

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Al-An'ām*, 6

This is a Sūra of the late Makkan period. The greater part of it was revealed entire. Its place in the traditional order of arrangement is justified by logical considerations. We have already had the religious history of mankind, a discussion of the earlier revelations and how they were lost or corrupted, the regulations for the outer life of the new Community, and the points in which the Jews and Christians failed to maintain the central doctrine of Islam—the unity of Allah. The next step now taken is to expound this doctrine in relation to Pagan Arabia.

Summary.— The nature of Allah and the method by which He reveals Himself are first expounded, and the weakness of Paganism is exposed (vi. 1-30).

The emptiness of this world's life is contrasted with the evidence of Allah's wonderful handiwork in all Creation. It is He who holds the keys of the Unseen and the secrets of all that we see (vi. 31-60).

Allah's working in His world and His constant care and guidance should give a clue to His unity as it did to Abraham when he argued with those who worshipped false gods (vi. 61-82).

The succession of prophets after Abraham kept Allah's truth alive, and led up to the Qur-ān. How can man fail to understand the majesty and goodness of Allah, when he contemplates Allah's creation and His Messages to mankind? (vi. 83-110).

The obstinate and the rebellious are deceived: they should be avoided. Though they turn for assistance to each other, they will receive due punishment (vi. 111-129).

Allah's decrees will come to pass, in spite of all the crimes and superstitions of the ungodly (vi. 130-150).

The better course is to follow the straight Way, the Way of Allah, as directed in the Qur-ān, with unity and the full dedication of our lives (vi. 151-165).

Al-An'ām, or Cattle.

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. Praise be to Allah,
Who created the heavens
And the earth,
And made the Darkness
And the Light.
Yet those who reject Faith
Hold (others) as equal⁸³⁴
With their Guardian Lord⁸³⁵
2. He it is Who created⁸³⁶
You from clay, and then
Decreed a stated term⁸³⁷
(For you). And there is
With Him another
Determined term; yet
Ye doubt within yourselves!
3. And He is Allah
In the heavens

سُورَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ
يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا وَأَجَلٌ
مُّسَمًّى عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تَمُرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ
وَجَهْرَكُمْ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٣﴾

834. 'Adala has various meaning: (1) to hold something as equal to something else, as here: to balance nicely: (2) to deal justly, as between one party and another, xlii. 15: (3) to give compensation or reparation, or something as equivalent to something else, vi. 70: (4) to turn the balance the right way, to give a right disposition, to give a just bias or proportion, lxxxii. 7: (5) to turn the balance the wrong way, to swerve, to show bias, iv. 135.

835. The argument is threefold: (1) Allah created everything you see and know: how can you then set up any of His own creatures as equal to Him? (2) He is your own Guardian-Lord; He cherishes and loves you; how can you be so ungrateful as to run after something else? (3) Darkness and Light are to help you to distinguish between the true from the false: how then can you confound the true God with your false ideas and superstitions? There may also be a repudiation of the Duality of old Persian theology; Light and Darkness are not conflicting Powers; they are both creatures of Allah.

836. After the general argument, the argument comes to man personally. Can such a miserable creature, created from clay, put himself in opposition to his Creator? And can man forget or doubt that he is here only for a short term of probation? And then, after a period, comes the Day of Account before Allah.

837. This life is a period of probation. The other term leads up to Judgement.

And in earth.
He knoweth what ye
Hide, and what ye reveal,
And He knoweth
The (recompense) which
Ye earn (by your deeds).⁸³⁸

4. But never did a single
One of the Signs
Of their Lord reach them,
But they turned
Away therefrom.
5. And now they reject
The truth when it reaches
Them: but soon shall come to them
The news of what
They used to mock at.
6. See they not how many
Of those before them
We did destroy?—⁸³⁹
Generations We had established
On the earth, in strength
Such as We have not given
To you—for whom
We poured out rain
From the skies in abundance,
And gave streams
Flowing beneath their (feet):
Yet for their sins
We destroyed them,
And raised in their wake

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا
عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿١﴾

فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَاءُ
مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٢﴾

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ مَا لَهُ تُمْكِنٌ لَكَرُّوْا وَرَاسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ
مِدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ
فَآهَلَكْنَاهُمْ يَوْمَهُمْ وَأَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا
آخَرِينَ ﴿٣﴾

838. It is folly to suppose that Allah only reigns in the heavens. He also reigns on earth. He knows all our secret thoughts and motives, and the real worth of all that is behind what we care to show. It is by our deeds that He judges us; for our deeds, whether good or evil, we shall get due recompense in due time.

839. Now comes the argument from history, looking backwards, and forwards. If we are so short-sighted or arrogant as to suppose that we are firmly established on this earth, secure in our privileges, we are reminded of much greater nations in the past, who failed in their duty and were wiped out. In their fate we must read our own fate, if we fail likewise! But those without faith, instead of facing facts squarely "turn away therefrom".

Fresh generations
(To succeed them).

7. If We had sent
Unto thee a written
(Message) on parchment,^{839-A}
So that they could
Touch it with their hands,
The Unbelievers would
Have been sure to say:
"This is nothing but
Obvious magic!"⁸⁴⁰

8. They say: "Why is not
An angel sent down to him?"
If We did send down
An angel, the matter
Would be settled at once,
And no respite
Would be granted them.⁸⁴¹

9. If We had made it
An angel, We should
Have sent him as a man.
And We should certainly
Have caused them confusion

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ
لَقَالُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧﴾

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَلَوْ أَنزَلْنَا مَلَكَ لَقُضِيَ
الْأَمْرُ لَمْ يَلْبِطُوا ﴿٨﴾

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكَ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ مَا يَلْبَسُونَ ﴿٩﴾

839-A. *Qir'ās*, in the Prophet's life, could only mean "parchment," which was commonly used as writing material in Western Asia from the 2nd century B.C. The word was derived from the Greek, *Charles* (Cf. Latin. "*Charta*"). Paper, as we know it, made from rags, was first used by the Arabs after the conquest of Smarqand in 751 A.D. The Chinese had used it by the 2nd century B.C. The Arabs introduced it into Europe; it was used in Greece in the 11th or 12th century, and in Spain through Sicily in the 12th century. The Papyrus, made from an Egyptian reed, was used in Egypt as early as 2500 B.C. It gave place to paper in Egypt in the 10th century.

840. The materialists want to see actual physical material things before them, but if such a thing came from an unusual source or expressed things they cannot understand, they give it some name like magic, or superstition, or whatever name is in fashion, and they are not helped at all in attaining faith, because their "hearts are diseased" (ii. 10).

841. Cf. ii. 210. An angel is a heavenly being, a manifestation of Allah's glory, invisible to men who live gross material lives. Such men are given plenty of respite in which to turn in repentance to Allah and make themselves worthy of His light. But if their prayer to see an angel were granted, it would do them no good, for they would be destroyed as darkness is destroyed by light.

In a matter which they have
Already covered with confusion.⁸⁴²

10. Mocked were (many)
Messengers before thee;
But their scoffers
Were hemmed in
By the thing that they mocked.⁸⁴³

SECTION 2.

11. Say: "Travel through the earth
And see what was the end
Of those who rejected Truth."
12. Say: "To whom belongeth
All that is in the heavens
And on earth?" Say:
"To Allah. He hath inscribed
For Himself (the rule of) Mercy.⁸⁴⁴
That He will gather you
Together for the Day of Judgment.
There is no doubt whatever,
It is they who have lost
Their own souls, that will
Not believe.

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ
سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ أَنْظِرُوا كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾
قُلْ لِمَنْ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ
كُتِبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةُ لِيَجْمَعَ كُمْ
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

842. Supposing an angel should appear to their grosser senses, he could only do it in human form. In that case their present confused notions about spiritual life would be still more confounded. They would say: "We wanted to see an angel, and we have only seen a man!"

843. "The scoffers were mocked by the thing that they mocked" would express epigrammatically part of the sense, but not the whole. "Hemmed in" implies that the logic of events turned the tables, and as a man might be besieged and surrounded by an enemy in war, and would be forced to surrender, so these mockers will find that events would justify Truth, not them. The mockers of Jesus,—where were they when Titus destroyed Jerusalem? The mockers who drove out Muhammad from Makkah—what was their plight when Muhammad came back in triumph and they sued for mercy,—and he gave it to them! According to the Latin proverb, Great is Truth, and must prevail.

844. History, travel, human experience, all prove the Mercy of Allah and the law that without it those who reject Truth tend to lose their own souls and destroy themselves.

13. To him belongeth all
That dwelleth (or lurketh)⁸⁴⁵
In the Night and the Day,
For He is the One
Who heareth and knoweth
All things.⁸⁴⁶

وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ

الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Say: "Shall I take
For my protector
Any other than Allah,
The Maker of the heavens
And the earth?
And He it is that
Feedeth but is not fed."⁸⁴⁷
Say: "Nay! but I am
Commanded to be the first
Of those who bow
To Allah (in Islam),
And be not thou
Of the company of those
Who join gods with Allah."

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أُتَجِدُّ وَلِيَافَاطِرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَهُوَ يُطْعِمُهُمْ وَلَا يُطْعَمُ قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ
أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. Say: "I would, if I
Disobeyed my Lord,
Indeed have fear
Of the Chastisement

قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ

رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٥﴾

845. *Sakan* = (1) to dwell; (2) to rest, to be still, to stop (moving), to lurk; (3) to be quiescent, as a letter which is not moved with a vowel.

If we imagine Night and Day to be places, and each to have (dwelling in them) things that are open and things that are concealed, things that move and things that are still, things that are sounded and things that are quiescent, we get some idea of the imagery implied. The mystery of Time (which seems more abstract than Space) is thus explained and illustrated by the idea of Place or Space, which also is a notion and not a concrete thing. But He Who has control of all these things is the one true God.

846. Throughout this section we have a sort of implied dialogue, of which one part is understood from the other part, which is expressed. In verse 11, we might have an imaginary objector saying: "Why go back to the past?" The answer is: "Well travel through the world, and see whether it is not true that virtue and godliness exalt a nation, and the opposite are causes of ruin. Both the past and the present prove this." In verse 12 the objector may say: "But you speak of Allah's power?" The man of God replies: "Yes, but Mercy is Allah's own attribute, and knowledge and wisdom beyond what man can conceive."

847. *Feedeth but is not fed*: true both literally and figuratively. To Allah we owe the satisfaction of all needs, but He is independent of all needs.

Of a Mighty Day.

16. "On that day, if the Penalty
Is averted from any,
It is due to Allah's Mercy;
And that would be
A Mighty Triumph.⁸⁴⁸
17. "If Allah touch thee
With affliction, none
Can remove it but He;
If He touch thee with happiness,
He hath power over all things.⁸⁴⁹
18. "He is Irresistibly Supreme
Over His servants.
And He is the Wise,
Acquainted with all things."
19. Say: "What thing is most
Weighty in evidence?"
Say: "Allah is witness
Between me and you;
This Qur-ān hath been
Revealed to me by inspiration.
That I may warn you
And all whom it reaches.
Can ye possibly bear witness
That besides Allah there
Are other gods?" Say:
"Nay! I cannot bear witness!"

مَنْ يُصْرِفْ عَنْهُ يَوْمَ مِيزٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمَهُ وَذَلِكَ
الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٦﴾

وَإِنْ يَمَسَّكَ اللَّهُ بِضُرٍّ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهُ إِلَّا
هُوَ وَإِنْ يَمَسَّكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾

قُلْ أَى شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً قُلْ اللَّهُ شَهِيدُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ
وَأَوْحَى إِلَى هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ أَنْ لَا تَذَرُكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ أَهَيْتَكُمْ
لَتَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهَةً أُخْرَى قُلْ لَا أَشْهَدُ
قُلْ إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ وَإِنِّى بَرِّئُ مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

848. We continue the implied dialogue suggested in n. 846. In verse 14, the objector might say: "But we have other interests in life than religion and Allah." "No," says the man of God, "My Creator is the one and only Power whose protection I seek; and I strive to be first in the race." In verse 15, the objector suggests: "Enjoy the good things of this life; it is short." The answer is: "The Hereafter is more real to me, and promises the true, fulfilment of all desire; happiness or affliction comes not from the fleeting pettinesses or illusions of this life, but from the power and wisdom of Allah." In verse 19, the objector makes his final splash: "What evidence is there for all this?" The reply is: "I know it is true for Allah's voice is within me, and my living Teacher awakens that voice; and there is the Book of Inspiration. Allah is one, and there is none other besides."

849. The vulgar worship false gods out of fear that they would harm them or hope that they would confer some benefit on them. These false gods can do neither. All power, all goodness in the hands of Allah. All else is pretence or illusion.

Say: "But in truth
He is the One God.
And I truly am innocent
Of (your blasphemy of) joining
Others with Him."

20. Those to whom
We have given the Book
Know this as they know⁸⁵⁰
Their own sons.
Those who have lost
Their own souls
Refuse therefore to believe.

SECTION 3.

21. Who doth more wrong
Than he who inventeth
A lie against Allah
Or rejecteth His Signs?
But verily the wrong-doers
Never shall prosper.
22. On the day shall We gather
Them all together: We
Shall say to those
Who ascribed partners (to Us):
"Where are the partners
Whom ye (invented
And) talked about!
23. There will then be (left)
No excuse for them⁸⁵¹
But to say: "By Allah

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ، كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ
أَبْنَاءَهُمْ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ
بِآيَاتِهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِن
شُرَكَاءُكُمْ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فِتْنَتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا وَاللَّهِ
رَبُّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

850. Cf. ii. 146 and n. 151. In both passages the pronoun translated "this" may mean "him" and refer to Muhammad the Messenger of Allah, as some Commentators think.

