

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Al-Aḥzāb*, 33.

The series of Sūras beginning with S. xxvi, having been closed with the last Sūra, we now come back to the hard facts of this life. Two questions are mainly considered here, viz., (1) the attempt by violence and brute force to crush the truth, and (2) the attempt, by slander or unseemly conduct, to poison the relations of women with men.

As regards the first, the story of the Aḥzāb or Confederates, who tried to surround and annihilate the Muslim community in Madinah is full of underhand intrigues on the part of such diverse enemies as the Pagan Quraish, the Jews (Banū Nadhīr) who had been already expelled from Madinah for their treachery, the Ḡaṭafān tribe of Bedouin Arabs from the interior, and the Jewish tribe of Banū Quraiza in Madinah. This was the unholy Confederacy against Islam. But though they caused a great deal of anxiety and suffering to the beleaguered Muslims, Islam came triumphantly out of the trial and got more firmly established than ever.

The Quraish in Makkah had tried all sorts of persecution, boycott, insult, and bodily injuries to the Muslims, leading to their partial *hijrat* to Abyssinia and their Hijrat as a body to Madinah. The first armed conflict between them and the Muslims took place at Badr in Ramaḍhān A.H. 2, when the Quraish were signally defeated. (See n. 352 to iii. 13). Next year (Shauwāl A.H. 3) they came to take revenge on Madinah. The battle was fought at Uḥud, and though the Muslims suffered severely, Madinah was saved and the Makkans had to return to Makkah with their object frustrated. Then they began to make a network of intrigues and alliances, and besieged Madinah with a force of 10,000 men in Shauwāl and Zul-qa'da A.H. 5. This is the siege of the Confederates referred to in xxxiii. 9-27, which lasted over two weeks; some accounts give 27 days. It caused much suffering, from hunger, cold, and unceasing shower of arrows, and constant general or concentrated assaults. But it ended in the discomfiture of the Confederates, and established Islam firmer than ever. It was a well-organised and formidable attack, but the Muslims had made preparations to meet it. One of the preparations, which took the enemy by surprise, was the Trench (Khandaq) dug round Madinah by the Prophet's order and under the supervision of Salmān the Persian. The siege and battle are therefore known as the Battle of the Trench or the Battle of the Confederates.

As regards the position and dignity of the ladies of the Prophet's Household and the Muslim women generally, salutary principles are laid down to safeguard their honour and protect them from slander and insult. The ladies of the Household interested themselves in social work and work of instruction for the

Muslim women, and Muslim women were being trained more and more in community service. Two of them (the two Zainabs) devoted themselves to the poor. The nursing of the wounded on or by the battlefield was specially necessary in those days of warfare. The Prophet's daughter Fātima, then aged about 19 to 20, lovingly nursed her father's wounds at Uhud (A.H. 3); Rufaida nursed S'ad ibn Mu'āz's wounds at the Siege of Madinah by the Confederates (A.H. 5); and in the Khaibar expedition (A.H. 7) Muslim women went out from Madinah for nursing service.

A portion of this Sūra sums up the lessons of the Battle of the Trench and must have been revealed some time after that Battle (Shauwāl A.H. 5). The marriage with Zainab referred to in verse 37 also took place in the same year.

Summary.—The pagan customs in human relationships should be abandoned, and men and women should be held in honour according to natural relationships. (xxxiii. 1-8).

The Battle of the Trench and its lessons: hypocrites and their fears: Truth and noble examples to be followed (xxxiii. 9-27).

High position and seemly conduct for the Prophet's wives: unhappy marriages (like Zainab's) not to be perpetuated on false scruples: Prophet's wives to be treated kindly and gently (xxxiii. 28-52).

Respect due to Prophet and his family: slander to be avoided and punished; guard your words and your responsibilities (xxxiii. 53-73).

Al-Ahzāb, or The Confederates.

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

1. O Prophet! Fear Allah,
And hearken not
To the Unbelievers³⁶⁶⁶
And the Hypocrites:
Verily Allah is full
Of knowledge and wisdom.
2. But follow that which
Comes to thee by inspiration
From thy Lord: for Allah
Is well acquainted³⁶⁶⁷
With (all) that ye do.
3. And put thy trust
In Allah, and enough is Allah³⁶⁶⁸
As a Disposer of affairs.

سُورَةُ الْاِحْزَابِ (٣٣)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١﴾

وَاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٢﴾

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٣﴾

3666. The fifth year A.H. was a critical year in the external history of early Islam, and this Sūra must be read in the light of the events that then took place. As explained in the Introduction, the Grand Confederacy against Islam came and invested Madinah and failed utterly. It consisted of the Makkan Unbelievers, the desert Arabs of Central Arabia, the Jews previously expelled for treachery from Madinah, the Jews remaining in Madinah and the Hypocrites led by 'Abdullah ibn Ubi, who have already been described in ix. 43-110. Their bond of union was the common hatred of Islam, and it snapped under the reverses they met with. It is important to note three points. (1) The Jews as a body now lost their last chance of bearing the standard of Islam: the best of them had already accepted the renewal of Allah's Message. (2) A definite status was given to Prophet's household, after the slanders on Hadhrat 'Āisha had been stilled (xxiv. 11-26), and the true position of the Mothers of the Believers had been cleared. (3) A further exposition of the purity of sex relation was given, based on the story of Hadhrat Zainab, the "Mother of the Poor". These points will be referred to in later notes.

3667. In the most adverse circumstances, in the midst of the assaults of Evil, the plots of treason and hypocrisy, the darts of slanders and false charges, and stupid superstitions and taboos, the Prophet of Allah should steer his course steadily according to Allah's Law and not fear human evil, in whatever form it appears. Men may misjudge, but Allah knows all. Men may try to overthrow Good, but Wisdom is with Allah.

3668. We must wholly trust Allah; He is the true and efficient Guardian of all interests. C.f. iv. 81, and n. 600.

4. Allah has not made
For any man two hearts³⁶⁶⁹
In his breast: nor has
He made your wives whom
Ye divorce by *Zihār*³⁶⁷⁰
Your mothers: nor has He
Made your adopted sons³⁶⁷¹
Your sons. Such is (only)
Your (manner of) speech
By your mouths. But Allah
Tells (you) the Truth, and He
Shows the (right) Way.

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّن قَلْبَيْنِ فِي جَوْفِهِ ۖ وَمَا جَعَلَ
أَزْوَاجَكُمْ الَّتِي تَظَاهَرُونَ مِّنْهُنَّ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ ۚ وَمَا جَعَلَ
أَدْعِيَاءَكُمْ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ
يَقُولُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِي السَّبِيلَ ﴿٤﴾

5. Call them by after
Their fathers: that is
Juster in the sight of Allah.
But if ye know not³⁶⁷²
Their father's names, (then they are)
Your Brothers in faith,

ادْعُوهُمْ لِأَبَائِهِمْ هُوَ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
فَإِن لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوا آبَاءَهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ
فِي الدِّينِ وَمَوَالِيكُمْ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ

3669. "Two hearts in his (one) breast": two inconsistent attitudes: such as serving Allah and Mammon; or subscribing to both Truth and Superstition; or hypocritically pretending one thing and intending another. Such a thing is against Allah's Law and Will. Apart from the condemnation of general hypocrisy, two pagan customs of the Times of Ignorance are mentioned, and their iniquity pointed out. See the notes 3670 and 3671.

3670. This was an evil Arab custom. He pronounced words importing that she was like his mother. See also lviii. 1-5. where this is condemned in the strongest terms and punishment is provided for it. A man sometimes said such words in a fit of anger; they did not affect him, but they degraded her position.

3671. If a man called another's son "his son", it might create complications with natural and normal relationships if taken too literally. It is pointed out that it is only a *facon de parler* in men's mouths, and should not be taken literally. The truth is the truth and cannot be altered by men's adopting "sons". "Adoption" in the technical sense is not allowed in Muslim Law. Those who have been "wives of your sons proceeding from your loins" are within the Prohibited Degrees of marriage; iv. 23: but this does not apply to "adopted" sons.

3672. Freedmen were often called after their master's name as the "son of so and so". When they were slaves, perhaps their father's names were lost altogether. It is more correct to speak of them as the *Maulā* of so and so. But *Maulā* in Arabic might also imply a close relationship of friendship: in that case, too, it is better to use the right term instead of the term "son". "Brother" is not objectionable because "Brotherhood" is used in a wider sense than "fatherhood" and is not likely to be misunderstood.

Or your friends
But there is no blame
On you if ye make³⁶⁷³
A mistake therein:
(What counts is)
The intention of your hearts:
And Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.

6. The Prophet is closer
To the Believers than
Their own selves,³⁶⁷⁴
And his wives are³⁶⁷⁵
Their mothers. Blood-relations
Among each other have
Closer personal ties,
In the Book of Allah,
Than (the Brotherhood of)
Believers and Muhājirs:³⁶⁷⁶

فِيمَا أَخْطَأْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَا يَكُنْ مَا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٥﴾

الَّتِي أُولَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُ
أُمَّهَاتُهُمْ وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِبَعْضٍ
فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ
إِلَّا أَنْ تَفْعَلُوا إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِكُمْ مَعْرُوفًا
كَانَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْكِتَابِ مَسْطُورًا ﴿٦﴾

3673. What is aimed at is to destroy the superstition of erecting false relationships to the detriment or loss of true blood relations. It is not intended to penalise an unintentional slip in the matter, and indeed, even if a man deliberately calls another his son or father, who is not his son or father, out of politeness or affection, "Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful". It is the action of mischievous parties which is chiefly reprehended, if they intend false insinuations. A mere mistake on their part does not matter.

