

### INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Al-Furqān* 25.

This Sūra further develops the contrast between Light and Darkness, as symbolical of knowledge and ignorance, righteousness and sin, spiritual progress and degradation. It closes with a definition of the deeds by which the righteous are known in the environment of this world.

It is mainly an early Makkan Sūra, but its date has no significance.

*Summary.*—Allah's highest gift to man is that He has furnished a Criterion for judgment between right and wrong,—in His revelation, which teaches us the true significance of our eternal Future (xxv. 1-20).

Those who do not use that Criterion will be full of woe when the Judgment comes, for Allah gave full warning at all times (xxv. 21-44).

In the contrasts of shade and sun, night and day, death and life, and the whole ordering of Allah's Creation, men may learn of Allah Most Gracious; and the virtues of the righteous respond to Allah's care for them (xxv. 45-77).

*Al-Furqān, or The Criterion.*

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

1. Blessed<sup>3052</sup> is He Who  
Sent down the Criterion<sup>3053</sup>  
To His servant, that it<sup>3054</sup>  
May be an admonition  
To all creatures;-
2. He to Whom belongs  
The dominion of the heavens  
And the earth: no son  
Has He begotten, nor has He  
A partner in His dominion:  
It is He Who created  
All things, and ordered them  
In due proportions.<sup>3055</sup>
3. Yet have they taken,<sup>3056</sup>  
Besides Him, gods that can

## سُورَةُ الْفُرْقَانِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلَى عَبْدِهِ

لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ﴿١﴾

الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ

وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ شَرِيكٌ فِي الْمُلْكِ

وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا ﴿٢﴾

وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً لَا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْئًا

وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ضَرًّا

3052. *Tabāraka*: the root meaning is "increase" or "abundance". Here that aspect of Allah's dealing with His creatures is emphasised, which shows His abundant goodness to all His creatures, in that He sent the Revelation of His Will, not only in the unlimited Book of Nature, but in a definite Book in human language, which gives clear directions and admonitions to all. The English word "blessed" hardly conveys that meaning, but I can find no other without departing far from established usage. To emphasise the meaning I have explained, I have translated "Blessed is ...", but "Blessed be..." is also admissible, as it brings out another shade of meaning, that we praise and bless His holy name.

3053. That by which we can judge clearly between right and wrong. Here the reference is to the Qur-ān, which has already been symbolised by Light. This symbol is continued here, and many contrasts are shown, in the midst of which we can distinguish between the true and the false by Allah's Light, especially the contrast between righteousness and sin.

3054. The pronoun in *yakūna* may refer either to *Furqān* (the Criterion) or to 'Abd (the holy Prophet). In either case the ultimate meaning is the same. The Qur-ān is the standing Criterion for judgment between right and wrong.

3055. The majesty of Allah and His independence of all wants or help are mentioned to show how exceedingly great is His goodness in revealing His Will to us.

3056. This is the first great distinction taught by the Criterion; to know the attributes of the true God, as against the false fancies of men.

Create nothing but are themselves  
Created; that have no control  
Of hurt or good to themselves;  
Nor can they control Death  
Nor Life nor Resurrection.

4. But the Misbelievers say:  
"Naught is this but a lie"<sup>3057</sup>  
Which he has forged,  
And others have helped him  
At it." In truth it is they  
Who have put forward  
An iniquity and a falsehood.
5. And they say: "Tales of  
The ancients, which he has caused  
To be written: and they  
Are dictated before him  
Morning and evening."<sup>3058</sup>
6. Say: "The (Qur-ān) was sent down  
By Him Who knows  
The secret (that is) in the heavens"<sup>3059</sup>

وَلَا تَقْنَعُوا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَاةً  
وَلَا نُشُورًا ﴿٢٥﴾

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا إِفْكُ افْتَرَتْهُ وَأَعَانَهُ  
عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ آخَرُونَ فَقَدْ جَاءُوا ظُلْمًا وَزُورًا ﴿٢٦﴾

وَقَالُوا أَأَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ أَكُتِبَتْهَا  
فِيهِ تَمَثَّلَ عَلَيْهِ بُعْكَرَةٌ وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٢٧﴾

قُلْ أَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِي يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٨﴾

3057. *Ifk*, which I have translated a "lie" may be distinguished from *zūr* at the end of this verse, translated "falsehood". The "lie" which the enemies attributed to the holy Prophet of Allah was supposed to be something which did not exist in reality, but was invented by him with the aid of other people: the implication was that (1) the Revelation was not a revelation but a forgery, and that (2) the things revealed e.g. the news of the Hereafter, the Resurrection, the Judgment, the Bliss of the Righteous and the sufferings of the Evil, were fanciful and had no basis in fact. Delusion is also suggested. The reply is that, so far from that being the case, the facts were true and the charges were false (*zūr*),—the falsehood being due to the habits of iniquity for which the Misbelievers' whole mental and spiritual attitude was responsible.

3058. In their misguided arrogance they say: 'We have heard such things before; they are pretty tales which have come down from ancient times; they are good for amusement, but who takes them seriously?' When the beauty and power of the Revelation are pointed out, and its miracle as coming from an unlearned man, they again hint at other men who wrote them, though they could not produce any one who could write anything like it.

3059. The answer is that the Qur-ān teaches spiritual knowledge of what is ordinarily hidden from men's sight, and such knowledge can only come from Allah, to Whom alone is known the secret of the whole Creation. In spite of man's sin and shortcomings, He forgives, and He sends His most precious gift, i.e., the revelation of His Will.

And the earth: verily He  
Is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful."

7. And they say: "What sort  
Of a messenger is this,  
Who eats food, and walks  
Through the streets? Why  
Has not an angel  
Been sent down to him  
To give admonition with him?"<sup>3060</sup>

وَقَالُوا مَا لِهَذَا الرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ  
وَيَمْشِي فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ  
فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ نَذِيرًا ﴿٧﴾

8. "Or (why) has not a treasure  
Been bestowed on him, or  
Why has he (not) a garden  
For enjoyment?"<sup>3061</sup> The wicked  
Say: "Ye follow none other  
Than a man bewitched."<sup>3062</sup>

أَوْ يُنْفَقَ إِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ  
يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا وَقَالَ الظَّالِمُونَ  
إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَسْحُورًا ﴿٨﴾

9. See what kinds of comparisons  
They make for thee!  
But they have gone astray,  
And never a way will they  
Be able to find!"<sup>3063</sup>

انْظُرْ كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا لَكَ الْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا  
فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩﴾

3060. This is another objection: 'He is only a man like us: why is not an angel sent down, if not by himself, at least with him?' The answer is: angels would be of no use to men as Messengers, as they and men would not understand each other, and if angels came, it might cause more confusion and wonder than understanding in men's minds. Cf. xxi. 7-8; xxvii, 94-95. The office of an angel is different. A teacher for mankind is one who shares their nature, mingles in their life, is acquainted with their doings, and sympathises with their joys and sorrows.