851. *Fitnat* has various meanings, from the root idea of "to try, to test, to tempt:" e.g., (1) a trial or temptation, as in ii. 102; (2) trouble, tumult, oppression, persecution, as in ii. 191, 193, 217; (3) discord as in iii. 7, (4) subterfuge, an answer that amounts to a sedition, and excuse founded on a falsehood, as here. Other shades of meaning will be noticed as they occur.

Those who blasphemed Allah in imagining false gods will now see the vanity of their imaginations for themselves. What answer can they give now? In their perversity they will deny that they ever entertained the notion of false gods.

Our Lord we were not
Those who joined gods
With Allah."

24. Behold! how they lie
Against themselves
But the (lie) which they
Invented will leave them⁸⁵²
In the lurch.

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَصَلَّ
عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

25. Of them there are some
Who (pretend to) listen to thee;
But We have thrown
Veils on their hearts,
So they understand it not,^{852-A}
And deafness in their ears;
If they saw every one
Of the Signs, they will
Not believe in them;
In so much that
When they come to thee,
They (but) dispute with thee;
The Unbelievers say:
"These are nothing
But tales of the ancients."

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً
أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلَاءِ آيَةٍ
لَّا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا أَنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرٌ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

26. Others they forbid it
And themselves they keep away;
But they only destroy
Themselves
And they perceive it not.

وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْتَوِي عَنْهُ وَإِنْ يُهْلِكُونَ
إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

27. If thou couldst but see
When they shall be made
To stand by the Fire
They will say:

وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ فَقَالُوا يَلَيْتُنَا نَرُدُّ
وَلَا نَكْذِبُ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

852. The lies which they used to tell have now "wandered" from the channels which they use to occupy, and left the liars in the lurch. In denying the indubitable fact that they took false gods, they admit the falsity of their notions and thus are practically convicted out of their own mouths.

852-A. It = The Qur-ān.

"Would that we were
But sent back!
Then would we not reject
The Signs of our Lord,
But would be amongst those
Who believe!"

28. Yea, in their own (eyes)
Will become manifest
What before they concealed.
But if they were returned,
They would certainly relapse
To the things they were forbidden,
For they are indeed liars.⁸⁵³

29. And they (sometimes) say:
"There is nothing except
Our life on this earth,
And never shall we be
Raised up again."

30. If thou couldst but see
When they shall be made to stand
Before their Lord
He will say:
"Is not this the truth?"
They will say:
"Yea, by our Lord"
He will say:
"Taste ye then the Chastisement
Because ye rejected Faith."

SECTION 4.

31. Lost indeed are they
Who treat it as a falsehood
That they must meet Allah,-

بَلْ بَدَأَهُمْ مَّا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا
لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

وَقَالُوا إِن هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ
بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ ذُقُوا غُلًّا عَلَيْهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ قَالَ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ
قَالُوا بَلَى وَرَبَّنَا قَالَ فَذُقُوا الْعَذَابَ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ
السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً قَالُوا لَا يَحْصِرُنَا عَلَى مَا فَرَطْنَا فِيهَا

853. Their falsity was not due to want of knowledge, but to perversity and selfishness. In their heart was a disease (ii. 10): therefore neither their understanding, nor their ears, nor their eyes do their proper work. They twist what they see, hear, or are taught, and go deeper and deeper into the mire. The deceptions which they used to practise on other people will, before the Seat of Judgment, become clear in their own eyes.

Until on a sudden
The hour is on them,
And they say: "Ah! woe
Unto us that we neglected;
For they bear their burdens⁸⁵⁴
On their backs,
And evil indeed are
The burdens that they bear?

وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْزَارَهُمْ عَلَى ظُهُورِهِمْ أَلَا سَاءَ
مَا يَرِزُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

32. Nothing is the life of this world
But play and amusement⁸⁵⁵
But best is the Home
In the Hereafter, for those
Who are righteous.
Will ye not then understand?

وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ الدَّارُ
الْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

33. We know indeed the grief
Which their words do cause thee:
It is not thee they reject:
It is the Signs of Allah,
Which the wicked deny.

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ
لَا يَكْذِبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَيَّاتٍ
اللَّهُ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. Rejected were the Messengers
Before thee: with patience
And constancy they bore
Their rejection and their persecution
Until Our aid did reach
Them: there is none
That can alter the Words
(And Decrees) of Allah
Already hast thou received
Some account of those Messengers.

وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ
مَا كَذَّبُوا وَآوَدُوا وَحَتَّىٰ أَنهَم نَصْرُنَا وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ
لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِن نَّبَايَ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

854. Grievous is the burden of sins which the wicked will bear on their backs when they become conscious of them. Some Commentators personify Sins as ugly Demons riding on the backs of men, while the men's Good Deeds become the strong and patient mounts which all carry the men on their backs. If the Good Deeds are few and the Sins many, the man and his good Deeds will be crushed under the load of the Evil which they carry.

855. Play and amusement are for preparing our minds for the serious things of life: in themselves they are not serious. So this life is a preparation for the Eternal Home to which we are going, which is far more important than the ephemeral pleasures which may possibly seduce us in this life.

35. If their spurning is hard
On thee, yet if
Thou wert able to seek
A tunnel in the ground
Or a ladder to the skies
And bring them a Sign,—⁸⁵⁶
(What good?). If it were
Allah's Will, He could
Gather them together
Unto true guidance:
So be not thou
Amongst those who are swayed
By ignorance (and impatience)!
36. Those who listen (in truth),⁸⁵⁷
Be sure, will accept:
As to the dead, Allah will
Raise them up; then will they
Be returned unto Him.
37. They say: "Why is not
A Sign sent down
To him from his Lord!"
Say: "Allah hath certainly
Power to send down a Sign:

وَإِنْ كَانَ كِبْرُ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ فَإِنْ اَسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ
تَبْنِيَ نَقْطًا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ سُلَّمًا فِي السَّمَاءِ
فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى
الْهُدَى فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

﴿٣٦﴾ إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَى يَبْعَثُهُمُ
اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَادِرٌ
عَلَى أَنْ يُنْزِلَ آيَةً وَلَٰكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

856. There were many Signs of a divine mission in the Prophet's life and in the Message which he delivered. If these did not convince the Unbelievers, was it not vain to seek a miraculous Sign from the bowels of the earth or by a visible ascent to the skies? If in the Prophet's eagerness to get all to accept his Message he was hurt at their callousness, active opposition, and persecution of him, he is told that a full knowledge of the working of Allah's Plan would convince him that impatience was misplaced. This was in the days of persection before the Hijrat. The history in Madinah and after shows how Allah's truth was ultimately and triumphantly vindicated. Who among the sincere devotees of Muḥammad can fail to read vi 33-35 without tears in his eyes?

857. There is a double meaning here. (1) If people listen to truth sincerely and earnestly, they must believe: even if the spiritual faculty is dead, Allah will by His grace revive it and they will come to Him, if they really try earnestly to understand. (2) The sincere will believe; but those whose hearts are dead will not listen, yet they cannot escape being brought to the Judgment Seat before Him.

But most of them
Understand not.⁸⁵⁸

38. There is not an animal
(That lives) on the earth,
Nor a being that flies
On its wings, but (forms
Part of) communities like you.⁸⁵⁹
Nothing have We omitted
From the Book, and they (all)
Shall be gathered to their Lord
In the end.

39. Those who reject our Signs
Are deaf and dumb,⁸⁶⁰
In the midst of darkness
Profound: whom Allah willeth,
He leaveth to wander:
Whom He willeth. He placeth
On the Way that is Straight.

40. Say: "Think ye to yourselves,
If there come upon you
The Punishment of Allah,
Or the Hour (that ye dread),
Would ye then call upon

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَيْرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ
إِلَّا أُمَّةٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
تُغْرَىٰ لَكُمْ بِهِمْ يُخَوَّلُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمُّوْا وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ
مَنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يُضِلَّهُ وَمَنْ يَشَأِ يُجْعَلْهُ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَتَاكُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَتْكُمْ
السَّاعَةُ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

858. Signs are all around them, but they do not understand. If they want a particular Sign to suit their gross ignorance, they will not be humoured, for they can always pick holes in anything that descends to their level.

859. "Animals living on the earth" include those living in the water,--fishes, reptiles, crustaceans, insects, as well as four-footed beasts. Life on the wing is separately mentioned. "Tāir," which is ordinarily translated as "bird," is anything that flies, including mammals like bats. In our pride we may exclude animals from our purview, but they all live a life, social and individual, like ourselves, and all life is subject to the Plan and Will of Allah. In vi. 59 we are told that not a leaf falls but by His Will, and things dry and green are recorded in His Book. In other words they all obey His archetypal Plan, the Book which is also mentioned here. They are all answerable in their several degrees to His Plan ("shall be gathered to their Lord in the end"). This is not Pantheism: it is ascribing all life, activity, and existence to the Will and Plan of Allah.

860. The limited free-will of man makes a little difference. If he sees the Signs but shuts his ears to the true Message, and refuses (like a dumb thing) to speak out the Message which all Nature proclaims, then according to the Plan (of his limited free-will) he must suffer and wander, just as, in the opposite case, he will receive grace and salvation.

Other than Allah?—
(Reply) if ye are truthful!

41. "Nay,—On Him would ye
Call, and if it be
His Will, He would remove
(The distress) which occasioned
Your call upon Him,
And ye would forget
(The false gods) which ye
Join with Him!"

SECTION 5.

42. Before thee We sent
(Messengers) to many nations,
And We afflicted the nations
With suffering and adversity,
That they call (Allah) in humility.

43. When the suffering reached
Them from Us, why then
Did they not call (Allah) in
humility?⁸⁶¹

On the contrary their hearts
Became hardened, and Satan
Made their (sinful) acts
Seem alluring to them.

44. But when they forgot
The warning they had received,
We opened to them the gates
Of all (good) things,⁸⁶²

بَلْ إِلَٰهَهُمْ نَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِن شَاءَ
وَتَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ
بِالْبَاسِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضُرَّعُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ
قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم
أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا
أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِغْتَةٍ فَادَاهُمْ مَبِيسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

861. Sorrow and suffering may (if we take them rightly) turn out to be the best gifts of Allah to us. According to the Psalms (xciv. 12). "Blessed is the man whom Thou chastenest. O Lord!" Through suffering we learn humility, the antidote to many vices and the fountain of many virtues. But if we take them the wrong way, we grumble and complain, we become faint-hearted; and Satan gets his opportunity to exploit us by putting forward the alluring pleasures of his Vanity Fair.

862. Learning the inner truth of ourselves and the world presupposes a certain advanced stage of sensitiveness and spiritual development. There is a shallower stage, at which prosperity and the good things of life may teach us sympathy and goodness and cheerfulness like that of Mr. Cheeribyles in Dickens. In such cases the Message takes =

Until, in the midst
Of their enjoyment
Of Our gifts,
On a sudden, We called
Them to account, when lo!
They were plunged in despair!

45. Of the wrong-doers the last
Remnant was cut off
Praise be to Allah,
The Cherisher of the Worlds.⁸⁶³

فَقُطِعَ دَائِرَةُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. Say: "Think ye, if Allah
Took away your hearing
And your sight, and sealed up⁸⁶⁴
Your hearts, who—a god
Other than Allah—could
Restore them to you?"
See how We explain
The Signs by various (symbols);
Yet they turn aside.

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَبَصَرَكُمْ وَخَمَّ
عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ أَنْظُرْ
كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ
ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْدِفُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. Say: "Think ye, if
The Punishment of Allah
Comes to you,
Whether suddenly or openly,⁸⁶⁵
Will any be destroyed
Except those who do wrong?

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ عَذَابُ اللَّهِ بَغْتَةً
أَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

= root. But there is another type of character which is puffed up in prosperity. For them prosperity is a trial of even a punishment from the higher point of view. They go deeper and deeper into sin, until they are pulled up of a sudden and then instead of being contrite they merely become desperate.

863. Allah's punishment of wrong-doers is a measure of justice, to protect the true and righteous from their depredations and maintain His righteous decrees. It is an aspect of His character which is emphasised by the epithet "Cherisher of the Worlds."

864. Cf. ii. 7 and n.

865. *Suddenly* = without warning. *Openly* = with many warnings, even to the sinners, though they heed them not. As to those who understand and read the signs of Allah, they could always tell that all wrong-doing must eventually have its punishment. But it will affect the wrong-doers, not the righteous. It is justice, not revenge.

48. We send the Messengers
Only to give good news⁸⁶⁶
And to warn: so those
Who believe and mend
(Their lives),—upon them
Shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve.

49. But those who reject
Our Signs,—them
Shall punishment touch,
For that they ceased not
From transgressing.

50. Say: "I tell you not
That with me
Are the Treasures of Allah,⁸⁶⁷
Nor do I know
What is hidden.
Nor do I tell you I am
An angel. I but follow
What is revealed to me."
Say: "Can the blind
Be held equal to the seeing?"⁸⁶⁸
Will ye then consider not?

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ ۚ فَمَنْ
ءَامَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُمْسِكُهُمُ الْعَذَابُ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ
الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ ۚ إِنِّي أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا
يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ ۚ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ
أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

866. The Prophets are not sent to cancel man's limited free-will. They are sent to preach and teach,—to preach hope to the repentant ("good news"), and to warn the rebellious of the Wrath to come.