3674. In human relationship the Prophet is entitled to more respect and consideration than blood-relations. The Believers should follow him rather than their fathers or mothers or brothers, where there is conflict of duties. He is even nearer-closer to our real interests—than our own selves.

3675. See last note. This Sūra establishes the dignity and position of the Holy Prophet's wives, who had a special mission and responsibility as Mothers of the Believers. They were not to be like ordinary women: they had to instruct women in religious matters visit and minister to those who were ill or in distress, and do other kindly offices in aid of the Prophet's mission.

3676. In the early Madinah period, there was a bond of brotherhood between its inhabitants and the Muslims who migrated. This bond was the reason for mutual inheritance between them. Once the stability of Muslim Ummah was established, the law of inheritance according to blood relationship was revealed superceding the previous brotherhood relationship. This verse and verse No. 75 of Sūra 8 abrogate the earlier arrangement.

Nevertheless do ye
What is just to your
Closest friends: such is
The writing in the Book
(Of Allah).

7. And remember We took
From the Prophets their Covenant:³⁶⁷⁷
And from thee:
From Noah, Abraham, Moses,
And Jesus the son of Mary:
We took from them
A solemn Covenant:

8. That (Allah) may question
The Truthful
About their truthfulness:³⁶⁷⁸
And He has prepared
For the Unbelievers
A grievous Chastisement.

SECTION 2.

9. O ye who believe!
Remember the Grace of Allah,
(Bestowed) on you, when

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَمِنْكَ وَمَنْ نُوحٍ
وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَى وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ
مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿٧﴾

لِيَسْأَلَ الصَّادِقِينَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ وَأَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿٨﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ

3677. Cf. iii. 81. There is an implied covenant on all created things to follow Allah's Law, which is the law of their being; see v. 1. But there is a special implied covenant with all Prophets, strict and solemn, that they shall carry out their mission, proclaim Allah's Truth without fear or favour, and be ever ready in His service in all circumstances. That gives them their position and dignity as explained in the last verse, and their tremendous responsibility in respect of the people whom they come to instruct and lead to the right Path.

3678. The men to whom Allah's Truth has been committed for promulgation will be asked in the Hereafter as to how the Truth fared in the world—how it was received, who opposed it, and who assisted it. Like all trustees, they will have to give a full account of their trust. Allah knows all, and it will not add to His information. But it will be evidence for and against those to whom it was preached, so that the responsibility of those who dishonoured it may be duly enforced. The primary custodians of spiritual Truth are the Prophets, but in descending degrees all men to whom Allah's Message comes are included.

There came down on you
Hosts (to overwhelm you):³⁶⁷⁹
But We sent against them³⁶⁸⁰
A hurricane and forces
That ye saw not:
But Allah sees (clearly)³⁶⁸¹
All that ye do.

10. Behold! they came on you
From above you and from
Below you, and behold,
The eyes swerved
And the hearts gaped³⁶⁸²
Up to the throats,
And ye imagined various
(Vain) thoughts about Allah!

إِذْ جَاءَ تَكُمْ جُنُودٌ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا وَجُنُودًا
لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ يَمَاتَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٦٨﴾

إِذْ جَاءَ وَكُم مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ أَسْفَلَ مِنكُمْ
وَإِذْ رَأَعَتْ الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَبَّغَتْ الْقُلُوبُ
الْحَنَاجِرَ وَنَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ الظُّنُونَا ﴿٦٩﴾

3679. In this verse is summed up the beginning and the end of the fateful struggle of the Siege of Madinah in A.H. 5. The composition of the unhallowed Confederacy that came to destroy Islam is referred to in the Introduction. They came with a force of ten to twelve thousand fighting men, an unprecedented army for that time and country. The battle is known as the Battle of the Trench.

3680. After a close investment of two to four weeks, during which the enemy were disheartened by their ill success, there was a piercing blast of the cold east wind. It was a severe winter, and February can be a very cold month in Madinah, which is about 3,000 ft. above the sea-level. The enemy's tents were torn up, their fires were extinguished, the sand and rain beat in their faces, and they were terrified by the portents against them. They had already well nigh fallen out amongst themselves, and beating a hasty retreat, they melted away. The Madinah fighting strength was no more than 3,000, and the Jewish tribe of the Banū Quraiza who were in their midst was a source of weakness as they were treacherously intriguing with the enemy. And further there were the Hypocrites: see n. 3666 above. But there were hidden forces that helped the Muslims. Besides the forces of nature there were angels, though invisible to them, who assisted the Muslims.

3681. Allah sees everything. Therefore we may conclude that the discipline and moral fervour of the Muslims, as well as the enemy's insincerities, intrigues, and reliance on brute force, were all contributory causes to his repulse, under Allah's dispensation. There were many hidden causes which neither party saw clearly.

3682. The psychology of the combatants is described with matchless vigour in the holy Text. The onrush of the enemy was really tremendous. The Trench round Madinah was between the defenders and the huge attacking force, which had some high ground behind them "above you": when any of them came through the valley or over the Trench, they seemed to come from below. The showers of arrows and stones on both sides must also have seemed to come from the air.

11. In that situation

Were the Believers tried:
They were shaken as by
A tremendous shaking.

هَذَا لَكَ آتِي الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَزُلْزِلُوا زَلْزَالًا شَدِيدًا ﴿١١﴾

12. And behold! The Hypocrites

And those in whose hearts
Is a disease say: "Allah
And His Messenger promised us
Nothing but delusions!"³⁶⁸³

وَلَا يَقُولُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
مَرَضٌ مَا وَعَدَنَا اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا ﴿١٢﴾

13. Behold! A party among them

Said: "Ye men of Yathrib!
Ye cannot stand (the attack)!
Therefore go back!"

وَلِذَلِكَ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ يَأْهَلُ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ
فَارْجِعُوا وَيَسْتَأْذِنُ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُولُونَ

And a band of them
Ask for leave of the Prophet,
Saying, "Truly our houses³⁶⁸⁴
Are bare and exposed," though
They were not exposed:
They intended nothing but
To run away.

إِنْ يُؤْتِنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ إِنْ يُرِيدُونَ إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿١٣﴾

14. And if an entry had
Been effected to them³⁶⁸⁵

From the sides of the (City),

وَلَوْ دُخِلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ أَمْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سَبَّحُوا بِالْفِتْنَةِ

3683. Before this year's mass attack on Madinah the Muslims had successfully reached the Syrian border on the north, and there were hopes of reaching Yemen in the south. The holy Prophet had seen signs of expansion and victory for the Muslims. Now that they were shut in within the Trench on the defensive, the Hypocrites taunted them with having indulged in delusive hopes. But the event showed that the hopes were not delusive. They were realised beyond expectations in a few years.

3684. All the fighting men of Madinah had come out of the City and camped in the open space between the City and the Trench that had been dug all round. The disaffected Hypocrites sowed defeatist rumours and pretended to withdraw for the defence of their homes, though their homes were not exposed, and were fully covered by the vigilant defensive force inside the Trench.

3685. The brunt of the fighting was on the north side, but the whole Trench was guarded. At one or two points enemy warriors did break in within the circuit of the Trench, but they were soon disposed off. Hadhrat 'Alī particularly distinguished himself in many fights, wearing the Prophet's own sword and armour. If any of the enemy had =

And they had been
Incited to sedition.
They would certainly have
Brought it to pass, with
None but a brief delay!

15. And yet they had already
Covenanted with Allah not to turn
Their backs, and a covenant³⁶⁸⁶
With Allah must (surely)
Be answered for.

16. Say: "Running away will not
Profit you if ye are
Running away from death³⁶⁸⁷
Or slaughter; and even if
(Ye do escape), no more
Than a brief (respite)
Will ye be allowed to enjoy!"

17. Say: "Who is it that can
Screen you from Allah
If it be His wish
To give you Punishment
Or to give you Mercy?"³⁶⁸⁸

لَا تَوَّاهَا وَمَا تَلْبَسُوا بِهَا إِلَّا يَسِيرًا ﴿١٤﴾

وَلَقَدْ كَانُوا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلُ لَا يُوَلُّونَ
الْأَدْبُرَ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ مَسْئُولًا ﴿١٥﴾

قُلْ لَنْ يَنْفَعَكُمْ الْفِرَارُ إِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ
أَوِ الْقَتْلِ وَإِذَا لَا تُمْنَعُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٦﴾

قُلْ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَعْصِمُكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوءًا
أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً وَلَا يَجِدُونَ لَهْمٍ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

= been able to penetrate into the City, the disaffected element, which was only sitting on the fence, would have risen against the Muslims at once—with no delay except what might have been necessary to put on their armour and arms.

3686. Apparently, after the battle of Uhud, certain men who had then shown cowardice were forgiven on undertaking that they would behave better next time. A solemn promise made to the Messenger of Allah is a promise to Allah, and it cannot be broken with impunity.