3061. Literally, 'that he may eat out of it'. As shown in n. 776 to v. 69, *akala* (to eat) has a comprehensive meaning, implying enjoyment of all kinds. Here the garden itself stands for a type of the amenities of life: its fruits would be available for eating, its coolness for rest and refreshment, its waters and its landscape for aesthetic delight.

3062. Cf. xvii. 47. This speech, of the wicked or the ungodly, is meant to be even more bitter than that of the Misbelievers. It makes out the Prophet to be a demented fool!

3063. The charges the enemies made against the Messenger of Allah recoiled on those who made them. The Messenger was vindicated, and went from strength to strength, for Allah's Truth will always prevail. The men who perversely leave the way of truth, righteousness, and sincerity, have not only missed *the* Way, but on account of their perversity they will never be able to find any way by which they can get back to Truth.

## SECTION 2.

10. Blessed is He Who,<sup>3064</sup>

If that were His Will,  
Could give thee better (things)  
Than those,—Gardens beneath  
which<sup>3065</sup>

Rivers flow; and He could  
Give thee Palaces (secure  
To dwell in).

11. Nay, they deny the Hour  
(Of the Judgment to come):<sup>3066</sup>

But We have prepared  
A Blazing Fire for such  
As deny the Hour:

## 12. When it sees them

From a place far off,  
They will hear its fury  
And its raging sigh.<sup>3067</sup>

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي إِنْ شَاءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِنْ ذَلِكَ  
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَيَجْعَلُ  
لَكَ قُصُورًا ﴿١٠﴾

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالسَّاعَةِ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ  
بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيرًا ﴿١١﴾

إِذَا رَأَوْهُمْ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا لَهَا تَغَيُّظًا  
وَزَفِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾

3064. Cf. above, xxv. 1. The reminiscent phrase shows that the first argument, about the Revelation and Prophethood, is completed, and we now pass on to the contrast, the fate of the rejecters of both.

3065. This phrase is usually symbolical of the Bliss in the Hereafter. If it were Allah's Plan, He could give his Messengers complete felicity and power in this life also. Instead of being persecuted, mocked, driven out of their homes, and having to exert their utmost powers of body, mind, and character to plant the flag of Truth in an unbelieving world, they could have lived in ease and security. But that would not have given the real lessons they came to teach struggling humanity by their example.

3066. Denying the Hour of Judgment means denying the power of Justice and Truth to triumph; it means asserting the dominion of Evil. But Allah himself will punish them, as shown in the following verses.

3067. For *zafir*, a deep emission of breath or a sigh, see n. 1607 to xi. 106. Here the Fire is personified. It is raging with hunger and fury, and as soon as it sees them from ever so far, it emits a sigh of desire. Till then they had not realised their full danger. Now, just as their heart begins to tremble with terror, they are bound together—like with like,—and cast into the roaring flames!

13. And when they are cast,  
Bound together, into a  
Constricted place therein, they  
Will plead for destruction  
There and then!<sup>3068</sup>
14. "This day plead not  
For a single destruction:  
Plead for destruction oft-repeated!"
15. Say: "Is that best, or  
The eternal Garden, promised<sup>3069</sup>  
To the righteous? For them,  
That is a reward as well  
As a final abode."<sup>3070</sup>
16. "For them there will be  
Therein all that they wish for:  
They will dwell (there) for aye:  
A promise binding upon  
Thy Lord."<sup>3071</sup>
17. The Day He will gather  
Them together as well as  
Those whom they worship  
Besides Allah, He will ask:<sup>3072</sup>

وَإِذَا أُلْقُوا مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُقَرَّنِينَ  
دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُورًا ﴿١٣﴾

لَا نَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُورًا وَاحِدًا وَادْعُوا ثُبُورًا  
كَثِيرًا ﴿١٤﴾

قُلْ أَذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِي وُعدَ  
الْمُنْقُورُونَ<sup>٤</sup> كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَزَاءً وَمَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾

لَهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ خَالِدِينَ<sup>٥</sup>  
كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ وَعْدًا مَسْتَوْلاً ﴿١٦﴾

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ  
فَيَقُولُ أَأَنْتُمْ أَضَلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِي هَؤُلَاءِ  
أَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا السَّبِيلَ ﴿١٧﴾

3068. Anything-total annihilation-would be better than the anguish they will suffer. But no annihilation will be granted to them. One destruction will not be enough to wipe out the intensity of their anguish. They will have to ask for many destructions, but they will not get them!

3069. Shifting the scene back to this life, they may fairly be asked: "Here is the result of the two courses of conduct: which do you prefer?"

3070. To the righteous, the final Bliss will in one sense be a reward. But the word "reward" does not truly represent facts, for two reasons: (1) the Bliss will be greater than they deserved; and (2) righteousness is its own reward. The best way of expressing the result would be to say that their highest Wish will now have been attained; the goal will have been reached; they will be in Allah's Presence. That is salvation in the highest.

3071. That is the sort of thing-to be prayed for from Allah which he has made binding upon Himself and not ephemeral things, even though they may be good. And that is the sort of thing that Allah has promised and undertaken to give.

3072. The question is as in a Court of Justice, to convince those who stand arraigned.

"Was it ye who led  
These My servants astray,  
Or did they stray  
From the Path themselves?"

18. They will say: "Glory to Thee!  
Not meet was it for us  
That we should take  
For protectors others besides  
Thee:<sup>3073</sup>

But Thou didst bestow,  
On them and their fathers,  
Good things (in life), until  
They forgot the Message:  
For they were a people  
Destroyed".

