

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *At-Tagābun*, 64.

This is the eighth of the short Madinah Sūras, each dealing with a *special* aspect of the life of the Community.

The special aspect spoken of here is the mutual gain and loss of Good and Evil, contrasted in this life and in the Hereafter.

It is an early Madinah Sūra, of the year 1 of the Hijra or possibly even of the Makkan period just before the Hijrat. (See n. 5494 below).

Summary.—Both the Unbelievers and the Believers were created by the One True God, Who created all and knows all: why should Unbelief and Evil exult in worldly gain when their loss will be as manifest in the Hereafter as will be the gains of the Believers? (lxiv. 1-18).

Tagābun, or Mutual Loss and Gain.

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

1. Whatever is
In the heavens and
On earth, doth declare⁵⁴⁷⁹
The Praises and Glory
Of Allah: to Him belongs
Dominion, and to Him belongs
Praise: and He has power
Over all things.
2. It is He Who has
Created you; and of you
Are some that are
Unbelievers, and some⁵⁴⁸⁰
That are Believers:
And Allah sees well
All that ye do.
3. He has created the heavens
And the earth
With the truth,
And has given you shape,⁵⁴⁸¹
And made your shapes

سُورَةُ التَّغَابُنِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ
وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١﴾

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ
وَاللَّهُ يَمَاتِعُمُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢﴾

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ
صُورَكُمْ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٣﴾

5479. Cf. lxii. 1, and n. 5449. All things by their very existence proclaim the Glory and the Praises of Allah. He has dominion over all things, but He uses His dominion for just and praiseworthy ends. He has power over all things: therefore He can combine justice with mercy, and His Plan and Purpose cannot be frustrated by the existence of Evil along with Good in His Kingdom.

5480. It is not that He does not see Rebellion and Evil, nor that He cannot punish them. He created all things pure and good, and if evil crept in by the grant of a limited free-will by Him, it is not unforeseen: it is in His wise and universal Plan, for giving man a chance of rising higher and ever higher.

5481. Cf. xl. 64, and n. 4440: also vii. 11 and n. 996. In addition to the beauty and grandeur of all God's Creation, He has endowed man with special aptitudes, faculties and capacities, and special excellencies which raise him at his best to the position of vicegerent on earth. "Beautiful" also includes the idea of "adapted to the ends for which they were created".

Beautiful: and to Him
Is the final Return.⁵⁴⁸²

4. He knows what is
In the heavens
And on earth;
And He knows what⁵⁴⁸³
Ye conceal and what
Ye reveal: yea, Allah
Knows well the (secrets)
Of (all) hearts.

5. Has not the story
Reached you, of those
Who rejected Faith aforetime?
So they tasted the evil
Result of their conduct;⁵⁴⁸⁴
And they had
A grievous Chastisement.

6. That was because there
Came to them messengers
With Clear Signs,
But they said:
"Shall (mere) human beings⁵⁴⁸⁵
Direct us?" So they rejected
(The Message) and turned away.
But Allah can do without (them):

يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسِرُّونَ
وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٦٤﴾

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ
فَذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالُوا
أَبَشِّرْهُدُونَا فَكَفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا وَأَسْتَفْتَى
اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ عَنِ حِمْدِهِ ﴿٦٥﴾

5482. "The final Return": not only of mankind, but of all things created, whether material or in the realm of ideas and events. All things return to Allah: as they derive their origin from Him, so is the return or destination of all of them to Allah.

5483. Not only does He create and develop and sustain all things; but all thoughts, motives, feelings, ideas, and events are known to Him. Therefore we must not imagine that, if some evil seems to go unpunished, it is not known to Him or has escaped His notice. His Plan is wise and good in its fullest compass: sometimes we do not see its wisdom and goodness because we see only a broken fragment of it, as our own intelligence is narrow.

5484. "The evil result of their conduct" begins to manifest itself in this very life, either in external events, or in internal restlessness and agonies of conscience. But its culminating force will be seen in the "grievous Penalty" of the Hereafter.

5485. This is referred to in a more expanded form in xiv. 9-11. which see.

And Allah is⁵⁴⁸⁶
Free of all needs
Worthy of all praise.

7. The Unbelievers think
That they will not be
Raised up (for Judgment).⁵⁴⁸⁷
Say: "Yea, by my Lord,
Ye shall surely be
Raised up: then shall ye
Be told (the truth) of
All that ye did.
And that is easy for Allah."