867. Literally, it might mean that the Prophets are not like vulgar soothsayers, who pretend to reveal hidden treasures, or peer into future, or claim to be something of a different nature from men. But the meaning is wider: they deal out Allah's great treasures of truth, but the treasures are not theirs, but Allah's; they have greater insight into the higher things, but that insight is not due to their own wisdom, but to Allah's inspiration; they are of the same flesh and blood with us, and the sublimity of their words and teaching arises through Allah's grace—to them and to those who hear them.

868. Therefore compare not the Prophets with ordinary men. The Prophets, although they be but men, have the higher light with them; therefore do not exact of them petty ephemeral services. Though they are men, they are not as other men, and are entitled to reverence.

SECTION 6.

51. Give this warning to those⁸⁶⁹

In whose (hearts) is the fear
That they will be brought
(To Judgment) before their Lord:
Except for Him
They will have no protector
Nor intercessor:
That they may guard
(Against evil).

52. Send not away those

Who call on their Lord
Morning and evening,
Seeking His Face.⁸⁷⁰
In naught art thou accountable
For them, and in naught are they
Accountable for thee,⁸⁷¹
That thou shouldst turn
Them away, and thus be
(One) of the unjust.

53. Thus did We test
Some of them by⁸⁷²

وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ
يُريُدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَكَذَٰلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لِّيَقُولُوا

869. There are some men-sinners—who yet believe in Judgment; let them be warned of their personal responsibility to guard against evil; let them not rely upon protectors or intercessors before Allah; their sins can only be forgiven by Allah's own Mercy.

870. Face: wajh: see ii. 112 and n. 114.

871. Some of the rich and influential Quraish thought it beneath their dignity to listen to Muhammad's teaching in company with the lowly disciples, who were gathered round him. But he refused to send away these lowly disciples, who were sincere seekers after Allah. From a worldly point of view they had nothing to gain from Muhammad as he was himself poor, and he had nothing to gain from them as they had no influence. But that was no reason for turning them away: indeed their true sincerity entitled them to precedence over worldly men in the kingdom of Allah, Whose justice was vindicated in Muhammad's daily life in this as in other things. If their sincerity was in any way doubtful, it involved no responsibility for the Preacher.

872. Pursue the argument of the last note. The influential people who were not given precedence over the poor and humble but sincere disciples, were on their trial as to their spiritual insight. Their temptation was to say (and they said it in scorn): "We are much greater than they: has Allah then selected these lowly people for His teaching?" But that was so. And Allah knew best those who were grateful to Him for His guidance.

Others, that they
Should say: "Is it these
Then that Allah hath
Favoured from amongst us?"
Doth not Allah know best
Those who are grateful?

54. When those come to thee
Who believe in Our Signs,
Say: "Peace be on you:⁸⁷³
Your Lord hath inscribed
For Himself (the rule⁸⁷⁴
Of) Mercy: verily,
If any of you did evil
In ignorance, and thereafter
Repented, and amended
(His conduct), lo! He is
Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

55. Thus do We explain
The Signs in detail:
That the way of the sinners
May be shown up.⁸⁷⁵

SECTION 7.

56. Say:⁸⁷⁶ "I am forbidden"
To worship those-others

أَهْتُولَاءَ مِنْ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ
بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ
عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ
أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ
مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾

وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصِلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِينَ سَبِيلُ
الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ

873. The humble who had sincere faith, were not only not sent away to humour the wealthy: they were honoured and were given a special salutation, which has become the characteristic salutation in Islam: "Peace be on you,"—the word peace, "*salām*" having special affinity with the word "*Islām*." In words they are given the salutation; in life they are promised Mercy by the special grace of Allah.

874. Cf. vi. 12.

875. If the way of the sinners (in jealousy and worldly pride) is shown up, and details are given how to honour the truly sincere, it forms the best illustration of the teaching of Allah.

876. There are a number of arguments now put forward against the Makkans who refused to believe in Allah's Message. Each argument is introduced with the word "Say." Here are the first four: (1) I have received Light and will follow it: (2) I prefer my Light to your vain desires: (3) your challenge—"if there is a God, why does He not finish the =

Than Allah-whom ye
Call upon," Say: "I will
Not follow your vain desires:
If I did, I would stray
From the path, and be not
Of the company of those
Who receive guidance."

اللَّهُ قُلْ لَا أَتَّبِعُ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ قَدْ ضَلَلْتُ إِذَا
وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

57. Say: "For me, I am
On a clear Sign from my Lord,
But ye reject Him. What ye⁸⁷⁷
Would see hastened, is not
In my power. The Command
Rests with none but Allah:
He declares the Truth,
And He is the best of judges."

قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُم بِهِ
مَا عِندِي مَّا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ
إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَقْضُ الْحَقُّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَصِّلِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

58. Say: "If what ye would see
Hastened were in my power,
The matter would be settled
At once between you and me.⁸⁷⁸
But Allah knoweth best
Those who do wrong."

قُلْ لَوْ أَنِّي عِنْدِي مَّا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ، لَقُضِيَ
الْأَمْرُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ
بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

59. With Him are the keys⁸⁷⁹
Of the Unseen, the treasures
That none knoweth but He.
He knoweth whatever there is
On the earth and in the sea.
Not a leaf doth fall

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ
وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ
إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلْمَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا
وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

= blasphemers at once?"-it is not for me to take up: punishment rests with Allah: (4) if it rested with me, it would be for me to take up your challenge; all I know is that Allah is not unacquainted with the existence of folly and wickedness, and many other things besides, that no mortal can know; you can see little glimpses of His Plan, and you can be sure that He will not be tardy in calling you to account.

877. *What ye would see hastened*: what ye, deniers of Allah, are so impatient about; the punishment which ye mockingly say does not come to you. Cf. xiii. 6.

878. The Messenger of Allah is not here to settle scores with the wicked. It is not a matter between them and him. It is a matter between them and Allah: he is only a warner against sin, and a declarer of the gospel of salvation.

879. *Mafatih*: Plural of either *miftah* = a key, or *maftah* = a treasure. Both meanings are implied, and I have accordingly put both in my translation.

But with His knowledge:
There is not a grain
In the darkness (or depths)
Of the earth, nor anything
Fresh or dry (green or withered),
But is (inscribed) in a Record⁸⁸⁰
Clear (to those who can read).

60. It is He Who doth take
Your souls by night,
And hath knowledge of all
That ye have done by day:
By day doth He raise
You up again; that a term
Appointed be fulfilled;
In the end unto Him
Will be your return;⁸⁸¹
Then will He show you
The truth of all
That ye did.

SECTION 8.

61. He is Irresistibly,
Supreme over His servants
And He sets guardians⁸⁸²
Over you. At length,

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُمْ
بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِقَاضِي أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُمْ
بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ ۖ وَيُرْسِلُ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ

880. This is the archetypal Plan, the Eternal Law, according to which everything seen and unseen is ordered and regulated. The simplest things in Nature are subject to His Law. The fresh and the withered, the living and the lifeless—nothing is outside the Plan of His Creation.

881. As the rest of His Creation is subject to His Law and Plan, so is man's life in every particular and at every moment, awake or asleep. The mystery of Sleep—"the twin brother of death"—is called the taking of our soul by Him, with the record of all we have done in our waking moments, and this record sometimes appears to us in confused glimpses in dreams. By day we awaken again to our activities, and so it goes on until we fulfil the term of our life appointed for this earth. Then comes the other Sleep (death), with the longer record of our Day (Life); and then, in the end comes the Resurrection and Judgment, at which we see everything clearly and not as in dreams, for that is the final Reality.

882. *Guardians*: most Commentators understand this to mean guardian angels. The idea of guardianship is expressed in a general term. Allah watches over us and guards us, and provides all kinds of agencies, material, moral, and spiritual, to help our growth and development, keep us from harm, and bring us nearer to our Destiny.

When death approaches
One of you. Our angels⁸⁸³
Take his soul, and they
Never fail in their duty.

62. Then are they returned
Unto Allah, their True Protector,
Surely His is the Command,⁸⁸⁴
And He is the Swiftest
In taking account.

63. Say:⁸⁸⁵ "Who is it
That delivereth you
From the dark recesses⁸⁸⁶
Of land and sea,
When ye call upon Him
In humility
And in secret:⁸⁸⁷
'If He only delivers us
From these (dangers),
(We vow) we shall truly
Show our gratitude'?"

لَا يَقْرَظُونَ ﴿١١﴾

ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا۟ اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَوْلٰهُمْ اَحَقُّ اَلَّا لَهُ الْحٰكَمُ
وَهُوَ اَسْرَعُ الْحٰسِبِیْنَ ﴿١٢﴾

قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّیْكُمْ مِّنْ ظُلُمٰتِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ يَدْعُوْهُ
تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْیَةً لَّیۡنًا نَّجِّنَا۟ مِنْ هٰذِهِ
لَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِیْنَ ﴿١٣﴾

883. *Angles*: the word used is *rusul*, the Sent Ones,—the same word as for human Messengers sent by Allah to teach mankind. The angels who come to take our souls at death are accurate in the performance of their duty. They come neither before nor after their appointed time, nor do they do it in any manner other than that fixed by the Command of Allah.

884. *Al-haqq*, the Truth, the only True One. The point is that our illusions of the life of this lower world now vanish, when we are rendered back to God. And now we find that so far from the results of our actions being delayed, they follow more swiftly than we can express in terms of Time. Here is the answer to the taunt of those who were impatient of the working of God's Plans (vi. 57-58).

885. In continuation of the four heads of argument referred to in n. 876, we have three more heads here in vi. 63-65: (5) your calling upon Him in times of danger shows that in the depths of your hearts you feel His need: (6) Allah's Providence saves you, and yet you ungratefully run after false gods; (7) it is not only physical calamities that you have to fear; your mutual discords and vengeance are even more destructive, and only faith in Allah can save you from them.

886. *Zulumât*: dark recesses, terrible lurking dangers, as in deserts or mountains, or forests, or seas.

887. There are two readings, but they both ultimately yield the same meaning. (1) *Khufyatan*, silently, secretly, from the depth of your inner heart, suggesting unspeakable terror. (2) *Khifatan*, out of terror or fear or reverence, as in vii. 205.

64. Say: "It is Allah
That delivereth you
From these and all (other)
Distresses: and yet
Ye worship false gods!"

قُلْ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ
تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65. Say: "He hath power
To send calamities⁸⁸⁸
On you, from above
And below, or to cover
You with confusion
In party strife,
Giving you a taste
Of mutual vengeance—
Each from the other".
See how We explain
The Signs in diverse ways,⁸⁸⁹
That they may understand.

قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَى أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِنْ فَوْقِكُمْ
أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبِسَكُمْ شِيْعًا وَيَرْفِقَ بَعْضُكُمْ
بِبَعْضٍ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ نُصْرِفُ
الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَفْقَهُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾

66. But thy people reject
This, though it is
The Truth. Say: "Not mine
Is the responsibility
For arranging your affairs,⁸⁹⁰

وَكَذَّبَ بِهِ قَوْمُكَ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ قُلْ لَنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ
بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. For every Prophecy
Is a limit of time,
And soon shall ye
Know it."

لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

888. *Calamities from above and below:* such as storms and blizzards, torrential rain, etc., or earthquakes, floods, landslides, etc.

889. *Cf. vi. 46,* where this refrain commences the argument now drawing to a close.

890. At the date of this revelation, the Messenger's people had as a body not only rejected Allah's truth, but were persecuting it. The Messenger's duty was to deliver his Message, which he did. He was not responsible for their conduct. But he told them plainly that all warnings from Allah had their time limit, as they would soon find out. And they did find out within a very few years. For the leaders of the resistance came to an evil end, and their whole system of fraud and selfishness was destroyed, to make room for the purer Faith of Islam. Apart from that particular application, there is the more general application for the present time and for all time.

68. When thou seest men
Engaged in vain discourse
About Our Signs, turn
Away from them unless
They turn to a different⁸⁹¹
Theme. If Satan ever
Makes thee forget, then
After recollection, sit not
Thou in the company
Of those who do wrong.

69. On their account
No responsibility
Falls on the righteous,⁸⁹²
But (their duty)
Is to remind them,
That they may (learn
To) fear Allah.

70. Leave alone those
Who take their religion
To be mere play
And amusement,⁸⁹³
And are deceived
By the life of this world.
But continue to admonish them
With it (Al-Qur-ān)
Lest a soul is caught
In its own ruin
By its own action:⁸⁹⁴

وَإِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ
حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۚ وَإِمَّا يُنسِيَنَّكَ الشَّيْطَانُ
فَلَا تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِىٰ مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
وَلَكِنْ ذَكَرْنَاهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَلَهْوًا
وَعَرْتَهُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَذَكَرْنَاهُمْ
أَنْ تَبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ
اللَّهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ ۚ وَإِنْ تَعْدِلْ كُلُّ عَدْلٍ
لَّا يُؤْخَذَ مِنْهَا ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ أُبْسِلُوا بِمَا كَسَبُوا ۚ

891. Cf. iv. 140. If in any gathering truth is ridiculed, we must not sit in such company. If we find ourselves in it, as soon as we realise it, we must show our disapproval by leaving.

892. Every man is responsible for his own conduct. But the righteous have two duties: (1) to protect themselves from infection, and (2) to proclaim Allah's truth, for even in the most unlikely circumstances, it is possible that it may have some effect.

893. Cf. vi. 32, where we are told that the life of this world is mere play and amusement, and Religion and the Hereafter are the serious things that require our attention. Worldly people reverse this, because they are deceived by the allurements of this life. But their own acts will find them out.

894. We must never forget our own personal responsibility for all we do, or deceive ourselves by the illusion of vicarious atonement.

