

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Al-Anbiyāa*, 21.

The last Sūra dealt with the individual story of Moses and Aaron, and contrasted it with the growth of evil in individuals like Pharaoh and the Sāmirī, and ended with a warning against Evil, and an exhortation to the purification of the soul with prayer and praise. This Sūra begins with the external obstacles placed by Evil against such purification, and gives the assurance of Allah's power to defend men, illustrating this with reference to Abraham's fight against idolatry, Lot's fight against injustice and failure to proclaim Allah's glory by making full use of man's God-given faculties and powers, that of Job against impatience and want of self-confidence, that of Ismā'il, Idrīs, and Zul-kifl against want of steady perseverance, that of Zun-nūn against hasty anger, that of Zakariya against isolation, and that of Mary against the lusts of this world. In each allusion there is a special point about the soul's purification. The common point is that the Prophets were not, as the disbelievers suppose, just irresistible men. They had to win their ground inch by inch against all kinds of resistance from evil.

The chronology of this Sūra has no particular significance. It probably dates from the middle of the Makkan period of inspiration.

Summary.—Man treats, as he has always treated, the serious things of life with jest or contempt; but the Judgment must come, and Truth must triumph (xxi. 1-29).

Unity of Design, and certainty of Allah's Promise: Allah's protection and mercy, and His justice (xxi. 30-50).

How Abraham triumphed over idols, as did others among Allah's chosen ones over various forms of evil (xxi. 51-93).

Work righteousness while it is yet time, for the Judgment will come, and only the righteous will inherit (xxi. 94-112).

Al-Anbiyāa, or The Prophets

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

1. Closer and closer to mankind²⁶⁶²
Comes their Reckoning: yet they
Heed not and they turn away.
2. Never comes (aught) to them
Of a renewed Message²⁶⁶³
From their Lord, but they
Listen to it as in jest,—
3. Their hearts toying as with
Trifles. The wrong-doers conceal²⁶⁶⁴
Their private counsels, (saying),
“Is this (one) more than
A man like yourselves?
Will ye go to witchcraft
With your eyes open?”²⁶⁶⁵

سورة الأنبياء

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ

وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿١﴾

مَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ ذِكْرٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ مُحَدَّثٍ

إِلَّا أَسْتَمِعُوهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٢﴾

لَا هِيَ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَسْرَأُ النَّجْوَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا

هَلْ هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ أَفَتَأْتُونَ

السِّحْرَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

2662. Every minute sees them nearer to their doom, and yet they are sadly heedless, and even actively turn away from the Message that would save them.

2663. In each age, when the Message of Allah is renewed, the very people who should have known better and welcomed the renewal and the sweeping away of human cobwebs, either receive it with amused self-superiority, which later turns to active hostility, or with careless indifference.

2664. Allah's Message is free and open, in the full light of day. His enemies plot against it in secrecy, lest their own false motives be exposed. Their jealousy prevents them from accepting a "man like themselves" as a teacher or warner or guide.

2665. Literally, "in a state in which you (actually) see (that it is witchcraft)". When Allah's Messenger is proved to be above them in moral worth, in true insight, in earnestness and power of eloquence, they accuse him of witchcraft, a word which may mean nothing, or perhaps some mysterious deceitful arts.

4. Say:²⁶⁶⁶ "My Lord
Knoweth (every) word (spoken)²⁶⁶⁷
In the heavens and on earth:
He is the One that heareth
And knoweth (all things)."

5. "Nay," they say, "(these are)
Medleys of dreams!-Nay,
He forged it!-Nay,
He is (but) a poet!²⁶⁶⁸
Let him then bring us
A Sign like the ones
That were sent to
(Prophets) of old!"

6. (As to those) before them,
Not one of the towns
Which We destroyed believed:
Will these believe?²⁶⁶⁹

قَالَ رَبِّي يَعْلَمُ الْقَوْلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦﴾

بَلْ قَالُوا أَضْغَتْ أَحْلَامٌ بَلْ افْتَرَاهُ بَلْ هُوَ
شَاعِرٌ فَلْيَأْتِنَا بآيَةٍ كَمَا أُرْسِلَ الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

مَاءَ أَمْنَتٍ قَبْلَهُمْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَفَهُمْ
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾

2666. Notice that in the usual Arabic texts (that is, according to the Qiraat of Hafs) the word *qāla* is here and in xxi. 112 below, as well as in xxiii. 112, spelt differently from the usual spelling of the word in other places (e.g. in xx. 125-126). *Qul* is the reading of the Basra Qirāat, meaning, "Say thou" in the imperative. If we construe "he says", the pronoun refers to "this (one)" in the preceding verse, viz.: the Prophet. But more than one Commentator understands the meaning in the imperative, and I agree with them. The point is merely one of verbal construction. The meaning is the same in either case. See n. 2948 to xxiii. 112.

2667. Every word, whether whispered in secret (as in xxi. 3 above) or spoken openly, is known to Allah. Let not the wrong-doers imagine that their secret plots are secret to the Knower of all things.

2668. The charges against Allah's inspired Messenger are heaped up, "Magic!" says one: that means, "We don't understand it!" Says another, "Oh! but we know! he is a mere dreamer of confused dreams!" If the "dreams" fit in with real things and vital experiences, another will suggest, "Oh yes! why drag in supernatural agencies? he is clever enough to forge it himself!" Or another suggests, "He is a poet! Poets can invent things and say them in beautiful words!" Another interposes, "What we should like to see is miracles, like those we read of in stories of the Prophets of old!"

2669. 'If such miracles as you read of failed to convince Unbelievers of old, what chance is there that these Unbelievers will believe? Miracles may come, but they are no cures for Unbelief.

7. Before thee, also, the messengers
We sent were but men,
To whom We granted inspiration:
If ye know this not, ask
Of those who possess the Message.²⁶⁷⁰

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ إِلَّا رِجَالًا نُوْحِي إِلَيْهِمْ فَتَشْكُرُوا
أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧﴾

8. Nor did We give them
Bodies that ate no food,
Nor were they immortals.²⁶⁷¹

وَمَا جَعَلْنَاهُمْ جَسَدًا لَا يَأْكُلُونَ الطَّعَامَ
وَمَا كَانُوا خَالِدِينَ ﴿٨﴾

9. Then We fulfilled
To them Our promise,
And We saved them
And those whom We willed
But We destroyed those
Who transgressed beyond bounds.²⁶⁷²

ثُمَّ صَدَقْنَاهُمُ الْوَعْدَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُمْ وَمَنْ نَشَاءُ
وَأَهْلَكْنَا الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٩﴾

10. We have revealed for you
(O men!) a book which
Will give you eminence.
Will ye not then understand?

لَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَابًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ أَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

SECTION 2.

11. How many were the towns.
We utterly destroyed because
Of their iniquities, setting up
In their places other peoples?

وَكَمْ قَصَمْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ كَانَتْ ظَالِمَةً
وَأَنْشَأْنَا بَعْدَهَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ ﴿١١﴾

2670. See xvi. 43 and n. 2069. This answers the Unbelievers' taunt, "he is just a man like ourselves!" True, but all messengers sent by Allah were men, not angels or another kind of beings, who could not understand men or whom men could not understand.

2671. As men they were subject to all the laws governing the physical bodies of men. They ate and drank, and their bodies perished in death.

2672. But, however difficult (or impossible) their mission may have appeared to them, or to the world at first, they won through eventually, even those who seemed to have been defeated. Examples are given in the latter part of this Sūra, especially in xxi. 51-93. They were delivered from the Wrath which overtook the Unbelievers, as were those with them who accepted Allah's Message and placed themselves in conformity with His Will and Plan. That is the meaning of "whom We willed."