8. Believe, therefore, in Allah
And His Messenger, and
In the Light which We⁵⁴⁸⁸
Have sent down. And Allah
Is well acquainted
With all that ye do.

9. The Day that He assembles
You (all) for a Day
Of Assembly,—that will be

زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُعَذَّبُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَنْ يَتُوبَ
لَهُمْ وَلَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۖ

﴿٧﴾

فَتَأْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۚ وَالنُّورِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْنَا
وَاللَّهُ يَمַعْزِلُونَ خَيْرٌ ۖ

﴿٨﴾

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ النَّارِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ
بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ ۚ وَيُدْخِلْهُ

5486. Their obedience is not necessary to Allah, nor will their rejection of Truth affect the validity of Truth or injure the progress of Truth. Allah is free of all needs or dependence on any circumstance whatever. He sends His Message for the good of mankind, and it is man who suffers by ignoring, rejecting, or opposing it.

5487. In other words, they think that there is no future life, and no responsibility for our actions beyond what we see in the present life. If that were true, all the profits of fraud and roguery, which remain unpunished in this world—and many do remain unpunished in this world—will remain with the wicked; and all the losses and pain suffered by integrity and righteousness, if they find no compensation in this life, will never find any compensation. This would be an odd result in a world of justice. We are taught that this is not true,—that it is certain that the balance will be redressed in a better future world; that there will be a resurrection of what we call the dead; and that on that occasion the full import of all we did will be made plain to us, and our moral and spiritual responsibility will be fully enforced.

5488. "The Light which We have sent down": i.e., the light of Revelation, the light of conscience, the light of reason, and every kind of true light by which we may know Allah and His Will. If we play false with any such lights, it is fully known to Allah.

A day of mutual loss⁵⁴⁸⁹
 And gain (among you).
 And those who believe
 In Allah and work righteousness,—
 He will remove from them⁵⁴⁹⁰
 Their ill, and He will admit
 Them to gardens beneath which⁵⁴⁹¹
 Rivers flow, to dwell therein
 For ever: that will be
 The Supreme Triumph.

10. But those who reject Faith
 And treat Our Signs
 As falsehoods, they will be
 Companions of the Fire,
 To dwell therein for aye:
 And evil is that Goal.

SECTION 2.

11. No kind of calamity
 Can occur, except
 By the leave of Allah:

جَنَّتْ تَجَرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ
 فِيهَا أَبَدًا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٤﴾

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ
 أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَبِئْسَ
 الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٦٥﴾

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِنْ
 بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ، وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

5489. The Day of Judgment will truly be "a Day of Mutual Loss and Gain", as the title of this Sūra indicates. Men who thought they were laying up riches will find themselves paupers in the Kingdom of Heaven. Men who thought they were acquiring good by wrong-doing will find their efforts were wasted; xviii. 104. On the other hand the meek and lowly of this life will acquire great dignity and honour in the next; the despised ones doing good here will be the accepted ones there; the persecuted righteous will be in eternal happiness. The two classes will as it were change their relative positions.

5490. "Remove from them their ills". The ills may be sins, faults, mistakes, or evil tendencies; Allah will of His grace cover them up, and blot out the account against them; or they may be sorrows, sufferings, or disappointments: Allah may even change the evil of such persons into good, their apparent calamities into opportunities for spiritual advancement: xxv. 70. This is because of their sincere Faith as evidenced by their repentance and amendment.

5491. "Gardens" the place of the highest Bliss, see ii. 25, n. 44; xiii. 35; xlvii. 15.

And if any one believes⁵⁴⁹²
In Allah, (Allah) guides his
Heart (aright): for Allah
Knows all things.

12. So obey Allah, and obey
His Messenger: but if
Ye turn back, the duty
Of Our Messenger is but
To deliver (the Message)⁵⁴⁹³
Clearly and openly.

13. Allah! There is no god
But He: and on Allah,
Therefore, let the Believers
Put their trust.

14. O ye who believe!
Truly, among your wives
And your children are (some
That are) enemies to⁵⁴⁹⁴
Yourselves: so beware
Of them! But if ye

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ
فَإِنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٢﴾

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِن أَرْوَاحِكُمْ
وَأَوْلَدِكُمْ ءَعْدُوْا لَكُمْ فَأَحْذَرُوهُمْ
وَإِن تَعَفَوْا وَتَصَفَحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

5492. What we consider calamities may be blessings in disguise. Pain in the body is often a signal of something wrong, which we can cure by remedial measures. So in the moral and spiritual world, we should in all circumstances hold firmly to the faith that nothing happens without Allah's knowledge and leave; and therefore there must be some justice and wisdom according to His great universal Plan. Our duty is to find out our own shortcomings and remedy them. If we try to do so in all sincerity of heart, Allah will give us guidance.