3687. The coward in a fight does not usually save himself from death. He is subject, after desertion, to the fury both of the enemy and of his own side for cowardice and desertion. Assuming that he did escape with his life, where could he go to? The brand of cowardice will be on him, and he will be Subject to the vengeance of his own people. In any case, his life would be in ignominy and would be brief, and he would have lost irretrievably the meed of valour.

3688. It is still worse if the cowardice or desertion is shown in a Cause, which, because of the high issues of truth and justice, may be called the Cause of Allah. How can any one escape Allah's Punishment? And in the same way, how can any one prevent =

Nor will they find for themselves,
Besides Allah, any protector
Or helper.

وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٧﴾

18. Verily Allah knows those
Among you who keep back
(Men) and those who say
To their brethren, "Come along
To us", but come not
To the fight except
For just a little while,

﴿١٨﴾ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ الْمُعَوِّقِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَائِلِينَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلَمْ إِلَيْنَا وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الْبَاسَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٨﴾

19. Covetous over you.³⁶⁸⁹
Then when fear comes,
Thou wilt see them looking
To thee, their eyes revolving,
Like one who
Faints from death: but when
The fear is past,
They will smite you
With sharp tongues, covetous³⁶⁹⁰
Of goods. Such men have
No faith, and so Allah
Has made their deeds³⁶⁹¹

أَشِحَّةً عَلَيْكُمْ فَإِذَا جَاءَ الْخَوْفُ رَأَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ
إِلَيْكَ تَدُورًا أَعْيُنُهُمْ كَالَّذِي يُغْشَى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ
فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوكُمْ بِأَلْسِنَةٍ حِدَادٍ
أَشِحَّةً عَلَى الْخَيْرِ أُولَئِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَأَحْبَطَ
اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

= another from obtaining Allah's Mercy by repentance and amendment? The better path, therefore, is to stand firm in Allah's Way, and if you fail through human weakness, to repent and seek Allah's Mercy. Cf. xxxiii. 24, and n. 3698 below.

3689. *Ashihhatan*: covetous, grasping, niggardly. Here the meaning is twofold: (1) they spare themselves in the fight as compared with you; they are niggardly with themselves as against you: they contribute little either in personal effort or with their money and resources; and (2) they covet any gains made or booty won, on the part of the real fighters.

3690. In times of danger, they would look to the holy Prophet for protection, and keep themselves snugly from the fight. When the danger is past, they will come and brag and wrangle and show their covetousness or greed for gain though they gave of themselves but sparingly.

3691. Even any good they may have done becomes vain because of their motives of envy, greed, and covetousness, and their cowardice.

Of none effect: and that
Is easy for Allah.³⁶⁹²

20. They think that the Confederates
Have not withdrawn; and if
The Confederates should come
(again),

They would wish they were
In the deserts (wandering)
Among the Bedouins, and³⁶⁹³
Seeking news about you
(From a safe distance);
And if they were
In your midst, they
Would fight but little.

SECTION 3.

21. Ye have indeed
In the Messenger of Allah
An excellent exemplar

يَحْسَبُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوا وَإِنْ يَأْتِ الْأَحْزَابُ
يَوَدُّوا لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ بَادُونَ فِي الْأَعْرَابِ يَسْأَلُونَ
عَنْ أَنْبَائِكُمْ وَلَوْ كَانُوا فِيكُمْ
مَاقِنَلُوا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٩﴾

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ

3692. It is not surprising that men's deeds fall as it were dead because there is no pure motive behind them. For men it may be difficult to probe motives, but it is easy for Allah, Whom hypocrisy or false show can never deceive.

3693. This completes the picture of the psychology of the Hypocrites, begun at verse 12. Let us analyse it. (1) When they first saw the enemy they were already in a defeatist mood, and thought all was over (verse 12). (2) Not content with disloyalty themselves, they tried to infect others, who made paltry excuses to withdraw from the fight (verse 13). (3) They were ready to betray the City to the enemy if once the enemy had gained entrance (verse 14). (4) They forgot all the promises of fidelity which they had previously sworn (verse 15). (5) In their paltry calculations they forgot that cowardice in war does not pay (verses 16-17). (6) Without taking much part in the actual defence, they were ready to talk glibly and claim a lion's share in the fruits of the victory (verses 18-19). (7) Even when the enemy had withdrawn, their cowardly minds were still afraid that the enemy would return, and were already meditating what they would do in that case: perhaps they would dwell in the deserts and spy on Madinah from a safe distance; and if caught in Madinah they would fight little and intrigue much.

It was a miracle that with such men in their midst, the holy Prophet and his band won through.

For him who hopes³⁶⁹⁴

In Allah and the Final Day,

And who remember

Allah much.³⁶⁹⁵

22. When the Believers saw
The Confederate forces,
They said: "This is
What Allah and His Messenger³⁶⁹⁶
Had promised us, and Allah
And His Messenger told us
What was true." And it
Only added to their faith
And their zeal in obedience.

23. Among the Believers are men
Who have been true to
Their covenant with Allah:
Of them some have died³⁶⁹⁷
And some (still) wait:
But they have never changed
(Their determination) in the least:

24. That Allah may reward
The men of Truth for
Their Truth, and punish

يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٦﴾

وَلَمَّا رَأَى الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْأَحْزَابَ قَالُوا هَذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا
اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. وَصَدَقَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. وَمَا زَادَهُمْ
إِلَّا إِيمَانًا وَتَسْلِيمًا ﴿٣٧﴾

مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ
فَمِنْهُمْ مَن قُتِلَ. وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَنْتَظِرُ
وَمَا بَدَّلُوا تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٣٨﴾

لِيَجْزِيَ اللَّهُ الصَّادِقِينَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ
الْمُنَافِقِينَ إِنْ شَاءَ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ إِنْ اللَّهُ كَانَ

3694. We now have the psychology of the Believers, -God-fearing men, led by that pattern of men and of leaders, Muḥammad Al-Muṣṭafā.

3695. Cf. xxvi. 227: see especially the last clause of that verse in a Makkan Sūra, which was amply fulfilled in Madinah.

3696. This is in contrast to what the Hypocrites said in verse 12 above. The divine promise of help and success is contingent upon our striving and faith. Nothing comes to the poltroon and the sceptical idler. Dangers and difficulties, and conflict with Evil, are foretold us, and we must meet them with fortitude and courage.

3697. In the fight for truth were (and are) many who sacrificed their all-resources, knowledge, influence, life itself-in the Cause, and never wavered. If they won the crown of martyrdom, they were blessed. Such a one was Sa'd ibn Mu'āz, the chief of the Aus tribe, the intrepid standard-bearer of Islam, who died of a wound he had received in the Battle of the Trench. Other heroes fought valiantly and lived, always ready to lay down their lives. Both classes were staunch: they never changed or wavered.

The Hypocrites if that be³⁶⁹⁸
His Will, or turn to them
In Mercy: for Allah is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

عَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٤﴾

25. And Allah turned back
The Unbelievers for (all)
Their fury: no advantage³⁶⁹⁹
Did they gain; and enough
Is Allah for the Believers
In their fight. And Allah
Is full of Strength,
Exalted in might.³⁷⁰⁰

وَرَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمَنَآلُوا خَيْرًا وَكَفَى
اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الْقِتَالَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيزًا ﴿٢٥﴾

26. And those of the people³⁷⁰¹
Of the Book who aided
Them—Allah did take them
Down from their strongholds³⁷⁰²
And cast terror into

وَأَنزَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَاهَرُوهُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ
مِنْ صَيَاصِيهِمْ وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ

3698. Before Allah's Mercy there is always room for repentance and forgiveness, even after treason and crime; but the forgiveness will be according to Allah's Will and Plan, which will judge the penitent's sincerity and capacity for good to the nicest degree in his favour. Cf. also xxxiii. 17 above.

3699. In spite of the mighty preparations and the great forces which the Makkans in concert with the Central Arabian Bedouins, the discontented Jews, and the treacherous Hypocrites, brought to the siege of Madinah, all their plans were frustrated. Their fury availed them nothing. They departed in hot haste. This was their last and dying effort. The initiative thereafter lay with the forces of Islam.

3700. For the meaning of 'Azîz, see n. 2818 to xxii. 40

3701. The reference is to the Jewish tribe of the Banū Quraiza. They counted among the citizens of Madinah and were bound by solemn engagements to help in the defence of the City. But on the occasion of the Confederate siege by the Quraish and their allies they intrigued with the enemies and treacherously aided them. Immediately after the siege was raised and the Confederates had fled in hot haste, the Prophet turned his attention to these treacherous "friends" who had betrayed his City in the hour of danger.

3702. The Banū Quraiza (see last note) were filled with terror and dismay when Madinah was free from the Quraish danger. They shut themselves up in their castles about three or four miles to the east (or north east) of Madinah, and sustained a siege of 25 days, after which they surrendered, stipulating that they would abide by the decision of their fate at the hands of Sa'd ibn Mu'āz, chief of the Aus tribe, with which they had been in alliance.

Their hearts, (so that)³⁷⁰³
Some ye slew, and some³⁷⁰⁴
Ye made captives.

27. And He made you heirs
Of their lands, their houses,
And their goods,
And of a land which³⁷⁰⁵
Ye had not frequented
(Before). And Allah has
Power over all things.

فَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ وَتَأْسِرُونَ فَرِيقًا ﴿٣٦﴾

وَأَوْزَعَكُمْ أَرْضَهُمْ وَيَدْيَرَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ وَأَرْضًا
لَمْ تَطَعُوهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا ﴿٣٧﴾

3703. Sa'd applied to them the Jewish Law of the Old Testament, not as strictly as the case warranted. In Deut. xx. 10-18, the treatment of a city "which is very far off from thee" is prescribed to be comparatively more lenient than the treatment of a city "of those people, which the Lord thy God does give thee for an inheritance," i.e., which is near enough to corrupt the religion of the Jewish people. The punishment for these is total annihilation: "thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth" (Deut. xx. 16). The more lenient treatment for far-off cities is described in the next note. According to the Jewish standard, then, the Banū Quraiza deserved total extermination—of men, women, and children. They were in the territory of Madinah itself, and further they had broken their engagements and helped the enemy.

3704. Sa'd adjudged them the milder treatment of the "far-off" cities which is thus described in the Jewish Law: "Thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword: but the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee" (Deut. xx. 13-14). The men of the Quraiza were slain: the women were sold as captives of war; and their lands and properties were divided among the Muhājirs.

3705. This part of the Sūra is considered a prophecy. It may refer to the conquest of Khaibar. Khaibar is a Harrat or volcanic tract, well-watered with many springs issuing from its basaltic rocks. It has a good irrigation system and produces good harvests of grain and dates in its wet valleys, while the outcrop of rocks in the high ground affords sites for numerous fortresses. In the holy Prophet's time there were Jewish colonies settled here, but they were a source of constant trouble especially after Siege of Madinah. It became a nest of all the hostile Jewish elements expelled for their treachery from elsewhere. Its capital, Khaibar, is about 90 miles due north of Madinah. Its inhabitants offered some resistance, and Ḥadhrat 'Alī, though he had just risen from a bed of illness, performed prodigies of valour. After its surrender, a land settlement was made, which retained the cultivators of the soil on the land, but brought them under control, so that no further focus of active hostility should remain near Madinah. The terms of the settlement will be found in Wāqidi.

SECTION 4.

28. O Prophet! say
To thy Consorts:
"If it be that ye desire
The life of this world,
And its glitter,—then come!³⁷⁰⁶
I will provide for your
Enjoyment and set you free
In a handsome manner.
29. But if ye seek Allah
And His Messenger, and
The Home of the Hereafter,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ إِن كُنْتُنَّ تُحِبُّونَ
الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ
أُمْتِعْكُمْ وَأَسْرِخْكُمْ سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٣٨﴾

وَلِن كُنْتُنَّ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالذَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ

3706. We now come to the subject of the position of the Consorts of Purity (*azwāj muṭahharāt*), the wives of the holy Prophet. Their position was not like that of ordinary women or ordinary wives. They had special duties and responsibilities. The only youthful marriage of the holy Prophet was his first marriage—that with Ḥadhrat Khadija, the best of women and the best of wives. He married her fifteen years before he received his call to Prophethood; their married life lasted for twenty-five years, and their mutual devotion was of the noblest, judged by spiritual as well as social standards. During her life he had no other wife, which was unusual for a man of his standing among his people. When she died, his age was 50, and but for two considerations, he would probably never have married again, as he was most abstemious in his physical life. The two considerations which governed his later marriages were: (1) compassion and clemency, as when he wanted to provide for suffering widows, who could not be provided for in any other way in that stage of society; some of them, like Sauda, had issue by their former marriage, requiring protection; (2) help in his duties of leadership, with women, who had to be instructed and kept together in the large Muslim family, where women and men had similar social rights. Ḥadhrat 'Āisha, daughter of Ḥadhrat Abū Bakr, was clever and learned, and in Ḥadīth she is an important authority on the life of the Prophet. Ḥadhrat Zainab, daughter of Khuzaima, was specially devoted to the poor; she was called the "Mother of the Poor". The other Zainab, daughter of Jahsh, also worked for the poor, for whom she provided from the proceeds of her manual work, as she was skilful in leather work. But all the Consorts in their high position had to work and assist as Mothers of the Ummat. Theirs were not idle lives, like those of Odalisques, either for their own pleasure or the pleasure of their husband. They are told here that they had no place in the sacred Household if they merely wished for ease or worldly glitter. If such were the case, they could be divorced and amply provided for.

Verily Allah has prepared
For the well-doers amongst you³⁷⁰⁷
A great reward.

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنْكُنَّ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٧﴾

30. O Consorts of the Prophet
If any of you were guilty
Of evident unseemly conduct,³⁷⁰⁸
The Punishment would be
Doubled to her, and that
Is easy for Allah.³⁷⁰⁹

يُنْفَسَاءُ النَّبِيِّ مِنْ بَآئٍ مِنْكُنَّ يُفَجِّشُ مُمَيَّنَاتٍ
يُضْعَفُ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ
عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٨﴾

31. But any of you that is
Devout in the service of
Allah and His Messenger,
And works righteousness,-
To her shall We grant
Her reward twice:³⁷¹⁰ and We
Have prepared for her
A generous Sustenance.³⁷¹¹

وَمَنْ يَقْتِ مِنْكُنَّ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ
صَالِحًا نُؤْتِهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا
كَرِيمًا ﴿٣٩﴾

3707. They were all well-doers. But being in their exalted position, they had extra responsibility, and they had to be specially careful to discharge it. In the same way their reward would be "great", for higher services bring higher spiritual satisfaction, though they were asked to deny themselves some of the ordinary indulgences of this life.

3708. "Evident unseemly conduct" i.e., proved misconduct, as opposed to false slanders from enemies. Such slanders were of no account, but if any of them had behaved in an unseemly manner, it would have been a worse offence than in the case of ordinary women, on account of their special position. Of course none of them were in the least guilty.

3709. Cf. xxxiii. 19 and n. 3692. The punishment in this life for a married woman's unchastity is very severe: for fornication, public flogging with a hundred stripes, under xxiv. 2; or for lewdness (see iv. 15) imprisonment; or stoning to death for adultery, according to certain precedents established in Canon Law. But here the question is not about this kind of punishment or this kind of offence. Even minor indiscretions, in the case of women who were patterns of decorum, would have been reprehensible; and the punishment in the Hereafter is on a higher plane, which we can scarcely understand.

3710. Twice, i.e., once as a righteous woman, and again as a Mother of the Believers, serving the believing women and thus showing her devotion to Allah and His Apostle.

3711. Sustenance: all that is necessary to sustain her in happiness in her future life.

32. O Consorts of the Prophet!

Ye are not like any
Of the (other) women:³⁷¹²
If ye do fear (Allah),
Be not too complaisant
Of speech, lest one
In whose heart is
A disease should be moved
With desire: but speak ye
A speech (that is) just.³⁷¹³

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النِّسَاءُ الَّتِي لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ
إِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ
الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٢﴾

33. And stay quietly in

Your houses, and make not
A dazzling display, like
That of the former Times
Of Ignorance; and establish
Regular Prayer, and give
Zakat and obey³⁷¹⁴
Allah and His Messenger.
And Allah only wishes
To remove all abomination
From you, ye Members³⁷¹⁵
Of the Family, and to make
You pure and spotless.

وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ
الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ
وَاطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ
عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ
تَطْهِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

3712. This is the core of the whole passage. The Prophet's Consorts were not like ordinary women, nor was their marriage an ordinary marriage, in which only personal or social considerations enter. They had a special position and special responsibilities, in the matter of guiding and instructing women who came into the fold of Islam. Islam is a Way of Life, and the Muslims are a family: women have as much place in Islam as men, and their intimate instruction must obviously be through women.

3713. While they were to be kind and gentle to all, they were to be guarded on account of their special position lest people might misunderstand or take advantage of their kindness. They were to make no vulgar worldly displays as in the times of Paganism.

3714. Obedience to Allah's Law sums up all duties. Regular Prayer (seeking nearness to Allah) and Regular Charity (doing good to fellow-creatures) are mentioned as special features of our Religion.

3715. Ahl al-Bait: *i.e.* the household of the Prophet (S.A.S) which includes his wives as well as his daughter Faṭīma, his son-in-law 'Ali and his grandsons, Ḥasan and Ḥusain generally in accordance with the narrative of Umm Salama.

34. And recite³⁷¹⁶ what is
Rehearsed to you in your
Homes, of the Signs of Allah
And His Wisdom:

For Allah is All-Subtle,

All-Aware.³⁷¹⁷

SECTION 5.

35. For Muslim men and women,³⁷¹⁸
For believing men and women,
For devout men and women,
For true men and women,
For men and women who are
Patient and constant, for men
And women who humble themselves,
For men and women who give³⁷¹⁹
In charity, for men and women
Who fast
For men and women who
Guard their chastity, and
For men and women who

وَأَذْكُرَنَّ مَا يَتْلَى فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ
اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾

إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ
وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ
وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ
فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ
اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ
مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

3716. The verb is *uzkurna*, feminine gender, as referring to the *Azwāj* again. It means not only "remember", but "recite", "teach", "make known", "publish", the Message which ye learn at home from the holy Prophet, the fountain of spiritual knowledge. The "Signs of Allah" refer specially to the verses of the Qur-ān, and Wisdom to the resulting Instruction derived therefrom.

3717. Cf. xxii. 63 and n. 2844. Allah's understanding is perfect in every detail, however minute. Therefore use His Revelation for every phase of life.

3718. Islam, or submitting our will to Allah's Will, includes all the virtues, as particularly specified in this verse. See n. 3720.