12. Yet, when they felt
Our Punishment (coming),
Behold, they (tried to) flee
From it.²⁶⁷³

فَلَمَّا أَحَسُّوا بَأْسَنَا إِذَا هُمْ مِنْهَا يَرْكُضُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. Flee not, but return to
The good things of this life
Which were given you,
And to your homes,
In order that ye may
Be called to account.²⁶⁷⁴

لَا تَرْكُضُوا وَارْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَا أُتْرِفْتُمْ فِيهِ
وَمَسْكِنِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

14. They said: "Ah! woe to us!
We were indeed wrong-doers!"

قَالُوا وَيَوَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. And that cry of theirs
Ceased not, till We made
Them as a field
That is mown, as ashes
Silent and quenched.²⁶⁷⁵

فَمَا زَالَت تَّلَٰكَ دَعْوَتُهُمْ حَتَّىٰ جَعَلْنَاهُمْ
حَصِيدًا خَامِدِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

2673. When they had every chance of repentance and reform, they rejected Allah's Message, and perhaps even put up an open defiance. When they actually began to feel the Wrath coming, they began to flee, but it was too late! Besides, where could they flee to from the Wrath of Allah? Hence the ironical appeal to them in the next verse: better go back to your luxuries and what you thought were your permanent homes! Cf. Christ's saying in the present Gospel of St. Matthew (iii. 7): "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the Wrath to come?"

2674. See last note. 'You thought your homes so comfortable: why don't you go back to them? You will be called to account. Perhaps there may be rewards to be given you, who knows? This irony is itself the beginning of the Punishment. But the ungodly now see how wrong they had been. But their signs and regrets now avail them nothing. It is too late. They are lost, and nothing can save them.

2675. The two similes present two different aspects of the lamentation of the ungodly. When they really see the Wrath to come, there is a stampede, but where can they go to? Their lamentation is now the only mark of their life. But it dies away, as corn vanishes from a field that is being mown, or as a dying fire is slowly extinguished! They do not die. They wish they were dead! (lxxviii. 40).

16. Not for (idle) sport did We²⁶⁷⁶
Create the heavens and the earth
And all that is between!

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لِنَعِينُ ﴿١٦﴾

17. If it had been Our wish
To take (just) a pastime,
We should surely have taken
It from the things nearest
To Us, if We would
Do (such a thing)!²⁶⁷⁷

لَوْ أَرَدْنَا أَنْ نَتَّخِذَ لَهْوًا لَا تَخَذْتُهُ مِنْ لَدُنَّا
إِنْ كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

18. Nay, We hurl the Truth
Against falsehood, and it knocks
Out its brain, and behold,
Falsehood doth perish!
Ah! woe be to you
For the (false) things
Ye ascribe (to Us).²⁶⁷⁸

بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ
فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ وَلَكُمْ الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا نَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

19. To Him belong all (creatures)
In the heavens and on earth:
Even those who are
With Him are not²⁶⁷⁹
Too proud to serve Him,
Nor are they (ever) weary
(Of His service):

وَلَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهُ
لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

2676. The Hindu doctrine of *Lila*, that all things were created for sport, is here negated. But more: with Allah we must not associate any ideas but those of Truth, Righteousness, Mercy, Justice, and the other attributes implied in His Beautiful Names. He does not jest nor play with His creatures.

2677. If such an idea as that of play or pastime had been possible with regard to Allah, and if He had wished really to indulge in pastime, He would have done it with creatures of Light nearest to Him, not with the lowly material creation that we see around us.

2678. Such as that (1) Allah has partners (xxi.22), or (2) that He has begotten a son (xxi.26), or (3) has daughters (xvi. 57), or any other superstitions derogatory to the dignity and glory of Allah.

2679. The pure angelic hosts, whom we imagine to be glorious creatures of light, high in Heavens, near the Throne of Allah Himself, are yet His creatures, and serve Him without ceasing, and are proud to do so. Such is the majesty of Allah Most High.

20. They celebrate His praises
Night and day, nor do they
Ever flag or intermit.
21. Or have they taken
(For worship) gods from the earth²⁶⁸⁰
Who can raise (the dead)?²⁶⁸¹
22. If there were, in the heavens
And the earth, other gods²⁶⁸²
Besides Allah, there would
Have been ruin in both!
But glory to Allah,
The Lord of the Throne:
(High is He) above
What they attribute to Him!
23. He cannot be questioned
For His acts, but they²⁶⁸³
Will be questioned (for theirs).
24. Or have they taken
For worship (other) gods²⁶⁸⁴

يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا آلِهَةً مِنَ الْأَرْضِ هُمْ يُنشِرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا

فَسُبْحَنَّ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

لَا يُسْتَلْ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْتَلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

أَمْ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِهِ آلِهَةً قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ

2680. The different kinds of false gods whom people raise from their imagination are now referred to. In verses 21-23, the reference is to the gods of the earth, whether idols or local godlings, or deified heroes, or animals or trees or forces of the nature around us, which men have from time to time worshipped. These, as deities, have no life except what their worshippers give to them.

2681. The answer of course is "no". No one but Allah can raise the dead to life. The miracle in the story of Jesus (iii. 49 and v. 113) was "by Allah's leave". It was a miracle of Allah, not one of Jesus by his own power or will.

2682. After the false gods of the earth (verse 21), are mentioned the false gods in the heavens and the earth, like those in the Greek Pantheon (verse 22), who quarrelled and fought and slandered each other and made their Olympus a perfect bear-garden!

2683. Allah is Self-Subsisting. All His creatures are responsible to Him and dependent on Him there is no other being to whom He can be responsible or on whom He can be dependent.

2684. See above. n. 2682, where two kinds of false worship are noted. Now we are warned against a third danger, the worship of false gods of any sort. Pagan man is prolific of creating abstract images for worship, including Self or abstract Intelligence or Power. In verse 26 below is mentioned a fourth kind of false worship, which imagines that Allah begets sons or daughters.

Besides Him? Say, "Bring
Your convincing proof: this
Is the Message of those
With me and the Message
Of those before me."²⁶⁸⁵
But most of them know not
The Truth, and so turn away.

25. Not a messenger did We
Send before thee without
This inspiration sent by Us
To him: that there is
No god but I; therefore
Worship and serve Me.

26. And they say: "The
Most Gracious has taken²⁶⁸⁶
A son." Glory to Him!
They are (but) servants raised
To honour.

27. They speak not before²⁶⁸⁷
He speaks, and they act
(In all things) by His command.

هَذَا ذِكْرٌ مِّنْ مَّعَىٰ وَذِكْرُ مَن قَبْلِي بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
الْحَقَّ فَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِي إِلَيْهِ
أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٢٦﴾

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَنَهُ
بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

لَا يَسْقُونَهُ إِلَّا الْفَوَلِ وَهُمْ
بِأَمْرِهِ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

2685. This verse should be read with the next. All reason revolts against the idea of conflicting gods, and points to Unity in Creation and Unity in Godhead. This is not only the Message of Islam ("those with me") but the message of all prophets who came before the holy Prophet Muhammad ("those before me"), and the line of prophets was closed with him. The Message given to every prophet in all ages was that of Unity as the fundamental basis of Order and Design in the world, material, moral, and spiritual.

2686. This refers both to the Trinitarian superstition that Allah has begotten a son, and to the Arab superstition that the angels were daughters of Allah. All such superstitions are derogatory to the glory of Allah. The prophets and the angels are no more than servants of Allah: they are raised high in honour, and therefore they deserve our highest respect, but not our worship.

2687. They never say anything before they receive Allah's command to say it, and their acts are similarly conditioned. This is also the teaching of Jesus as reported in the Gospel of St. John (xii. 49-50): "For I have not spoken of myself: but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." If rightly understood, "Father" has the same meaning as our "Rabb", Sustainer and Cherisher, not Begetter or Progenitor.

28. He knows what is before them,
And what is behind them,
And they offer no intercession
Except for those with whom
He is well-pleased²⁶⁸⁸
And they²⁶⁸⁹ stand
In awe and reverence
Of His (glory).

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ
إِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ وَهُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَتِهِ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

29. If any of them should say,
"I am a god besides Him",
Such a one We should
Reward with Hell: thus
Do We reward those
Who do wrong.

وَمَنْ يَقُلْ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّي إِلَهٌ مِنْ دُونِهِ فَذَلِكَ
نَجْزِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

SECTION 3.

30. Do not the Unbelievers see
That the heavens and the earth
Were joined together (as one²⁶⁹⁰
Unit of Creation), before
We clove them asunder?

