

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Al-Mū-min* or *Gāfir* 40

This Sūra is called "The Believer" (*Mū-min*) from the story of the individual Believer among the people of Pharaoh, who declares his faith and looks to the Future (verses 28-45). It is also called *Gāfir* (*He who forgives, see verse 3*). In S. xxiii, called *The Believers* (*Mūminūn*), the argument was about the collective force of Faith and virtue. Here it is about the Individual's witness to Faith and Virtue, and his triumph in the End.

We now begin a series of seven Sūras (xl-xlvi) to which are affixed the Abbreviated Letters *Hā-Mīm*. Chronologically they all belong to the same period, the later Makkan Period, and they immediately follow the last Sūra in time. About the Abbreviated Letters generally, see Appendix I at the end of S. II. As to the precise meaning of *Hā-Mīm* no authoritative explanation is available.

The general theme of the whole series is the relation of Faith to Unfaith, Revelation to Rejection, Goodness to Evil, Truth to Falsehood. It is shown that the first in each of these pairs is the real friend, helper, and protector of man, while the second is his enemy. The very word *Ḥamīm* in that sense is used in Sūras xl and xli (xl. 18 and xli. 34), while in the other Sūras we have words of equivalent import, e.g. *walī* or *naṣīr* (xlii. 8 and 31); *qarīn* (xliii. 36, 38); *maulā* (xliv. 41); *aulyāa* or *nāṣirīn* (xlv. 19, 34); and *aulyāa* (xlvi. 32).

Summary.—Faith is ever justified, for Allah forgives: but evil deeds must have evil fruits, for Allah knows and is just (xl. 1-20).

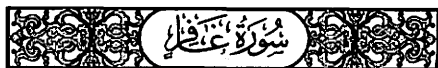
In all history Evil came to evil; the protest of Faith, in the midst of Evil, may be ignored; but Faith is protected by Allah, while Evil perishes (xl. 21-50).

No doubt is there of the Future Judgment; the Power, Goodness, and Justice of God are manifest; will man dispute, or will he accept the Signs before it is too late? (xl. 51-85).

Al-Mū-min, or The Believer.

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

1. *Hā-Mīm.*⁴³⁵⁶
2. The revelation
Of this Book
Is from Allah,
Exalted in Power,
Full of Knowledge,⁴³⁵⁷
3. Who forgiveth Sin,
Accepteth Repentance,⁴³⁵⁸
Is Severe in Punishment,
And is all-Bountiful.
There is no god
But He: to Him
Is the Final Goal.
4. None can dispute
About the Signs of Allah⁴³⁵⁹
But the Unbelievers.
Let not, then
Their strutting about⁴³⁶⁰
Through the land
Deceive thee!



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

حَمْدٌ

نَزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ

غَافِرِ الذَّنْبِ وَقَابِلِ التَّوْبِ شَدِيدِ الْعِقَابِ
ذِي الطَّوْلِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ إِلَهُ الْمَصِيرِ

مَا يُجَدِّلُ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
فَلَا يَغْنَصُكَ أَفْعَالُهُمْ فِي الْيَلْدِ

4356. See the Introduction to this Sūra.

4357. This verse is the same as xxxix: 1, except for the last words describing the attribute of Allah. In S. xxxix. 1, it was "Full of Wisdom", because stress was laid on the wisdom of Allah's Plan in ordering His World. In this Sūra the stress is laid on Allah's Knowledge, before which the shallow knowledge of men is vain (xl. 83).

4358. Allah's knowledge is supreme and all-reaching. But there are other attributes of His, which concern us even more intimately; e.g., He forgives sin and accepts our repentance when it is sincere and results in our change of heart and life: but He is also just, and strict in punishment; and so no loophole will be left for Evil except in repentance. And further, all His attributes reach forward to everything: His Mercy, as well as His Knowledge and Justice; His Bounties as well as His Punishments.

4359. Allah's knowledge and attributes are perfect, and everything around us proclaims this. We are surrounded by His Signs. It is only want of Faith that will make people dispute about them.

4360. Cf. iii. 196. Their strutting about shows how little they can read the Signs.

5. But (there were people) before them,
Who denied (the Signs),—
The People of Noah,
And the Confederates⁴³⁶¹
After them;
And every People plotted
Against their prophet,
To seize him, and disputed
By means of vanities,⁴³⁶²
Therewith to obliterate
The Truth: but it was I
That seized them!
And how (terrible)⁴³⁶³
Was My Requital!

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَالْأَحْزَابُ
مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ بِرَسُولِهِمْ
لِيَأْخُذُوهُ وَجَدَلُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوا بِهِ الْحَقَّ
فَاخَذْنَاهُمْ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عِقَابِ ﴿٥﴾

6. Thus was the Word
Of thy Lord proved true
Against the Unbelievers;⁴³⁶⁴
That truly they are
Companions of the Fire!

وَكَذَلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٦﴾

7. Those who bear⁴³⁶⁵
The Throne (of Allah)
And those around it
Sing Glory and Praise

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُ يُسَبِّحُونَ بِحَمْدِ
رَبِّهِمْ وَيُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

4361. Cf. xxxviii. 11-13, and n. 4158. All the hosts of wickedness collected together from history will have no power against Allah's Truth, or the Messenger of that Truth, or Allah's holy Plan for all His Creation.

4362. Whenever a great or vital Truth is proclaimed and renewed, there are always shallow minds that are ready to dispute about it! And what petty and vain arguments they advance! They think they can discredit or condemn the Truth in this way, or render "of none effect" Allah's Plan. But they are mistaken. If they seem to succeed for a time, that is merely their trial. They may try to plan and plot against Allah's men. But their plots will fail in the long run. They will themselves be caught in their own snares. And then, how terrible will be their Punishment!

4363. Cf. xiii. 32.

4364. Cf. xxxix. 71. The Decree, or Word of Allah, by which Evil was to be judged and condemned, was proved true against these men. They are "Companions of the Fire": in other words, they are fit to live only in Hell.

4365. Cf. xxxix. 75.

To their Lord; believe
In Him; and implore Forgiveness
For those who believe:
"Our Lord! Thou embracest⁴³⁶⁶
All things,
In Mercy and Knowledge.
Forgive, then, those who
Turn in Repentance, and follow
Thy Path; and preserve them
From the Chastisement
Of the Blazing Fire!

8. "And grant, our Lord!
That they enter
The Gardens of Eternity,
Which Thou hast promised
To them, and to the righteous
Among their fathers,⁴³⁶⁷
Their wives, and their posterity!
For Thou art (He),
The Exalted in Might,
Full of Wisdom.
9. "And preserve them
From (all) ills;
And any whom Thou
Dost preserve from ills⁴³⁶⁸
That Day,—on them
Wilt Thou have bestowed

رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَعِلْمًا
فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَاتَّبَعُوا سَبِيلَكَ
وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ

رَبَّنَا وَأَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ الَّتِي وَعَدْتَهُمْ
وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ
وَذُرِّيَّتِهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّئَاتِ يَوْمَئِذٍ
فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهُ، وَذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

4366. Cf. vi. 80; vii. 89 and 98.

4367. There is nothing selfish in prayer. We pray for all who are true and sincere. But just as Evil is catching, so Goodness is catching in another sense. The associates of the Good and those near and dear to them also share in their goodness and happiness, if only they try to walk in the same Way. And the Grace of Allah is working for all, all the time.

