

Surah 7. Al-A'raf

7.1 Alif Lam Mim Sad. ⁹⁸⁹

7.2 A Book revealed unto thee so let thy heart be oppressed no more by any difficulty on that account that with it thou mightest warn (the erring) and teach the believers. ⁹⁹⁰

7.3 Follow (O men!) the revelation given unto you from your Lord and follow not as friends or protectors other than Him. Little it is ye remember of admonition. ⁹⁹¹

7.4 How many towns have We destroyed (for their sins)? Our punishment took them on a sudden by night or while they slept for their afternoon rest.

7.5 When (thus) our punishment took them no cry did they utter but this "indeed we did wrong." ⁹⁹²

7.6 Then shall We question those to whom Our message was sent and those by whom We sent it. ⁹⁹³

7.7 And verily We shall recount their whole story with knowledge for We were never absent (at any time or place). ⁹⁹⁴

7.8 The balance that day will be true (to a nicety): those whose scale (of good) will be heavy will prosper.

7.9 Those whose scale will be light will find their souls in perdition for that they wrongfully treated our signs.

7.10 It is We who have placed you with authority on earth and provided you therein with means for the fulfillment of your life: small are the thanks that ye give! ⁹⁹⁵

7.11 It is We who created you and gave you shape; then We bade the angels bow down to Adam and they bowed down; not so Iblis; he refused to be of those who bow down. ^{996 997}

7.12 (Allah) said: "what prevented thee from bowing down when I commanded thee?" He said: "I am better than he: thou didst create me from fire and him from clay." ⁹⁹⁸

7.13 (Allah) said: "Get thee down from this: it is not for thee to be arrogant here: get out for thou art of the meanest (of creatures)." ⁹⁹⁹

7.14 He said: "give me respite till the day they are raised up."

7.15 (Allah) said: "be thou among those who have respite." ¹⁰⁰⁰

7.16 He said: "because Thou hast thrown me out of the way lo! I will lie in wait for them on Thy straight way." ¹⁰⁰¹

7.17 "Then will I assault them from before them and behind them from their right and their left: nor wilt Thou find in most of them gratitude (for Thy mercies). ¹⁰⁰²

7.18 (Allah) said: "Get out from this disgraced and expelled. If any of them follow thee hell will I fill with you all.

7.19 O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the garden and enjoy (its good things) as ye wish: but approach not this tree or ye run into harm and transgression." ^{1003 1004}

7.20 Then began satan to whisper suggestions to them bringing openly before their minds all their shame that was hidden from them (before): he said "Your Lord only forbade you this tree lest ye should become angels or such beings as live for ever." ^{1005 1006}

7.21 And he swore to them both that he was their sincere adviser.

7.22 So by deceit he brought about their fall: when they tasted of the tree their shame became manifest to them and they began to sew together the leaves of the garden over their bodies. And their Lord called unto

them: "Did I not forbid you that tree and tell you that satan was an avowed enemy unto you?"

7.23 They said: "our Lord! we have wronged our own souls: if Thou forgive us not and bestow not upon us Thy mercy we shall certainly be lost."

7.24 (Allah) said: "Get ye down with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling-place and your means of livelihood for a time."

7.25 He said: "therein shall ye live and therein shall ye die; but from it shall ye be taken out (at last)." ¹⁰⁰⁷

7.26 O ye children of Adam! We have bestowed raiment upon you to cover your shame as well as to be an adornment to you but the raiment of righteousness that is the best. Such are among the signs of Allah that they may receive admonition! ¹⁰⁰⁸

7.27 O ye children of Adam! let not satan seduce you in the same manner as he got your parents out of the garden stripping them of their raiment to expose their shame: for he and his tribe watch you from a position where ye cannot see them: We made the evil ones friends (only) to those without faith. ¹⁰⁰⁹

7.28 When they do aught that is shameful they say: "We found our fathers doing so"; and "Allah commanded us thus": say: "Nay Allah never commands what is shameful: do ye say of Allah what ye know not?"

7.29 Say: "My Lord hath commanded justice; and that ye set your whole selves (to him) at every time and place of prayer and call upon him making your devotion sincere as in his sight: such as he created you in the beginning so shall ye return." ^{1010 1011}

7.30 Some He hath guided: others have (by their choice) deserved the loss of their way: in that they took the evil ones in preference to Allah for their friends and protectors and think that they receive guidance. ¹⁰¹²

7.31 O children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: but waste not by excess for Allah loveth not the wasters. ¹⁰¹³

7.32 Say: Who hath forbidden the beautiful (gifts) of Allah which He hath produced for his servants and the things clean and pure (which He hath provided) for sustenance? Say: they are in the life of this world for those who believe (and) purely for them on the Day of Judgment. Thus do We explain the signs in detail for those who understand. ^{1014 1015}

7.33 Say: The things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah for which he hath given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which ye have no knowledge. ¹⁰¹⁶

7.34 To every people is a term appointed: when their term is reached not an hour can they cause delay nor (an hour) can they advance (it in anticipation). ¹⁰¹⁷

7.35 O ye children of Adam! whenever there come to you apostles from amongst you rehearsing my signs unto you those who are righteous and mend (their lives) on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.

7.36 But those who reject our signs and treat them with arrogance they are companions of the fire to dwell therein (for ever).

7.37 Who is more unjust than one who invents a lie against Allah or rejects his signs? For such their portion appointed must reach them from the Book (of decrees); until when Our messengers (of death) arrive and take their souls they say: "where are the things that ye used to invoke besides Allah?" They will reply "they have left us in the lurch" and they will bear witness against themselves that they had rejected Allah. ¹⁰¹⁸

7.38 He will say: "enter ye in the company of the peoples who passed away before you men and Jinns into the fire. Every time a new people enters it curses its sister-people (that went before) until they follow each other all into the fire. Saith the last about the first: "Our Lord! it is these that misled us: so give them a double penalty in the fire." He will say: "doubled for all": but this Ye do not understand. ¹⁰¹⁹

7.39 Then the first will say to the last: "see then! no advantage have ye over us; so taste ye of the penalty for all that ye did!" ¹⁰²⁰

7.40 To those who reject Our signs and treat them with arrogance no opening will there be of the gates of heaven nor will they enter the garden until the camel can pass through the eye of the needle: such is Our reward for those in sin.

7.41 For them there is hell as a couch (below) and folds and folds of covering above: such is Our requital of those who do wrong.

7.42 But those who believe and work righteousness no burden do We place on any soul but that which it can bear they will be companions of the garden therein to dwell (for ever).