It will find for itself
No protector or intercessor
Except Allah: if it offered
Every ransom, (or
Reparation), none
Will be accepted: such is
(The end of) those who
Deliver themselves to ruin
By their own acts:
They will have for drink
(Only) boiling water,
And for punishment
One most grievous:
For they persisted
In rejecting Allah.

SECTION 9.

71. Say,⁸⁹⁵ "Shall we
Call on others besides Allah,—
Things that can do us
Neither good nor harm,—
And turn on our heels
After receiving guidance
From Allah?—like one
Whom the Satans
Have made into a fool,
Wandering bewildered
Through the earth, his friends
Calling 'Come to us',
(Vainly) guiding him to the Path."

Say: "Allah's guidance
Is the (only) guidance,

لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

قُلْ أَدْعُوا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا
وَنُرْثُ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْنَا اللَّهَ كَالَّذِي
اسْتَهْوَتْهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَيْرَانًا لَهُ
أَصْحَابٌ يَدْعُونَهُ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ أَتَيْنَا قُلُوبًا
هُدًى اللَّهُ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَأَمْرُنَا لِلْإِسْلَامِ
لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

895. In continuation of the seven heads of argument referred to in nn. 876 and 885, we have here the final two heads: (8) who would, after receiving guidance from the living, eternal God, turn to lifeless idols? To do so would indeed show that we were made into fools, wandering to a precipice; (9) therefore accept the only true guidance, the guidance of Allah, and obey His Law, for we shall have to answer before His judgment-seat.

And we have been directed
To submit ourselves
To the Lord of the worlds;-

72. "To establish regular prayers
And to fear Allah:
For it is to Him
That we shall be
Gathered together."

وَأَن أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّقُوا وَهُوَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ
تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

73. It is He Who created
The heavens and the earth
With truth:⁸⁹⁶
The day He saith, "Be,"
Behold! it is. His Word
Is the Truth. His will be
The dominion the day
The trumpet will be blown.
He knoweth the Unseen
As well as that which is
Open. For He
Is the Wise, well acquainted
(With all things).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَيَوْمَ يَقُولُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ
وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ يَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ عَنَّمُ الْغَيْبِ
وَالشَّهَادَةِ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿٧٣﴾

74. Lo! Abraham said
To his father Āzar:
"Takest thou idols for gods?
For I see thee
And thy people
In manifest error."

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ أَعْظَمُ
الْهَةِ إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتَكَ وَقَوْمَكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٤﴾

896. The argument mounts up here, leading to the great insight of Abraham the true in faith, who did not stop short at the wonders of nature, but penetrated "from nature up to nature's God." Allah not only created the heavens and the earth: with every increase of knowledge we see in what true and perfect proportions all Creation is held together. Creatures are subject to Time, but the Creator is not: His word is the key that opens the door of existence. It is not only the starting point of existence, but the whole measure and standard of Truth and Right. There may possibly be, to our sight in this great world, aberrations of human or other wills, but the moment the trumpet sounds for the last day. His judgment-seat will, with perfect justice, restore the dominion of Right and Reality. For His knowledge and wisdom cover all reality.

75. So also did We show⁸⁹⁷
Abraham the kingdom
Of the heavens
And the earth, that he
Might have certitude.

76. When the night
Covered him over,
He saw a star:
He said: "This is my Lord."
But when it set,
He said. "I love not
Those that set."⁸⁹⁸

77. When he saw the moon
Rising in splendour,
He said: "This is my Lord."
But when the moon set.
He said: "Unless my Lord
Guide me, I shall surely
Be among those
Who go astray."⁸⁹⁹

وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى الْكَوْكَبَ قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي
فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْآفِلِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ بَازِعًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ
لَئِنْ لَمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ
الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

897. Now comes the story of Abraham. He lived among the Chaldeans, who had great knowledge of the stars and heavenly bodies. But he got beyond that physical world and saw the real world behind. His ancestral idols meant nothing to him. That was the first step. But Allah took him many degrees higher. Allah showed him with certitude the glories behind the magnificent powers and laws of the physical universe.

898. This shows the stages of Abraham's enlightenment. It should not be supposed that he literally worshipped stars or heavenly bodies. Having seen through the folly of ancestral idol worship, he began to see the futility of worshipping distant beautiful things that shine, which the vulgar endure with a power which does not reside in them. A type of such is a star shining in the darkness of the night. Superstition might read fortunes in it, but truer knowledge shows that it rises and sets according to laws whose author is Allah. And its light is extinguished in the broader light of day: Its worship is therefore futile. It is not a Power, much less the Supreme Power.

According to some commentators the whole thrust of Abraham's reasoning in verses 76-78 is directed against the superstitious beliefs of his people and demonstrates the folly of worshipping stars and other heavenly bodies. As such his statements may be seen as premises of his arguments against Polytheism rather than as stages in his enlightenment.

899. The moon, though it looks bigger and brighter than the star, turns out on closer knowledge, not only to set like the star, but to change its shape from hour to hour, and even to depend for her light on some other body! How deceptive are appearances! That is not Allah! At that stage you begin to search for something more reliable than appearances to the eye in the darkness of the night. You ask for guidance from Allah.

78. When he saw the sun
Rising (in splendour,)
He said: "This is my Lord;
This is the greatest (of all)."
But when the sun set,
He said: "O my people!
I am indeed free
From your (guilt)
Of giving partners to Allah."⁹⁰⁰

79. "For me, I have set
My face, firmly and truly,
Towards Him Who created
The heavens and the earth,
And never shall I give
Partners to Allah."

80. His people disputed⁹⁰¹
With him. He said:
"(Come) ye to dispute
With me, about Allah,
When He (Himself)
Hath guided me?
I fear not (the beings)
Ye associate with Allah:
Unless my Lord willeth,
(Nothing can happen),
My Lord comprehendeth
In His knowledge all things.

فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسُ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا
أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يَنْفَوِّرُ إِلَيَّ بَرِيءٌ مِمَّا
تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

إِلَيَّ وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ خَبِيرًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحِبُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِي
وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ رَبِّي
شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا
أَفَلَا تُتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

900. The next stage is the sun. You are in the open light of Day. Now you have the right clue. You see the biggest object in the heavens. But is it the biggest? There are thousands of stars in the universe bigger than the sun. And every day the sun appears and disappears from your sight. Such is not God who created you and all these wonderful works of His. What folly to worship creatures, when we might turn to the true God? Let us abjure all these follies and proclaim the one true God.

901. The story of Abraham is highly instructive for all men in quest of truth. If enlightenment go so far as to take a man beyond his ancestral worship, people will come to dispute with him. They will frighten him with the dire consequences of his dissent. What does he care? He has found the truth. He is free from superstitious fears, for has he not found the true God, without Whose Will nothing can happen? On the contrary he knows that it is the godless who have just grounds for fear. And he offers admonition to them, and arguments that should bring them the clearness of truth instead of the vagueness and mystery of superstition,—the security of Faith instead of the haunting fear of those who have no clear guidance.

Will ye not (yourselves)
Be admonished?

81. "How should I fear
(The beings) ye associate
With Allah, when ye
Fear not to give partners
To Allah without any warrant
Having been given to you?
Which of (us) two parties
Hath more right to security?
(Tell me) if ye know.

وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ
أَنْتُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ، عَلَيْكُمْ
سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

82. "It is those who believe
And mix not their beliefs
With wrong^{901-A}-that are
(Truly) in security, for they
Are on (right) guidance."

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ
أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

SECTION 10.

83. That was Our argument
Which We gave to Abraham
(To use) against his people:⁹⁰²
We raise whom We will,
Degree after degree:
For thy Lord is full
Of wisdom and knowledge.

وَبَلَدِكَ حُجَجَتُنَا ءَاتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ
دَرَجَاتٍ مَّن نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٣﴾

84. We gave him Isaac
And Jacob: all (three)
We guided:⁹⁰³
And before him,

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا
هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَمِن دُرِّيَّتِهِ

901-A. The word "wrong" here refers to ascribing partners to Allah as has been stated by the Prophet (peace be on him) in his explanation of the verse.

902. The spiritual education of Abraham raised him many degrees above his contemporaries, and he was expected to use that knowledge and dignity for preaching the truth among his own people.

903. We have now a list of eighteen Prophets in four groups, covering the great Teachers accepted among the three great religions based on Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad. The first group to be mentioned is that of Abraham, his son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob. Abraham was the first to have a Book. His Book is mentioned in Q. lxxxvii. 19, though it is now lost. They were therefore the first to receive Guidance in the sense of a Book.

We guided Noah,⁹⁰⁴
And among his progeny,
David, Solomon, Job,
Joseph, Moses, and Aaron:
Thus do We reward
Those who do good:

دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى
وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

85. And Zakariya and John,⁹⁰⁵
And Jesus and Elias:
All in the ranks
Of the Righteous:

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِيلَاسَ كُلٌّ
مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

86. And Isma'il and Elisha,⁹⁰⁶
And Jonas, and Lot:
And to all We gave
Favour above the nations:

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا
فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

87. (To them) and to their fathers,⁹⁰⁷
And progeny and brethren:

وَمِنَ آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ

904. In the second group, we have the great founders of families, apart from Abraham, viz., Noah, of the time of the Flood: David and Solomon, the real establishers of the Jewish monarchy: Job, who lived 140 years, saw four generations of descendants, and was blessed at the end of his life with large pastoral wealth (Job xlii. 16, 12); Joseph, who as Minister of State did great things in Egypt and was the progenitor of two Tribes; and Moses and Aaron, the leaders of the Exodus from Egypt. They led active lives and are called "doers of good."

905. The third group consists not of men of action, but Preachers of Truth, who led solitary lives. Their epithet is: "the Righteous." They form a connected group round Jesus. Zakariya was the father of John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus (iii. 37-41); and Jesus referred to John the Baptist as Elias: "this is Elias, which was to come" (Matt. xi. 14); and Elias is said to have been present and talked to Jesus at the Transfiguration on the Mount (Matt. xvii. 3). Elias is the same as Elijah.

906. This is the last group, described as those "favoured above the nations." It consists of four men who had all great misfortunes to contend with, and were concerned in the clash of nations, but they kept in the path of Allah, and came through above the clash of nations. Isma'il was the eldest son of Abraham: when he was a baby, he and his mother had nearly died of thirst in the desert round Makkah but they were saved by the well of Zamzam, and he became the founder of the new Arab nation. Elisha (Al-Yasa') succeeded to the mantle of the Prophet Elijah (same as Elias, see last note); he lived in troublous times for both the Jewish kingdoms (of Judah and Israel); there were wicked kings, and other nations were pressing in on them: but he performed many miracles, and some check was given to the enemies under his advice. The story of Jonas (Yūnus) is well-known: he was swallowed by a fish or whale, but was saved by Allah's mercy: through his preaching, his city (Nineveh) was saved (x. 98). Lot was a contemporary and nephew of Abraham: when the city of Sodom was destroyed for its wickedness, he was saved as a just man (vii. 80-84).

907. I take verse 87 to refer back to all the four groups just mentioned.

We chose them,
And We guided them
To a straight Way.

88. This is the Guidance
Of Allah: He giveth
That guidance to whom
He pleaseth, of His servants
If they were to join
Other gods with Him,
All that they did
Would be vain for them.

89. These were the men
To whom We gave
The Book, and Judgement,
And Prophethood: if these
(Their descendants) reject them,⁹⁰⁸
Behold! We shall entrust
Their charge to a new People
Who reject them not.

90. Those were the (prophets)
Who received Allah's guidance.
Follow the guidance they received;
Say: "No reward for this
Do I ask of you:
This is but
A Reminder to the nations.

SECTION 11.

91. No just estimate of Allah⁹⁰⁹
Do they make when they say:
"Nothing doth Allah send down
To man (by way of revelation)";

وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٨٧﴾

ذَٰلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ
لَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحِطَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَ
فَإِنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَؤُلَاءِ فَقَدْ وَكَلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَّيْسُوا
بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدْهُمْ أَفْتَدِ
قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ هُوَ
إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُوا مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى
بَشَرٍ مِّن شَيْءٍ قُلْ مَن أَنزَلَ الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي جَاءَ بِهِ

908. *Them*, i.e., the Book, and Authority and Prophethood. They were taken away from the other People of the Book and entrusted to the holy Prophet Muhammad and his People.

909. *Qadara*: to weigh, judge, or estimate the value or capacity of anything; to have power so to do. Cf. *Qadir* in iv. 149 and n. 655. The Jews who denied the inspiration of Muhammad had a good answer in their own books about the inspiration of Moses. To those who do not believe in Moses, the answer is more general: is it a just estimate =

Say: "Who then sent down
The Book which Moses brought?—
A light and guidance to man:⁹¹⁰
But ye make it into
(Separate) sheets for show,⁹¹¹
While ye conceal much
(Of its contents): therein
Were ye taught that
Which ye knew not—
Neither ye nor your fathers."
Say: "Allah (sent it down)":
Then leave them to plunge
In vain discourse and trifling.

مُوسَى نُورًا وَهُدًى لِلنَّاسِ جَعَلُونَهُ قُرْآنًا طَيِّسًا
تُبَدُّوْنَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا وَعِلْمُنَا مَا لَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنْتُمْ
وَلَا آبَاؤُكُمْ قُلِ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى ذَرَهُمْ فِي خَوَاصِرِهِمْ
يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩١﴾

92. And this is a Book
Which We have sent down,
Bringing blessings,⁹¹² and confirming
(The revelations) which came
Before it: that thou
Mayest warn the Mother⁹¹³
Of Cities and all around her.