4368. That is the final Judgment, and any who is saved from the evil consequences of their deeds in this life will truly have been saved by Allah's Mercy, and for them it is the highest achievement they could have, the attainment of all their wishes, the fulfilment of their destiny and the noblest purpose of their Life, the supreme Salvation and Felicity.

Mercy indeed: and that
Will be truly
The highest Achievement."⁴³⁶⁹

SECTION 2.

10. The Unbelievers will be
Addressed: "Greater was
The aversion of Allah to you⁴³⁷⁰
Than (is) your aversion
To yourselves, seeing that ye
Were called to the Faith
And ye used to refuse."

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنَادُونَ لَمَقْتُ اللَّهُ
أَكْبَرُ مِنْ مَقْتِكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ
إِلَى الْإِيمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

11. They will say: "Our Lord!
Twice hast Thou made us⁴³⁷¹
To die, and twice
Hast Thou given us Life!
Now have we recognised
Our sins: is there
Any way out (of this)?"

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا أَثْنَيْنِ وَأُحْيَيْنَا أَثْنَيْنِ فَاعْرِفْنَا
بِدُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ﴿١١﴾

12. (The answer will be:)
"This is because, when
Allah was invoked as

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُ إِذَا دُعِيَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ كَفَرْتُمْ

4369. Muslim Salvation, then, is more positive than mere safety from dangers or evils: it is the complete fulfilment of the noble destiny of man in the attainment of the fullest Grace.

4370. The Unbelievers having rejected Allah's Signs, they now see how they are shut out from Grace, and they feel disgusted with themselves. How much greater was Allah's displeasure with them, when He showered mercy upon them and they yet rebelled! How could they now hope for Grace!

4371. Cf. ii. 28: "How can ye reject the faith in Allah?—seeing that ye were without life, and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die, and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return." Non-existence, or existence as clay without life was equivalent to death. Then came true Life on this earth; then came physical death or the cessation of our physical life; and now at the Resurrection, is the second life.

The Only (object of worship),⁴³⁷²
 Ye did reject Faith,
 But when partners were
 Joined to Him, ye believed!
 The Command is with Allah,⁴³⁷³
 Most High, Most Great!"

وَأِنْ يُّشْرَكَ بِهِ تَوَسَّلُوا فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ
 الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ ﴿١٢﴾

13. He it is Who showeth
 You His Signs, and sendeth
 Down Sustenance for you⁴³⁷⁴
 From the sky: but only
 Those receive admonition
 Who turn (to Allah).

هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ
 لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ رِزْقًا
 وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أَمَّنْ يُنِيبُ ﴿١٣﴾

14. Call ye, then, upon Allah
 With sincere devotion to Him,
 Even though the Unbelievers⁴³⁷⁵
 May detest it.

فَادْعُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ
 وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. Exalted is He in
 His attributes.⁴³⁷⁶
 (He is) the Lord
 Of the Throne:

رَفِيعُ الدَّرَجَاتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ يُلْقِي الرُّوحَ
 مِنْ أَمْرِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ

4372. Cf. xxxix. 45, and n. 4313. When exclusive devotion is not rendered to Allah, there is no true understanding, in the mind of a creature, of his own true position, or of the working of the Divine Will and Purpose. How can he then hope to achieve the purpose of his life, or obtain Allah's Mercy, which is the only way to obtain release from the consequences of Sin?

4373. At the Judgment, the matter will have passed out of the stage at which further chances could have been hoped for. But in any case Allah is High above all things, Great above all that we can conceive of, both in Mercy and in Justice. The Decision will be with Him, and Him alone.

4374. Lest it should be thought that Allah's Grace did not meet the Sinner again and again and offer Allah's Mercy again and again, it is pointed out that Allah's Signs were freely vouchsafed everywhere and continuously, and that every kind of means was provided for man's "Sustenance" or growth and development, physical, mental, and spiritual. But only those could take advantage of it who turned their attention to Allah, who submitted their will to Him.

4375. Cf. ix. 33.

4376. He is raised far above any rank or degree which we can imagine. It is possible also to treat *Rafī*, as equivalent to *Rāfi'*, meaning that He can raise His creatures to the highest ranks and degrees for He is the fountain of all honour.

By His Command doth He
Send the spirit (of inspiration)
To any of His servants⁴³⁷⁷
He pleases, that it may
Warn (men) of the Day
Of Mutual Meeting,-⁴³⁷⁸

عِبَادِهِ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ الْفَلَاقِ ﴿١٥﴾

16. The Day whereon
They will (all) come forth:
Not a single thing
Concerning them is hidden
From Allah. Whose will be
The Dominion that Day?⁴³⁷⁹
That of Allah, the One,
The Overpowering!

يَوْمَ هُمْ بَارِزُونَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ
لِّمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾

17. That Day will every soul
Be requited for what
It earned; no injustice
Will there be that Day,
For Allah is Swift⁴³⁸⁰
In taking account.

الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ
لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٧﴾

18. Warn them of the Day
That is (ever) drawing near,
When the Hearts will

وَأُنْذِرُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْآزِفَةِ إِذِ الْقُلُوبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ

4377. The choosing of a man to be the recipient of inspiration—to be the standard bearer of Allah's Truth—is the highest honour possible in the Kingdom of Allah. And Allah bestows that honour according to His own most perfect Will and Plan, which no one can question, for He is the fountain of all honour, dignity, and authority.

4378. All men will meet together and meet their Lord at the Resurrection, no matter how far scattered they may have been in life or in death.

4379. The Kingdom of Allah—of Justice, Truth, and Righteousness—will then be fully established. Evil can then no more come into competition with Good, even in the subjective consciousness of man.

4380. *Swift* in several senses; (1) the time of the present life or of the interval before Judgment. i.e., before the restoration of true values, is so short as compared to Eternity, that it may be counted as negligible: in the next verse the Day is characterised as "(ever) drawing near"; (2) in spite of the great concourse of souls to be judged, the process of Judgment will be almost instantaneous, "in the twinkling of an eye" (xvi. 77), because everything is already known to Allah; and yet not the least injustice will be done.

(Come) right up to the Throats⁴³⁸¹

To choke (them);

No intimate friend⁴³⁸²

Nor intercessors will the wrong-doers

Have, who could be

Listened to.

19. (Allah) knows the treachery

Of the eyes,⁴³⁸³

And all that the hearts

(Of men) conceal.⁴³⁸⁴

20. And Allah will judge

With (Justice and) Truth:

But those whom (men)

Invoke besides Him, will

Not (be in a position)

To judge at all.