3719. A number of Muslim virtues are specified here, but the chief stress is laid on the fact that these virtues are as necessary to women as to men. Both sexes have spiritual as well as human rights and duties in an equal degree, and the future "reward" of the Hereafter.

Engage much in Allah's
remembrance³⁷²⁰

For them has Allah prepared
Forgiveness and great reward.

36. It is not fitting

For a Believer, man or woman,
When a matter has been decided
By Allah and His Messenger,
To have any option
About their decision:³⁷²¹
If any one disobey Allah
And His Messenger, he is indeed
On a clearly wrong Path.

37. Behold! thou didst say

To one who had received
The grace of Allah³⁷²²
And thy favour: "Retain thou
(In wedlock) thy wife,
And fear Allah." But thou

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
أَمْرًا أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَعْصِ
اللَّهُ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾

وَاذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ
أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَاتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفِي
فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ وَاللَّهُ

3720. The virtues referred to are: (1) Faith, hope, and trust in Allah, and in His benevolent government of the world; (2) devotion and service in practical life; (3) love and practice of truth, in thought and intention, word and deed; (4) patience and constancy, in suffering and in right endeavour; (5) humility, the avoidance of an attitude of arrogance and superiority; (6) charity, i.e., help to the poor and unfortunate ones in life, a special virtue arising out of the general duty of service (No. 2); (7) self-control, typically in food, but generally in all appetites; (8) chastity, purity in sex life, purity in motive, thought, word, and deed; and (9) constant attention to Allah's Message, and cultivation of the desire to get nearer to Allah.

3721. We must not put our own wisdom in competition with Allah's wisdom. Allah's decree is often known to us by the logic of facts. We must accept it loyally, and do the best we can to help in our own way to carry it out. We must make our will consonant to the Allah's Will.

3722. This was Zaid son of Haritha, one of the first to accept the faith of Islam. He was a freedman of the holy Prophet, who loved him as a son and gave him in marriage his own cousin Zainab. The marriage however turned out to be unhappy. See next note.

Didst hide in thy heart³⁷²³
 That which Allah was about
 To make manifest: thou didst
 Fear the people, but it is
 More fitting that thou shouldst.³⁷²⁴
 Fear Allah. Then when Zaid
 Had dissolved (his marriage)
 With her³⁷²⁵
 We joined her
 In marriage to thee:
 In order that (in future)
 There may be no difficulty
 To the Believers in (the matter
 Of) marriage with the wives³⁷²⁶
 Of their adopted sons, when
 The latter have dissolved
 (Their marriage) with them.
 And Allah's command must
 Be fulfilled.

أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَهُ فَلَمَّا قَضَى زَيْدٌ مَتَاهَا وَطَرًا
 زَوَّجْنَا كَهَا إِلَيْنَا لِيَكُونَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ حَرَجٌ
 فِي أَنْزُوجِ أَدْعِيَاءِهِمْ إِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا
 وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ مَفْعُولًا ﴿٣٧﴾

3723. Zaid's marriage with the Prophet's cousin Zainab daughter of Jahsh did not turn out happy. Zainab the high-born looked down upon Zaid the freedman who had been a slave. And he was not comely to look at. Both were good people in their own way, and both loved the Prophet, but there was mutual incompatibility and this is fatal to married life. Zaid wished to divorce her, but the Prophet asked him to hold his hand, and he obeyed. She was closely related to the Prophet; he had given a handsome marriage gift on her marriage to Zaid; and people would certainly talk if such a marriage was broken off. But marriages are made on earth, not in heaven, and it is no part of Allah's Plan to torture people in a bond which should be a source of happiness but actually is a source of misery. Zaid's wish—indeed the mutual wish of the couple—was for the time being put away, but it became eventually an established fact, and everybody came to know of it.

3724. All actual facts are referred to Allah. When the marriage is unhappy, Islam permits the bond to be dissolved, provided that all interests concerned are safeguarded. Apparently there was no issue here to be considered. Zainab had to be considered, and she obtained the dearest wish of her heart in being raised to be a Mother of the Believers, with all the dignity and responsibility of that position. See n. 3706 to xxxiii. 28 above.

3725. The 'Iddat or period of waiting after divorce (ii. 228, and n. 254) was duly completed.

3726. The Pagan superstition and taboo about adopted sons had to be destroyed. See xxxiii. 4-5 and notes 3671-3672 above.

38. There can be no difficulty
To the Prophet in what
Allah has indicated to him³⁷²⁷
As a duty: It was
The practice (approved) of Allah
Amongst those of old
That have passed away.³⁷²⁸
And the command of Allah
Is a decree determined.³⁷²⁹

مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيمَا فَرَضَ
اللَّهُ لَهُ سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ قَدَرًا مَقْدُورًا ﴿٣٨﴾

39. (It is the practice of those)
Who preach the Messages
Of Allah, and fear Him,
And fear none but Allah.
And enough is Allah
To call (men) to account.³⁷³⁰

الَّذِينَ يُبَلِّغُونَ رِسَالَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهُ
وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ أَحَدًا إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ﴿٣٩﴾

40. Muḥammad is not
The father of any
Of your men, but (he is)
The Messenger of Allah,
And the Seal of the Prophets.³⁷³¹
And Allah has full knowledge
Of all things.

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ أَبَا أَحَدٍ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمًا ﴿٤٠﴾

3727. See n. 3724 above.

3728. The next clause is parenthetical. These words then connect on with verse 39. Among the people of the Book there was no taboo about adopted sons, as there was in Pagan Arabia.

3729. Allah's ordering of the world is always full of wisdom. Even our unhappiness and misery may actually have a great meaning for ourselves or others or both. If our first Plan seems to fail, we must not murmur and repine, but retrieve the position by adopting a course which appears to be the best possible in the light of our duties as indicated by Allah. For Allah's Plan is framed on universal principles that cannot be altered by human action.

3730. Our responsibility is to Allah, not to men. Men's opinions may have a bearing on our own interpretation of duty, but when that duty is clear, our only course is to obey Allah rather than men.

3731. When a document is sealed, it is complete, and there can be no further addition. The holy Prophet Muḥammad closed the long line of Messengers. Allah's teaching is and will always be continuous, but there has been and will be no Prophet =

SECTION 6.

41. O ye who believe!
Remember Allah,
With much remembrance;

42. And glorify Him
Morning and evening.

43. He it is Who sends³⁷³²
Blessings on you, as do
His angels, that He may
Bring you out from the depths
Of Darkness into Light:
And He is Full of Mercy
To the Believers.³⁷³³

44. Their salutation on the Day
They meet Him will be
"Peace!"; and He has
Prepared for them
A generous Reward.

45. O Prophet! Truly We
Have sent thee as
A Witness, a Bearer³⁷³⁴
Of Glad Tidings,
And a Warner,--

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٤١﴾

وَسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلَائِكَتُهُ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ
مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ
رَحِيمًا ﴿٤٣﴾

تَحِيَّاتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهُ وَسَلَّمَ وَاعْدَهُمْ أَجْرًا
كَرِيمًا ﴿٤٤﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا
وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾

= after Muḥammad. The later ages will want thinkers and reformers, not Prophets. This is not an arbitrary matter. It is a decree full of knowledge and wisdom: "for Allah has full knowledge of all things."

3732. *Blessings*: good wishes and mercies. Allah wishes well to all His creatures, and His angels carry out His work, for their will is in all things His Will. His chief and everlasting blessing is that He gives us a knowledge of the spiritual world, and helps us towards its attainment.

3733. His Mercies are for all His creatures, but for those who believe and trust in Him, there are special mercies, "a generous Reward" as in the next verse.

3734. The Prophet was sent by Allah in five capacities. Three are mentioned in this verse, and the other two in the verse following. (1) He comes as a *Witness* to all men about the spiritual truths which had been obscured by ignorance or superstition, or by the dust of sectarian controversy. He did not come to establish a new religion or sect. =

46. And as one who invites
To Allah's (Grace) by His leave,³⁷³⁵
And as a Lamp
Spreading Light.

47. Then give the glad tidings
To the Believers, that
They shall have from Allah
A very great Bounty.³⁷³⁶

48. And obey not (the behests)
Of the Unbelievers
And the Hypocrites,
And disregard their insolence³⁷³⁷
But put thy trust in Allah.
For enough is Allah
As a Disposer of affairs.

49. O ye who believe!
When ye marry believing women,
And then divorce them

وَدَاعِيًا إِلَى اللَّهِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَسِرَاجًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٤٦﴾

وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بِأَنَّهُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٤٧﴾

وَلَا تَطِيعِ الْكَافِرِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَدَعِ أَذْنَهُمْ
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٨﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نَكَحْتُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
ثُمَّ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِن قَبْلِ أَن تَمْسُوهُنَّ فَمَا لَكُمْ

= He came to teach Religion. He is also a witness to Allah about men's doings and how they receive Allah's Message: see iv. 41 and n. 560. (2) He comes as a bearer of the *Glad Tidings* of the Mercy of Allah. No matter how far men may have transgressed, they have hope if they believe, repent, and live a good life. (3) He also comes as a *Warner* to those who are heedless. This life will not last. There is a Future Life, and that is all-important. See next note.