أَوَلَمْ يَرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا وَجَعَلْنَا
مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

2688. Cf. xx. 109. Those who have conformed to the Will of Allah and obeyed His Law, thus winning the stamp of His approval.

2689. *They*: the usual interpretation refers the pronoun to the servants of Allah who intercede: it may also refer to those on whose behalf intercession is made: they do not take it as a matter of course, but stand in due awe and reverence of Allah's great glory and mercy.

2690. The evolution of the ordered worlds as we see them is hinted at. As man's intellectual gaze over the physical world expands, he sees more and more how Unity is the dominating note in Allah's wonderful Universe. Taking the solar system alone, we know that the maximum intensity of sun-spots corresponds with the maximum intensity of magnetic storms on this earth. The universal law of gravitation seems to bind all mass together. Physical facts point to the throwing off of planets from vast quantities of diffused nebular matter, of which the central condensed core is a sun.

We made from water²⁶⁹¹

Every living thing. Will they
Not then believe?

31. And We have set on the earth
Mountains standing firm,²⁶⁹²
Lest it should shake with them,
And We have made therein
Broad highways (between mountains)
For them to pass through:
That they may find their way.²⁶⁹³

32. And We have made
The heavens as a canopy
Well guarded:²⁶⁹⁴ yet do they

وَجَعَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا
فِيهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ سَقْفًا مَحْفُوظًا
وَهُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾

2691. About 72 per cent, of the surface of our Globe is still covered with water, and it has been estimated that if the inequalities on the surface were all levelled, the whole surface would be under water, as the mean elevation of land sphere-level would be 7,000-10,000 feet below the surface of the ocean. This shows the predominance of water on our Globe. That all life began in the water is also a conclusion to which our latest knowledge in biological science points. Apart from the fact that protoplasm, the original basis of living matter, is liquid or semi-liquid and in a state of constant flux and instability, there is the fact that land animals, like the higher vertebrates, including man, show, in their embryological history, organs like those of fishes, indicating the watery origin of their original habitat. The constitution of protoplasm is about 80 to 85 per cent of water.

2692. Cf. xvi. 15 and n. 2038. *Lest it should shake with them*: here "them" refers back to "they" at the end of the preceding verse, meaning "Unbelievers". It might be mankind in general, but the pointed address to those who do not realise and understand Allah's mercies is appropriate, to drive home to them the fact that it is Allah's well-ordered providence that protects them normally from cataclysms like earthquakes, but that they could for their iniquities be destroyed in an instant, as the 'Ād and the Thamūd were destroyed before them. As pointed out in n. 2691 above, if the surface of the earth were levelled up, it would all be under water, and therefore the firm mountains are a further source of security of life which has evolved in terrestrial forms. Though the mountains may seem impassable barriers, yet Allah's providence has provided broad passes between them to afford highways for human communications.

2693. In both the literal and the figurative sense. Literally these natural mountain highways direct men in the way they should go. Figuratively, these wonderful instances of Allah's providence should turn men's thoughts to the true guidance of Allah in life.

2694. *Canopy well guarded*: the heavens form a canopy that is secure from falling down: they also form a sublime spectacle and a Mystery that man can only faintly reach. Cf. also xv. 17.

Turn away from the Signs
Which these things (point to)!

33. It is He Who created
The Night and the Day,
And the sun and the moon:
All (the celestial bodies)
Swim along, each in its²⁶⁹⁵
Rounded course.
34. We granted not to any man
Before thee permanent life²⁶⁹⁶
(Here): if then thou shouldst die,
Would they live permanently?
35. Every soul shall have
A taste of death:²⁶⁹⁷
And We test you
By evil and by good
By way of trial.
To Us must ye return.
36. When the Unbelievers see thee,
They treat thee not except
With ridicule. "Is this,"
(They say), "The one who talks²⁶⁹⁸

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِلْبَشَرِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ أَفَإِنْ مِتَّ
فَهُمُ الْخَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَنَبْلُوكُمْ
بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَإِذَا رَأَوْكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِتَيْنَكَ بِمُخَذِّبَاتِكَ
الْأَهْزَاءِ هَٰذَا الَّذِي يَذْكُرُ آلِهَتَكُمْ

2695. I have indicated, unlike most translators, the metaphor of swimming implied in the original words: how beautiful it is to contemplate the heavenly bodies swimming through space (or ether) in their rounded courses before our gaze!

2696. Life on this planet without death has not been granted to any man. The taunt of the Unbelievers at the holy Prophet was therefore futile. Could any of them live without death at some time or other? Could they name any one who did?

2697. Cf. iii. 185, and n. 491. The soul does not die, but when it separates from the body at the death of the body, the soul gets a taste of death. In our life of probation on this earth, our virtue and faith are tested by many things: some are tested by calamities, and some by the good things of this life. If we prove our true mettle, we pass our probation with success. In any case all must return to Allah, and then will our life be appraised at its true value.

2698. To the godly man the issue between false worship and true worship is a very serious matter. To the sceptics and unbelievers it is only a joke. They take it lightly, and laugh at the godly man. They not only laugh at him, but they blaspheme when the name of the One True God is mentioned. The reply to this is in the next verse.

Of your gods?" And they
Blaspheme at the mention
Of The Most Gracious!

37. Man is a creature of haste:²⁶⁹⁹

Soon (enough) will I show
You My Signs; So
Ask Me not
To hasten them!

38. They say: "When will this
Promise come to pass,
If ye are telling the truth?"

39. If only the Unbelievers²⁷⁰⁰
Knew (the time) when they
Will not be able
To ward off the Fire
From their faces, nor yet
From their backs, and (when)
No help can reach them!

40. Nay, it may come to them
All of a sudden and confound
Them: no power will they
Have then to avert it,
Nor will they (then)
Get respite.

وَهُمْ بِذِكْرِ الرَّحْمَنِ هُمْ كَفُورُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

خُلِقَ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ سَأُورِيكُمْ
آيَاتِي فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونِ ﴿٣٧﴾

وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَى هَذَا الْوَعْدُ

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا حِينَ لَا يَكْفُورُونَ
عَنْ وُجُوهِِهِمُ النَّارَ وَلَا عَنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

بَلْ تَأْتِيهِمْ بَغْتَةً فَتَبْهَتُهُمْ

فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ رَدَّهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

2699. Haste is in the very bone and marrow of man. If he is granted respite for his own sake, in order that he may have a further chance of repentance and coming back to Allah, he says impatiently and incredulously: "Bring on the Punishment quickly, that I may see if what you say is true!" Alas, it is too true! When the Punishment actually comes near and he sees it, he will not want it hastened. He will want more time and further delay! Poor creature of haste!

2700. They would not be so unreasonable if they only realised the terrible future for them! The Fire will envelop them on all sides, and no help will then be possible. Is it not best for them now to turn and repent? The Punishment may come too suddenly, as is said in the next verse.

41. Mocked were (many)
Messengers before thee;
But their scoffers
Were hemmed in
By the thing that they mocked.²⁷⁰¹

SECTION 4.

42. Say, "Who can keep
You safe by night and by day
From (the Wrath of) The
Most Gracious?"²⁷⁰² Yet they
Turn away from the remembrance
Of their Lord.
43. Or have they gods that
Can guard them from Us?
They have no power to aid
Themselves, nor can they
Be defended from Us.²⁷⁰³
44. Nay, We gave the good things
Of this life to these men
And their fathers until
The period²⁷⁰⁴ grew long for them;
See they not that We²⁷⁰⁵

وَلَقَدْ أَسْتَهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ
سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

قُلْ مَنْ يَكْلُؤُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ مِنَ الرَّحْمَنِ
بَلْ هُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

أَمْ لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ تَمْنَعُهُمْ مِنْ دُونِنَا
لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ مِنَّا
بُصْحُورٌ ﴿٤٣﴾

بَلْ مَنَعْنَاهُمُ الْوِلْدَانَ وَابَاءَهُمْ حَتَّى طَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ
الْعُمُرُ أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّا نَأْتِي الْأَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا

2701. The same verse occurs at vi. 10, where see n. 843. 'What they are mocking at now will be in a position to mock them in due time.'