كَظْمِينَ مَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ حِمِيمٍ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ
يُطَاعُ ١٨

يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ ١٩

وَاللَّهُ يَقْضِي بِالْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ
لَا يَقْضُونَ شَيْئًا إِنْ اللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْبَصِيرُ ٢٠

4381. *Hearts will come right up to the Throats to choke them:* an idiom implying that the whole of their life-functions will be choked up with terror. But a more subtle meaning emerges from further analysis. The heart (or the breast) is the seat of affection, emotion, and every kind of feeling, such as terror, pain, despair, etc. These things will as it were overflow right up to the throat and choke it. The throat is the vehicle for the voice; their voice will be choked, and they will be able to say nothing. The throat is the channel for food, which goes to the stomach and maintains a healthy functioning of life; the choking means that the healthy functioning will stop, and there will be nothing but woe.

4382. In that enforcement of personal responsibility, what sympathy or intercession can the wrong-doers get?

4383. Men may be taken in by tricks that deceive with the eyes, but Allah's perfect knowledge penetrates through all mysteries. "Treachery of the eyes" may mean several things; (1) a sleight of hand (literally or figuratively) may deceive in respect of the eyes of beholders, for the things that they see do not actually happen; (2) it may be the deceiver's own eyes that play false, because, for example, they show love when hatred is meant; or (3) it may be that the eyes of the beholder play him false, in that he sees things that he should not see, and thus sins with his eyes.

4384. Here we come into the region of evil motives and thoughts which may be concealed in the hearts, breast, or mind, but which are all perfectly known to Allah.

Verily it is Allah (alone)
Who hears and sees⁴³⁸⁵
(All things).

SECTION 3.

21. Do they not travel
Through the earth and see
What was the End
Of those before them?⁴³⁸⁶
They were even superior
To them in strength,
And in the traces (they⁴³⁸⁷
Have left) in the land:
But Allah did call them
To account for their sins,
And none had they
To defend them against Allah.

﴿أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ
عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ
مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَءَانَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ
يَذُنُّوهُمْ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَاكِ ۝١٦﴾

22. That was because there came
To them their messengers⁴³⁸⁸
With Clear (Signs),

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ

4385. If men build their hopes or their faith in anything except the Divine Grace, they will find themselves deserted. Any pretences that they make will be known to Allah. On the other hand every single good act, or word, or motive, or aspiration of their will, will reach Allah's Throne of Mercy.

4386. Cf. xxx. 9. and several other similar passages.

4387. See n. 3515 to xxx. 9. We can learn from the history of previous nations. Many of them were more powerful, or have left finer and more imposing monuments and made a deeper impression on the world around them than any particular generation addressed. "Traces" in the text may be taken in that extended sense. And yet all this did not save them from the consequences of their sins. They were called to account and punished. None of the power or pomp or skill of which they boasted could for a moment ward off the punishment when it came in God's good time.

4388. But Allah in His Mercy always sends a Message of warning and good news through his messengers, and He gives His messengers Clear Signs and an authority that can be recognised. Among the Clear Signs are: (1) the pure and unselfish lives of the messengers; (2) the revelation of truth which they bring; (3) their influence on the course of events in their own and succeeding generations; etc. Some of these may be so remarkable that they merit the name of Miracles.

But they rejected them:
So Allah called them
To account: for He is
Full of Strength,
Severe in Punishment.

23. Of old We sent Moses,⁴³⁸⁹
With Our Signs
And an Authority manifest,

24. To Pharaoh, Hāmān,⁴³⁹⁰
And Qārūn; but they
Called (him) "a sorcerer
Telling lies!"...

25. Now, when he brought them⁴³⁹¹
The Truth, from Us,
They said, "Slay the sons
Of those who believe"⁴³⁹²

فَكْفَرُوا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّهُ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدٌ
الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَى بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ
مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾

إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ
كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ

4389. This is not the story of Moses himself, so much as an introduction to the story of the one just man who believed, in the court of Pharaoh: see verse 28 below. This Sūra ("The Believer") is called after him.

4390. Here are three types of Unfaith, each showing a different phase, and yet all united in opposition to the Truth and Mission of Moses. (1) Pharaoh is the type of arrogance, cruelty, and reliance on brute force; cf. xxviii. 38-39. (2) Hāmān was Pharaoh's minister (n. 3331 to xxviii. 6; also xxviii. 38): he was the type of a sycophant who would pander to the vanity of any man in power. (3) Qārūn excelled in his wealth, was selfish in its use, and overbearing to the poor (xxviii. 76-81, and n. 3404). They all came to an evil end eventually.

4391. Verse 24 described the opposition of three types of Unfaith, which opposed Faith, in different ways, as described in the last note. Qārūn, in his overweening insolence, may well have called Moses and Aaron "sorcerers telling lies" in the Sinai desert, as he despised priests and men of God, and might cast the Egyptian reproach in their teeth as a reminiscence. Here, in verse 25, we have an episode about the time of the birth of Moses: "them" and "they" refer to Pharaoh and his Court; the "coming" of Moses here refers to the time of his birth. On that construction, "with him", lower down in their speech would be elliptical, referring to "slay the sons", as if they had said, "Kill all Israelite male children: the unknown Prophet to be born would be amongst them: so kill them all with him." In verse 26 we again skip some years and recall an episode when Moses, having got his mission, stood in Pharaoh's Court, and some of the Egyptian Commonalty were almost ready to believe in him.

4392. That is, the Israelites, for they were the custodians of Allah's Faith then. For the slaughter of Israelite children by Pharaoh, see xxviii. 4-6, and notes.

With him, and keep alive
Their females," but the plots
Of unbelievers (end) in nothing
But errors (and delusions)!...

26. Said Pharaoh: "Leave me
To slay Moses; and let him
Call on his Lord!⁴³⁹³
What I fear is lest
He should change your religion,⁴³⁹⁴
Or lest he should cause
Mischief to appear
In the land!"

27. Moses said: "I have indeed
Called upon my Lord
And your Lord!⁴³⁹⁵
(For protection) from every
Arrogant one who believes not
In the Day of Account!"

SECTION 4.

28. A Believer, a man⁴³⁹⁶
From among the people

وَمَا كَيْدُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَى وَلْيَدْعُ
رَبَّهُ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ
أَوْ أَنْ يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٦﴾

وَقَالَ مُوسَى إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُمْ
مِنْ كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٧﴾

وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ

4393. This is an episode that occurs when Moses, invested with his mission, confronts Pharaoh in his Court and preaches to him: see xx. 49 and following verses; also xx. 57, 63.

4394. Some of Pharaoh's people did afterwards give up the worship of Pharaoh and of the Egyptian gods and believed "in the Lord of Aaron and Moses" and in fact suffered martyrdom for the Faith of Unity: xx. 70-73.

4395. The whole point of the Gospel of Unity which Moses preached was that the God of Moses and the God of Pharaoh, of Israel and Egypt, the Lord of all the Worlds, was One, -Allah, the only True God. See xx. 49-50 and notes 2572 and 2573.

4396. There is nothing to justify the identification of this man with the man mentioned in xxviii. 20, who warned Moses long before Moses had received his mission. On the contrary, in this passage, the man is evidently speaking after Moses had received his mission, preached to Pharaoh, and got a certain amount of success, for which Pharaoh and his people were trying, to seek his life. Moses had evidently already brought his Clear Signs.