5493. The Messenger comes to guide and teach, not to force and compel. The Messenger's teaching is clear and unambiguous, and it is open and free to all. Cf. also v. 95.

5494. In some cases the demands of families, i.e., wife and children may conflict with a man's moral and spiritual convictions and duties. In such cases he must guard against the abandonment of his convictions, duties, and ideals to their requests or desires. But he must not treat them harshly. He must make reasonable provision for them, and if they persist in opposing his clear duties and convictions, he must forgive them and not expose them to shame or ridicule, while at the same time holding on to his clear duty. Such cases occurred when godly men undertook exile from their native city of Makkah to follow the Faith in Madinah. In some cases their families murmured, but all came right in the end.

Forgive and overlook,⁵⁴⁹⁵
And cover up (their faults),
Verily Allah is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

15. Your riches and your children
May be but a trial:⁵⁴⁹⁶
Whereas Allah, with Him
Is the highest Reward.

16. So fear Allah⁵⁴⁹⁷
As much as ye can;
Listen and obey;
And spend in charity
For the benefit of
Your own souls.⁵⁴⁹⁸
And those saved from
The covetousness of their own

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ
وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا
وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَمَنْ يُوقِ
شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

5495. For the different words for "forgiveness", see n. 110 to ii. 109.

5496. Children may be a "trial" in many senses: (1) their different ways of looking at things may cause you to reflect, and to turn to the highest things of eternal importance; (2) their relationship with you and with each other may confront you with problems far more complicated than those in separate individual lives, and thus become a test of your own strength of character and sense of responsibility; (3) their conflict with your ideals (see n. 5494 above) may vex your spirit, but may at the same time search out your fidelity to Allah; and (4) their affection for you and your affection for them, may be a source of strength for you if it is pure, just as it may be a danger if it is based on selfish or unworthy motives. So also riches and worldly goods have their advantages as well as dangers.

5497. "Fear Allah" combined with "as much as you can" obviously means: "lead lives of self-restraint and righteousness": the usual meaning of *Taqwā*: see n. 26 to ii. 2.

5498. Charity is meant to help and do good to other people who need it. But it has the highest subjective value for the person who gives it. Like mercy "it blesseth him that gives and him that takes". It purifies the giver's soul: the affection that he pours out is for his own spiritual benefit and progress. Cf. Coleridge: "He prayeth best who loveth best all things both great and small, for the Great God Who loveth us, Who made and loveth all".

Souls,—they are the ones
That achieve prosperity.⁵⁴⁹⁹

17. If ye loan to Allah⁵⁵⁰⁰

A beautiful loan, He
Will double it to
Your (credit), and He
Will grant you Forgiveness:
For Allah is All-Thankful,⁵⁵⁰¹
Most Forbearing,—

18. Knower of what is hidden
And what is open,
Exalted in Might,
Full of Wisdom.⁵⁵⁰²

إِنْ تَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يَضْعَفْهُ لَكُمْ
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾

5499. Cf. lix. 9. Our worst enemy is within ourselves,—the grasping selfishness which would deprive others of their just rights or seize things which do not properly belong to it. If we can get over this covetous selfishness, we achieve real Prosperity in justice and truth.

5500. Cf. ii. 245 and n. 276. Our Charity or Love is called a loan to Allah, which not only increases our credit account manifold, but obtains for us the forgiveness of our sins, and the capacity for increased service in the future.

5501. Cf. xiv. 5, n. 1877; and xxxv. 30, n. 3917. Allah's appreciation of our service or our love goes far deeper than its intrinsic merits or its specific expression on our side. His reward is beyond our deserts, and passes over our defects. He judges by our motives, which He can read through and through: see next verse.

5502. Allah's Appreciation and Forbearing Kindness can reach so far beyond our merits, because (1) His universal knowledge comprehends hidden motives, which others cannot see in us; (2) His power is so great that He can afford to reward even the unworthy; and (3) His Wisdom is so great that He can turn even our weakness into our strength.