19. (Allah will say): "Now  
Have they proved you liars  
In what ye say: so  
Ye cannot avert (your penalty)<sup>3074</sup>  
Nor (get) help." And whoever  
Among you does wrong,  
Him shall We cause to taste  
Of a grievous Chastisement.

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنْبَغِي لَنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ  
مِنْ دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنْ مَتَّعْتَهُمْ  
وَعِيبَاءَهُمْ حَتَّى نَسُوا آلَ الَّذِينَ  
وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا بَوْرًا ﴿١٨﴾

فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ بِمَا تَقُولُونَ  
فَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفًا وَلَا نَصْرًا وَمَنْ يَظْلِمِ  
مِنْكُمْ نَذِقْهُ عَذَابًا كَبِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

3073. The creatures of Allah who were worshipped will prove that they never asked for worship : on the contrary they themselves worshipped Allah and sought the protection of Allah and of none but Allah. Cf. xlvii. 5-6. They will go further and show that the false worshippers added ingratitude to their other sins: for Allah bestowed abundance on them, and they blasphemed against Allah. They were indeed "worthless and destroyed", for the word *būr* bears both significations.

3074. The argument is as in a court of justice. If the false worshippers plead that they were misled by those whom they falsely worshipped, the latter will be confronted with them and will prove that plea to be false. No help can be got from them, and the penalty cannot then be averted. After all these things are thus explained in detail beforehand, all ungodly men should repent and turn to Allah. False worship is here identified with sin, for sin is disobedience to Allah, and arises from a wrong appreciation of Allah's attributes and His goodness to His creatures. The sinful man refuses, in his conduct, to serve Allah: he serves other things than Allah.

20. And the messengers whom We  
Sent before thee were all  
(Men) who ate food  
And walked through the markets.<sup>3075</sup>  
We have made some of you  
As a trial for others.<sup>3076</sup>  
Will ye have patience?  
For Allah is One Who  
Sees (all things).

## SECTION 3.

21. Those who do not hope  
To meet Us<sup>3077</sup>  
(For Judgment) say:  
"Why are not the angels  
Sent down to us, or  
(Why) do we not see<sup>3078</sup>  
Our Lord?" Indeed they  
Have an arrogant conceit  
Of themselves, and mighty  
Is the insolence of their impiety!

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا أَنْهُمْ  
لِيَأكُلُوا الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُوا فِي الْأَسْوَاقِ  
وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً  
أَنْتَبِرُونَ ۚ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٢٥﴾

۞ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا لَوْلَا أُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا  
الْمَلَكُ ۖ أَوْ نَرَىٰ رَبَّنَا لَقَدْ اسْتَكْبَرُوا  
فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْا عُتُوًّا كَبِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾

3075. Cf. above, xxv. 7.

3076. In Allah's universal Plan, each unit or thing serves a purpose. If some are rich, the poor should not envy them: it may be that the rich man's proximity is itself a trial of their virtue. If some are poor, the righteous rich should not despise or neglect them: it may be that their coming within their sight is a trial for the real feeling of charity or brotherly love in the rich. If A is bad-tempered or persecutes or ill-uses B, it may be an opportunity for B to show his patience or humility or his faith in the ultimate prevalence of justice and truth. Whatever our experiences with other human beings may be, we must make them subserve the ends of our spiritual improvement and perhaps theirs also.

3077. The blasphemers who have given up all Faith and laugh at the Hereafter: nothing is sacred to them: their arrogance and insolence are beyond all bounds.

3078. Cf. ii. 55. The Israelites in the time of Moses demanded to see Allah. But they were struck with thunder and lightning even as they looked on. Indeed death would have been their fate, had it not been for the mercy of Allah.



22. The Day they see the angels,-  
No joy will there be  
To the sinners that Day:  
The (angels) will say:  
"There is a barrier  
Forbidden (to you) altogether!"<sup>3079</sup>

يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ لَا بُشْرَى يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ  
وَيَقُولُونَ حِجَابًا مَحْجُورًا ﴿٢٢﴾

23. And We shall turn  
To whatever deeds they did  
(In this life), and We shall  
Make such deeds as floating dust  
Scattered about.<sup>3080</sup>

وَقَدْ مَنَّا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ  
هَبَاءً مَّنْثُورًا ﴿٢٣﴾

24. The Companions of the Garden  
Will be well, that Day,  
In their abode, and have  
The fairest of places for repose.<sup>3081</sup>

أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَيْرٌ مُّسْتَقَرًّا  
وَأَحْسَنُ مَقِيلًا ﴿٢٤﴾

25. The Day the heaven shall be  
Rent asunder with clouds,<sup>3082</sup>  
And angels shall be sent down,  
Descending (in ranks),-

وَيَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ السَّمَاءُ بِالْغَمَمِ وَنُزُلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ  
تَنْزِيلًا ﴿٢٥﴾

26. That Day, the dominion  
Right by  
Shall be (wholly) for The<sup>3083</sup>

أَلَمَلِكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ لِلرَّحْمَنِ  
وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ عَسِيرًا ﴿٢٦﴾

3079. They will not be allowed to enjoy any of the felicity or peace which will be the normal state of the new world of Reality. Their own past will stand as a barrier to shut them off.

3080. The false hopes they built on in this life, and the deeds did under the shadow of such false hopes will be dissipated as if they were dust flying about in the wind. They will have no value whatever.

3081. The barrier which will shut out the evil ones will not exist for the righteous, who will have an abode of bliss and repose, for they will be in the Garden of bliss.

3082. It will be a new world, and the way to describe it must necessarily draw upon our present experience of the finest things in nature. The sky, which now appears remote and unpeopled will be rent asunder. There will appear clouds of glory-angels and spiritual Lights of all grades and ranks-and the true majesty and goodness of Allah will be visible as it should be in reality, and as it is not now, on account of "our muddy vesture of decay".

3083. See last note.

Most Gracious: it will be  
A Day of dire difficulty  
For the Misbelievers.

27. The Day that the wrong-doer  
Will bite at his hands,  
He will say, "Oh! would that  
I had taken a (straight) path  
With the Messenger!"<sup>3084</sup>

28. "Ah! woe is me!  
Would that I had never  
Taken such a one  
For a friend!