Of Pharaoh, who had concealed
His faith, said: "Will ye
Slay a man because he
Says, 'My Lord is Allah'?-
When he has indeed come
To you with Clear (Signs)
From your Lord? And if
He be a liar, on him
Is (the sin of) his lie;
But, if he is telling⁴³⁹⁷
The Truth, then will
Fall on you something
Of the (calamity) of which
He warns you: truly
Allah guides not one⁴³⁹⁸
Who transgresses and lies!

29. "O my People! yours
Is the dominion this day:
Ye have the upper hand⁴³⁹⁹
In the land: but who
Will help us from
The Punishment of Allah,
Should it befall us?"
Pharaoh said: "I but
Point out to you that

يَكْفُرُ بِمَنِّهِ أَنْتَقُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ
اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَإِنْ يَكُ
كَذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا
يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
لَا يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

يَقُولُ لَكُمْ أَلَمْ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ ظَاهِرِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
فَمَنْ يَنْصُرُنَا مِنْ بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِنْ جَاءَنَا قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ
مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَرَى وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ
إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٢٩﴾

4397. A commonsense view is put before them by an Egyptian who loves his own people and does not wish them to perish in sin. "Will you kill this man for calling on Allah? Have you not seen his character and behaviour? Do you not see the 'Clear Signs' about him that bespeak his credentials? Suppose for a moment that he is a liar and pretender: he will suffer for his falsehood, but why should you turn against Allah? But suppose that he is really inspired by Allah to tell you the truth and warn you against evil, what will be your fate when Allah's Wrath descends? For it must descend if he is a true Messenger sent by Allah."

4398. This is with reference to the "Clear signs". 'They are Signs of Allah's guidance, for Allah would never guide a man who exceeds the bounds of truth and tells you lies! Such a man is bound to be found out!'

4399. 'Do not be puffed up with arrogance because the power is in your hands at present! Do you deserve it? Will it last? If you are sinning and drawing upon yourselves Allah's Punishment, is there anything that can shield you from it?'

Which I see (myself);⁴⁴⁰⁰
Nor do I guide you
But to the Path of Right!"

30. Then said the man
Who believed: "O my People!
Truly I do fear
For you something like⁴⁴⁰¹
The Day (of disaster)
Of the Confederates (is sin)!-⁴⁴⁰²

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَنْفَعُوا إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ
مِثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ ﴿٢٠﴾

31. "Something like the fate
Of the People of Noah,
The 'Ād, and the Thamūd,
And those who came
After them: but Allah
Never wishes injustice⁴⁴⁰³
To His Servants.

مِثْلَ دَابِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعِبَادِ ﴿٢١﴾

32. "And O my People!
I fear for you a Day⁴⁴⁰⁴
When there will be
Mutual calling (and wailing),-

وَيَنْفَعُوا إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ النَّسَادِ ﴿٢٢﴾

4400. Pharaoh's egotism and arrogance come out. 'I can see and understand everything. As I see things, so do I direct you. The Path which I see must be right, and you must follow it.'

4401. He appeals to past history. "Have you not heard of people who lived before you?-like the generations of Noah, the 'Ād, the Thamūd, and many more-who held together in sin against Allah's Preachers, but were wiped out for their sins?"

4402. Cf. xxxviii. 11-13, and n. 4158, also xl. 5, and n. 4361.

4403. 'All these disasters happened in history, and they will happen again to you if you do not give up evil. Do not for a moment think that Allah is unjust. It is you who are deliberately preparing the disasters by your conduct.'

4404. This Day may refer to the Day of Judgment, of which three features are here referred to. (1) People may wail and call to each other, but no one can help another: each one will have his own judgment to face; (2) the wicked will then be driven to Hell from the Judgment-Seat; and (3) there will be no one to help, guide, or intercede, because the grace and guidance of Allah had already been rejected. But the words are perfectly general, and are applicable to all stages at which the Wrath of Allah is manifest.

33. "A Day when ye
Shall turn your backs
And flee: no defender
Shall ye have from Allah:
Any whom Allah leaves
To stray, there is none
To guide...

يَوْمَ تَوَلَّوْنَ مُدْبِرِينَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ
وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَهَآءُ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

34. "And to you there came
Joseph in times gone by,⁴⁴⁰⁵
With Clear Signs, but
Ye ceased not to doubt
Of the (mission) for which
He had come: at length,
When he died, ye said:
'No messenger will Allah send'⁴⁴⁰⁶
After him.' Thus doth Allah
Leave to stray such as
Transgress and live in doubt,-

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ يُوسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَآرَلْتُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِمَّا جَاءَكُمْ بِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا
هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ رَسُولًا
كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ
مُرْتَابٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. "(Such) as dispute about
The Signs of Allah,
Without any authority
That hath reached them,
Very hateful

الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ
أَتَتْهُمْ كُفْرًا مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا

4405. So far he has been speaking of general religious tradition. Now, as an Egyptian, addressing Egyptians, he refers to the mission of Joseph in Egypt, for which see the whole of Sūra xii. Joseph was not born in Egypt, nor was he an Egyptian. With what wonderful incidents he came into Egypt! What difficulties did he not surmount among his own brothers first, and in the Egyptian family which afterwards adopted him! How injustice, spite, and forgetfulness on the part of others, yet wove a spell round him and made him a ruler and saviour of Egypt in times of famine! How he preached to prisoners in prison, the wife of 'Aziz in her household, to the Egyptian ladies in their banquet, and to the Court of Pharaoh generally. The Egyptians profited by the material gains which came to them through him, but as a nation remained sceptical of his spiritual truths for many generations after him.

4406. The interval between Joseph and Moses was about one to three centuries, a very short period for the memory of a learned nation like the Egyptians. And yet they as a nation ignored his spiritual work, and afterwards even persecuted Israel in Egypt until Moses delivered them. They actually saw the benefits conferred by Joseph, but did not realise that Allah's Kingdom works continuously even though men ignore it.

(Is such conduct)
In the sight of Allah
And of the Believers.
Thus doth Allah seal up⁴⁴⁰⁷
Every heart-of arrogant
Tyrinical."

36. Pharaoh said: "O Hāmān!
Build me a lofty palace,⁴⁴⁰⁸
That I may attain
The ways and means—

37. "The ways and means
Of (reaching) the heavens,
And that I may look up
To the God of Moses:
But surely,
I think (Moses) is a liar!"
Thus was made alluring,⁴⁴⁰⁹
In Pharaoh's eyes,
The evil of his deeds,
And he was hindered
From the Path; and the plot⁴⁴¹⁰

كَذَلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ قَلْبٍ
مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَهْمَنُ ابْنُ لِي صَرِّحًا لَعَلِّي أَبْلُغُ
الْأَسْبَابَ ﴿٣٧﴾

أَسْبَابَ السَّمَوَاتِ فَأَطَّلِعُ إِلَى آلِهَةٍ مُوسَى
وَلِيِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ كَذَّابًا وَكَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ
لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ وَصُدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ
وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ إِلَّا فِي تَبَابٍ ﴿٣٨﴾

4407. See the last note. The arrogant transgressors having closed their hearts to the Message of Allah and to every appeal made to them, it followed by Allah's Law that their hearts were sealed up to any fresh influences for good. Cf. vii. 100; also ii. 7, and n. 31.