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ مُصَدِّقُ الَّذِي بَيْنَ
يَدَيْهِ وَلِنُنذِرَ أُمَّ الْقُرَى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَهُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ
يَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

= of Allah to think either that He has not the power or the will to guide mankind, seeing that He is Omnipotent and the Source of all good! If you say that guidance comes, not through an inspired book or man, but through our general intelligence, we point to the spiritual ignorance of "you and your ancestors" the sad spiritual darkness of men and nations high in the intellectual scale.

910. Cf. v. 44 and n. 750, and v. 46. In those passages Guidance is put before Light, as they refer to ordinary or average men. Here Light is put first as the question is: does Allah send inspiration?

911. The Message to Moses had unity: it was one Book. the present Old Testament is a collection of odd books ("sheets") of various kinds: see Appendix II. end of S. v. In this way you can make a show, but there is no unity, and much of the spirit of the original is lost or concealed or overlaid. The same applies to the New Testament: see Appendix III, after Appendix II.

912. *Mubārak*: blessed, as having received Allah's blessing: bringer of blessings to others, as having been blessed by Allah. Allah's highest blessing is the Guidance and Light which the Book brings to us, and which brings us nearer to Him.

913. *Mother of Cities*: Makkah now the Qibla and Centre of Islam. If this verse was (like the greater part of the Chapter) revealed in Makkah before the Hijrat, and before Makkah was made the Qibla of Islam. Makkah was nonetheless the Mother of Cities, being traditionally associated with Abraham (see ii. 125, and n. 217 to ii. 197).

All round Makkah: would mean, the whole world if we look upon Makkah as the Centre.

Those who believe
In the Hereafter
Believe in this (Book),
And they are constant
In guarding their Prayers.⁹¹⁴

93. Who can be more wicked
Than one who inventeth
A lie against Allah,
Or saith, "I have
Received inspiration,"
When he hath received
None, or (again) who saith,
"I can reveal the like
Of what Allah hath revealed?"
If thou couldst but see
How the wicked (do fare)
In the agonies
Of death!—the angels
Stretch forth their hands,
(Saying), "Yield up your souls!"⁹¹⁵
This day shall ye receive
Your reward,—a chastisement
Of disgrace, for that ye used
To tell lies against Allah,
And scornfully to reject
Of His Signs!"

94. "And behold! ye come
To Us bare and alone
As We created you
For the first time:"⁹¹⁶

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ
إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوْحَ إِلَيَّ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ قَالَ سَأُنْزِلُ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُو أَيْدِيهِمْ آخِرُ جَوْأٍ
أَنْفُسَكُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ
بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ
وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَى كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
وَتَرْكُنتُمْ مَا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ وَمَا نَرَى

914. An earnest study of the Qur-ān is true worship: so is Prayer, and so are all deeds of goodness and charity.

915. *Yield up your souls:* or "get your souls to come out of your bodies." The wicked, we may suppose, are not anxious to part with the material existence in their bodies for the "reward" which in irony is stated to be there to welcome them.

916. Some of the various ideas connected with "creation" are noted in n. 120 to ii. 117. In the creation of man there are various processes. If his body was created out of clay, i.e., earthy matter, there was an earlier process of the creation of such earthy matter. Here the body is left behind, and the soul is being addressed. The soul underwent =

Ye have left behind you
All (the favours) which
We bestowed on you:
We see not with you
Your intercessors
Whom ye thought to be
Partners in your affairs:
So now all relations
Between you have been
Cut off, and your (pet) fancies
Have left you in the lurch!⁹¹⁷

SECTION 12.

95. It is Allah Who causeth⁹¹⁸

The seed-grain
And the date-stone
To split and sprout.⁹¹⁹
He causeth the living

مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَكُمْ الَّذِينَ رَعَيْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءٌ
لَقَدْ نَقَطَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ
مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

﴿٩٥﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى يُخْرِجُ الْحَىَّ
مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَىِّ ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى
تُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

= various processes of fashioning and adapting to its various functions in its various surroundings (xxxii. 7-9). But each individual soul, after release from the body, comes back as it was created, with nothing more than its history, "the deeds which it has earned," which are really a part of it. Any exterior things given to help in its development, "the favours which We bestowed on you," it must necessarily leave behind, however it may have been proud of them. These exterior things may be material things, e.g., wealth, property, signs of power, influence and pride such as sons, relatives, and friends, etc., or they may be intangible things, like talents, social gifts, etc.

917. The false ideas of intercessors, demi-gods, gods, saviours, etc., now vanish like unsubstantial visions, "leaving not a wrack behind." Now the soul is face to face with reality. Its personal responsibility is brought home to it.

918. Another beautiful nature passage, referring to Allah's wonderful artistry in His Creation. In how few and how simple words, the whole pageant of Creation is placed before us. Beginning from our humble animal needs and dependence on the vegetable world, we are asked to contemplate the interaction of the living and the dead. Here is a teaching, referring not only to physical life but to the higher life above the physical plane, not only to individual life but to the collective life of nations. Then we take a peep into the daily miracle of morning, noon, and night, and pass on to the stars that guide the distant mariner. We rise still higher to the mystery of the countless individuals from the one human soul, their sojourn and their destiny. So we get back to the heavens: the description of the luscious fruits which the "gentle rain from heaven" produces, leaves us to contemplate the spiritual fruits which faith will provide for us, with the aid of the showers of Allah's mercy.

919. The seed-grain and the date-stone are selected as types in the vegetable kingdom, showing how our physical life depends on it. The fruits mentioned later (in vi. 99) start another allegory which we shall notice later. Botanists will notice that the seed- =

To issue from the dead.
 And He is the One
 To cause the dead
 To issue from the living.⁹²⁰
 That is Allah: then how
 Are ye deluded
 Away from the truth?

96. He it is that cleaveth
 The day-break (from the dark):
 He makes the night
 For rest and tranquillity,
 And the sun and moon
 For the reckoning (of time):
 Such is the judgment⁹²¹

فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ
 وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٩٦﴾

= grain includes the cereals (such as wheat, barley, rice, millet, etc.) which are monocotyledons, as well as the pulses (such as beans, peas, gram etc.) and other seeds which are dicotyledons. These two represent the most important classes of food-grains, while the date-palm a monocotyledon, represents for Arabia both food, fruit, confectionery, thatch and pillars for houses, shady groves in oases, and a standard measure of wealth and well being. "Split and sprout": both ideas are included in the root *falaqa*, and a third is expressed by the word "cleave" in the next verse for the action of evolving day-break from the dark. For vegetables, "split and sprout" represents a double process: (1) the seed divides, and (2) one part shoots up, seeking the light, and forming leaves and the visible parts of the future tree, and the other part digs down into the dark, forming the roots and seeking just that sustenance from the soil, which is adapted for the particular plant. This is just one small instance of the "judgment and ordering" of Allah, referred to in the next verse.

920. This does not mean that in physical nature there are no limits between life and non-life, between the organic and the non-organic. In fact physicists are baffled at the barrier between them and frankly confess that they cannot solve the mystery of Life. If there is such a barrier in physical nature, is it not all the more wonderful that Allah can create Life out of nothing? He has but to say. "Be," and it is. He can bring Life from non-Life and annihilate Life. But there are two other senses in which we can contemplate the contrast between the living and the dead. (1) We have just been speaking of the botanical world. Take it as a whole, and see the contrast between the winter of death, the spring of revivification, the summer of growth, and the autumn of decay, leading back to the death of winter. Here is a cycle of living from dead, and dead from living. (2) Take our spiritual life, individual or collective. We rise from the darkness of spiritual nothingness to the light of spiritual life. And if we do not follow the spiritual laws, Allah will take away that life and we shall be again as dead. We may die many deaths. The keys of life and death are in Allah's hands. Neither Life nor Death are fortuitous things. Behind them both is Allah and only He.

921. The night, the day, the sun, the moon,—the great astronomical universe of Allah. How far, and yet how near to us! Allah's universe is boundless, and we can barely comprehend even its relations to us. But this last we must try to do if we want to be numbered with "the people who know" *Taqdir*: Cf. vi. 91 and n. 909, iv. 149 and n. 655.

And ordering of (Him),
The Exalted in Power,
The Omniscient.

97. It is He Who maketh
The stars (as beacons) for you,
That ye may guide yourselves,
With their help,
Through the dark spaces
Of land and sea:⁹²²
We detail Our Signs
For people who know.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا
بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ اللَّيْلِ وَالْبَحْرِ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

98. It is He Who hath
Produced you⁹²³
From a single soul:
Then there is a resting place
And a repository:⁹²⁴
We detail Our signs
For people who understand.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ
وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ
يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

99. It is He Who sendeth down
Rain from the skies:⁹²⁵
With it We produce
Vegetation of all kinds:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ
بَنَاتٍ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْرِجُ

922. See the last note. At sea, or in deserts or forests, or "in fairy scenes forlorn,"— whenever we sweep over wide spaces, it is the stars that act as our guides, just as the sun and moon have already been mentioned as our measures of time.

923. *Produced: ansha'a* = made you grow, increase, develop, reach maturity: another of the processes of creation. This supplements n. 120 to ii. 117 and n. 916 to vi. 94. It is one of the wonders of Allah's Creation, that from one person we have grown to be so many, and each individual has so many faculties and capacities, and yet we are all one. In the next verse we have the allegory of grapes and other fruits: all grapes may be similar to look at, yet each variety has a distinctive flavour and other distinctive qualities, and each individual grape may have its own special qualities. So for man.

924. In the sojourn of this life we must respond to Allah's hand in fashioning us, by making full use of all our faculties, and we must get ready for our departure into the Life that will be eternal.

925. Our allegory now brings us to maturity, the fruit, the harvest, the vintage. Through the seed we came up from nothingness of life; we lived our daily life of rest and work and passed the mile-stones of time; we had the spiritual experience of traversing through vast spaces in the spiritual world, guiding our course through the star of Faith; we grew; and now for the harvest or the vintage! So will man if he has produced the fruits of Faith!

From some We produce
 Green (crops), out of which
 We produce,
 Close-compounded grain
 Out of the date-palm
 And its sheaths (or spathes)
 (Come) clusters of dates
 Hanging low and near:
 And (then there are) gardens
 Of grapes, and olives,
 And pomegranates,
 Each similar (in kind)
 Yet different (in variety).⁹²⁶
 When they begin to bear fruit,
 Feast your eyes with the fruit
 And the ripeness thereof.⁹²⁷
 Behold! in these things
 There are Signs for people
 Who believe.⁹²⁸

100. Yet they make
 The Jinns equals⁹²⁹

مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنْ النَّخْلِ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا
 قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ
 وَالزَّيْتَانُ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَبِهٍ انْظُرُوا
 إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَنَعْمَ جَانٌّ فِي ذَلِكَ
 لَا يَسْتَلْقُونَ^(١١) يُؤْمِنُونَ

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُوا لَهُمُ بَيْنَ

926. Each fruit—whether it is grapes, or olives, or pomegranates,—looks alike in its species, and yet each variety may be different in flavour, consistency, shape, size, colour, juice or oil contents, proportion of seed to fruit, etc. In each variety individuals may be different. Apply the allegory to man, whose varied spiritual fruit may be equally different and yet equally valuable!

927. And so we finish this wonderful allegory. Search through the world's literature, and see if you can find another such melody or hymn,—so fruity in its literary flavour, so profound in its spiritual meaning!

928. There is a refrain in this beautiful descriptive verses. In verse 97 it is: "We detail Our Signs for people who *know*." So far we were speaking of the things we see around us every day. Knowledge is the appropriate instrument for these things. In verse 98 we read: "We detail Our Signs for people who *understand*." Understanding is a higher faculty than knowledge, and is necessary for seeing the mystery and meaning of this life. At the end of verse 99 we have: "In these things there are Signs for people who *believe*." Here we are speaking of the real fruits of spiritual Life. For them Faith is necessary, as bringing us nearer to Allah.

929. *Jinns*: who are they? In xviii. 50, we are told that Iblis was one of the Jinns, and it is suggested that that was why he disobeyed the Command of Allah. But in that passage and other similar passages, we are told that Allah commanded the angels to bow down to Adam, and they obeyed except Iblis. That implies that Iblis had been of the company of angels. In many passages Jinns and men are spoken of together. In lv. 14-15, =

With Allah, though Allah
Did create the Jinns;
And they falsely,
Having no knowledge,
Attribute to Him
Sons and daughters,
Praise and glory be
To Him! (for He is) above
What they attribute to Him!

وَبَدَّلَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحَانَہُ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا
يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

SECTION 13.

101. Wonderful Originator
Of the heavens and the earth:⁹³⁰
How can He have a son
When He hath no consort?
He created all things,
And He hath full knowledge
Of all things.

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ
وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ
وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠١﴾

102. That is Allah, your Lord!
There is no god but He,
The Creator of all things:
Then worship ye Him:
And He hath power
To dispose of all affairs.

ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَالِقُ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ فَاعْبُدُوهُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾

103. No vision can grasp Him,
But His grasp is over
All vision; He is
Subtle well-aware.⁹³¹

لَا تَدْرِيكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْآبْصَرَاتِ
وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٠٣﴾

= man is stated to have been created from clay, while Jinns from a flame of fire. The root meaning of *junna*, *yujannu*, is "to be covered or hidden," and *janna yajunnu*, in the active voice, "to cover or hide," as in vi. 76. (Both the Qur-ān and the Hadith describe the Jinn as a definite species of living beings. They are created out of fire and like man, may believe or disbelieve, accept or reject guidance. The authoritative Islamic texts show that they are not merely a hidden force, or a spirit. They are personalized beings who enjoy a certain amount of free will and thus will be called to account.