7.43 And We shall remove from their hearts any lurking sense of injury; beneath them will be rivers flowing; and they shall say: "Praise be to Allah Who hath guided us to this (felicity): never could we have found guidance had it not been for the guidance of Allah: indeed it was the truth that the apostles of our Lord brought unto us." And they Shall hear the cry: "Behold! the garden before you! Ye have been made its inheritors for your deeds (of righteousness)." ^{1021 1022}

7.44 The companions of the garden will call out to the companions of the fire: "We have indeed found the promises of our Lord to us true: have you also found your Lord's promises true?" They shall say "yes"; but a crier shall proclaim between them: "the curse of Allah is on the wrong- doers;" ¹⁰²³

7.45 "Those who would hinder (men) from the path of Allah and would seek in it something crooked: they were those who Denied the Hereafter." ¹⁰²⁴

7.46 Between them shall be a veil and on the heights will be men who would know everyone by his marks: they will call out to the companions of the garden "peace on you" they will not have entered but they will have an assurance (thereof.) ¹⁰²⁵

7.47 When their eyes shall be turned towards the companions of the fire they will say: "Our Lord! send us not to the company of the wrong- doers." ¹⁰²⁶

7.48 The men on the heights will call to certain men whom they will know from their marks saying: "Of what profit to you were you hoards and your arrogant ways?" ¹⁰²⁷

7.49 "Behold! are these not the men whom you swore that Allah with his mercy would never bless? Enter ye the garden: no fear shall be on you nor shall ye grieve."

7.50 The companions of the fire will call to the companions of the garden; "pour down to us water or anything that Allah doth provide for your sustenance." They will say: "Both these things hath Allah forbidden to those who rejected Him." ¹⁰²⁸

7.51 "Such as took their religion to be mere amusement and play and were deceived by the life of the world." That day shall We forget them as they forgot the meeting of this day of theirs and as they were wont to reject Our signs. ¹⁰²⁹

7.52 For We had certainly sent unto them a Book based on knowledge which We explained in detail a guide and a mercy to all who believe.

7.53 Do they just wait for the final fulfillment of the event? On the day the event is finally fulfilled those who disregarded it before will say: "the apostles of our Lord did indeed bring true (tidings). Have we no intercessors now to intercede on our behalf? Or could we be sent back? Then should we behave differently from our behavior in the past." In fact they will have lost their souls and the things they invented will leave them in the lurch. ¹⁰³⁰

7.54 Your guardian-Lord is Allah Who created the heavens and the earth in six days and is firmly established on the throne (of authority): He draweth the night as a veil O'er the day each seeking the other in rapid succession: He created the sun the moon and the stars (all) governed by laws under His command. Is it not His to create and to govern? Blessed be Allah the cherisher and sustainer of the worlds! ^{1031 1032}

7.55 Call on your Lord with humility and in private: for Allah loveth not those who trespass beyond bounds. ¹⁰³³

7.56 Do no mischief on the earth after it hath been set in order but call on Him with fear and longing (in your hearts): for the mercy of Allah is (always) near to those who do good. ^{1034 1035}

7.57 It is He who sendeth the winds like heralds of glad tidings going before His mercy: when they have carried the heavy-laden clouds We drive them to a land that is dead make rain to descend thereon and produce every kind of harvest therewith: thus shall We raise up the dead: perchance ye may remember. ¹⁰³⁶

7.58 From the land that is clean and good by the will of its cherisher springs up produce (rich) after its kind: but from the land that is bad spring up nothing but that which is niggardly: thus do We explain the signs by various (symbols) to those who are grateful. ^{1037 1038}

7.59 We sent Noah to his people. He said: "O my people! worship Allah! ye have no other god but Him. I fear for you the punishment of a dreadful day!" ¹⁰³⁹

7.60 The leaders of his people said: "Ah! we see thee evidently wandering (in mind)."

7.61 He said: "O my people! no wandering is there in my (mind): on the contrary I am an apostle from the Lord and Cherisher of the worlds!

7.62 "I but fulfil towards you the duties of my Lord's mission: sincere is my advice to you and I know from Allah something that ye know not.

7.63 "Do ye wonder that there hath come to you a message from your Lord through a man of your own people to warn you so that ye may fear Allah and haply receive his mercy?"

7.64 But they rejected him and We delivered him and those with him in the ark: But We overwhelmed in the flood those who rejected our signs. They were indeed a blind people!

7.65 To the Ad people (We sent) Hud one of their (own) brethren: He said: "O my people! worship Allah! ye have no other god but Him. Will yet not fear (Allah)?" ¹⁰⁴⁰

7.66 The leaders of the unbelievers among his people said: "Ah! we see thou art an imbecile!" and "we think thou art a liar!"

7.67 He said: "O my people! I am not imbecile but (I am) an apostle from the Lord and Cherisher of the worlds!

7.68 "I but fulfil towards your the duties of my Lord's mission: I am to you a sincere and trustworthy adviser.

7.69 "Do ye wonder that there hath come to you a message from your Lord through a man of your own people to warn you? call in remembrance that he made you inheritors after the people of Noah and gave you a stature tall among the nations. Call in remembrance the benefits (ye have received) from Allah: that so Ye may prosper."

7.70 They said: "Comest thou to us that we may worship Allah alone and give up the cult of our fathers? Bring us what thou threatenest us with if so be that thou tellest the truth!"

7.71 He said: "punishment and wrath have already come upon you from your Lord: dispute ye with me over names which ye have devised ye and your fathers without authority from Allah? Then wait: I am amongst you also waiting." ^{1041 1042}

7.72 We saved him and those who adhered to him by our mercy and We cut off the roots of those who rejected our signs and did not believe.

7.73 To the Thamud people (We sent) Saleh one of their own brethren: he said: "O my people! worship Allah; ye have no other god but Him. Now hath come unto you a clear (sign) from your Lord! This she-camel of Allah is a sign unto you: so leave her to graze in Allah's earth and let her come to no harm or ye shall be seized with a grievous punishment." ^{1043 1044}

7.74 "And remember how He made you inheritors after the Ad people and gave you habitations in the land: ye build for yourselves palaces and castles in (open) plains and carve out homes in the mountains; so bring to remembrance the benefits (ye have received) from Allah and refrain from evil and mischief on the earth."

7.75 The leaders of the arrogant party among his people said to those who were reckoned powerless those among them who believe: "know ye indeed that Saleh is an apostle from his Lord?" They said: "We do indeed believe in the revelation which hath been sent through him." ^{1045 1046}

7.76 The arrogant party said: "for our part we reject what ye believe in."

7.77 Then they ham-strung the she-camel and insolently defied the order of their Lord saying: "O Saleh! bring about thy threats if thou art an apostle (of Allah)!"