2702. 'Allah is most Gracious: if, in spite of His great mercy, you are so rebellious and depraved as to incur His Wrath, who is there who can save you? His Wrath can descend on you at any time, by night or by day.'

2703. *Ashhaba*: to join as companion: with 'an or min it has also the meaning of to defend or remove from someone. The full signification can only be got by a long paraphrase: 'they are not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with Us, nor can they be defended from Us.'

2704. 'Umr or 'Umur: age, generation, period, time, life. Here "period" is most appropriate, as it covers many generations, "these men and their fathers."

2705. The particular signification is that Islam spread from the outer borders, social and geographical, gradually inwards. The social fringe was the humbler people, such as slaves and poor men. The geographical reference is to Madinah and tribes away from the =

Gradually reduce the land
(In their control) from
Its outlying borders? Is it
Then they who will win?

مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَا أَفْهَمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

45. Say, "I do but warn you
According to revelation":
But the deaf will not hear
The call, (even) when
They are warned!²⁷⁰⁶

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنذِرُكُمْ بِالْوَحْيِ وَلَا يَسْمَعُ الصُّمُّ
الدَّعَاءَ إِذَا مَا يُنذَرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

46. If but a breath of the Wrath
Of thy Lord do touch them
They will then say, "Woe
To us! we did wrong indeed!"

وَلَيْنَ مَسَّتْهُمْ نَفْحَةٌ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّكَ
لَيَقُولُنَّ يَوَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

47. We shall set up scales
Of justice for the day
Of Judgment, so that
Not a soul will be dealt with
Unjustly in the least.
And if there be
(No more than) the weight
Of a mustard seed,²⁷⁰⁷

وَنَضَعُ الْمَوَازِينَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ
نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْقَالُ حَبَّةٍ
مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا وَكَفَى بِنَا حَاسِبِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

= Makkah centre. The proud and unbelieving Quraish were the last to come in when the circle was gradually drawn tighter and tighter around them. The general signification applies to all times. Allah's Truth makes its way first among the poor and the lowly, those whose minds are unsoiled by prejudices of false pride or false knowledge, but it gradually hems in the obstinate, until it prevails in the end.

2706. According to the English saying. "none is so deaf as those who will not hear". When they deliberately shut their ears to warning from the Merciful Allah, meant for their own good, the responsibility is their own. But their cowardice is shown in the next verse by their behaviour when the first breath of the Wrath reaches them.

2707. Not the smallest action, word, thought, motive, or predilection but must come into the account of Allah. Cf. Browning (in *Rabbi Ben Ezra*): "But all, the world's coarse thumb And finger failed to plumb, So passed in making up the main account; All instincts immature. All purposes unsure. That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's account; Thoughts hardly to be packed Into a narrow act. Fancies that broke through language and escaped; All I could never be, All, men ignored in me, This, I was worth to God, Whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

We will bring it (to account):
And enough are We
To take account.²⁷⁰⁸

48. In the past We granted
To Moses and Aaron
The Criterion (for judgment).²⁷⁰⁹
And a Light and a Message
For those who would do right,—

49. Those who fear their Lord
In their most secret thoughts,
And who hold the Hour
(Of Judgment) in awe.²⁷¹⁰

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى وَهَارُونَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَاءَ
وَذِكْرًا لِّلْمُنْفِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾

الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِالْغَيْبِ
وَهُمْ مِنَ السَّاعَةِ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

2708. The literalism of Sale has here excelled itself: he translates, "and there will be sufficient accountants with us"! What is meant is that when Allah takes account, His accounting will be perfect: there will be no flaw in it, as there may be in earthly accountants, who require other people's help in some matters of account which they do not understand for want of knowledge of that particular department they are dealing with. Allah's knowledge is perfect, and therefore His justice will be perfect also; for He will not fail to take into account all the most intangible things that determine conduct and character. See last note. There is no contradiction between this and xviii. 104-105, where it is said that men of vain works, i.e., shallow hypocritical deeds, will have no weight attached to their deeds. In fact the two correspond.

2709. Cf. ii. 53 and n. 68, where the meaning of *Furqān* is discussed. Here three things are mentioned as given to Moses and Aaron: (1) The Criterion for judgment: this might well be the wonderful Proofs they saw of Allah's goodness and glory from which they could have no doubt as to Allah's will and command; (2) the Light; this was the inner enlightenment of their soul, such as comes from inspiration: and (3) the Message, the Book, the original Book of Moses, which Aaron as his lieutenant would also use as a guide for his people.

2710. Note the three kinds of fear mentioned in xxi. 48-49. *Taqwā* is the fear of running counter to the will of Allah; it is akin to the love of Him; for we fear to offend those we love; it results in right conduct, and those who entertain it are "those who would do right". Then there is *Khashyat*, the fear of Allah, lest the person who entertains it may be found, in his inmost thoughts, to be short of the standard which Allah wishes for him; this is also righteous but in a less high degree than *Taqwā* which is akin to love. And thirdly, there is the fear of consequences on the Day of Judgment (*ishfaq*); this also may lead to righteousness, but is on a still lower plane. Perhaps the three correspond to the Criterion, the Light, and the Message (or Warning) of the last verse.

50. And this is a blessed
Message which We have
Sent down: will ye then
Reject it?²⁷¹¹

SECTION 5.

51. We bestowed aforetime
On Abraham his rectitude²⁷¹²
Of conduct, and well were We
Acquainted with him.²⁷¹³

52. Behold! he said
To his father and his people,²⁷¹⁴
"What are these images,
To which ye are
(So assiduously) devoted?"

53. They said, "We found
Our fathers worshipping them."

54. He said, "Indeed ye
Have been in manifest
Error—ye and your fathers."

55. They said, "Have you
Brought us the Truth,

وَهَذَا ذِكْرٌ مُبَارَكٌ أَنزَلْنَاهُ أَفَأَنْتُمْ لَهُ مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ رُشْدَهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا
بِهِ عَلِيمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ مَا هَذِهِ التَّمَاثِيلُ الَّتِي
أَنْتُمْ لَهَا عَاكِفُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

قَالُوا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا لَهَا عَابِدِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ
فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

قَالُوا أَجِئْنَا بِالْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنْتَ مِنَ اللَّاعِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

2711. Here is a Prophet and a Book, greater than Moses and his Book. Are you going to reject him and it?

2712. *Rushd*: right conduct, corresponding in action to the quality expressed in the epithet Hanif (sound or true in Faith) applied to Abraham in ii. 135 and elsewhere.

2713. Hence Abraham's title "Friend of Allah" (*Khalil-ullah*): iv. 125.

2714. Reference is made to Abraham in many places. In xix. 42-49 it was with reference to his relations to his father: the problem was how a righteous man should deal with his father, when his duty to his father conflicts with his duty to Allah. Here the problem is: how a righteous man should deal with evil and overcome it; how he should fight against evil, and if he is subjected to the fire of persecution, how his firmness draws Allah's Mercy, and the very troubles he is placed in become his comfort and joy.

Or are you one
Of those who jest?"²⁷¹⁵

56. He said, "Nay, your Lord
Is the Lord of the heavens
And the earth, He Who
Created them (from nothing):²⁷¹⁶
And I am a witness
To this (truth).

57. "And by Allah, I will certainly
Plan against your idols—
After ye go away
And turn your backs"...²⁷¹⁷

58. So he broke them to pieces,
(All) but the biggest of them,
That they might turn
(And address themselves) to it.²⁷¹⁸

59. They said, "Who has
Done this to our gods?
He must indeed be
One of the unjust one.

قَالَ لِلرَّبِّ كُفْرُؤُكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ الَّذِي فَطَرَهُمْ
وَأَنَا عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

وَأَلَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَانَكُمْ
بَعْدَ أَنْ تُولُوْا مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذَاذًا إِلَّا كَبِئْرَ الْأَثَمِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

قَالُوا مَنْ فَعَلَ هَٰذَا بِآِلٰهِنَا
إِنَّهُمْ لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

2715. Abraham looked at life with a serious eye, and his people took it light-heartedly. He was devoted to Truth, and they cared more for ancestral custom. In the conflict he seemed to be in their power. But he was fearless, and he triumphed by Allah's Grace.