4408. Cf. xxviii. 38, and n. 3371. There are two points to be noted here. (1) Pharaoh, in the arrogance of his materialism, thinks of the Kingdom of Heaven like a kingdom on earth; he thinks of spiritual things in terms of palaces and ladders: notice that the word *asbāb* (ways and means) is emphasised by repetition (2) His sarcasm turns Moses and Allah to ridicule, and he frankly states that 'for his part he thinks Moses is a liar', though other men less lofty than he (Pharaoh) may be deceived by the Clear Signs of Moses.

4409. Pharaoh's speech shows how his own egotism and haughty arrogance brought him to this pass, that even the evil which he did seemed alluring in his own eyes! His heart was indeed sealed, and his arrogance prevented him from seeing the right path. (With the Kūfī Qirāat I read *sudda* in the passive voice).

4410. Pharaoh had plotted to slay Moses (xl. 26) and to kill the Children of Israel (xl. 25). The plot recoiled on his own head and on the head of his people who joined in the plot; for they were all drowned in the Red Sea.

Of Pharaoh led to nothing
But perdition (for him).

SECTION 5.

38. The man who believed said
Further: "O my People!
Follow me: I will lead
You to the Path of Right.⁴⁴¹¹

وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَنْقُومُ اتَّبِعُونِ
أَهْدِيكُمْ سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٣٨﴾

39. "O my People! This life
Of the present is nothing
But (temporary) enjoyment:
It is the Hereafter
That is the Home
That will last.⁴⁴¹²

يَنْقُومُ إِنَّمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا مَتَّعٌ
وَإِنَّ الْآخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ﴿٣٩﴾

40. "He that works evil
Will not be requited
But by the like thereof:
And he that works
A righteous deed—whether
Man or woman—and is
A Believer—such will enter
The Garden (of Bliss): therein
Will they have abundance⁴⁴¹³
Without measure.

مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا
وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنفَوْا
وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ
يُرْزَقُونَ فِيهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

41. "And O my People!
How (strange) it is⁴⁴¹⁴
For me to call you

وَيَنْقُومُ مَا لِي أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى النَّجْوَةِ ﴿٤١﴾

4411. Note the contrast between the earnest beseeching tone of the Believer here and the hectoring tone of Pharaoh in using similar words in xl. 29 above.

4412. Faith makes him see the contrast between vanities, even though they may glitter temporarily, and the eternal Good that is destined for man.

4413. Cf. ii. 212. This sustenance will not only last. It will be a most liberal reward, far above any merits of the recipient.

4414. It may seem strange according to the laws of this world that he should be seeking their Good while they are seeking his damnation! But that is the merit of Faith. Its mission is to rescue its enemies and Allah's enemies, as far as their will will consent!

To Salvation while ye
Call me to the Fire!

42. "Ye do call upon me
To blaspheme against Allah,⁴⁴¹⁵
And to join with Him
Partners of whom I have
No knowledge; and I
Call you to the Exalted
In Power, Who forgives
Again and again!
43. "Without doubt ye do call
Me to one who has no claim
To be called to,⁴⁴¹⁶
Whether in this world,
Or in the Hereafter;
Our Return will be
To Allah; and the Transgressors
Will be Companions
Of the Fire!
44. "Soon will ye remember
What I say to you (now).⁴⁴¹⁷
My (own) affair I commit
To Allah: for Allah (ever)
Watches over His Servants"

وَتَدْعُونِي إِلَى النَّارِ ﴿٤١﴾

تَدْعُونِي لِأَكْفُرَ بِاللَّهِ وَأُشْرِكَ بِهِ مَا لَيْسَ
لِي بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَأَنَا أَدْعُوكُمْ إِلَى الْعَزِيزِ الْغَفَّارِ ﴿٤٢﴾

لَا جُرْمَ أَنَّمَا تَدْعُونِي إِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَلَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَأَنْ مَرَدَّنَا إِلَى اللَّهِ
وَأَنْتَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ هُمْ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ﴿٤٣﴾

فَسَتَذْكُرُونَ مَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ وَأَفَؤُصِّ
أَمْرِي إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٤﴾

4415. The worship of Pharaoh was blasphemy, but it had many sides, including the worship of heroes, animals, powers of good and evil in nature, and idols of all kinds. It is this comprehensive cult which required warnings again and again, but Allah is Exalted in Power, and gives such forgiveness on repentance.

4416. Faith is not content with its own inner vision and conviction. It can give ample arguments. Three are mentioned here: (1) nothing but Allah is worthy of worship, either in this world of sense or in the next world; (2) our Return will be to Allah, the Eternal Reality; and (3) the worship of Falsehood must necessarily lead to the Penalty of Falsehood, unless Allah's Mercy intervenes and forgives on our sincere repentance.

4417. The wording suggests as if there was a plot to kill him, but he was saved, as the next verse shows. His thought to the last is with his People. 'No matter what you do to me: you will have cause to remember my admonition, when perhaps it is too late for you to repent. For my part I commit myself to the care of Allah, and my Faith tells me that all will be right.'

45. Then Allah saved him
From (every) evil that they
Plotted (against him),
But the brunt of the Chastisement⁴⁴¹⁸
Encompassed on all sides
The People of Pharaoh.

فَوَقَّهٗ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِ مَا مَكَرُوا
وَحَاقَ بِآلِ فِرْعَوْنَ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. In front of the Fire
Will they be brought,
Morning and evening,⁴⁴¹⁹
And (the Sentence will be)
On the Day when
The Hour comes to pass:
"Cast ye the People
Of Pharaoh into
The severest Penalty"

أَلَنَّا يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ
السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. Behold, they will dispute
With each other in the Fire!⁴⁴²⁰
The weak ones (who followed)
Will say to those who
Had been arrogant, "We but
Followed you: can ye then
Take (on yourselves) from us
Some share of the Fire?"

وَإِذْ يَتَحَاوَرُونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاءُ
لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَمَا
هَلْ أَنتُمْ مُغْنُونَ عَنَّا نَصِيبًا مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿٤٧﴾

48. Those who had been arrogant
Will say: "We are all"⁴⁴²¹
In this (Fire)! Truly,

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا

4418. The Pharaoh of the time of Moses, and his people, suffered many calamities in this world: vii. 130-136. But those were nothing to the Penalties mentioned in the next verse.

4419. When the Judgment really comes, it is not like an ordinary physical disaster. The Fire of Punishment is ever present—morning and evening—i.e., at all times. The sentence becomes final and there is no mitigation.

4420. Just as Unity, Harmony, and Peace are indications of Truth, Bliss, and Salvation, so Reproaches, Disputes, and Disorders are indications of Hell.

4421. Note the evasion and cynicism of the answer, befitting the character of spiritual misleaders! 'What! are we not suffering with you in the same Fire! Pray to Allah if you like! He has pronounced His Judgment!' Cf. xiv. 21-22.

Allah has judged
Between (His) Servants!"