7.78 So the earthquake took them unawares and they lay prostrate in their homes in the morning! ¹⁰⁴⁷

7.79 So Saleh left them saying: "O my people! I did indeed convey to you the message for which I was sent by my Lord: I gave you good counsel but ye love not good counsellors!" ¹⁰⁴⁸

7.80 We also (sent) Lut: he said to his people: "Do ye commit lewdness such as no people in creation (ever) committed before you?" ¹⁰⁴⁹

7.81 "For ye practice your lusts on men in preference to women: ye are indeed a people transgressing beyond bounds."

7.82 And his people gave no answer but this: they said "drive them out of your city: these are indeed men who want to be clean and pure!" ¹⁰⁵⁰

7.83 But We saved him and his family except his wife: she was of those who lagged behind. ¹⁰⁵¹

7.84 And We rained down on them a shower (of brimstone): then see what was the end of those who indulged in sin and crime! ¹⁰⁵²

7.85 To the Madyan people We sent Shu`aib one of their own brethren: he said: "O my people! worship Allah; Ye have no other god but Him. Now hath come unto you a clear (sign) from your Lord! Give just measure and weight nor withhold from the people the things that are their due; and do no mischief on the earth after it has been set in order: that will be best for you if ye have faith. ^{1053 1054}

7.86 "And squat not on every road breathing threats hindering from the path of Allah those who believe in Him and seeking in it something crooked; but remember how ye were little and He gave you increase. And hold in your mind's eye what was the end of those who did mischief. ¹⁰⁵⁵

7.87 "And if there is a party among you who believes in the message with which I have been sent and a party which does not believe hold yourselves in patience until Allah doth decide between us: for He is the best to decide." ^{1056 1057}

7.88 The leaders the arrogant party among his people said: "O Shu`aib! we shall certainly drive thee out of our city (thee) and those who believe with thee: or else ye (thou and they) shall have to return to our ways and religion." He said: "what! even though we do detest (them)? ¹⁰⁵⁸

7.89 "We should indeed invent a lie against Allah if we returned to your ways after Allah hath rescued us therefrom: nor could we by any manner of means return thereto unless it be as in the Will and plan of Allah Our Lord. Our Lord can reach out to the utmost recesses of things by His knowledge. In Allah is our trust. Our Lord! decide thou between us and our people in truth for thou art the best to decide." ^{1059 1060 1061}

7.90 The leaders the unbelievers among his people said "if ye follow Shu`aib be sure then ye are ruined!" ¹⁰⁶²

7.91 But the earthquake took them unawares and they lay prostrate in their homes before the morning! ¹⁰⁶³

7.92 The men who rejected Shu`aib became as if they had never been in the homes where they had flourished: the men who rejected Shu`aib it was they who were ruined!

7.93 So Shu`aib left them saying: "O my people! I did indeed convey to you the messages for which I was sent by my Lord: I gave you good counsel but how shall I lament over a people who refuse to believe! ¹⁰⁶⁴

7.94 Whenever We sent a prophet to a town We took up its people in suffering and adversity in order that they might learn humility. ¹⁰⁶⁵

7.95 Then We changed their suffering into prosperity until they grew and multiplied and began to say: "Our fathers (too) were touched by suffering and affluence."...Behold! We called them to account of a sudden while they realized not (their peril). ¹⁰⁶⁶

7.96 If the people of the towns had but believed and feared Allah We should indeed have opened out to them (all kinds of) blessings from heaven and earth; but they rejected (the truth) and We brought them to book for their misdeeds.

7.97 Did the people of the towns feel secure against the coming of our wrath by night while they were asleep? ¹⁰⁶⁷

7.98 Or else did they feel secure against its coming in broad daylight while they played about (care-free)?

7.99 Did they then fell secure against the plan of Allah? But no one can feel secure from the plan of Allah except those (doomed) to ruin! ¹⁰⁶⁸

7.100 To those who inherit the earth in succession to its (previous) possessors is it not a guiding (lesson) that if We so willed We could punish them (too) for their sins and seal up their hearts so that they could not hear? ¹⁰⁶⁹

7.101 Such were the towns whose story We (thus) relate unto thee: there came indeed to them their apostles with clear (signs): but they would not believe what they had rejected before. Thus doth Allah seal up the heart of those who reject faith. ¹⁰⁷⁰

7.102 Most of them We found not men (true) to their covenant: but most of them We found rebellious and disobedient.

7.103 Then after them We sent Moses with Our signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs but they wrongfully rejected them: so see what was the end of those who made mischief.

7.104 Moses said: "O Pharaoh! I am an apostle from the Lord of the worlds. ^{1071 1072}

7.105 "One for whom it is right to say nothing but truth about Allah. Now have I come unto you (people) from your Lord with a clear (sign): so let the children of Israel depart along with me." ¹⁰⁷³

7.106 (Pharaoh) said: "If indeed thou hast come with a sign show it forth if thou tellest the truth." ¹⁰⁷⁴

7.107 Then (Moses) threw his rod and behold! it was a serpent plain (for all to see)! ¹⁰⁷⁵

7.108 And he drew out his hand and behold! it was white to all beholders! ¹⁰⁷⁶

7.109 Said the Chiefs of the people of Pharaoh: "This is indeed a sorcerer well-versed.

7.110 "His plan is to get you out of your land then what is it ye counsel?" ¹⁰⁷⁷

7.111 They said: "Keep him and his brother in suspense (for a while); and send to the cities men to collect

7.112 and bring up to thee all (our) sorcerers well-versed." ¹⁰⁷⁸

7.113 So there came the sorcerers to Pharaoh: they said "Of course we shall have a (suitable) reward if we win!" ¹⁰⁷⁹

7.114 He said: "Yea (and more) for ye shall in that case be (raised to posts) nearest (to my person)."

7.115 They said: "O Moses! wilt thou throw (first) or shall we have the (first) throw?"

7.116 Said Moses: "Throw ye (first)." So when they threw they bewitched the eyes of the people and struck terror into them: for they showed a great (feat of) magic. ¹⁰⁸⁰

7.117 We put it into Moses's mind by inspiration: "throw (now) thy rod": and behold! it swallows up straightway all the falsehoods which they fake!

7.118 Thus truth was confirmed and all that they did was made of no effect.

7.119 So the (great ones) were vanquished there and then and were made to look small. ¹⁰⁸¹

7.120 But the sorcerers fell down prostrate in adoration.

7.121 Saying: "we believe in the Lord of the worlds.

7.122 "The Lord of Moses and Aaron."

7.123 Said Pharaoh: "believe ye in him before I give you permission? Surely this is a trick which ye have planned in the city to drive out its people: but soon shall ye know (the consequences). ¹⁰⁸²

7.124 "Be sure I will cut off your hands and your feet on opposite sides and I will cause you all to die on the cross."