2716. For the various words for "creation" see n. 120 to ii. 117, where *fatar* is explained and differentiated from other words of similar meaning.

2717. He wants to convince them of the powerlessness of their idols. But he does not do it underhand. He tells them that he is going to do something when once they are gone and their backs are turned to the idols,—as much as to say that the idols are dependent on their care and attention. Apparently the people are amused and want to see what he does. So they leave him to his own devices.

2718. He was enacting a scene, to make the people ashamed of worshipping senseless stocks and stones. He left the biggest idol untouched and broke the others to pieces, as if a fight had taken place between the idols, and the biggest had smashed the others. Would they turn to the surviving idol and ask him how it all happened?

60. They said, "We heard
A youth talk of them:²⁷¹⁹
He is called Abraham."

قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَذْكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾

61. They said, "Then bring him
Before the eyes of the people,
That they may bear witness:"

قَالُوا فَأْتُوا بِهِ عَلَى أَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

62. They said, "Art thou
The one that did this
With our gods, O Abraham?"²⁷²⁰

قَالُوا أَنْتَ فَاعِلْتَ هَٰذَا بِآلِهَتِنَا يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾

63. He said: "Nay, this
Was done by this
The biggest one!
Ask them, if they
Can talk."

قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيرُهُمْ
هَٰذَا فَاسْأَلُوهُمْ إِنْ كَانُوا يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

64. So they turned to themselves
And said, "Surely ye
Are the ones in the wrong!"²⁷²¹

فَرَجَعُوا إِلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ
أَنْتُمْ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

2719. Different groups of people are speaking. Those who were not present at Abraham's speech in verse 57 ask, "who has done this?" Those who were, at once name him, whereupon a formal council of the people was held, and Abraham was arraigned.

2720. They asked him the formal question. There was no mystery about it. He had already openly threatened to do something to the idols, and people who had heard his threats were there. He now continues his ironic taunt to the idol-worshippers. 'You ask me! Why don't you ask the idols? Doesn't it look as if this big fellow has smashed the smaller ones in a quarrel?' If they do not ask the idols, they confess that the idols have not intelligence enough to answer! This argument is developed in verses 64-67. Note that while the false worshippers laughed at his earnestness, he pays them out by a grim practical joke, which at the same time advances the cause of Truth.

2721. Abraham's biting irony cut them to the quick. What could they say? They turned to each other. Some among them thought he had the best of the argument. They were not keen on idolatry, and they told their fellows that it was useless arguing with Abraham. They all hung their heads in shame. But presently they thought they would face out Abraham, and take his words literally. They said, "You know quite well that idols do not speak!" This was precisely what Abraham wanted them to say, and he delivered his final blow! See n. 2723 below.

65. Then were they confounded²⁷²²

With shame: (they said),
"Thou knowest full well that
These (idols) do not speak!"

66. (Abraham) said, "Do ye then
Worship, besides Allah,
Things that can neither
Be of any good to you
Nor do you harm?"

67. "Fie upon you, and upon²⁷²³
The things that ye worship
Besides Allah! Have ye
No sense?"...

68. They said, "Burn him
And protect your gods,
If ye do (anything at all)!"

69. We said, "O Fire!²⁷²⁴
Be thou cool,
And (a means of) safety
For Abraham!"²⁷²⁵

ثُمَّ نَكِسُوا عَلَى رُءُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ
مَا هَؤُلَاءِ يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ
مَا لَا يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ ﴿٦٦﴾

أَفِي لَكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ
مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

قَالُوا حَرِّقُوهُ وَانصُرُوا آلِهَتَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ
فَاعِلِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

قُلْنَا نَارُ كُوفِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٦٩﴾

2722. Literally, "they were turned down on their heads" which may suggest a metaphorical somersault, i.e., they recovered from their dawning shame for idolatry and were prepared to argue it out with the youth Abraham. But I think there is better authority for the interpretation I have adopted.

2723. As soon as they admitted in so many words that the idols could not speak, Abraham delivered his final attack: 'Then why do you worship useless impotent creatures?' After that, there remains nothing but the argument of violence, which they proceed to exercise, being the party in power. 'Burn him at the stake' is an easy cry! But it was not Abraham that suffered: it was his persecutors (xxi. 70).

2724. The nature of fire, by all the physical laws of matter, is to be hot. The fire became cool, and a means of safety for Abraham.

2725. Can we form any idea of the place where he passed through the furnace, and the stage in his career at which this happened? He was born in Ur of the Chaldees, a place on the lower reaches of the Euphrates, not a hundred miles from the Persian Gulf. This was the cradle, or one of the cradles, of human civilisation. Astronomy was studied here in very ancient times, and the worship of the sun, moon, and stars was the prevailing form of religion. Abraham revolted against this quite early in life, and his argument is referred to in vi. 74-82. They also had idols in their temples, probably idols representing =

70. Then they planned
Against him: but We
Made them the Greater losers.²⁷²⁶

وَأَرَادُوا بِهِ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَاهُمُ الْأَخْسَرِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. But We delivered him
And (his nephew) Lūt
(And directed them) to the land²⁷²⁷
Which We have blessed
For the nations.

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى الْأَرْضِ
الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾

72. And We bestowed on him Isaac
And, as an additional gift,²⁷²⁸

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً

= heavenly bodies and celestial winged creatures. He was still a youth (xxi. 60) when he broke the idols. This was stage No. 2. After this he was marked down as a rebel and persecuted. Perhaps some years passed before the incident of his being thrown into the Fire (xxi. 68-69) took place. Traditionally the Fire incident is referred to a king called Nimrūd, about whom see n. 1565 to xi. 69. If Nimrūd's capital was in Assyria, near Nineveh (site near modern Mosul), we may suppose either that the king's rule extended over the whole of Mesopotamia, or that Abraham wandered north through Babylonia to Assyria. Various stratagems were devised to get rid of him (xxi. 70), but he was saved by the mercy of Allah. The final break came when he was probably a man of mature age and could speak to his father with some authority. This incident is referred to in xix. 41-48. He now left his ancestral lands, and avoiding the Syrian desert, came to the fertile lands of Aram or Syria, and so south to Canaan, when the incident of xi. 69-76 took place. It is some years after this that we may suppose he built the Ka'ba with Ismā'il (ii. 124-29), and his prayer in xiv. 35-41 may be referred to the same time. His visit to Egypt (Gen. xii. 10) is not referred to in the Qur-ān.

2726. As they could not get rid of him by open punishment, they tried secret plans, but were foiled throughout. It was not he that lost, but they. On the contrary he left them and prospered and became the progenitor of great peoples.

2727. The land of Aram or Syria, which in its widest connotation includes Canaan or Palestine. Syria is a well-watered fertile land, with a Mediterranean sea-coast, on which the famous commercial cities of Tyre and Sidon were situated. Its population is very mixed, as it has been a bone of contention between all the great kingdoms and empires of Western Asia and Egypt, and European interest in it dates from the most ancient times.

2728. *Nāfilat* has many meanings: (1) booty; (2) extra work or prayer; (3) extra or additional gift; (4) grandson. The two last significations are implied here. Not only was Abraham given a son in his old age; he was given not only Isaac, but several sons, the chief being Ismā'il and Isaac, who both joined in burying him (Gen. xxv. 9); and he also saw grandsons. Ismā'il is specially mentioned later (xxi. 85) apart from Isaac's line, on account of his special importance for Islam.

(A grandson), Jacob, and We
Made righteous men of every one
(Of them).

73. And We made them
Leaders, guiding (men) by
Our Command, and We
Inspired them
To do good deeds,
To establish regular prayers,
And to Give zakat
And they constantly served
Us (and Us only).²⁷²⁹

74. And to Lūt, too,
We gave Judgment and Knowledge,
And We saved him
From the town which practised
Abominations: truly they were
A people given to Evil,
A rebellious people.²⁷³⁰

75. And We admitted him
To Our Mercy: for he
Was one of the Righteous.

SECTION 6.