49. Those in the Fire will say
To the Keepers of Hell:⁴⁴²²
"Pray to your Lord
To lighten us the Chastisement
For a Day (at least)!"

50. They will say: "Did there
Not come to you
Your messengers with Clear Signs?"
They will say, "Yes".
They will reply, "Then"⁴⁴²³
Pray (as ye like)! But
The Prayer of those
Without Faith is nothing
But (futile wandering)
In (mazes of) error!"

SECTION 6.

51. We will, without doubt,
Help Our messengers and those
Who believe, (both)
In this world's life
And on the Day
When the Witnesses⁴⁴²⁴
Will stand forth,-

إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا

رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٩﴾

قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ تَكُنْ تَأْتِيكُم رُّسُلُكُمْ

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَالُوا فَادْعُوا

وَمَا دَعَوْا إِلَّا كُفْرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ

الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ ﴿٥١﴾

4422. Cf. xxxix. 71. The poor misguided ones will turn to the angels who are their Keepers, asking them to pray and intercede for them. But the angels are set there to watch over them, not to intercede for them. In their innocence they ask, 'Did you have no warnings from messengers, men like yourselves, in your past life?'

4423. The answer being in the affirmative, they will have to tell the dreadful truth: 'This is neither the time nor the place for prayer, for mercy! And in any case, Prayer without Faith is Delusion, and must miss its mark.' Cf. xiii. 14.

4424. The Day of Judgment is described as "the Day when Witnesses will stand forth". This description implies two things: (1) that there man will be judged justly; his past actions and his faculties and opportunities will be witnesses as to the use he made of them (xxiv. 24); in fact he will himself be a witness against himself (vi. 130); and the prophets and just men will bear witness to the fact that they preached and warned men (xxxix. 69; ii. 133).

52. The Day when no profit
Will it be to Wrong-doers
To present their excuses,⁴⁴²⁵
But they will (only) have
The Curse and the Home
Of Misery.

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعَذِرَتُهُمْ
وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. We did aforetime give Moses
The Guidance,⁴⁴²⁶
And We gave the Book
In inheritance to the Children
Of Israel,—

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَى وَأَوْرَثْنَا
بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ الْكِتَابَ ﴿٥٣﴾

54. A Guide and a Reminder
To men of understanding.

هُدًى وَذِكْرًا لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٤﴾

55. Patiently, then, persevere:⁴⁴²⁷
For the Promise of Allah
Is true: and ask forgiveness⁴⁴²⁸
For thy fault, and celebrate
The Praises of thy Lord
In the evening
And in the morning.⁴⁴²⁹

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ
وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ﴿٥٥﴾

4425. After the testimony mentioned in the last note, there will be no room for excuses, and if any were made, they could serve no purpose, unlike the state of matters in this world, where there is much make-believe, and Falsehood often masquerades as Truth and is accepted as such even by those who should know better.

4426. Moses was given a Revelation, and it was given in heritage to the Children of Israel, to preserve it, guide their conduct by it, and hold aloft its Message: but they failed in all these particulars.

4427. The Israelites corrupted or lost their Book; they disobeyed Allah's Law; and failed to proclaim and exemplify Allah's Message. That is why the new Revelation came to the holy Prophet. If, in the beginning, it was rejected and persecuted, there was no cause for discouragement; on the contrary, there was all the greater need for patience and perseverance.

4428. Every mortal according to his nature and degree of spiritual enlightenment falls short of the perfect standard of Allah (xvi. 61), and should therefore ask Allah for forgiveness. What is merit in an ordinary man may be a human shortcoming in one nearest to Allah: see xxxviii. 24-25, and notes 4175-76. Prophets have a further responsibility for their People or their Ummat, and they ask in a representative capacity.

4429. Cf. iii. 41. Evening and morning are the best times for contemplation and prayer. But the phrase "evening and morning" may mean "at all times".

56. Those who dispute
About the Signs of Allah
Without any authority
Bestowed on them,—there is⁴⁴³⁰
Nothing in their breasts
But (the quest of) greatness,
Which they shall never
Attain to: seek refuge,
Then, in Allah: it is He
Who hears and sees (all things).

57. Assuredly the creation⁴⁴³¹
Of the heavens
And the earth
Is a greater (matter)
Than the creation of men:
Yet most men Know not.

58. Not equal are the blind
And those who (clearly) see:⁴⁴³²
Nor are (equal) those
Who believe and work
Deeds of righteousness, and
Those who do evil.
Little do ye learn
By admonition!

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ
اللَّهِ يَغْتَرِبُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ
إِلَّا كِبْرًا مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيهِ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ
إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٥٦﴾

لَخَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ
النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَى وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءُ
قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

4430. The Disputes are actuated by nothing but the desire for self-glory and self-aggrandizement. Their desire is not likely to receive fruition, but others should take warning from it.

4431. The heavens and the earth include mankind and all other creatures and millions of stars. Man is himself but a tiny part of creation. Why should he be so ego-centric? The whole is greater than a tiny part of it. And Allah Who created the whole of the Worlds is able to do much more wonderful things than can enter the imagination of man. Why should man be arrogant and doubt the Resurrection, and take upon himself to doubt the possibility of Allah's Revelation? It is only because he has made himself blind. See next verse.

4432. The man of Faith who backs his faith by righteous conduct is like the man of clear vision, who sees things in their true perspective and walks with firm steps in the Way of Allah. The man who does evil is like a blind man: the Light of Allah is all around him, but he is blind, and he can see nothing. He has rejected Faith and cannot even learn by other people's admonition.

59. The Hour will certainly come:⁴⁴³³

Therein is no doubt:

Yet most men believe not.

60. And your Lord says:

"Call on Me; I

Will answer your (Prayer):⁴⁴³⁴

But those who are

Too arrogant to serve Me

Will surely enter Hell

Abased."

SECTION 7.

61. It is Allah Who has⁴⁴³⁵

Made the Night for you,

That ye may rest therein,

And the Day, to give

You light.

Verily Allah is Full of

Grace and Bounty to men:

Yet most men give

No thanks.

62. Such is Allah, your Lord,

The Creator of all things,

There is no god but He:

Then how ye are deluded⁴⁴³⁶

Away from the Truth!

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَآيَةً لَّأَرْيَبَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ
أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي
سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ لَتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ
وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ
عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ
لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَآَن تَتُفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

4433. "The Hour" is the crown and consummation of man's life on this earth,—the gateway to the Hereafter.

4434. As this life is not the end of all things, and we are to have its fulfilment in the Hereafter: we have only to pray to the Lord of the Present and the Hereafter, and He will hear us, forgive us, guide us, and make our Path smooth. But Pride will have its fall,—and its humiliating Punishment: Cf. xxxvii. 18.

4435. The succession of Day and Night in our physical life is frequently appealed to, as a symbol to draw our attention to the Mercy and Bounty of Allah. If we viewed these things aright, we should serve Allah and seek Light from Him and Rest from Him, and celebrate His praises with gratitude.

4436. If we worship false gods, i.e., go after vanities, what is it that deludes us and leads us astray? What could it be but our rank ingratitude and failure to use the understanding which Allah has given us?