29. "He did lead me astray  
From the Message (of Allah)  
After it had come to me!  
Ah! the Satan is  
But a traitor to man!"<sup>3085</sup>

30. Then the Messenger will say:  
"O my Lord, Truly  
My people treated this Qur-ān  
With neglect."<sup>3086</sup>

وَيَوْمَ يَعْصُ الظَّالِمُ عَلَى يَدَيْهِ يَقُولُ  
يَلَيْتَنِي اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُولِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٧﴾

يَتَوَلَّى لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أَتَّخِذْ فَلَانًا خَلِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾

لَقَدْ أَضَلَّنِي عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ جَاءَنِي  
وَكَانَ الشَّيْطَانُ لِلْإِنْسَانِ خَذُولًا ﴿٢٩﴾

وَقَالَ الرَّسُولُ يَرْبِّ إِنَّ قَوْمِي اتَّخَذُوا  
هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ مَهْجُورًا ﴿٣٠﴾

3084. The words are general, and for us the interest is in a general sense. A man who actually receives the Truth and is on the right path is all the more culpable if he is diverted from that path by the machinations of a worldly friend. The particular person whom some Commentators mention in this connection was one 'Uqba who received the light of Islam, but was misled afterwards by a worldly friend into apostasy and blasphemy. He came to an evil end afterwards.

3085. The seductive wiles of the Satan are merely meant for snares. There is fraud and treachery in them. The deceived ones are left in the lurch after the way of escape is made impossible for them.

3086. "My people" are of course the unbelieving Quraish. They treated the Qur-ān with neglect, i.e., something to be discarded. But they were only a handful of people whose vested interests were touched by the beneficent reforms initiated by Islam. They soon passed away, and all Arabic-speaking or Arabic-understanding people have considered the Qur-ān as a treasury of Truths expressed in the most beautiful possible language, with a meaning that grows deeper with research.

31. Thus have We made  
For every prophet an enemy  
Among the sinners: but enough  
Is thy Lord to guide  
And to help.<sup>3087</sup>

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ  
وَكَفَىٰ بِرَبِّكَ هَادِيًا وَنَصِيرًا ﴿٣١﴾

32. Those who reject Faith  
Say: "Why is not the Quran  
Revealed to him all at once?  
Thus (is it revealed), that We  
May strengthen thy heart<sup>3088</sup>  
Thereby, and We have  
Rehearsed it to thee in slow,  
Well-arranged stages, gradually.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْآنُ جُمْلَةً  
وَّاحِدَةً ۚ كَذَلِكَ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهِ  
فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنَاهُ تَرْتِيلًا ﴿٣٢﴾

33. And no question do they  
Bring to thee but We  
Reveal to thee the truth  
And the best explanation  
(thereof).<sup>3089</sup>

وَلَا يَأْتُونَكَ بِمَثَلٍ إِلَّا جِئْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ  
وَأَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

3087. It is the nature of sin to be hostile to truth and righteousness, but such hostility will not harm the righteous and need cause no misgiving because Allah will guide and help those who work in His cause. And what could be better or more effective than His guidance and help?

3088. Three reasons are given for the gradual revelation of the Qur-ān. (1) "*To strengthen thy heart*": the tremendous task of winning the Arab nation, and, through them, the whole world, to Islam, required superhuman patience, constancy, and firmness, and these qualities were strengthened by the gradual promulgation of solutions to each difficulty as it arose. (2) "*Slow, well-arranged stages*": though the stages were gradual, as the occasion demanded from time to time, in the course of twenty-three years, the whole emerged, when completed, as a well-arranged scheme of spiritual instruction, as we have seen in following the arrangement of the Sūras. (3) *Questions put and answers given*: see next note.

3089. Divine knowledge is a fathomless ocean. But glimpses of it can be obtained by any individuals sincerely searching for the Truth. Their progress will be in grades. If they ask questions, and answers are then furnished to them, they are more likely to apprehend the Truth, as they have already explored the part of the territory in which they are interested. In the same way, when concrete questions arise by the logic of events, and they are answered not only for the occasion, but from a general stand-point, the teaching has a far greater chance of penetrating the human intelligence and taking shape in practical conduct. And this is the usual way of instruction in the Qur-ān.

34. Those who will be gathered  
To Hell (prone) on their faces,<sup>3090</sup>  
They will be in an evil  
Plight, and, as to Path,  
Most astray.<sup>3091</sup>

## SECTION 4.

35. (Before this), We sent Moses  
The Book, and appointed  
His brother Aaron with him  
As Minister;<sup>3092</sup>
36. And We commanded: "Go ye  
Both, to the people who  
Have rejected our Signs:"  
And those (people) We destroyed  
With utter destruction.
37. And the people of Noah,-  
When they rejected the messengers,  
We drowned them,  
And We made them  
As a Sign for mankind,<sup>3093</sup>  
And We have prepared  
For (all) wrong-doers  
A grievous Chastisement:

الَّذِينَ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْجُهُهُمْ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ  
أُولَٰئِكَ سُوءُ مَكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٣٤﴾

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ  
وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَهُ أَخَاهُ هَارُونَ وَزِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾

فَقُلْنَا أَذْهَبَا إِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا  
فَدَمَّرْنَاهُمْ تَدْمِيرًا ﴿٣٦﴾

وَقَوْمُ نُوحٍ لَّمَّا كَذَبُوا الرُّسُلَ أَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ  
وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ آيَةً وَأَعْتَدْنَا  
لِلظَّالِمِينَ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿٣٧﴾

3090. That is, in ignominy.

3091. This verse may be compared and contrasted with xxv. 24 above. Here the argument is rounded off about the distinction between the Good and Evil in their final Destiny. The Good are to have "the fairest of places for repose", and in contrast, the Evil are, "as to Path, most astray". They have no repose, and their wanderings lead nowhere.

3092. Cf. xx. 29, and the whole passage there, which is merely referred to here, to show how previous Prophets were treated, but how they stuck fast to the Criterion given, to distinguish between Good and Evil.

3093. The stories of Noah, of the prophets of 'Ād and Thamūd (and of other prophets), in the reactions of their communities to their teaching are told in xxvi. 105-159, below. Here they are just mentioned to illustrate how little respect past ages had for their prophets and teachers of Truth. But Allah's Truth did not suffer: it was the blind rejecters of spiritual Truth who were wiped out.