76. (Remember) Noah, when
He cried (to Us) aforetime:^{2730A}

وَلَا جَعَلْنَا صَالِحِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَيْمَةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا
إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ
وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

وَلُوطًا أَيْنَهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا
وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ تَعْمَلُ
الْفَاحِشَاتِ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمَ مَسْوُوعٍ فَسَقِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

وَادْخَلْنَاهُ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا إِنَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادَى مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ

2729. The spiritual lesson from this passage may be recapitulated. The righteous man makes no compromise with evil. If the votaries of evil laugh at him he pays them in their own coin, but he stands firmly by his principles. His firmness causes some confusion among the followers of evil, and he openly declares the faith that is in him. They try, openly and secretly, to injure or kill him, but Allah protects him, while evil perishes from its own excesses.

2730. Lot's people were given to unspeakable abominations. His mission was to preach to them. He withstood Evil, but they rejected him. They were punished, but he and his followers were saved. See xv. 61-74; xi. 77-82; and vii. 80-84.

2730-A. The date of Noah was many centuries before that of Abraham.

We listened to his (prayer)
And delivered him and his
Family from great distress.²⁷³¹

77. We helped him against
People who rejected Our Signs:
Truly they were a people
Given to Evil: so We
Drowned them (in the Flood)
All together.

78. And remember David
And Solomon, when they
Gave judgment in the matter
Of the field into which
The sheep of certain people
Had strayed by night:
We did witness their judgment.

79. To Solomon We inspired²⁷³²
The (right) understanding
Of the matter: to each

فَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٦﴾

وَنَصَرْنَاهُ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

وَدَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ
فِي الْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَسَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ
وَكَانَ الْحُكْمُ بِهِنَّ شَاهِدِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾

فَفَهَّمْنَاهَا سُلَيْمَانَ وَكُلَّاءَ آيِنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا
وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطِّيرَ

2731. The contemporaries of Noah were given to Unbelief, oppression of the poor, and vain disputations. He carried Allah's Message to them, and standing fast in faith, built the Ark, in which he was saved with his followers from the Flood, while the wicked were drowned. See xi. 25-48.

2732. The sheep, on account of the negligence of the shepherd, got into a cultivated field (or vineyard) by night and ate up the young plants or their tender shoots, causing damage, to the extent of perhaps a whole year's crop. David was king, and in his seat of judgment he considered the matter so serious that he awarded the owner of the field the sheep themselves in compensation for his damage. The Roman law of the Twelve Tables might have approved of this decision, and on the same principle was built up the Deodand doctrine of English Law, now obsolete. His son Solomon, a mere boy of eleven, thought of a better decision, where the penalty would better fit the offence. The loss was the loss of the fruits or produce of the field of vineyard: the *corpus* of the property was not lost. Solomon's suggestion was that the owner of the field or vineyard should not take the sheep altogether but only detain them long enough to recoup his actual damage, from the milk, wool, and possibly young of the sheep, and then return the sheep to the shepherd. David's merit was that he accepted the suggestion, even though it came from a little boy: Solomon's merit was that he distinguished between *corpus* and income, and though a boy, was not ashamed to put his case before his father. But in either case it was Allah Who inspired the true realisation of justice. He was present and witnessed the affair, as He is present all the time.

(Of them) We gave Judgment
And Knowledge; it was
Our power that made
The hills and the birds
Celebrate Our praises,²⁷³³
With David: it was We
Who did (all these things).

80. It was We Who taught him²⁷³⁴
The making of coats of mail
For your benefit, to guard
You from each other's violence:
Will ye then be grateful?²⁷³⁵

81. (It was Our power that
Made) the violent (unruly)
Wind flow (tamely) for Solomon,²⁷³⁶
To his order, to the land²⁷³⁷
Which We had blessed:
For We do know all things.

وَكُنَّا فَعَلِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

وَعَلَّمْنَاهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ لَّكُمْ لِنُحِصِنَكُمْ
مِّنْ بِأْسِكُمْ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ شَاكِرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيحَ غَاصِفَةً تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ
الَّتِي بَارَكْنَا فِيهَا وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمِينَ ﴿٨١﴾

2733. Whatever is in the heavens and the earth celebrates the praises of Allah: xvii. 44; lvii. 1; xvi. 48-50. Even the "thunder repeateth His praises": xiii. 13. All nature ever sings the praises of Allah. David sang in his Psalms, cxlviii. 7-10: "Praise the Lord from the earth, ye...mountains and all hills;...creeping things and flying fowl!" All nature sings to Allah's glory, in unison with David, and angels, and men of God. Cf. xxxiv. 10 and xxxviii. 18-19.

2734. The making of coats of mails is attributed to David. It is defensive armour, and therefore its discovery and supply is associated with deeds of righteousness in xxxiv. 10-11, in contrast with the deadly weapons which man invents for offensive purposes. Indeed, all fighting, unless in defence of righteousness, is mere "violence."

2735. David's good work then was: (1) he was open to learn wisdom wherever it came from; (2) he sang the praises of Allah, in unison with all nature; (3) he made defensive armour. But all these things he did, because of the faculties which Allah had given him, and we must be grateful for this and for all things to Allah.

2736. Cf. xxxiv. 12, and xxxviii. 36-38. This has been interpreted to mean that Solomon had miraculous power over the winds, and he could make them obey his order. In any case the power behind was, and is, from Allah, Who has granted man intelligence and the faculties by which he can tame the more unruly forces of nature.

2737. Evidently Palestine, in which was Solomon's capital, though his influence extended for north in Syria.

82. And of Satans

Were some who dived
For him, and did other work²⁷³⁸
Besides; and it was We
Who guarded them.

وَمِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ مَنْ يَغْوُصُونَ
لَهُ، وَيَعْمَلُونَ عَمَلًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ
وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حَافِظِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾

83. And (remember) Job, when

He cried to his Lord
"Truly distress has seized me,"²⁷³⁹
But Thou art the Most
Merciful of those that are
Merciful."

﴿٨٣﴾ وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ: إِنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ
وَأَنْتَ أَزْكَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

84. So We listened to him:

We removed the distress
That was on him,
And We restored his people
To him, and doubled
Their number,—as a Grace

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ، فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِ مِنْ ضُرٍّ
وَأَنْتَنَاهُ أَهْلَهُ، وَمِنْهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةٌ
مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْعَابِدِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

2738. It was Allah's power ultimately, Who granted him wisdom. Solomon tamed the jinns with Wisdom.

2739. Job (*Ayūb*) was a prosperous man, with faith in Allah, living somewhere in the north-east corner of Arabia. He suffers from a number of calamities: his cattle are destroyed, his servants slain by the sword, and his family crushed under his roof. But he holds fast to his faith in Allah. As a further calamity he is covered with loathsome sores from head to foot. He loses his peace of mind, and he curses the day he was born. His false friends come and attribute his afflictions to sin. These "Job's comforters" are no comforters at all, and he further loses his balance of mind, but Allah recalls to him all His mercies, and he resumes his humility and gives up self-justification. He is restored to prosperity, with twice as much as he had before; his brethren and friends come back to him; he had a new family of seven sons and three fair daughters. He lived to a good old age, and saw four generations of descendants. All this is recorded in the Book of Job in the Old Testament. Of all the Hebrew writings, the Hebrew of this Book comes nearest to Arabic. The account given in the Biblical sources and the image that it projects of Prophet Job is decidedly different from that found in the Qur-ān and the Hadith, which present him as a prophet and brilliant example of dignified patience becoming of a great Prophet of Allah ever trustful in Him and His promises. Nothing could be farther from truth than saying that he lost his peace of mind or resorted to curses during the period of his trial.

From Ourselves, and a thing
For commemoration, for all
Who serve Us.²⁷⁴⁰

85. And (remember) Ismā'il,²⁷⁴¹
Idrīs,²⁷⁴² and Zul-kifl,²⁷⁴³ all
(Men) of constancy and patience;

86. We admitted them to
Our Mercy: for they
Were of the Righteous ones.

وَلِإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ كُلٌّ
مِّنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

وَادْخَلْنَاهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ
مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

2740. Job is the pattern of humility, patience, and faith in Allah. It was with these weapons that he fought and conquered evil.

2741. Ismā'il is mentioned specially, apart from the line which descended through Isaac (xxi. 72), as he was the founder of a separate and greater Ummat. His sufferings began in infancy (see n. 160 to ii. 158); but his steady constancy and submission to the will of Allah were specially shown when he earned the title of "Sacrifice to Allah" (see n. 2506 to xix. 54). That was the particular quality of his constancy and patience.