7.125 They said: "for us we are but sent back unto our Lord.

7.126 "But thou dost wreak thy vengeance on us simply because we believed in the signs of our Lord when they reached us! Our Lord! pour out on us patience and constancy and take our souls unto thee as Muslims (who bow to thy will)!" ¹⁰⁸³

7.127 Said the chiefs of Pharaoh's people: "wilt thou leave Moses and his people to spread mischief in the land and to abandon thee and thy gods?" He said: "Their male children will we slay; (only) their females will we save alive; and we have over them (power) irresistible." ¹⁰⁸⁴

7.128 Said Moses to his people: "Pray for help from Allah and (wait) in patience and constancy: for the earth is Allah's to give as a heritage to such of his servants as He pleaseth; and the end is (best) for the righteous. ¹⁰⁸⁵

7.129 They said: "We have had (nothing but) trouble both before and after thou comest to us." He said: "It may be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you inheritors in the earth; that so He may try

you by your deeds." 1086 1087

7.130 We punished the people of Pharaoh with years (of drought) and shortness of crops; that they might receive admonition.

7.131 But when good (times) came they said "this is due to us"; when gripped by calamity they ascribed it to evil omens connected with Moses and those with him! Behold! in truth the omens of evil are theirs in Allah's sight but most of them do not understand! ¹⁰⁸⁸

7.132 They said (to Moses): "whatever be the signs thou bringest to work therewith the sorcery on us we shall never believe in thee." ¹⁰⁸⁹

7.133 So We sent (plagues) on them wholesale death Locusts Lice Frogs and Blood: signs openly Self-explained; but they were steeped in arrogance a people given to sin. ^{1090 1091}

7.134 Every time the penalty fell on them they said: "O Moses! on our behalf call on thy Lord in virtue of his promise to thee: if thou wilt remove the penalty from us we shall truly believe in thee and we shall send away the children of Israel with thee." ¹⁰⁹²

7.135 But every time We removed the penalty from them according to a fixed term which they had to fulfil Behold! they broke their word! ¹⁰⁹³

7.136 So We exacted retribution from them: We drowned them in the sea because they rejected Our signs and failed to take warning from them. ^{1094 1095}

7.137 And We made a people considered weak (and of no account) inheritors of lands in both east and west lands whereon We sent down our blessings. The fair promise of the Lord was fulfilled for the children of Israel because they had patience and constancy and We levelled to the ground the great works and fine buildings which Pharaoh and his people erected (with such pride). ¹⁰⁹⁶

7.138 We took the children of Israel (with safety) across the sea. They came upon a people devoted entirely to some idols they had. They said: "O Moses! fashion for us a god like unto the gods they have." He said: "surely ye are a people without knowledge. ¹⁰⁹⁷

7.139 "As to these folk the cult they are in is (but) a fragment of a ruin and vain is the (worship) which they practice." ¹⁰⁹⁸

7.140 He said: "Shall I seek for you a god other than the (true) Allah when it is Allah who hath endowed you with gifts above the nations?"

7.141 And remember We rescued you from Pharaoh's people who afflicted you with the worst of penalties who slew your male children and saved alive your females: in that was a momentous trial from your Lord. ¹⁰⁹⁹

7.142 We appointed for Moses thirty nights and completed (the period) with ten (more): thus was completed the term (of communion) with his Lord forty nights. And Moses had charged his brother Aaron (before he went up): "Act for me amongst my people: do right and follow not the way of those who do mischief." ^{1100 1101}

7.143 When Moses came to the place appointed by Us and his Lord addressed him He said: "O my Lord! show (Thyself) to me that I may look upon thee." Allah said: "by no means canst thou see Me (direct); but look upon the mount; if it abide in its place then shalt thou see Me." When his Lord manifested his glory on the mount He made it as dust and Moses fell down in a swoon. When he recovered his senses he said: "Glory be to Thee! to thee I turn in repentance and I am the first to believe." (Allah) said: "O Moses! I have chosen thee above (other) men by the mission I (have given thee) and the words I (have spoken to thee): take then the (revelation) which I give thee and be of those who give thanks." ^{1102 1103 1104}

7.144 (Allah) said: "O Moses! I have chosen thee Above (other) men By the mission I (have Given thee) and the words I (have spoken to thee): Take then the (revelation) Which I give thee And be of those Who give thanks." ^{1105 1106}

7.145 And We ordained laws for him in the tablets in all matters both commanding and explaining all things (and said): "take and hold these with firmness and enjoin thy people to hold fast by the best in the precepts: soon shall I show you the homes of the wicked (how they lie desolate)." ^{1107 1108 1109}

7.146 Those who behave arrogantly on the earth in defiance of right them will I turn away from My signs they will not believe in them; and if they see the way of right conduct they will not adopt it as the way; but if they see the way of error that is the way they will adopt; for they rejected Our signs and failed to take warning from them. ^{1110 1111}

7.147 Those who reject Our signs and the meeting in the hereafter vain are their deeds: can they expect to be rewarded except as they have wrought?

7.148 The people of Moses made in his absence out of their ornaments the image of a calf (for worship): it seemed to low: did they not see that it could neither speak to them nor show them the way? They took it for worship and they did wrong. ^{1112 1113 1114}

7.149 When they repented and saw that they had erred they said: "If our Lord have not mercy upon us and forgive us we shall indeed be of those who perish."

7.150 When Moses came back to his people angry and grieved he said: "evil it is that ye have done in my place in my absence: did ye make haste to bring on the judgment of your Lord?" He put down the tablets seized his brother by (the hair of) his head and dragged him to him. Aaron said: "son of my mother! the people did indeed reckon me as naught and went near to slaying me! make not the enemies rejoice over my misfortune nor count thou me amongst the people of sin." ^{1115 1116 1117 1118}

7.151 Moses prayed: "O my Lord! forgive me and my brother! admit us to Thy mercy! for Thou art the Most Merciful of those who sow mercy!" ¹¹¹⁹

7.152 Those who took the calf (for worship) will indeed be overwhelmed with wrath from their Lord and with shame in this life: thus do We recompense those who invent (falsehoods). ¹¹²⁰

7.153 But those who do wrong but repent thereafter and (truly) believe verily Thy Lord is thereafter Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful.

7.154 When the anger of Moses was appeased he took up the tablets: in the writing thereon was guidance and mercy for such as fear their Lord.