38. As also 'Ād and Thamūd,  
And the Companions<sup>3094</sup>  
Of the Rass, and many  
A generation between them.

وَعَادًا وَثَمُودًا وَأَصْحَابَ الرَّسِّ وَقُرُونًا  
بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٨﴾

39. To each one We set forth  
Parables and examples;  
And each one We broke  
To utter annihilation  
(For their sins).

وَكُلًّا ضَرَبْنَا لَهُ الْأَمْثَالَ وَكُلًّا تَبَّرْنَا  
تَتًّا ﴿٣٩﴾

40. And the (Unbelievers) must indeed  
Have passed by the town  
On which was rained<sup>3095</sup>  
A shower of evil: did they not  
Then see it (with their own  
Eyes)? But they expect not  
To be raised again.

وَلَقَدْ أَتَوْا عَلَى الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي أَمْطَرْنَا مِنْهَا سَوَاءً  
أَفْكَمَ يَكُونُوا يَكُونُوا يُرْوَاهَا تِلْكَ كَانُوا  
لَا يَرْجُونَ نُشُورًا ﴿٤٠﴾

41. When they see thee,  
They treat thee no otherwise  
Than in mockery: "Is this  
The one whom Allah has sent  
As a messenger?"

وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ إِذَا بُدِّعُوا بِكَ إِذَا هَرُّوا  
أَهَذَا الَّذِي بَعَثَ اللَّهُ رَسُولًا ﴿٤١﴾

3094. Commentators are not clear as to who the "Companions of the Rass" were. The root meaning of "rass" is an old well or shallow water-pit. Another root connects it with the burial of the dead. But it is probably the name of a town or place. The "Companions of the Rass" may well have been the people of Shu'aib, as they are here mentioned with the 'Ād, the Thamūd, and Lot's people, and the people of Shu'aib are mentioned in a similar connection in xxvi. 176-190 and in xi. 84-95. Shu'aib was the prophet of the Madyan people in the north-west of Arabia, where many old wells are found. There is however an oasis town *al-Rass* in the district of Qasīm in Middle Najd, about thirty-five miles south-west of the town of 'Unaiza, reputed to be the central point of the Arabian Peninsula, and situated midway between Makkah and Basra. See Doughty's *Arabia Deserta*, thin-paper one-volume edition, London 1926, II, 435 and Map, Lat. 26°N., and Long. 43°E.

3095. This refers to Lūt's story and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the wicked cities of the plain near the Dead Sea, by a shower of brimstone. The site lies on the highway between Arabia and Syria. Cf. xv. 74, 76, and n. 1998.

42. "He indeed would well-nigh  
Have misled us from  
Our gods, had it not been  
That we were constant  
To them!"—Soon will they  
Know, when they see  
The Chastisement, who it is  
That is most misled  
In Path!<sup>3096</sup>

43. Seest thou such a one  
As taketh for his god  
His own passion (or impulse)?  
Couldst thou be a disposer  
Of affairs for him?<sup>3097</sup>

44. Or thinkest thou that most  
Of them listen or understand?  
They are only like cattle;—  
Nay, they are farther astray  
From the way.

#### SECTION 5.

45. Hast thou not seen?<sup>3098</sup>  
How thy Lord?—

إِنْ كَادَ لَيُضِلَّنَا عَنْ إِلَهِنَا  
لَوْلَا أَنْ صَبَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا وَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ  
حَيْثُ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ مَنْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٢﴾

أَرَأَيْتَ مَنِ اخْتَذَى إِلَهَهُ هُوَ لَهُ أَفَانَتْ تَكُونُ  
عَلَيْهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٤٣﴾

أَمْ تَحْسَبُ أَنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ أَوْ يَعْقِلُونَ  
إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ سَبِيلًا ﴿٤٤﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ وَلَوْ شَاءَ  
لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسُ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا ﴿٤٥﴾

3096. "Path" (*Sabil*) is almost equivalent here to conduct, way of life.

3097. The man who worships his own passions or impulses or desires is the most hopeless to teach or lead or guide. If it were anything else the matter with him, the Prophet could argue with him. But Reason cannot prevail over blind passion. It is vain to hope that such a man could be led, until his mad desires are killed. No one could undertake any responsibility for him, for he obeys no law and follows no advice. He is worse than brute beasts, which may not understand, but at least follow the wholesome instincts implanted in them by Allah. The lawless man has killed his instincts and is unwilling to submit to guidance.

3098. We saw in xxiv. 35 that Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. We have now another sublime passage, in which we are asked to contemplate the Glory of Allah by a parable of the subtle play of Light and Shade in Allah's creation.

Doth prolong<sup>3099</sup>

The Shadow! If He willed,  
He could make it stationary!  
Then do We make  
The sun its guide;<sup>3100</sup>

46. Then We draw it in<sup>3101</sup>  
Towards Ourselves,—  
A contraction by easy stages.<sup>3102</sup>

47. And He it is Who makes  
The Night as a Robe  
For you, and Sleep as Repose,  
And makes the Day  
(As it were) a Resurrection.<sup>3103</sup>

ثُمَّ قَبَضْنَاهُ إِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا سِيرًا ﴿٤٦﴾

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا  
وَجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُورًا ﴿٤٧﴾

3099. In our artificial life and surroundings we fail to see some of the finest mysteries of Light and Shade. We praise, and rightly, the wonderful colours of sunset. We see, particularly in climates more northerly than that of India, the subtle play of Light and Shade in the twilights succeeding sunsets. If we were as assiduous in seeing sunrises and the play of Light and Shade preceding them, we should see phenomena even more impressive, as the early morning seems to us more holy than any other time in the twenty-four hours of the sun's daily journey. There is first the false dawn, with its curious uncertain light and the curious long uncertain shadows which it casts. Then there are the streaks of black in the East, succeeded by the true dawn, with its delicate tones of colours and light and shade. The light of this true or false Dawn is not given by the direct rays of the sun. In a sense it is not light, but the shadows or reflections of light. And they gradually merge into actual sunrise, with its more substantial or more defined shadows, which we can definitely connect with the sun.

3100. The morning shadows are long but more definite, and their length and direction are seen to be guided by the sun. But they change insensibly every second or fraction of a second.

3101. As the sun rises higher and higher, the shadows contract. In regions where the sun gets actually to the zenith at noon, there is no shadow left at that time. Where does it go to? It was but a shadow cast by a substance and it gets absorbed by the substance which produced it.