930. Cf. ii. 117 and n. 120.

931. *Latif*: fine, subtle, so fine and subtle as to be invisible to the physical eye: so fine as to be imperceptible to the senses. Cf. xxii. 63, and n. 2844.

104. "Now have come to you,
From your Lord proofs
(To open your eyes):
If any will see,
It will be for (the good
Of) his own soul:
If any will be blind,
It will be to his own
(Harm): I am not (here)
To watch over your doings."⁹³²

105. Thus do We explain
The Signs by various (ways)⁹³³
That they may say,
"Thou hast learnt this
(From somebody),
And that We may make
The matter clear
To those who know."⁹³⁴

106. Follow what thou art taught
By inspiration from thy Lord:
There is no god but He:
And turn aside from those
Who join gods with Allah.

107. If it had been Allah's Will,⁹³⁵
They would not have taken

فَدَجَاءَكُمْ بِبَصَائِرٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ
وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ﴿١٠٤﴾

وَكَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ أَدْرَسَتْ
وَلَيْتَنَّهُمْ يَلْقَوُوهُمْ بَلْعَمُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

اتَّبِعْ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكُوا وَمَا جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ
حَفِيظًا وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾

932. I understand "Say" to be understood in the beginning of this verse. The words would then be the words of the Prophet, as in fact is suggested in verse 107 below. That is why I have enclosed them in inverted commas.

933. Cf. vi. 65, and n. 889.

934. The teaching in the Qur-ān explains things by various symbols, parables, narratives, and appeals to nature. Those who were in search of knowledge and had thus acquired some knowledge of spiritual things were greatly helped to understand more clearly the things of which, before the varied explanations, they had only one-sided knowledge.

935. Allah's Plan is to use the human will to co-operate in understanding Him and His relations to us. This is the answer to an objector who might say: "If He is All-powerful, why does sin or evil exist in the world? Can He not destroy it?" He can, but His Plan is different, and in any case it is not for a Prophet to force any one to accept the truths which he is inspired to preach and proclaim.

False gods: but We
Made thee not one
To watch over their doings,
Nor art thou set
Over them to dispose
Of their affairs.

108. Revile not ye
Those whom they call upon
Besides Allah, lest
They out of spite
Revile Allah
In their ignorance.
Thus have We made
Alluring to each people⁹³⁶
Its own doings.
In the end will they
Return to their Lord
And He shall then
Tell them the truth
Of all that they did.

109. They swear their strongest
Oaths by Allah, that if
A (special) Sign came
To them, by it they would

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّلْنَا كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ
عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَهُمْ آيَةٌ
لَّيُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ
أَنَّهُآ إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

936. A man's actual personal religion depends upon many things,—his personal psychology, the background of his life, his hidden or repressed feelings, tendencies, or history (which psychoanalysis tries to unravel), his hereditary dispositions or antipathies, and all the subtle influences of his education and his environment. The task before the man of God is: (1) to use any of these which can subserve the higher ends, (2) to purify such as have been misused, (3) to introduce new ideas and modes of looking at things, and (4) to combat what is wrong and cannot be mended: all for the purpose of leading to the truth and gradually letting in spiritual light where there was darkness before. If that is not done with discretion and the skill of a Teacher, there may be not only a reaction of obstinacy, but an unseemly show of dishonour to the true God and His Truth, and doubts would spread among the weaker brethren whose faith is shallow and infirm. What happens to individuals is true collectively of nations or groups of people. They think in their self-obsession that their own ideas are right. Allah in His infinite compassion bears with them, and asks those who have purer ideas of faith not to vilify the weaknesses of their neighbours, lest the neighbours in their turn vilify the real truth and make matters even worse than before. In so far as there are mistakes, Allah will forgive and send His grace for helping ignorance and folly. In so far as there is active evil, He will deal with it in His own way. Of course the righteous man must not hide his light under a bushel, or compromise with evil, or refuse to establish right living where he has power to do so.

Believe. Say: "Certainly
(All) Signs are in the power
Of Allah: but what will
Make you (Muslims) realise
That (even) if (special) Signs
Came, they will not believe."⁹³⁷

110. We (too) shall turn
To (confusion) their hearts⁹³⁸
And their eyes, even as they
Refused to believe in this
In the first instance:
We shall leave them
In their trespasses,
To (stumble blindly).⁹³⁹

SECTION 14.

111. Even if We did send
Unto them angels,
And the dead did speak
Unto them, and We gathered
Together all things before⁹⁴⁰
Their very eyes, they are not

وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ
أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَنَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

﴿١١١﴾ وَلَوْ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَكَلَّمَهُم
الَّذِينَ وَحْشَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قَبْلًا مَا كَانُوا يُولِئُونَ
إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَئِنْ أَكْثَرَهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

937. If the Unbelievers are merely obstinate, nothing will convince them. There is no story more full of miracles than the story of Jesus. Yet in that same story we are told that Jesus said: "A wicked adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas": Matt. xvi. 4. There are Signs given by Allah every day—understood by those who believe. A mere insistence upon some particular or special Sign means mere contumacy and misunderstanding of the religious world.

938. Where there is sheer obstinacy and ridicule of faith, the result will be that such a sinner's heart will be hardened and his eyes will be sealed, so that he cannot even see the things visible to ordinary mortals. The sinner gathers impetus in his descent towards wrong.

939. Cf. ii. 15. Allah's grace is always ready to help human weakness or ignorance, and to accept repentance and give forgiveness. But where the sinner is in actual rebellion, he will be given rope, and it will be his own fault if he wanders about distractedly, without any certain hope or refuge.

940. The most stupendous miracles even according to their ideas would not have convinced them. If the whole pageant of the spiritual world were brought before them, they would not have believed, because they—of their own choice and will—refuse knowledge and faith.

The ones to believe,
Unless it is in Allah's Plan.
But most of them
Ignore (the truth).

112. Likewise did We make

For every Messenger
An enemy,- satans⁹⁴¹

Among men and Jinns,
Inspiring each other
With flowery discourses

By way of deception.
If thy Lord had so willed,
They would not have
Done it: so leave them
And what they forge.

113. To such (deceit)

Let the hearts of those
Incline, who have no faith
In the Hereafter: and let them
Delight in it, and let them
Earn from it what they may.⁹⁴²

114. Say: "Shall I seek

For judge other than Allah?—
When He it is
Who hath sent unto you
The Book, explained in detail."⁹⁴³

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَاطِئِينَ الْإِنسِ
وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ
الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ
فَذَرَهُمْ وَمَا يَفْقَرُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

وَلِلصَّغِيِّ إِلَيْهِ آفِئَةٌ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْآخِرَةِ وَلِيَرْضَوْهُ وَلِيَقْتَرِفُوا مَا هُمْ
مُقْتَرِفُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكَمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ
إِلَيْكُمْ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا وَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنْزَلٌ مِنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ
فَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾

941. What happened in the history of the Holy Prophet happens in the history of all righteous men who have a Message from Allah. The spirit of evil is ever active and uses men to practise deception by means of highly embellished words and plausible excuses and objections. Allah permits these things in His Plan. It is not for us to complain. Our faith is tested, and we must stand the test steadfastly.

942. People who have no faith in the future destiny of man listen to and be taken in by the deceit of evil. If they take a delight in it, let them. See what they gain by it. Their gains will be as deceitful as their delight. For the end of evil must be evil.

943. The righteous man seeks no other standard of judgment but Allah's Will. How can he, when Allah in His grace has explained His Will in the Qur-ān, with details which men of every capacity can understand? The humblest can learn lessons of right conduct in daily life, and the most advanced can find the highest wisdom in its teaching, enriched as it is with all kinds of beautiful illustrations from nature and the story of man.

They know full well,
To whom We have given
The Book, that it hath been
Sent down from thy Lord
In truth. Never be then
Of those who doubt.

115. The Word of thy Lord
Doth find its fulfilment
In truth and in justice:
None can change His Words:
For He is the one Who
Hearth and knoweth all.

116. Wert thou to follow
The common run of those
On earth, they will lead
Thee away from the Way
Of Allah. They follow
Nothing but conjecture: they
Do nothing but lie.

117. Thy Lord knoweth best
Who strayeth from His Way:
He knoweth best
Those who are rightly guided.

118. So eat of (meats)
On which Allah's name
Hath been pronounced,
If ye have faith
In His Signs.

119. Why should ye not
Eat of (meats) on which
Allah's name hath been
Pronounced, when He hath
Explained to you in detail
What is forbidden to you—
Except under compulsion⁹⁴⁴
Of necessity?

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ
لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١١٥﴾

وَأَن تَطِعَ أَكْثَرُ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ
عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ
إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَن يَضِلُّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ
أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٧﴾

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ إِن كُنتُمْ بِآيَاتِهِ
مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾

وَمَا لَكُمُ اللَّأَنَّا كُلُوا مِمَّا ذَكَرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ
وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُم مَّا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرَرْتُمْ
إِلَيْهِ وَإِنْ كَثُرَ الْيُضِلُّونَ بِأَهْوَاءِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

944. Cf. v. 3. When a clear law has explained what is lawful and unlawful in food, it is wrong to raise fresh scruples and mislead the ignorant.

But many do mislead (men)
By low desires
Without knowledge. Thy Lord
Knoweth best those who transgress.

120. Eschew all sin,
Open or secret:
Those who earn sin
Will get due recompense
For their "earnings."

121. Eat not of (meats)
On which Allah's name
Hath not been pronounced:
That would be impiety.
But the satans
Ever inspire their friends
To contend with you
If ye were to obey them,
Ye would indeed be Pagans.

SECTION 15.

122. Can he who was dead,⁹⁴⁵
To whom We gave life,
And a Light whereby
He can walk amongst men,
Be like him who is
In the depths of darkness,
From which he can
Never come out?
Thus to those without Faith
Their own deeds seem pleasing.

وَدَرُوا ظَهْرَ الْإِنَّمِ وَبَاطِنُهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِنَّمِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ ﴿١٢٠﴾

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ الَّتِي ذَكَرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَإِنَّهُ
لَفَسْقٌ وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَى أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ
لِيُجْدِلُواكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

أَوْ مَنْ كَانَ مَيِّتًا فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا
يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ
لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ
مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

945. Here is an allegory of the good man with his divine mission and the evil man with his mission of evil. The former, before he got his spiritual life, was like one dead. It was Allah's grace that gave him spiritual life, with a Light by which he could walk and guide his own footsteps as well as the footsteps of those who are willing to follow Allah's light. The opposite type is that which hates Allah's light, which lives in the depths of darkness, and which plots and burrows against all that is good. But the plots of evil recoil on itself, although it thinks that they will hurt the good. Can these two types be for a moment compared with each other? Perhaps the lead in every centre of population is taken by the men of evil. But the good men should not be discouraged. They should work in righteousness and fulfil their mission.

123. Thus have We placed
Leaders in every town,
Its wicked men, to plot
(And burrow) therein:
But they only plot
Against their own souls,
And they perceive it not.

124. When there comes to them
A Sign (from Allah),
They say: "We shall not
Believe until we receive
One (exactly) like those
Received by Allah's messengers."⁹⁴⁶
Allah knoweth best where
To Place
His mission. Soon
Will the wicked
Be overtaken by
Humiliation before Allah,
And a severe chastisement,
For all their plots.

125. Those whom Allah
Willeth to guide,—He openeth⁹⁴⁷
Their breast to Islam;

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا
مُنْجِرًا مِّمَّهَا لِيَمْكُرُوا فِيهَا
وَمَا يَمْكُرُونَ إِلَّا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَىٰ
مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ
رِسَالَتَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارٌ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ لِّمَا كَانُوا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ
وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا

946. Besides the teaching in Allah's Word, and the teaching in Allah's world, of nature and history and human contacts, many Signs come to the Prophets, which they humbly receive and understand; and many Signs also come to the ungodly, in the shape of warnings or otherwise, which the ungodly either do not heed, or deliberately reject. The Signs in the two cases are not the same, and that becomes one of their perverse arguments against Faith. But Allah's working will be according to His Will and Plan, and not according to the wishes or whims of the ungodly.

947. Allah's Will is the *Qadhā wa Qadr*, which is so much misunderstood. That decree is unalterable, and that is His Will. It means that in the spiritual world, as in the physical world, there are laws of justice, mercy, grace, penalty, etc., which work as surely as anything we know. If, then, a man refuses Faith, becomes a rebel, with each step he goes further and further down, and his pace will be accelerated: he will scarcely be able to take spiritual breath, and his recovery,—in spite of Allah's mercy which he has rejected,—will be as difficult as if he had to climb up to the skies. On the other hand, the godly will find, with each step, the next step easier. Jesus expressed this truth paradoxically: "He that hath, to him shall be given; but he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath": Mark. iv. 25.

Those whom He willeth
To leave straying,-He maketh
Their breast close and constricted,
As if they had to climb
Up to the skies: thus
Doth Allah lay abomination
On those who refuse to believe.