7.155 And Moses chose seventy of his people for Our place of meeting: when they were seized with violent quaking he prayed: "O my Lord! if it had been Thy will Thou couldst have destroyed long before both them and me: wouldst Thou destroy us for the deeds of the foolish one among us? This is no more than Thy trial: by it Thou causest whom Thou wilt to stray and Thou leadest whom Thou wilt into the right path. Thou art our protector: so forgive us and give us Thy mercy; for Thou art the best of those who forgive." ^{1121 1122 1123 1124}

7.156 "And ordain for us that which is good in this life and in the hereafter: for we have turned unto Thee." He said: "with My punishment I visit whom I will; but My mercy extendeth to all things. That (Mercy) I shall ordain for those who do right and practice regular charity and those who believe in Our signs;" ^{1125 1126}

7.157 "Those who follow the apostle the unlettered prophet whom they find mentioned in their own (Scriptures); in the law and the Gospel; for he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil: he allows them as lawful what is good (and pure) and prohibits them from what is bad (and impure); He releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him honor him help him and follow the light which is sent down with him it is they who will prosper." ^{1127 1128 1129 1130}

7.158 Say: "O men! I am sent unto you all as the apostle of Allah to Whom belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth: there is no god but He: it is He that giveth both life and death. So believe in Allah and His apostle the unlettered Prophet who believed in Allah and His words: follow him that (so) ye may be guided." ^{1131 1132}

7.159 Of the people of Moses there is a section who guide and do justice in the light of truth.

7.160 We divided them into twelve tribes or nations. We directed Moses by inspiration when his (thirsty) people asked him for water: "Strike the rock with thy staff": out of it there gushed forth twelve springs: each group knew its own place for water. We gave them the shade of clouds and sent down to them manna and quails (saying): "Eat of the good things We have provided for you": (but they rebelled): to Us they did no harm but they harmed their own souls. ^{1133 1134}

7.161 And remember it was said to them: "Dwell in this town and eat therein as ye wish but say the word of humility and enter the gate in a posture of humility; We shall forgive you your faults; We shall increase (the portion of) those who do good." ¹¹³⁵

7.162 But the transgressors among them changed the word from that which had been given them; so We sent on them a plague from heaven for that they repeatedly transgressed. ¹¹³⁶

7.163 Ask them concerning the town standing close by the sea. Behold! they transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath. For on the day of their Sabbath their fish did come to them openly holding up their heads but on the day they had no Sabbath they came not: thus did We make a trial of them for they were given to transgression. ¹¹³⁷

- 7.164 When some of them said: "why do ye preach to a people whom Allah will destroy or visit with a terrible punishment?" Said the preachers: "to discharge our duty to your Lord and perchance they may fear him." ¹¹³⁸
- 7.165 When they disregarded the warnings that had been given them We rescued those who forbade evil; but We visited the wrong-doers with a grievous punishment because they were given to transgression.
- 7.166 When in their insolence they transgressed (all) prohibition We said to them: "Be ye apes despised and rejected." ¹¹³⁹
- 7.167 Behold! thy Lord did declare that He would send against them to the Day of Judgment those who would afflict them with grievous penalty. Thy Lord is quick in retribution but he is also Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful. ¹¹⁴⁰
- 7.168 We broke them up into sections on this earth. There are among them some that are the righteous and some that are the opposite. We have tried them with both prosperity and adversity: in order that they might turn (to us). ¹¹⁴¹
- 7.169 After them succeeded an (evil) generation: they inherited the Book but they chose (for themselves) the vanities of this world saying (for excuse): "(everything) will be forgiven us." (Even so) if similar vanities came their way they would (again) seize them. Was not the covenant of the Book taken from them that they would not ascribe to Allah anything but the truth? And they study what is in the Book. But best for the righteous is the home in the hereafter: will ye not understand? ^{1142 1143}
- 7.170 As to those who hold fast by the Book and establish regular prayer; never shall We suffer the reward of the righteous to perish.
- 7.171 When We shook the mount over them as if it had been a canopy and they thought it was going to fall on them (We said): "Hold firmly to what We have given you and bring (even) to remembrance what is therein; perchance ye may fear Allah." ^{1144 1145}
- 7.172 When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam from their loins their descendants and made them testify concerning themselves (saying): "Am I not your Lord (who cherishes and sustains you)?" They said: "Yea! we do testify!" (This) lest ye should say on the Day of Judgment: "of this we were never mindful." ^{1146 1147}
- 7.173 Or lest ye should say: "Our fathers before us may have taken false gods but we are (their) descendants after them: wilt thou then destroy us because of the deeds of men who were futile?" ¹¹⁴⁸
- 7.174 Thus do We explain the signs in detail! and perchance they may turn (unto Us).
- 7.175 Relate to them the story of the man to whom We sent our signs but he passed them by: so satan followed him up and he went astray. ¹¹⁴⁹
- 7.176 If it had been Our will We should have elevated him with our signs; but he inclined to the earth and followed his own vain desires. His similitude is that of a dog: if you attack him he lolls out his tongue or if you leave him alone he (still) lolls out his tongue. That is the similitude of those who reject our signs; so relate the story; perchance they may reflect. ^{1150 1151}
- 7.177 Evil as an example are people who reject Our signs and wrong their own souls.
- 7.178 Whom Allah doth guide he is on the right path: whom He rejects from His guidance such are the persons who perish. ¹¹⁵²
- 7.179 Many are the Jinns and men We have made for Hell: They have hearts wherewith they understand not eyes wherewith they see not and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle nay more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning). ¹¹⁵³
- 7.180 The most beautiful names belong to Allah: so call on Him by them; but shun such men as use profanity in His names: for what they do they will soon be requited. ¹¹⁵⁴
- 7.181 Of those We have created are people who direct (others) with truth and dispense justice therewith.
- 7.182 Those who reject Our signs We shall gradually visit with punishment in ways they perceive not.
- 7.183 Respite will I grant unto them: for My scheme is strong (and unfailing).
- 7.184 Do they not reflect? Their companion is not seized with madness: he is but a perspicuous warner. ^{1155 1156}

7.185 Do they see nothing in the government of the heavens and the earth and all that Allah hath created? (Do they not see) that it may well be that their term is nigh drawing to an end? In what message after this will they then believe? ¹¹⁵⁷

7.186 To such as Allah rejects from His guidance there can be no guide; He will leave them in their trespasses wandering in distraction. ¹¹⁵⁸

7.187 They ask thee about the (final) hour when will be its appointed time? Say: "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (alone): none but He can reveal as to when it will occur. Heavy were its burden through the heavens and the earth. Only all of a sudden will it come to you. They ask thee as if thou wert eager in search thereof: Say: "The knowledge thereof is with Allah (alone) but most men know not." ^{1159 1160}