3735. See last note. The two other capacities in which the Prophet was sent are here specified. (4) He comes as one who has a right to *invite* all men to repentance and the forgiveness of sins: but he does this, not of his own authority, but by the permission and authority given to him by Allah. This is said lest people may deify the Prophet as they did with other Prophets before him. The personal responsibility of each individual remains, but the Prophet can lead him on the Right and help him. (5) The Prophet also comes as a *Light* or a *Lamp* (*Sirāj*) to illuminate the whole world. In lxxi.16 and elsewhere the same word (*Sirāj*) is used for the sun. The comparison is apt. When the sun appears, all the lesser lights pale before its light. And the Message of Islam, i.e., of the Universal Religion, is to diffuse Light everywhere.

3736. The light of Islam is the Biggest Bounty possible and if they truly understand it, they should glory in it.

3737. Men of little or no Faith will often lay down the law and tell better men than themselves what to do. In case of refusal they shower insults and injuries. No attention is to be paid to them. It is their way. All will be right under the government of Allah.

Before ye have touched them,
No period of 'Iddat'³⁷³⁸
Have ye to count
In respect of them:
So give them a present,³⁷³⁹
And release them
In a handsome manner.³⁷⁴⁰

50. O Prophet! We have
Made lawful to thee³⁷⁴¹
Thy wives to whom thou
Hast paid their dowers,³⁷⁴²
And those whom thy
Right hand possesses out of
The captives of war whom³⁷⁴³
Allah has assigned to thee;
And daughters of thy paternal
Uncles and aunts, and daughters

عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عِدَّةٍ تَعْدُونَهَا فَمَعَهُنَّ وَسِرَّوَهُنَّ
سَرَاحًا جَمِيلًا ﴿٥١﴾

يَتَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ إِنَّا أَحْلَلْنَا لَكَ أَزْوَاجَ النَّبِيِّ ءَاتَيْتَ
أُجُورَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِينُكَ مِمَّا أَفَاءَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمِكَ وَبَنَاتِ عَمَّتِكَ
وَبَنَاتِ خَالِكَ وَبَنَاتِ خَلَّتِكَ الَّتِي هَاجَرْنَ
مَعَكَ وَأَمْرَةٌ مُؤْمِنَةٌ إِنْ وَهَبْتَ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ

3738. See n. 254 to ii. 228. The 'Iddat counts for three monthly courses, or if there are no courses, for three months: see lxx. 4.

3739. This present is held, by some, to be in addition to the half dower due to them under ii. 237. If the dower had not yet been fixed, the gift would presumably be larger, and it would absorb the gift prescribed in ii. 236.

3740. The gifts should be given with good grace, and the freedom of the woman should not be interfered with in any way. If she chooses to marry again immediately, no obstacle should be placed in her path. On no pretext should she be allowed to remain doubtful about her freedom.

3741. This introduces no new exemption or privilege. Verses 50-52 merely declare the points in which, on account of the special circumstances (see n. 3706 above), the Prophet's marriages differed from those of ordinary Muslims. This is considered under four heads, which we shall examine in the four notes following.

3742. Head 1. Marriage with dower (iv. 4): this is the universal Muslim marriage. The difference in the Prophet's case was that there was no limitation to the number of four (iv. 3), and women of the People of the Book (v. 6) were not among his wives, but only Believers. These points are not expressly mentioned here, but are inferred by his actual practice. Obviously women who are expected to instruct other women in Islam must be Muslims.

3743. Head 2. Women Prisoners of War: the same remark as in the last note.

Of thy maternal uncles
 And aunts, who migrated³⁷⁴⁴
 With thee;
 And any believing woman
 Who gives herself
 To the Prophet if the Prophet³⁷⁴⁵
 Wishes to wed her;-this
 Only for thee, and not
 For the Believers (at large);
 We know what We have
 Appointed for them as to³⁷⁴⁶
 Their wives and the captives
 Whom their right hands
 Possess;-in order that³⁷⁴⁷
 There should be no difficulty
 For thee. And Allah is
 Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.³⁷⁴⁸

إِنْ أَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ أَنْ يَسْتَنْكِحَهَا خَالِصَةً لَّكَ
 مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا
 عَلَيْهِمْ فِي أَزْوَاجِهِمْ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ
 أَيْمَانُهُمْ لِكَيْلَا يَكُونَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٥٠﴾

3744. Head 3. These are first cousins, and not within the Prohibited Degrees of Marriage (see iv. 23-24). These are specially mentioned here by way of limitation. None of them could marry the Prophet unless she had performed the Hijrat with him.

3745. Head 4. A believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet: obviously this case, like the last, is only applicable to the Prophet, and it is hedged round with the limitation that the Prophet considers it suitable.

3746. The ordinary law of Muslim marriage will be found chiefly in ii. 221-235, iv. 19-25, iv. 34-35, and v. 6.

3747. The words "this only for thee ...right hands possess" are parenthetical, and the words "in order that..." connect on with the previous clauses beginning with "O Prophet, We have made lawful....wishes to wed her".

3748. Marriage is an important relationship not only in our physical life, but in our moral and spiritual life, and its effects extend not only to the parties themselves but to children and future generations. A number of special problems arise according to special circumstances. Every man and woman must seriously consider all sides of the question and must do the best in his or her power to temper instincts and inclinations with wisdom and guidance from Allah. Allah wishes to make every one's path easy, for He is indeed "Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful".

51. Thou mayest defer (the turn³⁷⁴⁹
 Of) any of them that thou
 Pleasest, and thou mayest receive
 Any thou pleasest: and there
 Is no blame on thee if
 Thou invite one whose (turn)³⁷⁵⁰
 Thou hadst set aside.
 This were nigher to
 The cooling of their eyes,³⁷⁵¹
 The prevention of their grief,
 And their satisfaction—
 That of all of them –
 With that which thou
 Hast to give them:³⁷⁵²

تُرْجَىٰ مِنْ نَشَاءٍ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُؤَيَّ إِلَىٰكَ مِنْ نَشَاءٍ
 وَمِنْ ابْتِغَايَةٍ مِمَّنْ عَزَلْتَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْنَا فِ ذَٰلِكَ
 أَذْنَىٰ أَنْ نَقْرَأَ عَلَيْهِنَّ وَلَا نُخَبِّرَنَّ وَيَرْضَيْنَ
 بِمَا آتَيْنَهُنَّ كُلُّهُنَّ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
 وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَلِيمًا ﴿٥١﴾

3749. In iv. 3 it is laid down that more than one wife is not permissible "if ye fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with them". In a Muslim household there is no room for a "favourite wife" in the sense that such a wife is recipient of favours denied to other wives. In the special circumstances of the Prophet there were more than one, and he usually observed the rule of equality with them, in other things as well as in the rotation of conjugal rights. But considering that his marriages after he was invested with the Prophetic office were mainly dictated by other than conjugal or personal considerations (see n. 3706. xxxiii. 28), the rotation could not always be observed, though he observed it as much as possible. This verse absolves him from absolute adherence to a fixed rotation. There are other interpretations, but I agree with most of the Commentators in the view I have explained.

3750. Where the rotation was for some reason interfered with, it was permissible, by another interference with the usual rotation, to bring satisfaction to one who had been previously set aside. This was not only permitted, but commended, as tending to remove dissatisfaction and cheer and comfort the eyes and hearts of those who were disappointed in their turn.

3751. *Cooling the eyes*: an Arabic idiom for cheering and comforting eyes which yearn to see those they love. A verse of Zeb-un-nisāa, daughter of the Mughal Exporer Aurangzeb, may be rendered thus:

"My heart is glad whenever lover-wise
 I dwell upon thy beauties and thy grace!
 But how can I content my hungry eyes,
 That ask continually to see thy face?"

3752. There was not much in the way of worldly goods or satisfaction that the Prophet could give them: see xxxiii. 28 above. But he was kind, just, and true;—the best of men to his family, and they all clung to him.

And Allah knows (all)
That is in your hearts:³⁷⁵³
And Allah is All-Knowing,
Most Forbearing.

52. It is not lawful for thee
(To marry more) women³⁷⁵⁴
After this, nor to change
Them for (other) wives,
Even though their beauty
Attract thee, except any
Thy right hand should
Possess (as handmaidens):
And Allah doth watch
Over all things.

SECTION 7.

53. O ye who believe!
Enter not the Prophet's houses,-
Until leave is given you,-³⁷⁵⁵

لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ الْإِسَاءُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَلَا أَنْ تَبَدَّلَ مِنْ
مَنْ أَنْزَلَتْ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ حُسْنُهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ
بَيْمَنُكَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رَقِيبًا ﴿٥٢﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتَ النَّبِيِّ
إِلَّا أَنْ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ إِلَى طَعَامٍ غَيْرَ نَبْظِرِينَ إِنَّهُ

3753. Our human hearts, however good on the whole, may yet, in their motives, have possibly some baser admixture. The feminine hearts are not more immune in this respect than the masculine. But everything is known and understood by Allah. Who will in His mercy make all allowance for our human weaknesses. His title of "Most Forbearing" (*Halim*) also gives His devoted worshippers the cue: why should we not also forbear with the faults and weaknesses of our neighbours and fellow-creatures?

3754. This was revealed in A.H. 7. After that the Prophet did not marry again, except the handmaiden Mary the Copt, who was sent as a present by the Christian Muqauqas of Egypt. She became the mother of Ibrāhīm, who died in his infancy.