3102. The shadows are constantly in a state of flux; so are all things in Creation, all things we see or covet in this life. Allah, if He wills, can give some of them greater fixity or comparative stability.

3103. It is still the contrast between Light and Shade; but the shade of Night is as a Robe to cover and screen us and give us Repose from activity; and the Light of Day is for striving, work, activity. Or again, the Night is like Death, our temporary Death before Judgment, the time during which our senses are as sealed in Sleep; and the Day is like the renewal of Life at the Resurrection.

48. And He it is Who sends  
The Winds as heralds  
Of glad tidings, going before<sup>3104</sup>  
His Mercy, and We send down  
Pure water from the sky,<sup>3105</sup>
49. That with it We may give  
Life to a dead land,  
And slake the thirst  
Of things We have created,<sup>3106</sup>  
Cattle and men in great numbers.
50. And We have distributed  
The (water) amongst them, in  
order<sup>3107</sup>

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا لِّبَنِي  
رَحْمَتِهِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا ﴿٤٨﴾

لِّنُحْيِيَ بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيِّتًا وَنُسْقِيَهُ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا  
أَنْعَمًا وَأُنَاسٍ كَثِيرًا ﴿٤٩﴾

وَلَقَدْ صَرَفْنَاهُ بَيْنَهُمْ لِيَذْكُرُوا  
فَآبِيَ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كَثُورًا ﴿٥٠﴾

3104. Cf. vii. 57. The Winds are heralds of Joy, ushering in Rain, which is one form of Allah's Mercy. Again, the symbolism presents a fresh point of view. Heat (which is connected with light) sets up currents in the atmosphere, besides sucking up moisture from the seas, and distributing it by means of Winds over wide surfaces of the earth. In the physical world we know the beneficent action of heat on life, and by contrast, we also know how intolerable high temperatures may become, and how the cloud-bearing Winds come as welcome heralds of rain.

3105. Rain water (in pure air) is not only pure water distilled in air and sky, but it is the best purifying and sanitating agent on the largest scale known to us.

3106. The whole cycle of water,—sea, clouds, rain or hail or snow, rivers, and sea again,—is a remarkable illustration of the processes of nature making Allah's providence visible to us. The salts of the sea sanitize and purify all the filth that pours into it. Water action, in the form of rain, frost, glaciers, rivers, lakes, etc., is responsible for the building up and configuration of the crust of the earth, and is the chief agent in physical geography. A parched desert quickly comes to life under the action of water. All drinking water, whether derived from rivers, canals, lakes, reservoirs, springs, wells, or water-works of any kind, are ultimately traceable to rain. The connection of life with water is intimate. The physical basis of life itself, protoplasm, is in great part water; see xxv. 54 below.

3107. The water is distributed all over the world, in order that all life may receive its support according to its needs. In xxv. 48-50, we have the argument of contrasts stated in another way. Water is life, and is made available to sustain life all over the world; this is a physical fact which all can see. But water is also the symbol of spiritual life, whose sustaining principle is the Will of Allah as made known to us through Revelation. It sometimes comes to us in our inward or spiritual storms. Many violent unsettlements =



That they may be mindful  
But most men  
Are averse (to aught) but<sup>3108</sup>  
(Rank) ingratitude.

51. Had it been Our Will,  
We could have sent  
A warner to every town.<sup>3109</sup>

52. Therefore listen not  
To the Unbelievers, but strive  
Against them with the utmost  
Strenuousness, with the (Qur-ān).<sup>3110</sup>

53. It is He Who has  
Let free the two bodies  
Of flowing water:<sup>3111</sup>  
One palatable and sweet,

وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَبَعَثْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ نَذِيرًا ﴿٥١﴾

فَلَا تَطِيعُ الْكَافِرِينَ  
وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهِ جِهَادًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٥٢﴾

﴿٥٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ  
وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا  
وَحِجْرًا مَّتَّجُورًا ﴿٥٤﴾

= of the spirit are but heralds of the refreshing showers of spiritual understanding that come in their wake. They purify our souls, and produce spiritual Life even where there was a parched spiritual desert before. They continue to sustain us in our normal spiritual Life out of the reservoirs of Allah's Revelation, which are open to all, and well distributed in time and space. The universality of distribution is again referred to in the following verse.

3108. In contrast to Allah's abounding Mercy is man's base ingratitude.

3109. Allah's Message has been distributed to all nations. If it had been necessary, a Prophet could have been sent to every town and village. But Allah's Plan is different. He has sent His Light to every heart, through His Signs in man's conscience, in Nature, and in Revelation.

3110. The distribution of Allah's Signs being universal, the Prophet of Allah pays no heed to carping critics who reject Faith. He wages the biggest Jihād of all, with the weapon of Allah's Revelation.

3111. *Maraja*: literally, let free or let loose cattle for grazing. *Bahrain*: two seas, or two bodies of flowing water; for *bahr* is applied both to the salt sea and to rivers. In the world taken as a whole, there are two bodies of water, viz.: (1) the great salt Ocean, and (2) the bodies of sweet water fed by rain, whether they are rivers, lakes or underground springs: their source in rain makes them one, and their drainage, whether above-ground or underground, eventually to the Ocean, also makes them one. They are free to mingle, and in a sense they do mingle, for there is a regular water-cycle: see n. 3106 above: and the rivers flow constantly to the sea, and tidal rivers get sea-water for several miles up their estuaries at high tide. Yet in spite of all this, the laws of gravitation are like a barrier or partition set by Allah, by which the two bodies of water as a whole =

And the other salt  
And bitter; yet has He  
Made a barrier between them,  
A partition that is not  
To be passed.<sup>3112</sup>

54. It is He Who has  
Created man from water:<sup>3113</sup>  
Then has He established  
Relationships of lineage<sup>3114</sup>  
And marriage: for thy Lord  
Has power (over all things).

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا فَجَعَلَهُ

نَسَبًا وَصِهْرًا وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿٥٤﴾

55. Yet do they worship,  
Besides Allah, things that can  
Neither profit them nor  
Harm them: and the Misbeliever

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَا يَضُرُّهُمْ

وَكَانَ الْكَافِرُ عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِ ظَهِيرًا ﴿٥٥﴾

= are always kept apart and distinct. In the case of rivers carrying large quantities of water to the sea, like the Mississippi or the Yangtse-Kiang, the river-water with its silt remains distinct from sea-water for a long distance out at sea. But the wonderful Sign is that the two bodies of water, though they pass through each other, remain distinct bodies, with their distinct functions.