2742. For Idrīs see n. 2508 to xix. 56. He was in a high station in life, but that did not spoil him. He was sincere and true, and that was the particular quality of his constancy and patience.

2743. *Zul-kifl* would literally mean "possessor of, or giving, a double requital or portion"; or else, "one who used a cloak of double thickness," that being one of the meanings of *Kifl*. The Commentators differ in opinion as to who is meant, why the title is applied to him, and the point of his being grouped with Ismā'il and Idrīs for constancy and patience. I think the best suggestion is that afforded by Karsten Niebuhr in his *Reisebeschreibung nach Arabien*, Copenhagen, 1778, ii. 264-266, as quoted in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* under "*Dhul-Kifl*". He visited Meshad 'Alī in 'Iraq, and also the little town called Kefil, midway between Najaf and Hilla (Babylon). Kefil, he says, is the Arabic form of Ezekiel. The shrine of Ezekiel was there, and the Jews came to it on pilgrimage.

If we accept "*Zul-kifl*" to be not an epithet, but an Arabicised form of "Ezekiel", it fits the context, Ezekiel was a prophet in Israel who was carried away to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar after his second attack on Jerusalem (about B.C. 599). His Book is included in the English Bible (Old Testament). He was chained and bound, and put into prison, and for a time he was dumb (Ezekiel, iii. 25-26). He bore all with patience and constancy, and continued to reprove boldly the evils in Israel. In a burning passage he denounces false leaders in words which are eternally true: "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken...", etc. (Ezekiel, xxxiv. 2-4).

Zul-kifl is again mentioned in xxxviii. 48 along with Ismā'il and Elisha.

87. And remember *Zun-nūn*,²⁷⁴⁴

When he departed in wrath:

He imagined that We

Had no power over him!

But he cried through the depths

Of darkness, "There is

No god but Thou:

Glory to Thee: I was

Indeed wrong!"

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغْضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ
عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ
سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

88. So We listened to him:

And delivered him from

Distress: and thus do We

Deliver those who have faith.

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَخَجَعْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ
وَكَذَلِكَ نُشَوِّجُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

89. And (remember) *Zakariyā*,²⁷⁴⁵

When he cried to his Lord:

وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَى رَبَّهُ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا

2744. *Zun-nūn*. "the man of the Fish or the Whale", is the title of Jonah (Yūnus), because he was swallowed by a large Fish or Whale. He was the prophet raised to warn the Assyrian capital Nineveh. For Nineveh see n. 1478 to x. 98. His story is told in xxxvii. 139-149. When his first warning was unheeded by the people, he denounced Allah's wrath on them. But they repented and Allah forgave them for the time being. Jonah, meanwhile, departed in wrath, discouraged at the apparent failure of his mission. He should have remained in the most discouraging circumstances, and relied on the power of Allah; for Allah had power both over Nineveh and over the Messenger He had sent to Nineveh. He went away to the sea and took a ship, but apparently the sailors threw him out as a man of bad omen in a storm. He was swallowed by a big Fish (or Whale), but in the depth of the darkness, he cried to Allah and confessed his weakness. The "darkness" may be interpreted both physically and spiritually; physically, as the darkness of the night and the storm and the Fish's body; spiritually as the darkness in his soul, his extreme distress in the situation which he had brought on himself. Allah Most Gracious forgave him. He was cast out ashore; he was given the shelter of a plant in his state of mental and physical lassitude. He was refreshed and strengthened, and the work of his mission prospered. Thus he overcame all his disappointment by repentance and Faith, and Allah accepted him.

2745. See xix. 2-15, and iii. 38-41. *Zakariyā* was a priest; both he and his wife were devout and punctilious in their duties. They were old, and they had no son. He was troubled in mind, not so much by the vulgar desire to have a son to carry on his line, but because he felt that his people were not unselfishly devout, and there would be no sincere work for Allah unless he could train up someone himself. He was given a son *Yahyā* (John the Baptist), who added to the devout reputation of the family, for he is called "noble, chaste, and a prophet," (iii. 39). All three, father, mother, and son, were made worthy of each other, and they repelled evil by their devout emulation in virtue.

"O my Lord! leave me not
Without offspring, though Thou
Art the best of inheritors."²⁷⁴⁶

90. So We listened to him:
And We granted him
Yahyā: We cured his wife's²⁷⁴⁷
(Barrenness) for him. These (three)
Were ever quick in doing
In good works: they used
To call on Us in yearning and awe.
And humble themselves
Before Us.

91. And (remember) her who²⁷⁴⁸
Guarded her chastity:
We breathed into her
From Our spirit, and We
Made her and her son
A Sign for all peoples.

92. Verily, this Ummah
Of yours is a single Ummah²⁷⁴⁹

وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ، وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ يَحْيَىٰ
وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُ زَوْجَهُ، إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا
يُستَرِعونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا
رَغْبًا وَرَهْبًا وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

وَالَّتِي أَحْصَيْنَا فَرْجَهَا، فَنَفَخْنَا فِيهَا
مِنْ رُوحِنَا وَجَعَلْنَاهَا وَأَبْنَاهَا
آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

إِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً

2746. 'It is not that I crave a personal heir to myself: all things go back to Thee, and Thou art the best of inheritors: but I see no one around me sincere enough to carry on my work for Thee; wilt Thou give me one whom I can train?'

2747. *Aṣlahā* = to improve to mend, to reform, to make better. Here, with reference to Zakariyā's wife, the signification is twofold: (1) that her barrenness would be removed, so that she could become a mother; and (2) her spiritual dignity should be raised in becoming the mother of John the Baptist; and by implication his also, in becoming the father of John.

2748. Mary the mother of Jesus. Chastity was her special virtue: with a son of virgin birth, she and Jesus became a miracle to all nations. That was the virtue with which they (both Mary and Jesus) resisted evil.

2749. *Ummat*: this is best translated by Brotherhood here. "Community", "race", and "nation." and "people" are words which import other ideas and do not quite correspond to "Ummat". "Religion" and "Way of Life" are derived meanings, which could be used in other passages, but are less appropriate here. Our attention has been drawn to people of very different temperaments and virtues, widely different in time, race, language, surroundings, history, and work to be performed, but forming the closest brotherhood as being men and women united in the highest service of Allah. They pre-figure the final and perfected Brotherhood of Islam .

And I am your Lord
And Cherisher: therefore
Serve Me (and no other).

وَأَنذَرْتُكُمْ فَاَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٩٢﴾

93. But (later generations) cut off²⁷⁵⁰
Their affair (of unity),
One from another: (yet)
Will they all return to Us.

وَنَقُطِعْ أَوَّامَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَا
وَنَرْجِعُوكُمْ ﴿٩٣﴾

SECTION 7.

94. Whoever works any act
Of Righteousness and has
Faith,—
His endeavour will not
Be rejected: We shall
Record it in his favour.²⁷⁵¹

فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا
كُفْرَانَ لِسَعِيدِهِ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاشِبُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

95. But there is a ban
On any population which
We have destroyed: that they²⁷⁵²
Shall not return,

وَحَرَامٌ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنَّهُمْ
لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

96. Until the Gog and Magog (people)²⁷⁵³
Are let through (their barrier),
And they swiftly swarm
From every hill.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ
وَهُمْ مِنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنْسِلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

2750. Allah's Message was and ever is one; and His Messengers treated it as one. It is people of narrower views who come later and trade on the earlier names, that break up the Message and the Brotherhood into jarring camps and sects.

2751. Allah gives credit for every act of righteousness, however small: when combined with sincere Faith in Allah, it becomes the stepping stone to higher and higher things. It is never lost.

2752. But when wickedness comes to such a pass that the Wrath of Allah descends, as it did on Sodom, the case becomes hopeless. The righteous were warned and delivered before the Wrath descended. But those destroyed will not get another chance, as they flouted all previous chances. They will only be raised at the approach of the Day of Judgment.

2753. For Gog and Magog see n. 2439 to xviii. 92. The name stands for wild and lawless tribes who will break their barriers and swarm through the earth. This will be one of the prognostications of the approaching Judgment.