126. This is the Way
Of thy Lord, leading straight:
We have detailed the Signs
For those who
Receive admonition.

127. For them will be a Home
Of Peace with
Their Lord: He will be
Their Friend, because
They practised (righteousness).

128. On the day when He will gather
Them all together, (and say):
"O ye assembly of Jinns⁹⁴⁸
Much (toll) did ye take
Of men."⁹⁴⁹ Their friends
Amongst men will say:
"Our Lord! we made profit⁹⁵⁰
From each other: but (alas!)
We reached our term-
Which Thou didst appoint
For us." He will say:
"The Fire be your dwelling-place:
You will dwell therein for ever,

حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ فِي السَّمَاءِ
كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾

وَهَذَا صِرَاطُ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ وَلِيُّهَا
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا يَمْعَشَرِ الْجِنِّ
قَدْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ وَقَالَ أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمْ
مِنَ الْإِنْسِ رَبَّنَا اسْتَمْتَعَ بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ وَبَلَّغْنَا
أَجَلَنَا الَّذِي أَجَلْتَ لَنَا قَالَ النَّارُ مَثْوٍ لَكُمْ خَالِدِينَ
فِيهَا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢٨﴾

948. Cf. vi. 100, n. 929.

949. I.e., you have misled a great number of human beings.

950. It is common experience that the forces of evil make an alliance with each other, and seem thus to make a profit by their mutual log-rolling. But this is only in this material world. When the limited term expires, their unholy bargains will be exposed, and there will be nothing but regrets.

Except as Allah willeth.⁹⁵¹
 For thy Lord is full
 Of wisdom and knowledge.

129. Thus do We make
 The wrong-doers turn
 To each other, because
 Of what they earn.⁹⁵²

SECTION 16.

130. "O ye assembly of Jinns
 And men! came there not
 Unto you messengers from
 amongst you,⁹⁵³
 Setting forth unto you
 My Signs, and warning you
 Of the meeting of this Day
 Of yours?" They will say:
 "We bear witness against
 Ourselves." It was
 The life of this world
 That deceived them. So
 Against themselves will they
 Bear witness that they
 Rejected Faith.

131. (The messengers were sent) thus,
 For thy Lord would not
 Destroy the towns unjustly whilst
 Their occupants were unwarned.

وَكَذَلِكَ نُؤْتِي بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضًا
 بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

يَنصَحُونَ عَلَىٰكُمْ ءَايَاتِي وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ
 يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا قَالُوا شَهِدْنَا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِنَا وَغَرَّتْهُمْ
 الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
 كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

ذَٰلِكَ أَنْ لَمْ يَكُن رَّبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْكُفْرَىٰ يَظْلِمِ
 وَأَهْلَهَا غُفْلُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾

951. Eternity and infinity are abstract terms. They have no precise meaning in our human experience. The qualification, "except as Allah willeth," makes it more intelligible, as we can form some idea—however inadequate—of a Will and Plan, and we know Allah by His attribute of Mercy as well as of Justice.

952. See n. 950 above. Evil consorts with evil because of their mutual bargains. But in doing so they save the righteous from further temptation.

953. "Messengers from amongst you." This is addressed to the whole gathering of men and Jinns.

132. To all are degrees (or ranks)⁹⁵⁴

According to their deeds:

For thy Lord

Is not unmindful

Of anything that they do.

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَتٌ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوا وَمَا رَبُّكَ
بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

133. Thy Lord is Self-sufficient,⁹⁵⁵

Full of Mercy: if it were

His Will, He could destroy

You, and in your place

Appoint whom He will

As your successors, even as

He raised you up

From the posterity

Of other people.

وَرَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ إِنْ يَشَاءُ
يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ
مَا يَشَاءُ كَمَا أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ قَوْمٍ
آخَرِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

134. All that hath been⁹⁵⁶

Promised unto you

Will come to pass:

Nor can ye frustrate it

(In the least bit).

إِنْ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لَأَتِيَّ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ
بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

135. Say: "O my people!

Do whatever ye can:⁹⁵⁷

I will do (my part):

Soon will ye know

Who it is whose end

قُلْ يَتَقَوُّوا أَعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَاتِبِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ
فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ عَقِيبَةُ
الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

954. On good and evil there are infinite degrees, in our deeds and motives; so will there be degrees in our spiritual position. For everything is known to Allah, better than it is to ourselves.

955. Allah is not dependent on our prayer or service. It is out of His Mercy that He desires our own good. Any race or people to whom He gives chances should understand and that its failure does not affect Allah. He could create others in their place, as He did in times past, and is doing in our own day, if only we had the wit to see it.

956. Both the good news and the warning which Allah's messengers came to give will be fulfilled. Nothing can stop Allah's Will. See n. 947 to vi. 125.

957. In so far as this is addressed to the Unbelievers it is a challenge: "Do your utmost; nothing will deter me from my duty: we shall see who wins in the end. "Passing from the particular occasion, we can understand it in a more general sense, which is true for all time. Let the evil ones do their worst. Let those who believe do all they can, according to their opportunities and abilities. The individual must do the straight duty that lies before him. In the end Allah will judge, and His judgment is always true and just.

Will be (best) in the Hereafter:
Certain it is that
The wrong-doers will not prosper."

136. Out of what Allah
Hath produced in abundance
In tilth and in cattle,
They assigned Him a share:
They say, according to their
fancies:⁹⁵⁸

"This is for Allah, and this"—
For Our "partners"!
But the share of their "partners"
Reacheth not Allah, whilst
The share of Allah reacheth
Their "partners"! Evil
(And unjust) is their judgment.

137. Even so, in the eyes
Of most of the Pagans,⁹⁵⁹
Their "partners" made alluring
The slaughter of their children,
In order to lead them
To their own destruction,

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ
وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ
بِرَّعْمِهِمْ وَهَذَا لِشُرَكَائِنَا فَمَا كَانَ
لِشُرَكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ إِلَى الْوَكِيلِ
شُرَكَائِهِمْ سَاءَ
مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

وَكَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِنَ
الْمُشْرِكِينَ قَتْلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ
شُرَكَائِهِمْ لِيُرْدُوهُمْ وَلِيَلْبِسُوا

958. There is scathing sarcasm here, which some of the Commentators have missed. The Pagans have generally a big Pantheon, though above it they have a vague idea of a Supreme Allah. But the material benefits go to the godlings, the fancied "partners" of Allah; for they have temples, priests, dedications, etc., while the true and supreme Allah has only lip-worship, or at best a share with numerous "partners." This was so in Arabia also. The shares assigned to the "partners" went to the priests and hangers-on of the "partners", who were many and clamorous for their rights. The share assigned to Allah possibly went to the poor, but more probably went to the priests who had the cult of the "partners", for the Supreme God had no separate priests of His own. It is also said that when heaps were thus laid out, if any portion of Allah's heap fell into the heaps of the "partners" the priests greedily and promptly appropriated it, while in the contrary case, the "partners" priests were careful to reclaim any portion from what they called "Allah's heap." The absurdity of the whole thing is ridiculed. Allah created everything: how can He have a share?

959. The false gods and idols-among many nations, including the Arabs-were supposed to require human sacrifices. Ordinarily such sacrifices are revolting to man, but they are made "alluring"-a sacred rite-by Pagan custom, which falsely arrogates to itself the name of religion. Such customs, if allowed, would do nothing but destroy the people who practise them, and make their religion but a confused bundle of revolting superstitions.

And cause confusion
In their religion
If Allah had willed,
They would not have done so:
But leave alone
Them and what they forged.

عَلَيْهِمْ دِينُهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ
فَذَرَهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

138. And they say that
Such and such cattle and crops⁹⁶⁰
Are forbidden, and none should
Eat of them except those
Whom—so they say—We
Wish; further, there are
Cattle forbidden to yoke⁹⁶¹
Or burden, and cattle
On which, (at slaughter)
The name of Allah is not⁹⁶²
Pronounced:—forging a lie
Against Allah's name: soon
Will He requite them
For what they forged.

وَقَالُوا هَذِهِ أَنْعَامٌ وَحَرَّتْ جِبْرٌ
لَّا يَطْعُمُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ نَّشَاءُ بَرِئَ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَأَنْعَامٌ حُرِّمَتْ ظُهُورُهَا وَأَنْعَامٌ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ
أَسْمَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا افْتِرَاءٌ عَلَيْهِ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾

139. They say: "What is
In the wombs of
Such and such cattle
Is specially reserved
(For food) for our men,
And forbidden to our women;
But if it is still-born,
Then all have shares therein."⁹⁶³

وَقَالُوا مَا فِي بُطُونِ هَذِهِ الْأَنْعَامِ
خَالِصَةٌ لِّذُنَا وَمُحَرَّمٌ عَلَى أَزْوَاجِنَا
وَإِنْ يَكُن مَيِّتَةً فَهُمْ فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ
سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصْفَهُمْ إِنَّهُ حَكِيمٌ
عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٣٩﴾

960. A taboo of certain foods is sometimes a device of the priesthood to get special things for itself. It has to be enforced by pretending that the prohibition for others is by the Will of Allah. It is a lie or invention against Allah. Most superstitions are.

961. Cattle dedicated to heathen gods may be reserved from all useful work, in that case they are a dead loss to the community, and they may, besides, do a great deal of damage to fields and crops.

962. If meat is killed in the name of heathen gods, it would naturally not be killed by the solemn rite in Allah's name, by which alone the killing can be justified for food. See n. 698 to v. 4.

963. These are further Pagan superstitions about cattle. Some have already been noted in v. 103, which may be consulted with the notes.

For their (false) attribution
(Of superstitions to Allah),
He will soon punish them:
For He is full
Of wisdom and knowledge.

140. Lost are those who slay
Their children, from folly,
Without knowledge, and forbid
Food which Allah hath provided
For them, forging (lies)
Against Allah, They have
Indeed gone astray
And heeded no guidance.

SECTION 17.

141. It is He who produceth⁹⁶⁴
Gardens, with trellises
And without, and dates,
And tilth with produce
Of all kinds, and olives
And pomegranates,
Similar (in kind)
And different (in variety).⁹⁶⁵
Eat of their fruit
In their season, but render
The dues that are proper
On the day that the harvest
Is gathered. But waste not⁹⁶⁶
By excess: for Allah
Loveth not the wasters.

قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ وَحَرَّمُوا مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ افْتِرَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ
قَدْ ضَلُّوا وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

﴿١٤١﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَغَيْرَ
مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أُكْلُهُ
وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرَّمَانَ مُتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرَ
مُتَشَابِهٍ كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَآتُوا
حَقَّهُ يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ
لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾

964. *Ansha-a*: see vi. 98, n. 923.

965. A beautiful passage, with music to match the meaning. Cf. vi. 99 and notes.

966. "Waste not, want not," says the English proverb. Here the same wisdom is preached from a higher motive. See what magnificent means Allah provides in nature for the sustenance of all His creatures, because He loves them all. Enjoy them in moderation and be grateful. But commit no excess, and commit no waste: the two things are the same from different angles of vision. If you do, you take away something from other creatures and Allah would not like your selfishness.

142. Of the cattle are some
For burden and some for meat:⁹⁶⁷
Eat what Allah hath provided
For you, and follow not
The footsteps of Satan:
For he is to you
An avowed enemy.

143. (Take) eight (head of cattle)⁹⁶⁸
In (four) pairs:
Of sheep a pair;
And of goats a pair,
Say, hath He forbidden
The two males,
Or the two females,
Or (the young) which the wombs
Of the two females enclose?
Tell me with knowledge
If ye are truthful:

144. Of camels a pair,
And of oxen a pair;
Say, hath He forbidden
The two males,
Or the two females,
Or (the young) which the wombs
Of the two females enclose?—
Were ye present when Allah
Ordered you such a thing?
But who doth more wrong
Than one who invents
A lie against Allah,

وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةً وَفَرْشًا كُلُوا
مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوتَ الشَّيْطَانِ
إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾

ثَمَنِيَّةً أَزْوَاجٍ مِّنَ الضَّأْنِ اثْنَيْنِ
وَمِنَ الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ ءَالَّذَكَرْتَنِي حَرَّمَ
أَمْ الْأُنثَيْنِ أَمْأَسْتَمَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ
الْأُنثَيْنِ نَبِيُّنِي يَعْلَمُ إِن كُنْتُمْ
صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

وَمِنَ الْإِبِلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ
ءَالَّذَكَرْتَنِي حَرَّمَ أَمْ الْأُنثَيْنِ أَمْأَسْتَمَلْتَ
عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثَيْنِ أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ
إِذْ وَصَّيْكُمْ اللَّهُ بِهَٰذَا فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ
أَفْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا لِّيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ
عِلْمٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

967. Superstition kills true religion. We come back to the Arab Pagan superstitions about cattle for food. The horse is not mentioned, because horse flesh was not an article of diet and there were no superstitions about it. Sheep and goats, camels and oxen were the usual sources of meat. Sheep and goats were not used as beasts of burden, but camels (of both sexes) were used for carrying burdens, and oxen for the plough, though cows were mainly used for milk and meat. The words "some for burden and some for meat" do not differentiate whole species, except that they give you the first two and the last two as categories.

968. The superstitions referred to in vi. 139 and v. 103, are further ridiculed in this verse and the next.

To lead astray men
Without knowledge?
For Allah guideth not
People who do wrong.

SECTION 18.

145. Say: "I find not
In the Message received
By me by inspiration
Any (meat) forbidden
To be eaten by one
Who wishes to eat it,
Unless it be dead meat,
Or blood poured forth,⁹⁶⁹
Or the flesh of swine,-
For it is an abomination-
Or what is impious, (meat)
On which a name has been
Invoked, other than Allah's."
But (even so), if a person
Is forced by necessity,
Without wilful disobedience,
Nor transgressing due limits,-
Thy Lord is Oft-forgiving,
Most Merciful.

146. For those who followed
The Jewish Law, We forbade
Every (animal) with
Undivided hoof,⁹⁷⁰

قُلْ لَا أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ
يَطْعُمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا
أَوْ لَحْمَ خِنْزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ فِسْقًا أُهِلَّ
لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ. فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَإِنَّ
رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾

وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَّمْنَا كُلَّ ذِي ظُفْرٍ
وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ وَالْفَتَرِ حَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ

969. *Blood poured forth*: as distinguished from blood adhering to flesh, or the liver, or such other internal organs purifying the blood.