3112. In Allah's overall scheme of things, bodies of salt and sweet water, which are adjoining and yet separate, have significant functions. Weaving a harmonious fabric out of these different fibres shows both Allah's power and wisdom. Incidentally, this verse points to a fact which has only recently been discovered by science. This fact relates to the oceans of the world: they meet and yet each remains separate for Allah has placed "a barrier, a partition" between them.

3113. The basis of all living matter in the physical world, protoplasm, is water: Cf. xxiv. 45 and xxi. 30, and notes thereon.

3114. Water is a fluid, unstable thing: yet from it arises the highest form of life known to us, in this world, man. And man has not only the functions and characteristics of the noblest animals, but his abstract relationships are also typical of his highest nature. He can trace lineage and pedigree, and thus remember and commemorate a long line of ancestors, to whom he is bound by ties of piety, which no mere animals can do. Further, there is the union in marriage: it is not only like the physical union of animals, but it gives rise to relationships arising out of the sexes of individuals who were not otherwise related to each other. These are physical and social facts.

Is a helper (of Evil),  
Against his own Lord!<sup>3115</sup>

56. But thee We only sent  
To give glad tidings  
And warnings.

57. Say: "No reward do I  
Ask of you for it but this:  
That each one who will  
May take a (straight) Path  
To his Lord:"

58. And put thy trust  
In Him Who lives  
And dies not; and celebrate  
His praise; and enough is He  
To be acquainted with  
The faults of His servants;—<sup>3116</sup>

59. He Who created the heavens  
And the earth and all  
That is between, in six days,<sup>3117</sup>  
Then He established Himself  
On the Throne:<sup>3118</sup>  
Allah Most Gracious:  
Ask thou, then, about Him  
Of any acquainted (with such  
things).<sup>\*3119</sup>

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٥٦﴾

قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ إِلَّا مَنْ شَاءَ  
أَنْ يَتَّخِذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٥٧﴾

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَمُوتُ وَسَبِّحْ  
بِحَمْدِهِ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِهِ بُذُوبَ عِبَادِهِ خَبِيرًا ﴿٥٨﴾

الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا  
فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ الرَّحْمَنُ  
فَسْأَلْ بِهِ خَبِيرًا ﴿٥٩﴾

3115. Here is the highest contrast of all-material things which are inert, and Allah, Whose goodness and power are supreme; Faith and Unfaith, meriting glad tidings and admonition; the selfish man who is self-centred, and the man of God, who works for others without reward.

3116. Allah knows our faults better than we or anyone else. It is no use hiding anything from Him. We must put our trust completely in Him. His care is for all, and He is Allah Most Gracious.

3117. Cf. vii. 54 and n. 1031.

3118. See n. 1386 to x. 3.

3119. The argument is about the question, in whom shall we put our trust? Worldly men put their trust in wordly things: the righteous man only in Allah. The true distinction will be quite clear from a ray of divine knowledge. If you do not see it all clearly, ask of those who possess such knowledge.

60. When it is said to them,  
 "Adore ye The Most Gracious!",  
 They say, "And what is (Allah)  
 Most Gracious? Shall we adore  
 That which thou commandest us?"  
 And it increases them  
 In aversion.<sup>3120</sup>

## SECTION 6.

61. Blessed is He Who made  
 Constellations in the skies,  
 And placed therein a Lamp<sup>3121</sup>  
 And a Moon giving light;  
 62. And it is He Who made  
 The Night and the Day  
 To follow each other:  
 For such as desire  
 To be mindful<sup>3122</sup>  
 Or to show their gratitude.  
 63. And the servants of (Allah)  
 Most Gracious are those

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْجُدُوا لِلرَّحْمَنِ قَالُوا وَمَا الرَّحْمَنُ  
 أَنَسْجُدُ لِمَا تَأْمُرُنَا وَزَادَهُمْ نُفُورًا ﴿٦٠﴾

نَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا  
 سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا ﴿٦١﴾

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَن أَرَادَ  
 أَن يَذَّكَّرَ أَوْ أَرَادَ شُكُورًا ﴿٦٢﴾

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا  
 وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا ﴿٦٣﴾

3120. Those who have no spiritual Light cannot understand this precept about putting all our trust in Allah. It seems to them foolish. They have no faith, or but a superficial faith. They may possibly take the name of Allah on their lips, but they cannot understand the full significance of His title of *Rahmān* (Most Gracious). Perhaps they are afraid on account of their sins; perhaps they do not see how unbounded is the mercy of Allah. Such men are contrasted against the true servants of Allah, who are described below in xxv. 63-75.

3121. The glorious Lamp of the skies is the Sun; and next to him is the Moon, which gives borrowed light. The Constellations of course include the Signs of the Zodiac, which mark the path of the planets in the heavens.

3122. The scenes of the phenomenal world are Signs of the Self-Revelation of Allah, for those who understand and who have the will to merge their wills in His. This they do (1) by praising Him, which means understanding something of His nature, and (2) by gratitude to Him, which means carrying out His Will, and doing good to their fellow-creatures. These two attitudes of mind and heart give rise to various consequences in their lives, which are detailed in the following verse.

Who walk on the earth  
In humility, and when the  
ignorant<sup>3123</sup>

Address them, they say,  
"Peace!";

64. Those who spend the night  
In adoration of their Lord  
Prostrate and standing;<sup>3124</sup>

65. Those who say, "Our Lord!  
Avert from us the Wrath  
Of Hell, for its Wrath  
Is indeed an affliction grievous,"<sup>3125</sup>

66. "Evil indeed is it  
As an abode, and as  
A place to rest in";<sup>3126</sup>

67. Those who, when they spend,  
Are not extravagant and not  
Niggardly, but hold a just (balance)  
Between those (extremes);<sup>3127</sup>

وَالَّذِينَ يَسْتَوُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا ﴿١٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ  
جَهَنَّمَ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا ﴿١٥﴾

إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿١٦﴾

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا  
وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿١٧﴾

3123. *Ignorant*: in a moral sense. *Address*: in the aggressive sense. Their humility is shown in two ways: (1) to those in real search of knowledge, they give such knowledge as they have and as the recipients can assimilate; (2) to those who merely dispute, they do not speak harshly, but say "Peace!", as much as to say, "May it be well with you, may you repent and be better"; or "May Allah give me peace from such wrangling"; or "Peace, and Good-bye; let me leave you!"