7.188 Say: "I have no power over any good or harm to myself except as Allah willeth. If I had knowledge of the unseen I should have multiplied all good and no evil should have touched me I am but a warner and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith." ¹¹⁶¹

7.189 It is He who created you from a single person and made his mate of like nature in order that he might dwell with her (in love). When they are united she bears a light burden and carries it about (unnoticed). When she grows heavy they both pray to Allah their Lord (saying): "if Thou givest us a goodly child we vow we shall (ever) be grateful." ^{1162 1163 1164}

7.190 But when He giveth them a goodly child they ascribe to others a share in the gift they have received: but Allah is exalted high above the partners they ascribe to Him. ¹¹⁶⁵

7.191 Do they indeed ascribe to Him as partners things that can create nothing but are themselves created?

7.192 No aid can they give them nor can they aid themselves!

7.193 If ye call them to guidance they will not obey: for you it is the same whether ye call them or ye hold your peace! ¹¹⁶⁶

7.194 Verily those whom ye call upon besides Allah are servants like unto you: call upon them and let them listen to your prayer if ye are (indeed) truthful! ¹¹⁶⁷

7.195 Have they feet to walk with? or hands to lay hold with? or eyes to see with? or ears to hear with? Say: "Call your god-partners scheme (your worst) against me and give me no respite! ¹¹⁶⁸

7.196 "For my protector is Allah Who revealed the Book (from time to time) and He will choose and befriend the righteous.

7.197 "But those ye call upon besides Him are unable to help you and indeed to help themselves."

¹¹⁶⁹ 7.198 If thou callest them to guidance they hear not. Thou wilt see them looking at thee but they see not.

7.199 Hold to forgiveness; command what is right; but turn away from the ignorant. ¹¹⁷⁰

7.200 If a suggestion from satan assail thy (mind) seek refuge with Allah; for He heareth and knoweth (all things). ¹¹⁷¹

7.201 Those who fear Allah when a thought of evil from satan assaults them bring Allah to remembrance when lo! they see (aright)! ¹¹⁷²

7.202 But their brethren (the evil ones) plunge them deeper into error and never relax (their efforts). ¹¹⁷³

7.203 If thou bring them not a revelation they say: "Why hast thou not got it together?" Say: "I but follow what is revealed to me from my Lord: This is (nothing but) lights from your Lord and guidance and mercy for any who have faith." ^{1174 1175}

7.204 When the Qur'an is read listen to it with attention and hold your peace: that ye may receive Mercy.

7.205 And do thou (O reader!) bring thy Lord to remembrance in thy (very) soul with humility and in reverence without loudness in words in the mornings and evenings; and be not thou of those who are unheedful.

7.206 Those who are near to thy Lord disdain not to do Him worship: They celebrate His praises and bow down before Him. ^{1176 1177}

Author Comments

989 - This is a combination of four Abbreviated Letters. For Abbreviated Letters generally, see Appendix I (at the end of Sura II). The combination here includes the three letters A.L.M., which occurred at the beginning of Sura II, and are discussed in n. 25 to ii. 1. The additional letter Sad occurs in combination here and in Sura xix, and by itself at the beginning of S. xxxviii, and nowhere else. The factor common to S. vii. S. xix, and S. xxxviii, is that in each case the core of the Sura consists in the stories (qisas) of the Prophets. In this Sura we have the Stories of Noah, Hud, Salih, Lot, Shu'aib, and Moses, leading up to Muhammad, and in S. xxxviii, the stories of David, Solomon, and Job similarly lead up to Muhammad, occupying three out of the five sections. Sura xix consists almost entirely of such stories. In this Sura vii, we have the religious history of mankind traced-the Beginning the Middle, and the End.

990 - Heart: in the original, breast. I have used the word most appropriate to the English idiom. The meaning is that Al-Mustafa is consoled for all the difficulties which he encountered in his mission, with the fact that he had clear guidance in the Book for his preaching.

991 - This is added in order that men might not be puffed up with such little knowledge as they possessed, for there are great heights to be scaled in the spiritual kingdom.

992 - The religious story of man begins with a prelude. Think of the towns and nations ruined by their iniquity. Allah gave them many opportunities, and sent them warners and teachers. But they arrogantly went on in their evil ways, till some dreadful calamity came and wiped out their traces. In a warm climate the disturbance in the heat of the midday rest is even more than the disturbance at night. It was when the catastrophe came that the people realised their sins, but it was too late.

993 - In the final reckoning, the warners and teachers will give evidence of their preaching the truth, and the wicked will themselves have to acknowledge the truth. We picture it like a court scene, when the story is related, but the Judge knows all, even more than the parties can tell.

994 - Allah (being all-knowing) is never absent from any place or at any time, for Time and Place are relative conceptions for our limited natures, while He is the Absolute, independent of such relative

conceptions.

995 - That is, all the material things which are necessary to sustain, beautify, and refine life, as well as all those powers, faculties, and opportunities which are instrumental in bringing up life to a higher plane and preparing man for his high destiny.

996 - It was after Adam (as standing for all mankind) had been so taught that the angels were asked to prostrate to him, for, by Allah's grace, his status had actually been raised higher. Note the transition from "you" (plural) in the first clause to "Adam" in the second clause: Adam and mankind are synonymous: the plural is reverted to in vii. 14, 16-18.

997 - Iblis not only refused to bow down: he refused to be of those who prostrated. In other words he arrogantly despised the angels who prostrated as well as man to whom they prostrated and he was in rebellion against Allah for not obeying His order. Arrogance, jealousy, and rebellion were his triple crime.

998 - Notice the subtle wiles of Iblis: his egotism in putting himself above man, and his falsehood in ignoring the fact that Allah had not merely made man's body from clay, but had given him spiritual form,-in other words, had taught him the nature of things and raised him above the angels.

999 - The incident marks the excommunication of Iblis from the Garden owing to his rebelliousness born of arrogance.

1000 - Are there others under respite? Yes, Iblis has a large army of wicked seducers, and those men who are their dupes. For though degradation takes effect at once, its appearance may be long delayed.

1001 - Another instance of Iblis's subtlety and falsehood. He waits till he gets the respite. Then he breaks out into a lie and impertinent defiance. The lie is in suggesting that Allah had thrown him out of the Way, in

other words misled him: whereas his own conduct was responsible for his degradation. The defiance is in his setting snares on the Straight Way to which Allah directs men.

1002 - The assault of evil is from all sides. It takes advantage of every weak point, and sometimes even our good and generous sympathies are used to decoy us into the snares of evil. Man has every reason to be grateful to Allah for all His loving care and yet man in his folly forgets his gratitude and does the very opposite of what he should do.