63. Thus are deluded those⁴⁴³⁷

Who are wont to reject
The Signs of Allah.

64. It is Allah Who has⁴⁴³⁸

Made for you the earth
As a resting place,⁴⁴³⁹
And the sky as a canopy,
And has given you shape—⁴⁴⁴⁰
And made your shapes
Beautiful,—and has provided
For you Sustenance,⁴⁴⁴¹
Of things pure and good;—
Such is Allah your Lord.
So Glory to Allah,
The Lord of the Worlds!

65. He is the Living (One):⁴⁴⁴²

There is no god but He:
Call upon Him, giving Him
Sincere devotion. Praise be
To Allah, Lord of the Worlds!

كَذَٰلِكَ يُؤْفِكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا يَتَّبِعُونَ
يُحْمَدُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا
وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَاءً وَصَوَّرَكُم فَأَحْسَنَ
صُورَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ
مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

4437. See the last two notes. If men are deluded by Falsehoods, it is because they reject Revelation and refuse to learn from the Signs of Allah all around them.

4438. The argument in the last two verses was from man's personal experiences of his physical life. In this and the next verse a parallel argument is addressed to man on a much higher plane: 'look at the spacious earth and the canopy of the sky; look at the special position you occupy above other animals that you know, in shape and form, and moral and spiritual capacities; consider your refinements in food and fruits and the higher spiritual Sustenance of which your physical food is a type; would you not indeed say that the Lord is good, and would you not glorify His holy name?'

4439. *A resting place*: I understand this to imply a temporary place of rest or sojourn, a period of probation, to be followed by the eternal Home.

4440. Cf. vii. 11 and n. 996. The shape and form refer to the physical form as well as to the inborn moral and spiritual capacities of man. As regards physical form, Cf. Milton's description of Adam and Eve, "Two of far noble shape, erect and tall" (*Paradise Lost*, iv. 288). As regards moral and spiritual capacities, they are typified by the breathing of Allah's spirit into man: xv. 29.

4441. "*Sustenance*": all that is necessary for growth and development, physical, moral, and spiritual. Cf. n. 2105 to xvi. 73.

4442. The real, self-subsisting Life is only in Him: Cf. ii. 255, and n. 296.

66. Say: "I have been forbidden⁴⁴⁴³
To invoke those whom ye
Invoke besides Allah,—seeing that
The Clear Signs have come
To me from my Lord;
And I have been commanded
To submit (in Islām)
To the Lord of the Worlds."

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ
مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لِمَا جَاءَنِي الْبَيِّنَاتُ مِنْ رَبِّي وَأُمِرْتُ
أَنْ أَسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

67. It is He Who has⁴⁴⁴⁴
Created you from dust,
Then from a sperm-drop,
Then from a leech-like clot;
Then does He get you
Out (into the light)
As a child: then lets you
(Grow and) reach your age
Of full strength; then
Lets you become old,—
Though of you there are
Some who die before;—
And lets you reach
A Term appointed;
In order that ye
May understand.

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ
ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوا
أَشْدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِيَتُكُونُوا أُشْيُوخًا وَمِنْكُمْ
مَنْ يُتَوَفَّى مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَلْيَبْلُغُوا أَجْلًا مُسَعًّى
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

4443. All objects of worship besides Allah are mere delusions. To any one who sees this clearly, through Allah's Self-revelations, the only possible course is to give up everything else, which his own inner experience as well as outer Revelation tell him is false or of a temporary nature, and to bring his own will and actions into complete unison with Allah's Will: for that is the meaning of Islam, bowing to the Will of Allah. When we bow to the Real and Everlasting, we are automatically saved from falling victims to the False and Evanescent.

4444. Cf. this passage with xxii. 5 and notes 2773 and 2774. The various stages of man's physical life are: (1) first, simple matter (dust); (2) the sperm-drop in the father; (3) the fertilised ovum in the mother's womb; (4) out into the light, as a human child; (5) youth and full maturity; (6) decay; and (7) death. In some cases the later stages are curtailed or cut off; but in any case, a Term appointed is reached, so that the higher purpose of Allah's Will and Plan may be fulfilled in each given case, that man "may understand."

68. It is He Who gives Life⁴⁴⁴⁵
And Death; and when He
Decides upon an affair,
He says to it, "Be",
And it is.

SECTION 8.

69. Seest thou not those
That dispute concerning
The Signs of Allah?
How are they turned away⁴⁴⁴⁶
(From Reality)?-

70. Those who reject the Book⁴⁴⁴⁷
And the (revelations) with which
We sent Our messengers:
But soon shall they know,-

71. When the yokes (shall be)⁴⁴⁴⁸
Round their necks,
And the chains;
They shall be dragged along-

هُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا
يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٦٨﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
أَنَّهُمْ يُصْرِفُونَهَا ﴿٦٩﴾

الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآلِ كِتَابٍ وَبِمَا أَرْسَلْنَا
بِهِ رَسُولًا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

إِذَا الْأَغْلالُ فِي أَعْنَقِهِمْ وَالسَّلَاسِلُ يُسْحَبُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

4445. The keys of life and death are in Allah's hands. But He is not dependent on time or place or instruments or materials. All that He has to do is to say "Be", and it comes into existence. Cf. xvi. 40, and n. 2066; xxxvi. 82, and n. 4029. Conversely, His Will or Command is sufficient to annihilate Existence into Non-Existence (Life into Death) or determine the limits or conditions of Existence or Non-Existence.

4446. Those who dispute about the Signs of Allah which are clear to all who care to see, are merely in the mists of Unreality: Cf. x. 32.

4447. "The Book" may refer to the Holy Qur-ān or to the fundamental, Revelation the "Mother of the Book" (xiii. 39), while the Books revealed to the messengers are the definite Revelations that came down to men from time to time.

4448. The rejection of Allah's Message, however brought, carries its own penalty. The yoke of slavery to Sin and Evil is fastened more and more firmly round the rejecter's neck, because there is no one to safeguard his freedom, and the chains of superstitions and the ugly consequences of evil restrict his freedom and the limited faculty of choice which was given by Allah to man. This process receives its climax at the Hour of Judgment.

72. In the boiling fetid fluid;⁴⁴⁴⁹

Then in the Fire
Shall they be burned;

73. Then shall it be said
To them: "Where are
The (deities) to which
Ye gave part-worship—

"74. Besides Allah?"

They will reply: "They have⁴⁴⁵⁰
Left us in the lurch:
Nay, we invoked not,
Of old, anything (that had
Real existence)." Thus
Does Allah leave
The Unbelievers to stray.

75. "That was because⁴⁴⁵¹
Ye were wont to rejoice
On the earth in things
Other than the Truth,
And that ye were wont
To be insolent.

76. "Enter ye the gates⁴⁴⁵²
Of Hell, to dwell therein:
And evil is (this) abode
Of the arrogant!"

فِي الْحَمِيمِ ثُمَّ فِي النَّارِ يُسْجَرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

ثُمَّ قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَتَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا بَلْ لَمْ نَكُنْ نَدْعُوا
مِنْ قَبْلُ شَيْئًا كَذَلِكَ يَضِلُّ اللَّهُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾

ذَلِكَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ
وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

ادْخُلُوا أَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا فِئْسَ
مَثْوًى الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

4449. The sinner gets dragged further and further in the disgusting consequences of his evil actions, until the fire of destruction closes in upon him.