3755. The rules of refined social ethics is as necessary to teach to-day as it was with the rude Arabs whom the holy Prophet had to teach in his day. Those mentioned in this verse may be briefly recapitulated thus: (1) Enter not a friend's house without permission; (2) if invited to dine, don't go too early; you are asked to dine, not to wait for the preparation of the food; (3) be there at the time appointed, so that you enter when you are expected and invited; (4) after the meal, don't get familiar with your host, especially if there is a great distance between him and you; (5) don't waste time in tittle-tattle, causing inconvenience and perhaps annoyance to your host; (6) understand what is proper behaviour for you: he may be too polite to ask to depart. All this has a social bearing: respect and delicate consideration for others are among the highest virtues.

For a meal, (and then)
Not (so early as) to wait
For its preparation: but when
Ye are invited, enter;
And when ye have taken
Your meal, disperse,
Without seeking familiar talk.
Such (behaviour) annoys
The Prophet he is shy
To dismiss you, but
Allah is not shy
(To tell you) the truth.

And when ye
Ask (his ladies)³⁷⁵⁶
For anything ye want,
Ask them from before
A screen: that makes
For greater purity for
Your hearts and for theirs.
Nor is it right for you³⁷⁵⁷
That ye should annoy³⁷⁵⁸
Allah's Messenger, or that
Ye should marry his widows

وَلَكِنْ إِذَا دُعِيتُمْ فَادْخُلُوا إِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوا
وَلَا مُمْسِكَينَ لِحَدِيثِ إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذَى
الَّذِينَ فَيَسْتَعِجِلُّ مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَعِجِلُّ
مِنَ الْحَقِّ إِذَا سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَاسْأَلُوهُنَّ
مِنْ وَرَاءِ حِجَابٍ ذَلِكُمْ أَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوبِكُمْ
وَقُلُوبِهِنَّ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْذُوا رَسُولَ
اللَّهِ وَلَا أَنْ تَنْكِحُوا أَزْوَاجَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَبَدًا
إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمًا ﴿٥٣﴾

3756. The actual manner of showing respect to ladies may be different in different circumstances. But it is an essential principle of good society to show the greatest deference to them. To the "Mothers of the Believers" this respect was due in an exceptional degree.

3757. Considering his position, the holy Prophet deserved to be respected before all other men and nothing should be done to cause him the least harm and annoyance. This applied not only during his life-time, but it applies now, because his teaching and personality are alive to us. It was not fitting that his widows, both for their own position and for the position of the Prophet, should be married by other men after him. And this mark of respect was duly observed in history.

3758. "Annoy": *Āzā* (IV) may equally mean: to vex, to cause hurt or injury, to insult, to ill-treat by slander or unseemly conduct, or hurt the feelings of (some one). The Prophet came with a divine mission to teach and reclaim the world, and he is entitled to the respect of all, even of those who do not consciously acknowledge his mission, for his mission works constantly like the forces of nature. In a minor degree the "Mothers of the Believers" are also entitled to respect.

After him at any time.
Truly such a thing is
In Allah's sight an enormity.

54. Whether ye reveal anything³⁷⁵⁹
Or conceal it, verily
Allah has full knowledge
Of all things.

55. There is no blame
(On those ladies if they
Appear) before their fathers³⁷⁶⁰
Or their sons, their brothers,
Or their brothers' sons,
Or their sisters' sons,
Or their women,
Or the (slaves) whom
Their right hands possess.
And, (ladies), fear Allah;
For Allah is Witness
To all things.

إِنْ تَبْدُوا شَيْئًا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٥٤﴾

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي آبَائِهِمْ وَلَا أَبْنَائِهِمْ
وَلَا إِخْوَانِهِمْ وَلَا أَبْنَاءَ إِخْوَانِهِمْ
وَلَا نِسَاءَهُمْ وَلَا مَمْلُوكَاتٍ أَيْمَنَهُمْ وَأَتَقِينَ اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ﴿٥٥﴾

3759. Respect or opposition may be shown overtly or in devious hidden ways. All good and evil are open before Allah, and He will take due account of everything.

3760. This refers back to the Hijāb (screen) portion of verse 53 above. The list of those before whom the Prophet's wives could appear informally without a screen is their fathers, sons, brothers, brothers' or sisters' sons, serving women, and household slaves or servants. Commentators include uncles (paternal and maternal) under the heading "fathers". "Their women" is held to mean all women who belonged to the Muslim community: other women were in the position of strangers, whom they received not so intimately, but with the formality of a screen as in the case of men. Compare with this list and the wording here the list and the wording in xxiv. 31, which applies to all Muslim women. In the list here, husbands and husbands' relatives are not necessary to be mentioned, as we are speaking of a single household, that of the central figure in Islam: nor men-servants nor children, as there were none. In the wording, note that for Muslim women generally, no screen or Hijāb (Parda) is mentioned, but only a veil to cover the bosom, and modesty in dress. The screen was a special feature of honour for the Prophet's household, introduced about five or six years before his death.

56. Allah and His Angels,
Send blessings on the Prophet;³⁷⁶¹
O ye that believe!
Send ye blessings on him,
And salute him
With all respect.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

57. Those who annoy³⁷⁶²
Allah and His Messenger—
Allah has cursed them
In this world and
In the Hereafter,
And has prepared for them
A humiliating Punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿٥٧﴾

58. And those who annoy
Believing men and women
Undeservedly, bear (on
themselves)³⁷⁶³
A calumny and a glaring sin.

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ
بِغَيْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوا فَقَدْ احْتَمَلُوا بُهْتَانًا
وَأَسْأَمِيًّا ﴿٥٨﴾

SECTION 8.

59. O Prophet! Tell
Thy wives and daughters,

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

3761. Allah and His angels honour and bless the holy Prophet as the greatest of men. We are asked to honour and bless him all the more because he took upon himself to suffer the sorrows and afflictions of this life in order to guide us to Allah's Mercy and the highest inner Life.

3762. Cf. n. 3758 above.

3763. Cf. iv. 112. In that passage we were told that any one who was himself guilty but accused an innocent man of his guilt, was obviously placing himself in double jeopardy; first, for his own original guilt, and secondly for the guilt of a false accusation. Here we take two classes of men instead of two individuals. The men and women of faith (if they deserve the name) and doing all they can to serve Allah and humanity. If they are insulted, hurt, or annoyed by those whose sins they denounce, the latter suffer the penalties of a double guilt, viz., their sins to start with, and the insults or injuries they offer to those who correct them. Instead of resenting the preaching of Truth, they should welcome it and profit by it.

And the believing women,³⁷⁶⁴
 That they should cast
 Their outer garments over³⁷⁶⁵
 Their persons (when out of doors):
 That is most convenient,
 That they should be known³⁷⁶⁶
 (As such) and not molested.
 And Allah is Oft-Forgiving,³⁷⁶⁷
 Most Merciful.

يَذَرْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِثْلَهُنَّ جَلْبَابَهُنَّ ذَلِكَ أَذْنَى أَنْ يَعْرِفْنَ
 فَلَا يُؤْذَنَنَّ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٥٩﴾

60. Truly, if the Hypocrites,
 And those in whose hearts
 Is a disease, and those who
 Stir up sedition in the City,³⁷⁶⁸
 Desist not, We shall certainly
 Stir thee up against them:
 Then will they not be
 Able to stay in it
 As thy neighbours
 For any length of time:

لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
 مَرَضٌ وَالْمُرْجِفُونَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ لَنُغْرِبَنَّكَ
 بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُونَكَ فِيهَا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٦٠﴾

3764. This is for all Muslim women, those of the Prophet's household, as well as the others. They were asked to cover themselves with outer garments when walking out of doors.

3765. *Jilbāb*, plural *Jalābīb*: an outer garment; a long gown covering the whole body, or a cloak covering the neck and bosom.

3766. The object was not to restrict the liberty of women, but to protect them from harm and molestation. In the East and in the West a distinctive public dress of some sort or another has always been a badge of honour or distinction, both among men and women. This can be traced back on the earliest civilisations. Assyrian Law in its palmiest days (say, 7th century B.C.), enjoined the veiling of married women and forbade the veiling of slaves and women of ill fame: see *Cambridge Ancient History*, III. 107.

3767. That is, if a Muslim woman sincerely tries to observe this rule, but owing to human weakness falls short of the ideal, then "Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful".

3768. It was necessary to put down all kinds of unseemly conduct in the Prophet's City. And here is the warning in the plainest terms. And the warning had its effect. The "Hypocrites" were men who pretended to be in Islam but whose manners and morals were anti-Islamic. Those "with diseased hearts" may have been the ones that molested innocent women. "Those who stirred up sedition" put false rumours in circulation to excite the crowd. Alas! we must ask ourselves the question: "Are these conditions present among us to-day?"

61. They shall have a curse³⁷⁶⁹

On them: wherever they
Are found, they shall be
Seized and slain.

مَلْعُونِينَ أَيْنَمَا ثَقِفُوا أَحَدًا وَاقْتَلُوا
تَقْتِيلًا ﴿٦١﴾

62. (Such was) the practice
(Approved) of Allah among those³⁷⁷⁰
Who lived aforetime:
No change wilt thou find
In the practice (approved)
Of Allah.

سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ فِي الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ
وَلَنْ يَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ تَبْدِيلًا ﴿٦٢﴾

63. Men ask thee concerning
The Hour: say, "The knowledge³⁷⁷¹
Thereof is with Allah (alone)":
And what will make thee
Understand?—perchance
The Hour is nigh!

يَسْأَلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا يَذْكُرُكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُونُ قَرِيبًا ﴿٦٣﴾

64. Verily Allah has cursed
The Unbelievers and prepared
For them a Blazing Fire,—

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَنَ الْكَافِرِينَ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيرًا ﴿٦٤﴾

65. To dwell therein for ever:
No protector will they find,
Nor helper.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٦٥﴾

3769. They will be deprived of the blessing and guidance of Allah. They sought to cause disorder in Allah's world—moral as well as material; but they will themselves be destroyed. Those who become outlaws, rebels against the Law, will themselves be destroyed by the Law.

3770. The Jewish law was much more severe; see notes 3703 and 3704 to xxxiii. 26. That severity is mitigated in Islam. But it is a universal principle that any element which deliberately refuses to obey law and aggressively tries to subvert all order in society, secretly and openly, must be effectively suppressed, for the preservation of the life and health of the general community.

3771. Cf. vii. 187 and n. 1159, where the idea is further explained. The knowledge of the Final Hour is with Allah alone. The fact of its coming is certain; the exact time when it will come has not been revealed. If it were, it would disturb our thoughts and life. "Heavy were its burden through the heavens and the earth." But at any given moment it cannot be far distant. In theological language, each individual's death is a Final Hour, a *Qiyāmat Ṣuġrā* (Lesser Day of Judgment). In that sense it is not the same for all individuals, and is certainly always near.

66. The Day that their faces
Will be turned over³⁷⁷²
In the Fire, they will say:
"Woe to us! would that
We had obeyed Allah
And obeyed the Messenger!"

يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُولُونَ
يَا لَيْتَنَا أَطَعْنَا اللَّهَ وَأَطَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ ﴿١٦﴾

67. And they would say:
"Our Lord! We obeyed
Our chiefs and our great ones,
And they misled us
As to the (right) path.

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكِبَرَاءَنَا
فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلَ ﴿١٧﴾

68. "Our Lord! Give them
Double Chastisement³⁷⁷³
And curse them
With a very great Curse!"

رَبَّنَا آتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ
وَالْعَنَّهُمْ لَعْنًا كَبِيرًا ﴿١٨﴾

SECTION 9.

69. O ye who believe!
Be ye not like those
Who hurt Moses,³⁷⁷⁴
But Allah cleared him
Of the (calumnies) they

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ آذَوْا مُوسَى
فَبَرَّاهُ اللَّهُ مِمَّا قَالُوا وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَجِيهاً ﴿١٩﴾

3772. The face is the expression of their Personality, their Self; and turning upside down is a sign of degradation and ignominy. When the Retribution comes, the evil ones will be humiliated, and they will wish that they had followed right guidance when they had the chance. They will then fall to accusing their leaders who misled them. But they forget their own personal responsibility.

3773. Cf. xxv. 69 and n. 3129, and xi. 20 and n. 1515. The double Penalty invoked will be because (1) they went wrong themselves and (2) they misled others.

3774. The people of Moses often vexed him and rebelled against him and against God's Law. Here the reference seems to be to Num. xii. 1-13. It is there said that Moses's own sister Miriam and his brother Aaron spoke against Moses because Moses had married an Ethiopian woman. God cleared Moses of the charge of having done anything wrong: "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house." Miriam was afflicted with leprosy for seven days as a punishment, after which she was forgiven, as also was Aaron. This is the Old Testament story. The holy Prophet was also attacked because of his marriage with Zainab bint Jahsh, but not by his own circle, his motives were of the highest and were completely vindicated as we have seen above.

Had uttered: and he
Was honourable in Allah's sight.

70. O ye who believe!
Fear Allah, and
Make your utterance
Straight forward:³⁷⁷⁵

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا
سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾

71. That He may make
Your conduct whole and sound
And forgive you your sins:
He that obeys Allah
And His Messenger, has already
Attained the great victory.³⁷⁷⁶

يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ
وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾

72. We did indeed offer
The Trust³⁷⁷⁷ to the Heavens
And the Earth
And the Mountains;³⁷⁷⁸
But they refused³⁷⁷⁹

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا

3775. We must not only speak the truth as far as we know it, but we must always try to hit the right point; *i.e.*, we must not speak unseasonably, and when we do speak, we must not beat about the bush, but go straight to that which is right, in deed as well as in word. Then Allah will make our conduct right and cure any defects that there may be in our knowledge and character. With our endeavour directed straight to the goal, we shall be forgiven our errors, shortcomings, faults, and sins of the past.

3776. This is salvation, the attainment of our real spiritual desire or ambition, as we are on the highway to nearness to Allah.

3777. The Trust is something given to a person, over which he has a power of disposition; he is expected to use it as directed or expected, but he has the power to use it otherwise. There is no trust if the trustee has no power, and the trust implies that the giver of the trust believes and expects that the trustee would use it according to the wish of the creator of the trust, and not otherwise.

3778. Cf. lix. 21, where the hypothetical sending down of the Qur-ân to the Mountains is mentioned, and it is mentioned that such Parables are put forth in order to aid men to reflection.

3779. The Heavens, the Earth, and the Mountains, *i.e.*, other creatures of Allah, besides man, refused to undertake a Trust or a responsibility, and may be imagined as happy without a choice of good or evil being given through their will. In saying that they refused, we imply a will, but we limit it by the statement that they did not undertake to be given a choice between good and evil. They preferred to submit their will entirely to Allah's Will, which is All-Wise and Perfect, and which would give them far more =

To undertake it,³⁷⁸⁰
 Being afraid thereof:
 But man undertook it:-³⁷⁸¹
 He was indeed unjust³⁷⁸²
 And foolish;-

أَلَا نَسْنِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا ﴿٧١﴾

= happiness than a faculty of choice, with their imperfect knowledge. Man was too audacious and ignorant to realise this, and the result has been that man as a race has been disrupted: the evil ones have betrayed the Trust and brought Punishment on themselves, though the good have been able to rise far above other Creation, to be the *muqarrabin*, the nearest ones to Allah: lvi. 11 and lvi. 88. What can be higher than this for any creature?

It follows incidentally from this that the Heavens and the Earth were created before man was created and this is in accordance with what we know of the physical world in science: man came on the scene at a comparatively late stage.

3780. *Ḥamala*: to undertake, bear, carry (the Trust or responsibility), to be equal to it. This is the ordinary meaning, and the majority of Commentators construe so. But some understand it to mean "to carry away, run away with, to embezzle (the thing entrusted); hence to be false to the Trust, to betray the Trust." In that case the sense of verses 72-73 would be: "Allah offered the Trust to other creatures, but they refused, lest they should betray it, being afraid from that point of view: but man was less fair to himself: in his ignorance he accepted and betrayed the Trust, with the result that some of his race became Hypocrites and Unbelievers and were punished, though others were faithful to the Trust and received Allah's Mercy". The resulting conclusion is the same under both interpretations.

3781. See ii. 30-34 and notes. Allah intended a very high destiny for man, and placed him in his uncorrupted state even above the angels, but in his corruption he made himself even lower than the beasts. What was it that made man so high and noble? The differentiating quality which Allah gave man was that Allah breathed something of His own spirit into man (xxxii. 9; xv. 29 and n. 1968; and other passages). This meant that man was given a limited choice of good and evil, and that he was made capable of Forbearance, Love, and Mercy. And in himself man summed up Allah's great world: man is in himself a microcosm.

3782. *Zalūm* (translated "unjust") and *Jahūl* (ignorant) are both in the Arabic intensive form; as much as to say, 'man *signally* failed to measure his own powers or his own knowledge.' But Allah's Grace came to his assistance. Where man did his best, he won through by Allah's Grace, even though man's Best was but a poor Good.

How did man generically undertake this great Responsibility, which made him Vicegerent on earth (ii. 30)? Here comes in the doctrine of a Covenant, express or implied, between Allah and Humanity. See vii. 172-73 and notes 1146-48 also v. 1 and n. 682. A Covenant (*Mithāq*) necessarily implies Trust, and its breach necessarily implies Punishment.

73. (With the result) that
 Allah has to punish³⁷⁸³
 The Hypocrites, men and women,
 And the Unbelievers, men
 And women, and Allah turns
 In Mercy to the Believers,³⁷⁸⁴
 Men and women: for Allah
 Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

لَيُعَذِّبَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ
 وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ
 عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
 غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٧٣﴾

3783. Man's generic Covenant, which flowed from his exercising the option given him, choosing Will, Forbearance, Love, and Mercy, made it necessary that breach of it should carry its own punishment. Breach of it is here classed under two heads: those who betray their Trust act either as Hypocrites or as Unbelievers. Hypocrites are those who profess Faith but bring not forth the fruits of Faith. Unbelievers are those who openly defy Faith, and from whom therefore no fruits of Faith are to be expected.

3784. Those who remain firm to their Faith and their Covenant (see notes 3781-82) will receive the aid of Allah's Grace; their faults and weaknesses will be cured; and they will be made worthy of their exalted Destiny. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving and Most Merciful.

So ends a Sūra which deals with the greatest complications and misunderstandings in our throbbing life here below, and points upwards to the Great Achievement, the highest Salvation.