1003 - Now the story turns to man. He was placed in the Garden of comfort and bliss, but it was Allah's Plan to give him a limited faculty of choice. All that he was forbidden to do was to approach the Tree, but he succumbed to Satan's suggestions.

1004 - Enjoy: literally, "eat." Cf. the meaning of ta'ama in vi, 14, n. 847 and akala in v. 66, n. 776.

1005 - The transition from the name "Iblis" to the name "Satan" is similar to that in ii. 36, where it is explained in n. 52.

1006 - Our first parents as created by Allah (and this applies to all of us) were innocent in matters material as well as spiritual. They knew no evil. But the faculty of choice, which was given to them and which raised them above the angels, also implied that they had the capacity of evil, which by the training of their own will, they were to reject. They were warned of the danger. When they fell, they realised the evil. They were (and we are) still given the chance, in this life on a lower plane, to make good and recover the lost status of innocence and bliss.

1007 - Cf. this whole passage about Adam with the passage in ii. 30-39, and with other passages in subsequent Suras. In places the words are precisely the same, and yet the whole argument is different. In each case it exactly fits the context. In S. ii. the argument was about the origin of man. Here the argument is a prelude to his history on earth, and so it continues logically in the next section to address the Children of Adam, and goes on afterwards with the story of the various prophets that came to guide mankind. Truth is one, but its apt presentment in words shows a different facet in different contexts.

1008 - The body: is pure and beautiful, as long as it is not defiled by misuse: its clothing and ornaments may be good or meretricious, according to the motives in the mind and character: if good, they are the symbols of purity and beauty: but the best clothing and ornament we could have comes from righteousness, which covers the nakedness of sin, and adorns us with virtues.

1009 - That is, by fraud and deceit,-by putting you off your guard and telling lies. Adam's story here becomes an introduction to the later religious history of mankind: vii. 20-22. In the Garden, Satan's deceit stripped off their raiment of honour and innocence. In this life on a lower plane he seeks to strip us of the raiment of righteousness. And he can take up positions on a vantage ground of worldly power or influence or riches, in which he and his confederates are not seen in their true colours. They may assume a fair-seeming disguise of disinterested friendship or high motives of patriotism or public spirit, or loyalty to ancestors, when beneath it there is nothing but spite and selfishness.

1010 - For wajh, see ii. 112 and n. 114. Our devotion should be sincere, not as in other men's sight, but by presenting our whole selves, heart and soul, to Allah. Even so, it may not be enough; for the sight of our heart and soul may be faulty. We should call upon Allah to give us the light, by which our sincerity may commend itself to Him as true sincerity "as in His sight"

1011 - Cf. vi. 94. Our sincerity should be real sincerity, as in His sight for when we return to Him, we shall be stripped of all pretence, even such self-deception as may satisfy us in this life.

1012 - Guidance is for all. But in some it takes effect: in others the doors are closed against it, because they have taken Satan for their friend. If they have lost their way, they have richly deserved it; for they deliberately took their choice, even though, in their self-righteousness, they may think that their sin is their virtue, and that their Evil is their Good.

1013 - Beautiful apparel: zinat: adornments or apparel for beautiful living: construed to mean not only clothes that add grace to the wearer, but toilet and cleanliness, attention to hair, and other small personal details which no self-respecting man or woman ought to neglect when going solemnly even before a great human dignitary, if only out of respect for the dignity of the occasion. How much more important it is to attend to these details when we solemnly apply our minds to the Presence of Allah. But the caution against

excess applies: men must not go to prayer in silks or ornaments appropriate to women. Similarly sober food, good and wholesome, is not to be divorced from offices of religion; only the caution against excess applies strictly. A dirty, unkempt, slovenly Faqir could not claim sanctity in Islam.

1014 - Asceticism often means the negation of art and beauty, it has no necessary sanctity attached to it.

1015 - The beautiful and good things of life are really meant for, and should be the privilege of those with faith in Allah. If they do not always have them in this life, and if there is sometimes the semblance of others having them who do not deserve them, let us remember that this is a test from Allah. In the life to come they will be purely for the faithful.

1016 - The forbidden things are described in four categories: (1) what is shameful or unbecoming; the sort of things which have also legal and social sanctions, not of a local but of a universal kind; they may be called offences against society: (2) sins against self and trespasses or excesses of every sort; these are against truth and reason; here would come in indiscipline, failure in doing intangible duties not clearly defined by law; selfishness or self-aggrandisement, which may be condoned by custom and not punished by law, etc.- (3) erecting fetishes or false gods; this is treason against the true God; and (4) corrupting religion by debasing superstitions, etc.

1017 - People: ummat. I do not know whether "generation" would not be more appropriate here. If so, it would refer to the Time-Spirit, for it affects a whole number of people living contemporaneously, and while we deal grammatically with a group, we really have in mind the individuals composing the group. Anyway, the lesson is what is suggested in the following verses. There is only a limited time for an individual or for a group of people. If they do not make good during that time of probation, the chance is lost, and it cannot come again. We cannot retard or advance the march of time by a single hour or minute. ("Hour" in the text expresses an indefinite but short period of time).

1018 - It must not be supposed that the rebels against Allah would at once be cut off in this life for their sins. They will get the portion allotted to them, including the good things of life and the chance of repentance and reformation, during their probationary period on this earth. During that period they will have a full run. After that period expires, they will be called to account. They will themselves see that the false things, in which they put their trust, were false, and they will confess their sin, but it will be too late.

1019 - The earlier generations committed a double crime: (1) their own sins, (2) the bad example they set for those that followed. We are responsible not only for our own misdeeds, but for those which our example and our teaching to our juniors may induce them to commit. But it does not lie in the mouth of the juniors to ask for a double punishment for seniors: the motive is not justice, but pure spite, which is itself a sin. Further, the later generations have to answer for two things: (1) their own sins, and (2) their failure to learn from the past, from the experiences of those who preceded them. -They should have an advantage in this respect, being "in the foremost files of Time," but they did not learn. Thus there was nothing to choose between the earlier and later generations in the matter of guilt. But how few people understand this! In vi. 160, we were told that good was rewarded tenfold, but evil was punished according to its guilt, in perfect justice. This verse is in no way inconsistent with it. Two crimes must have a double penalty.

1020 - Wrong-doers have really no sense of honour towards each other. "Honour among thieves" is an exceptional, not an ordinary, experience. In real life, guilt and crime are apt to indulge in mean spite and bitter recriminations against accomplices.