4450. All falsehoods will vanish: Cf. vii. 36. The only Reality will be fully manifest even to those to whom Evil was made to seem alluring in the lower life. They will feel in their inmost souls that they had been pursuing mere shadows, things of no real existence. This was the result of their rejecting the Light and the Grace of Allah: they got entangled in the mazes of error.

4451. Allah does not withdraw His grace from any unless (1) they actively and deliberately take a delight in things that are vain or false, and (2) they insolently reject the things that are true,—in other words, unless men are deliberately false to their own lights, as illuminated by the Light of Allah.

4452. Cf. xxxix. 72.

77. So persevere in patience;
For the Promise of Allah
Is true: and whether⁴⁴⁵³
We show thee (in this life)
Some part of what We
Promise them,—or We
Take thy soul (to Our Mercy)
(Before that),—(in any case)
It is to Us that
They shall (all) return.

78. We did aforetime send
Messengers before thee: of them⁴⁴⁵⁴
There are some whose story
We have related to thee,
And some whose story
We have not related
To thee. It was not
(Possible) for any messenger
To bring a Sign except
By the leave of Allah:
But when the Command⁴⁴⁵⁵
Of Allah issued,
The matter was decided
In truth and justice,

فَأَصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَكَيْمًا نُرِيكَ بَعْضَ
الَّذِي نَعِدُهُمْ أَوْ تَوَفِّيْنَاكَ فَإِنَّا نِيرْجِعُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَّن قَصَصْنَا
عَلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَيْكَ وَمَا كَانَ
لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكَ بِتَايَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ فَإِذَا جَاءَ
أَمْرُ اللَّهِ فَخِصٌّ بِالْحَقِّ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ
الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

4453. Cf. x. 46, and n. 1438. As the eventual justice and readjustment of values must take place, when every soul returns to the Judgment-Seat of Allah, it makes no difference if good and evil meet their deserts in this very life or not. Cf. also xiii. 40.

4454. Cf. iv. 164. Allah sent Messengers of His Truth to every people. There are some whose names are known to us through the holy Qur-ān, but there are a large number whose names are not made known to us through that medium. We must recognise the Truth wherever we find it.

4455. The Signs of Allah are everywhere, and can be seen by the discerning eye at all times. But if any extraordinary Signs are demanded by cynics or Unbelievers, they will not be granted merely because they are demanded. It is Allah's Will that issues them, not merely the desire of human beings, even if he be a Messenger of Allah. But when an extraordinary Sign does issue by the Command of Allah, it means that the cup of the iniquitous is full; that their case is decided, and their time of respite is past; and that Justice takes the place of Mercy, and evil is blotted out.

And there perished,
There and then, those
Who stood on Falsehoods.

SECTION 9.

79. It is Allah who made⁴⁴⁵⁶
Cattle for you, that ye
May use some for riding
And some for food;
80. And there are (other) advantages
In them for you (besides);
That ye may through them
Attain to any need
(There may be) in your hearts;
And on them and on ships
Ye are carried.
81. And He shows you (always)⁴⁴⁵⁷
His Signs: then which
Of the Signs of Allah
Will ye deny?
82. Do they not travel through
The earth and see what
Was the End of those

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْعَامَ
لِتَرْكَبُوا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَكُونُ

وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً
فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ
تُقَمَّلُونَ

وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ فَآيَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُنْكِرُونَ

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ

4456. Cf. xvi. 5-8. The fact that beasts, which in their wild state are so noxious, are, when domesticated, so useful to man, is itself one of the great and standing Signs of Allah's care for man. The great usefulness of cattle is very instructive. They serve for riding, and many of them for food; further, they are used for the plough, and they produce milk, or wool, or hair; and from their carcasses man derives bones and horns for many industrial uses; but passing on to higher aspects of life, they further social, moral, and spiritual uses as draught-animals, in that transport serves one of the fundamental purposes of civilisation, being in this respect like ships for international commerce: xxx. 46, and n. 3565. It is by means of human intercourse through transport that we can carry out the highest needs of our culture, "any need there may be in our hearts", i.e., in our inner being.

4457. The Signs of Allah's goodness and mercy are so numerous that it is impossible to enumerate them. Which of them can any mortal deny? This is the theme of that highly poetical Sūra, *Rahmān* (S.lv.).

Before them? They were
More numerous than these
And superior in strength⁴⁴⁵⁸
And in the traces
(They have left) in the land:
Yet all that they accomplished
Was of no profit to them.

83. For when their messengers
Came to them
With Clear Signs, they exulted⁴⁴⁵⁹
In such knowledge (and skill)
As they had; but
That very (Wrath) at which⁴⁴⁶⁰
They were wont to scoff
Hemmed them in.

84. But when they saw
Our Might, they said:
"We believe in Allah,-
The One God-and we
Reject the partners we used
To join with Him."

الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَانُوا أَكْثَرُ مِنْهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ
قُوَّةً وَأَثَارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَا أَعْنَى عَنْهُمْ
مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ
فَرِحُوا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ
بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْا بَأْسَنَا قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَحْدَهُ
وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا يَدْعُوهُ مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

4458. Cf. ix. 69. For any generation to take inordinate pride in its own single achievements in science or skill becomes ridiculous if we consider the broad stream of history. In the first place, men will find that a great deal of what they attribute to their own merits only became possible owing to the earlier work of their predecessors. Secondly, many of their predecessors were more numerous and mightier in power than they, although the perspective of time may have reduced the apparent depth of their influence, and the monuments which they have left behind may have suffered from the destroying hand of Time. Thirdly, and most important of all, when they forgot Allah and His inexorable Law, nothing of their own handiwork profited them: they perished in the common ruin as all vanities must perish. Cf. also xl. 21 above, and n. 4387. See how the recapitulation rounds off the argument.

4459. Arrogance and an exaggerated idea of Self were at the bottom of the Evil to which they succumbed.

4460. Cf. xvi. 34. Nothing could stop Justice of Allah punishing Evil. What they had ridiculed came as an inexorable fact. None of their grandeur or art or science or skill was of any use when they lost their souls!

85. But their professing the Faith⁴⁴⁶¹
 When they (actually) saw
 Our Punishment was not going
 To profit them.
 (Such has been) Allah's way
 Of dealing with His servants
 (From the most ancient times).
 And even thus did
 The rejecters of Allah
 Lose (utterly)!

فَلَمْ يَكُنْ يَنْفَعُهُمْ إِيمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَأَوْا بَاسًا سُنَّتَ
 اللَّهُ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ فِي عِبَادِهِ وَخَسِرَ هُنَاكَ
 الْكَافِرُونَ



4461. Again and again were they given chances, and again and again did they reject them. When it was too late, and in fact when it had no meaning, they offered to profess Faith. That was of no use. Allah does not accept unmeaning things of that kind. He wants to train and purify our will. For their disobedience and rebellion they perished utterly.