3124. Humble prayer brings them nearer to Allah.

3125. This is a prayer of humility: such a person relies, not on any good works which he may have done, but on the Grace and Mercy of Allah; and he shows a lively sense of the Day of Judgment, when every action will weigh for or against a soul.

3126. The misery which results from sin is not only grievous to live in ("an abode") but also grievous "to rest in" or "to stand in", if it be only for a short time.

3127. In ordinary spending this is a wise rule. But even in charity, in which we give of our best, it is not expected that we should be extravagant, i.e., that we should either do it for show, to impress other people, or do it thoughtlessly, which would be the case if we "rob Peter to pay Paul". We should certainly not be niggardly, but we should remember everyone's rights, including our own, and strike a perfectly just balance between them.

68. Those who invoke not,  
With Allah, any other god,  
Nor slay such life as Allah  
Has made sacred, except  
For just cause, nor commit<sup>3128</sup>  
Fornication;—and any that does  
This (not only) meets punishment
69. (But) the Chastisement on the Day  
Of Judgment will be doubled  
To him, and he will dwell  
Therein in ignominy,—<sup>3129</sup>
70. Unless he repents, believes,  
And works righteous deeds,  
For Allah will change  
The evil of such persons  
Into good, and Allah is  
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful,<sup>3130</sup>
71. And whoever repents and does good  
Has truly turned to Allah  
In repentance:

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَدْعُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُونَ  
النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُونَ  
وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ يَلْقَ أَثَامًا ﴿٦٨﴾

يُضَاعَفْ لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيهِ  
مُهَانًا ﴿٦٩﴾

إِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا  
فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَبْدِلُ اللَّهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ حَسَنَاتٍ  
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٧٠﴾

وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ  
مَتَابًا ﴿٧١﴾

3128. Here three things are expressly condemned: (1) false worship, which is a crime against Allah; (2) the taking of life, which is a crime against our fellow-creatures; and (3) fornication, which is a crime against our self-respect, against ourselves. Every crime is against Allah, His creatures, and ourselves, but some may be viewed more in relation to one than to another. The prohibition against taking life is qualified: "except for just cause,"; e.g., in judicial punishment for murder, or in self-preservation, which may include not only self-defence in the legal sense, but also the clearing out of pests, and the provision of meat under conditions of *Halâl*: see n. 698 to v. 5. After this comes a long parenthesis, which ends with verse 71 below.

3129. The three crimes just mentioned are specially detestable and infamous, and as ignominy will be added to other punishments, the penalty will be double that of ordinary punishment.

3130. But even in the case of great crimes, if there is true repentance as tested by a changed life in conduct, Allah's Mercy is available, and it will transform the repentant's nature from evil to good.

72. Those who witness no falsehood<sup>3131</sup>

And, if they pass by futility,<sup>3132</sup>

They pass by it

With honourable (avoidance);

وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ

مَرُّوا كِرَامًا ﴿٧٢﴾

73. Those who, when they are

Admonished with the Signs

Of their Lord, droop not down<sup>3133</sup>

At them as if they were

Deaf or blind;

وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ

لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَعُمْيَانًا ﴿٧٣﴾

74. And those who pray,

"Our Lord! Grant unto us

Wives and offspring who will be

The comfort of our eyes,<sup>3134</sup>

And give us (the grace)

To lead the righteous."<sup>3135</sup>

وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا

وَذُرِّيَّتِنَا قَرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْ لَنَا

لِلْمُنْفِقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾

3131. *Witness no falsehood* has two significations, both implied in this passage: (1) those who give no evidence that is false; and (2) those who do not assist at anything which implies fraud or falsehood.

3132. There is not only condemnation of positive falsehood or of being mixed up with things implying falsehood; but futilities—vain random talk, unedifying jokes, useless show, etc.—are all condemned. If a good man finds himself in such an affair, he must withdraw from it in an honourable, dignified way, not in a fussy arrogant way.

3133. *Kharra* may mean: to fall down, to snore, to droop down as if the person were bored or inattentive, or did not wish to see or hear or pay attention.

3134. We must also pray for the maintenance of Allah's Law after us, through our wives and descendants: in our eyes they should not be mere accidents or play-things, but a real comfort and fulfilment of our spiritual longings. Perhaps, through them, as well through ourselves, we may, by Allah's grace, be able to give a lead for truth and righteousness.

3135. Let us recapitulate the virtues of the true servants of Allah: (1) they are humble and forbearing to those below them in spiritual worth; (2) they are constantly, by adoration, in touch with Allah; (3) they always remember the Judgment in the Hereafter; (4) they are moderate in all things; (5) they avoid treason to Allah, to their fellow-creatures, and to themselves; (6) they give a wide berth not only to falsehood but to futility; (7) they pay attention, both in mind and manner, to the Signs of their Lord; (8) their ambition is to bring up their families in righteousness and to lead in all good. A fine code of individual and social ethics, a ladder of spiritual development, open to all.

75. Those are the ones who  
Will be rewarded with  
The highest place in heaven,  
Because of their patient constancy:  
Therein shall they be met  
With salutations and peace,

76. Dwelling therein;-how beautiful  
An abode and place of rest!

77. Say (to the Rejecters):

"My Lord would not concern

Himself

With you but for your call on

Him:<sup>3136</sup>

But ye have indeed rejected  
(Him), and soon will come  
The inevitable (punishment)!"

أُولَٰئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا  
وَيُلْقَوْنَ فِيهَا نَجَّةً وَسَلَامًا ﴿٧٥﴾

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا حَسَنَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿٧٦﴾

قُلْ مَا يَعْصِيَاكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ  
فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُونُ لِزَامًا ﴿٧٧﴾

3136. Let not the wicked think that it causes Allah any annoyance or uneasiness if they do not serve or worship Him. He is high above all needs. But He turns in His Mercy to all who call on Him. For those who arrogantly reject Him, the evil consequences of their rejection are inevitable, and must soon come to pass.