970. *Zufur* may mean claw or hoof; it is in the singular number; but as no animal has a single claw, and there is no point in a division of claws, we must look to a hoof for the correct interpretation. In the Jewish Law (Leviticus. xi. 3-6), "whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts" was lawful as food, but the camel, the coney (rabbit), and the hare were not lawful, because they do not "divide the hoof". "Undivided hoof" therefore is the correct interpretation. These three animals, unlawful to the Jews, are lawful in Islam. Cf. iv. 160.

And We forbade them
The fat of the ox⁹⁷¹
And the sheep, except
What adheres to their backs
Or their entrails,
Or is mixed up
With a bone:
This in recompense
For their wilful disobedience:
For We are True
(In Our ordinances).

شَحُومَهُمَا إِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ ظُهُورُهُمَا
أَوِ الْحَوَايِبَ أَوْ مَا أَخْلَطَ بَعْظُهُ ذَلِكَ
جَزَيْنَهُمْ بِنَفْسِهِمْ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

147. If they accuse thee
Of falsehood, say:
"Your Lord is full
Of mercy all-embracing;
But from people in guilt
Never will His wrath
Be turned back.

فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ رَبُّكُمْ ذُو رَحْمَةٍ
وَسِعَتْ وَلَا يَمُرُّ بِأَسْهُ عَنِ الْقَوِيمِ
الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

148. Those who give partners
(To Allah) will say:
"If Allah had wished,
We should not have
Given partners to Him,
Nor would our fathers;
Nor should we have had⁹⁷²
Any forbidden thing." So did
Their ancestors argue
Falsely, until they tasted
Of Our wrath. Say:

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا
وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ
كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى ذَاقُوا آسَافًا
قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا
إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ
إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

971. In Leviticus (vii. 23) it is laid down that "ye shall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of sheep, or of goat." As regards the exceptions, it is to be noticed that priests were enjoined (Leviticus, vii. 6) to eat of the fat in the trespass offering, which was considered holy, viz., "the rump" (back and bone) "and the fat that covereth the inwards" (entrails), (Leviticus, vii. 3).

972. As used by the Pagans, the argument is false, for it implies (a) that men have no personal responsibility, (b) that they are the victims of a Determinism against which they are helpless, and (c) that they might therefore go on doing just what they liked. It is also inconsistent, for if (b) is true, (c) cannot be true. Nor is it meant to be taken seriously.

"Have ye any (certain)
Knowledge? If so, produce
It before us. Ye follow
Nothing but conjecture:
Ye do nothing but lie."

149. Say: "With Allah is the argument⁹⁷³
That reaches home: if it had
Been His Will. He could
Indeed have guided you all."

150. Say: "Bring forward your witnesses
To prove that Allah did
Forbid so and so." If they
Bring such witnesses,
Be not thou amongst them:⁹⁷⁴
Nor follow thou the vain
Desires of such as treat
Our Signs as falsehoods,
And Such as believe not
In the Hereafter: for they
Hold others as equal
With their Guardian Lord.⁹⁷⁵

SECTION 19.

151. Say: "Come, I will rehearse
What Allah hath (really)⁹⁷⁶
Prohibited you from": join not
Anything with Him:

قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَيْتُكُمْ
أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

قُلْ هَلَمْ شُهِدَآءُكُمْ الَّذِينَ يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ
حَرَّمَ هَذَا فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَلَا تَشْهَدُ مَعَهُمْ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ
يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

﴿١٥١﴾ قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَنزِلْ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّيَ كُفَّ
عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ أَلَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا لَوْلَا دِينُ

973. On the other hand, the argument cuts true and deep, as from Allah to His creatures. Allah is Omnipotent, and can do all that we can conceive. But He, in His Wisdom, has given man some responsibility, and some choice in order to train man's will. If man fails, he is helped in various ways by Allah's mercy and grace. But man cannot go on sinning, and in a state of sin, expect Allah to be pleased with him (vi. 147).

974. The Pagan superstitions were of course baseless, and in many cases harmful and debasing. If Allah's name was taken as supporting them, no true man of God could be taken in, or join in support simply because Allah's name was taken in vain.

975. Cf. vi. 1. Allah, who created and who cherishes and cares for all, should have the first claim on our attention. Those who set up false gods fail to understand Allah's true governance or their own true destiny.

976. Instead of following Pagan superstitions, and being in constant terror of imaginary taboos and prohibitions, we should study the true moral law, whose sanction =

Be good to your parents;
Kill not your children
On a plea of want;—We
Provide sustenance for you
And for them;—come not
Nigh to indecent deeds,
Whether open or secret;
Take not life, which Allah
Hath made sacred, except
By way of justice and law.⁹⁷⁷
Thus doth He command you,
That ye may learn wisdom.

إِحْسَنَّا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِمَّنْ إِمْلَقُوا
تَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا
الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ
وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ
ذَلِكَ وَصَّكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

152. And come not nigh
To the orphan's property,
Except to improve it,
Until he attain the age
Of full strenght; give measure
And weight with (full) justice;—
No burden do We place
On any soul, but that
Which it can bear;—
Whenever ye speak, speak justly,
Even if a near relative
Is concerned; and fulfil

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ
حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْكَيْلِ وَالْمِيزَانِ
بِالْقِسْطِ لَا تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا
وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَبِعَهْدِ
اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾

= is Allah's Law. The first step is that we should recognise that He is the One and Only Lord and Cherisher. The mention of goodness to parents immediately afterwards suggests: (1) that Allah's love of us and care for us may—on an infinitely higher plane—be understood by our ideal of parental love, which is purely unselfish: (2) that our first duty among our fellow creatures is to our father and mother, whose love leads us to the conception of divine love. Arising from that is the conception of our converse duties to our children, Allah provides sustenance (material and spiritual) not only for us, but for them; hence any custom like the Pagan custom of sacrificing children to Moloch stands condemned. Then come the moral prohibitions against lewdness and all unseemly acts, relating to sex or otherwise, open or secret. This is followed by the prohibition of killing. All these things are conformable to our own interests, and therefore true wisdom from our own point of view.

977. For the comprehensive word *haqq* I have used the two words "justice and law": other significations implied are: right, truth, what is becoming, etc. It is not only that human life is sacred, but all life is sacred. Even in killing animals for food, a dedicatory formula "in the name of Allah" has to be employed, to make it lawful: see n. 698 to v. 4, and n. 962 to vi. 138.

The Covenant of Allah:⁹⁷⁸

Thus doth He command you,
That ye may remember.

153. Verily, this is My Way
Leading straight: follow it:
Follow not (other) paths:
They will scatter you about
From His Path:
Thus doth He command you,
That ye may be righteous.⁹⁷⁹

154. Moreover, We gave Moses
The Book, completing
(Our favour) to those
Who would do right,
And explaining all things⁹⁸⁰
In detail,—and a guide
And a mercy, that they
Might believe in the meeting
With their Lord

SECTION 20.

155. And this is a Book
Which We have revealed
As a blessing: so follow it
And be righteous, that ye
May receive mercy:

وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ
ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّيْنَاكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

ثُمَّ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِي
أَحْسَنَ وَتَفْصِيلًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً
لَّعَلَّهُمْ يُلَاقُونَ رَبَّهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

978. Cf. v. 1, and n. 682.

979. Note again the triple refrain with variations, in vi, 151, 152, and 153. In verse 151, we have the moral law, which it is for our own good to follow: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom." In verse 152, we have to deal justly and rightly with others; we are apt to think too much of ourselves and forget others: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may remember." In verse 153 our attention is called to the Straight Way, the Way of Allah, the only Way that leads to righteousness: "Thus doth He command you, that ye may be righteous."

980. The revelation to Moses went into the details of people's lives, and thus served as a practical guide to the Jews and after them to the Christians. Admittedly the Message delivered by Christ dealt with general principles only and in no way with details. The message of Islam as in the Qur-ān is the next complete guide in point of time after that of Moses.

156. Lest ye should say:

"The Book was sent down
To two Peoples before us,
And for our part, we
Remained unacquainted⁹⁸¹
With all that they learned
By assiduous study;"

157. Or lest ye should say:

"If the Book had only
Been sent down to us,
We should have followed
Its guidance better than they."
Now then hath come
Unto you a Clear (Sign)⁹⁸²
From your Lord,—and a guide
And a mercy: then who
Could do more wrong
Than one who rejecteth
Allah's Signs, and turneth
Away therefrom? In good time
Shall We requite those
Who turn away from Our Signs,
With a dreadful chastisement
For their turning away.

158. Are they waiting to see
If the angels come to them,
Or thy Lord (Himself),
Or certain of the Signs
Of thy Lord!
The day that certain
Of the Signs of the Lord
Do come, no good

أَنْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أُنْزِلَ الْكِتَابُ عَلَى طَائِفَتَيْنِ
مِنْ قَبْلِنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

أَوْ تَقُولُوا لَوْ أَنَّا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْكِتَابُ لَكُنَّا أَهْدَىٰ
مِنْهُمْ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ بَيِّنَاتٍ
أَلَّهِ وَصَدَفَ عَنْهَا سَنَجْزِي الَّذِينَ يَصْدِفُونَ
عَنْ آيَاتِنَا سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْدِفُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ
رَبُّكَ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ
آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيْمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ ءَامَنَتْ
مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا خَيْرًا قُلِ انْظُرُوا
إِنَّا مُنْظِرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

981. Because the diligent studies of the earlier People of the Book were in languages foreign to the new People of Islam, or because they were meant for circumstances different from those of the new world after Islam.

982. The Qur-ān and the life and the teaching of Muḥammad the Messenger of Allah.

Will it do to a soul⁹⁸³
To believe then,
If it believed not before
Nor earned righteousness
Through its Faith. Say:
"Wait ye: we too
Are waiting."⁹⁸⁴

159. As for those who divide⁹⁸⁵
Their religion and break up
Into sects, thou hast
No part in them in the least:
Their affair is with Allah:
He will in the end
Tell them the truth
Of all that they did.

160. He that doeth good
Shall have ten times
As much to his credit:
He that doeth evil
Shall only be recompensed
According to his evil:⁹⁸⁶
No wrong shall be done
Unto them.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيَعًا لَسَتْ
مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُم
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ
بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا أَمِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ
لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

983. There is no merit in faith in things that you are compelled to acknowledge when they actually happen. Faith is belief in things which you do not see with your eyes but you understand with your intellect if your whole will consents to it, it results in deeds of righteousness, which are the evidence of your faith.

984. The waiting in the two cases is in quite different senses: the foolish man without faith is waiting for things which will not happen, and is surprised by the real things which do happen; the righteous man of faith is waiting for the fruits of righteousness, of which he has an assured hope.

985. *Divide their religion: farraqū: i.e.,* (1) make a distinction between one part of it and another, take the part which suits them and reject the rest: or (2) have religion one day of the week and the world the rest of the six days: or (3) keep "religion in its right place," as if it did not claim to govern the whole life: make a sharp distinction between the secular and the religious, or (4) show a sectarian bias, seek differences in views, so as to break up the unity of Islam.

986. Allah is just as well as generous. To the good the reward is multiplied ten times (i.e., far above merits) on account of His generosity. To the evil, the punishment is no more than commensurate with their sin, and even so the door of mercy is always open to those who sincerely repent and show it by their conduct.

161. Say: "Verily, my Lord
Hath guided me to
A Way that is straight,-
A religion of right,-
The Path (trod) by Abraham
The true in faith,
And he (certainly)
Joined not gods with Allah."

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَيْتَنِي رَبِّيَ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا قِيَمًا
مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾

162. Say: "Truly, my prayer
And my service of sacrifice,
My life and my death,
Are (all) for Allah,
The Cherisher of the Worlds:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

163. No partner hath He:
This am I commanded,
And I am the first
Of those who submit
To His Will.

لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ. وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٦٣﴾

164. Say: "Shall I seek
For (my) Lord
Other than Allah.
When He is the Cherisher
Of all things (that exist)?
Every soul draws the meed
Of its acts on none⁹⁸⁷
But itself: no bearer
Of burdens can bear
The burden of another.
Your return in the end
Is towards Allah: He will tell
You the truth of the things
Wherein ye disputed."

قُلْ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغِي رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَا تَكْسِبُ
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَظَمَاتُهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ
ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ فَيُنْفِثُكُمْ
بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

987. The doctrine of personal responsibility again. We are fully responsible for our acts ourselves: we cannot transfer the consequences of someone else. Nor can any one vicariously atone for our sins. If people have honest doubts or differences about important questions of religion, they should not start futile disputes. All will be clear in the end. Our duty here is to maintain unity and discipline, and do the duty that comes to us.

165. It is He Who hath made
 You the inheritors⁹⁸⁸
 Of the earth: He hath raised
 You in ranks, some above
 Others: that He may try you
 In the gifts He hath given you:
 For thy Lord is quick
 In punishment: yet He
 Is indeed Oft-forgiving
 Most Merciful.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ
 بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ
 فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ
 لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾

988. Cf. ii. 30 and n., where I have translated "Khalifa" as "Vicegerent", it being Allah's Plan to make Adam (as representing mankind) vicegerent on earth. Another idea implied in "Khalifa" is that of "successor, heir, or inheritor," i.e., one who has the ultimate ownership after the present possessors, to whom a life-tenancy has been given by the owner, have passed away. In xv. 23 occurs the striking word "heirs" (*wārithūn*) as applied to Allah: "We give life and death, and We are the Heirs (or Inheritors)." The same idea occurs in iii. 180, where see n. 485.