97. Then will the True Promise
Draw nigh (of fulfilment):
Then behold! the eyes
Of the Unbelievers will²⁷⁵⁴
Fixedly stare in horror: "Ah!
Woe to us! we were indeed
Heedless of this; nay; we
Truly did wrong!"

98. Verily ye, (Unbelievers),
And the (false) gods that
Ye worship besides Allah,
Are (but) fuel for Hell!
To it will ye (surely) come!

99. If these had been gods,
They would not have got there!²⁷⁵⁵
But each one will abide
Therein.

100. There, sobbing will be
Their lot, nor will they
There hear (aught else).

101. Those for whom
The Good from Us
Has gone before, will be
Removed far therefrom.²⁷⁵⁶

102. Not the slightest sound
Will they hear of Hell:
What their souls desired,
In that will they dwell.

وَأَقْرَبَ الْوَعْدِ الْحَقُّ فَإِذَا هِيَ شَاخِصَةٌ
أَبْصُرُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُرَوُّنَا وَقَدْ كُنَّا
فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ
اللَّهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ أَن تُمْلَئُوهَا وَرُدُّونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

لَوْ كَانَتْ هَتُولَاءِ آلِهَةً مَا وَرَدُّوهَا
وَكُلٌّ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُمْ مِنَّا الْحُسْنَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ
عَنَّا مُبْعَدُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَهَا وَهُمْ فِي مَا أُشْتَهَتْ
أَنفُسُهُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

2754. Cf. xiv. 42.

2755. The ultimate proof of Truth and Falsehood will be that Truth will endure and come to its own, while Falsehood will be destroyed. And so the men who worshipped Truth will come to their own, while those who worshipped Falsehood will be in a Fire of Punishment they could scarcely have imagined before. In that state there will be nothing but regrets and sighs and groans, and these evil sounds will drown everything else.

2756. In contrast to the misery of those who rejected Truth and Right, will be the happiness of those who accepted it. The good will not hear the least sound of the groans of evil. Their true soul's desires will be fulfilled—not temporarily as in this world, but in a permanent form.

103. The Great Terror will²⁷⁵⁷
Bring them no grief:
But the angels will meet them
(With mutual greetings):
"This is your Day,-
(The Day) that ye were promised."

لَا يَحْزَنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْأَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقَّاهُمُ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ هَذَا يَوْمُكُمْ الَّذِي
كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

104. The Day that We roll up
The heavens like a scroll
Rolled up for books (completed):-
Even as We produced
The first Creation, so
Shall We produce²⁷⁵⁸
A new one: a promise
We have undertaken:
Truly shall We fulfil it.

يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ
كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُعِيدُهُ وَعَدًّا عَلَيْنَا
إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

105. Before this We wrote
In the Psalms,²⁷⁵⁹ after the Message
(Given to Moses):²⁷⁶⁰ "My servants
The righteous, shall inherit
The earth."

وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِن بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ
أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾

106. Verily in this (Qur-ān)
Is a Message for people

إِنَّ فِي هَذَا الْبَلَاغِ لِقَوْمٍ عَذِيبِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

2757. The Judgment and balancing of accounts will be a mighty Terror to the evil-doers. But it will cause, to the righteous, not grief or anxiety, but hope and happiness, for now they will be in a congenial atmosphere, and will see the fulfilment of their ideals in the meeting and greeting of the angels, preparatory to their enjoyment of the supreme Bliss—seeing the Face of Allah.

2758. The world—the universe—as we know it, will be folded up like a scroll of parchment, for it will have done its work. If Allah created all this world out of nothing, He can create an entirely new heaven and a new earth, on a plane of which we can form no conception in our present life. And He will do so, for that is His promise.

2759. Zabūr: the Book of the Psalms of David. The name of David is expressly mentioned in connection with the Zabūr in iv. 163 and xvii. 55, although there the indefinite article is applied to the word as meaning a Book of Scripture. See Psalms xxv. 13, "his seed shall inherit the earth"; xxxvii. 11, "the meek shall inherit the earth" (quoted by Jesus in Matt. v.3); and xxxvii. 29, "the righteous shall inherit the land."

2760. The same promise occurs in the Pentateuch, Exod. xxxii. 13.

Who would (truly) worship

Allah²⁷⁶¹

107. We sent thee not, but
As a Mercy for all creatures.²⁷⁶²

108. Say: "What has come to me
By inspiration is that
Your God is One God:
Will ye therefore bow
To His Will (in Islām)?"²⁷⁶³

109. But if they turn back,
Say: "I have proclaimed
The Message to you all alike
And in truth; but I
Know not whether that
Which ye are promised
Is near or far."²⁷⁶⁴

110. "It is He Who knows
What is open in speech

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾

قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحِي إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ
إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ ءَاذَنْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ سَوَاءٍ
وَإِن أَدْرِي أَقْرَبُ أَم بَعِيدُ مَا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾

إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ
مَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

2761. The culmination of Allah's Revelation is in the Qur-ān, which confirms previous scriptures, corrects the errors which men introduced into them, and explains many points in detail for all who seek for right worship and service to Allah—whether they inherit the previous Books ("People of the Book") or not. It is a universal Message.

2762. There is no question now of race or nation, of a "chosen people" or the "seed of Abraham"; or the "seed of David"; or of Hindu Arya-varta; of Jew or Gentile, Arab or 'Ajam (non-Arab), Turk or Tājik, European or Asiatic, White or Coloured; Aryan, Semitic, Mongolian, or African; or American, Australian, or Polynesian. To all men and creatures other than men who have any spiritual responsibility, the principles universally apply.

2763. 'Not my God only, but also *your* God; for there is but One God, the Universal Lord, Who made and loves and cherishes all.'

2764. 'If you do not realise the significance of the Message, I at least have done my duty. I have given the Good News for the Righteous and the Warning for the Unjust, without favour or partiality, and without abating one jot of the truth, openly and squarely for all. Do not ask me when the Good News and the Warning will be fulfilled. That is for Allah to decide, not for me or for you to know.'

And what ye hide
(In your hearts).²⁷⁶⁵

111. "I know not but that
It may be a trial
For you, and a grant
Of (worldly) livelihood
(To you) for a time."²⁷⁶⁶

112. Say:²⁷⁶⁷ "O my Lord!
Judge Thou in truth!"²⁷⁶⁸
"Our Lord Most Gracious
Is the One Whose assistance
Should be sought against
The blasphemies ye utter!"²⁷⁶⁹

وَأِنْ أَدْرَىٰ لَعَلَّهُ فِتْنَةٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَنْعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣١﴾

قُلْ رَبِّ أَحْكُم بِالْحَقِّ وَرَبُّنَا الرَّحْمَنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ
عَلَىٰ مَا نَصِفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

2765. The Messenger of Allah freely and impartially teaches all how to carry out Allah's Will and live a good life. If some of them are hypocrites and come into the Ummat (Brotherhood) from baser motives and not the pure motives of the love of Allah, their motives and conduct will be judged by Allah and not by men.

2766. In the same way if men who come into the Brotherhood from pure motives and yet feel aggrieved that those outside are better off from a worldly point of view, they are wrong. It may be that the fleeting enjoyment of this world's goods is but a trial, and they should be grateful for being saved from temptation.

2767. See above, n. 2666 to xxi. 4. The better reading is "Say" in the imperative, rather than "He (the Prophet) said (or says)" in the indicative mood. Note that, on that construction, there are three distinct things which the Prophet is asked to say: viz.: (1) the statement in verses 109-11, addressed to those who turn away from the Message; (2) the prayer addressed to Allah in the first part of verse 112; and (3) the advice given indirectly to the Believers, in the second part of verse 112. I have marked these divisions by means of inverted commas.

2768. That is, Allah's judgment as between the Teacher and those who refuse his Message, or between the righteous and those who taunt them for their poverty, will be the true one, and both the Teacher and the Ummat must leave the judgment to Allah.

2769. Blasphemy is a dreadful sin. We must guard ourselves from it. But as regards others, if we cannot prevent it, we must pray to Allah for assistance and not rely upon carnal weapons.