1021 - A man who may have suffered or been disappointed may have a lurking sense of injury in the back of his mind, which may spoil his enjoyment on account of past memory intruding in the midst of felicity. In such cases memory itself is pain. Even sorrow is intensified by memory: as Tennyson says, "A sorrow's crown of sorrows is remembering happier things." But that is in this our imperfect life. In the perfect felicity of the righteous, all such feelings will be blotted out. No "heartaches" then and no memories of them! The clouds of the past will have dissolved in glorious light, and no past happiness will be comparable with the perfect happiness which will have then been attained. Nor will any sense of envy or shortcoming be possible in that perfect bliss.

1022 - Jesus said: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth": Matt. v. 5. Here we are told: blessed are the righteous, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. The stress here is on actual practical deeds of righteousness: whether they find their rewards on earth or not is immaterial: their attention is directed to an infinitely greater reward, the kingdom of heaven. In the Sermon on the Mount this is promised to the "poor in spirit": Matt. v, 3.

1023 - The Companions of the Fire can only answer a single word, "Yes," such is their state of misery. Even so, their voice is drowned in the voice of the Crier, who explains their state: they are in a state of curse, that is, deprivation of the grace and mercy of Allah. Such deprivation is the highest misery that souls can suffer.

1024 - The unrighteous reflect their own crooked minds when the path of Allah is before them. Instead of going straight, they try to find something in it that suits their own crooked ideas. Frankly they have no faith in the final Goal, the Hereafter.

1025 - This is a difficult passage, and Commentators have interpreted it in different ways. Three distinct schools of thought may be discerned in the interpretation. (1) One school thinks that the men on the Heights are angels, or such men of exalted spiritual dignity (e.g., the great prophets), as will be able to know the souls at sight as regards their real worth: the Heights will be their exalted stations, from which they will welcome the righteous with a salutation of peace, even before the righteous have entered heaven; the salutation of peace being itself an assurance of salvation to those whom they salute. (2) Another school of thought thinks that the men on the Heights are such souls as are not decidedly on the side of merit or decidedly on the side of sin, but evenly balanced on a partition between heaven and hell. Their case is yet to be decided, but their salutation to the righteous is a wistful salutation, because they hope for Allah's Mercy.

1026 - Their eyes: according to interpretation (2) of the last note, "their" would refer to the people whose fate has not yet been decided, and the speech would be theirs; according to interpretations (1) and (3) in that note, "their" would refer to the Companions of the Garden, who would realise the terrible nature of hell, and express their horror of it. I prefer the latter. Then the mention of the "men on the Heights" and their speech in verse 48 comes in naturally as a different kind of speech from a different kind of men.

1027 - This speech is in three parts: (1) the last lines of this verse are addressed to the Companions of the Fire, reminding them (as a bench of judges might speak to a prisoner) of the futility of their wealth and riches and arrogance in their earthly life: (2) the second part, in the first half of verse 49, recalls to their minds how false was their contempt of the good but lowly men who are now to be the inheritors of heaven: and (3) the latter part of verse 49, "enter ye the Garden" is addressed to the Blessed, to give them a welcome to their state of felicity.

1028 - The Companions of the Fire will thirst for water and not get it, and for sustenance which will not be theirs, while the Companions of the Garden will have the crystal waters of the springs and rivers and they will enjoy the bliss of Allah's Countenance, which will be their supreme nourishment and the fruit of their life of probation and seeking. These things will not be transferable. Cf. also xxxvii. 41-47, 62-67.

1029 - "Forgetfulness" may be involuntary, from a defect of memory, or figuratively, a deliberate turning away from, or ignoring of, something we do not want, as when we say in an argument, "you conveniently forget that so- and-so is so-and-so." Here the latter kind is meant. If men deliberately ignored the Hereafter in spite of warnings, can they expect to be received by Allah, Whom they themselves rejected?

1030 - If those without Faith want to wait and see what happens in the Hereafter, they will indeed learn the truth, but it will be too late for them to profit by it then. All the false ideals and false gods which they put their trust upon will leave them in the lurch. If they thought that the goodness or greatness of others would help them, they will be undeceived on the day when their personal responsibility will be enforced. There will be no salvation except on their own record. How they will then wish that they had another chance! But their chance will be gone.

1031 - A sublime verse, comparable to the Throne Verse ii. 255. As for the Creation in six days, in xxii. 47, we are told that a Day in the sight of Allah is like a thousand years of our reckoning, and in lxx. 4, the comparison is with 50,000 of our years. In the history of our material earth, we may reckon six great epochs of evolution.

1032 - Here, we are told of the creation of the heavens and the earth in six days. But lest we should be obsessed with the Jewish idea that Allah rested on the seventh day, we are told that the Creation was but a prelude to Allah's work: for His authority is exercised constantly by the laws which He establishes and enforces in all parts of His Creation. The beautiful imagery of night and day seeking out each other in rapid succession is still further enforced in the Arabic by the double accusative of the verb yugshi, showing the mutual interactions of the day and the night, each covering the other in turn. The heavenly bodies show an order which is evidence of His constant care and government. Not only that, but it is only He Who creates, maintains, and governs, and no one else.

1033 - In prayer, we must avoid any arrogance or show or loudness, or vanity of requests or words. If excess is condemned in all things, it is specially worthy of condemnation when we go humbly before Our Lord,-we poor creatures before the Omnipotent Who knoweth all.

1034 - The man who prays with humility and earnestness finds the ground prepared by Allah for his spiritual advancement. It is all set in order, and cleared of weeds. He does not, like the wicked, upset that order, to introduce evil or mischief into it.

1035 - Fear and longing: the fear of Allah is really a fear lest we should diverge from His Will, or do anything which would not be pleasing to Him: unlike ordinary fear, it therefore brings us nearer to Allah, and in fact nourishes our longing and desire for Him.

1036 - The Parable is complete in its triple significance. (1) In the physical world the winds go like heralds of glad tidings; they are the advance guard, behind which is coming the great army of winds driving heavily laden clouds before it; the wise Providence of Allah is their General, who directs them towards a parched land, on which the clouds deliver their gladdening showers of mercy, which convert the dead land into a living, fertile, and beautiful land bearing a rich harvest. (2) In the spiritual world, the winds are the great motive forces in the mind of man, or in the world around him, that bring the clouds or instruments of Allah's Mercy, which descend and fertilise souls hitherto spiritually dead. (3) If we can see or experience such things in our life here below, can we doubt the resurrection?

1037 - The triple parable explained in the last note is here continued. (1) In the physical world, the fertilising showers of rain yield a rich harvest on good soil, but bad soil yields little or nothing. (2) In the spiritual world, also, Allah's Mercies evoke no response in some souls which have chosen evil. (3) In the final reckoning, though all will be raised, not all will achieve the fulfilment of their lives.

1038 - Those who are grateful are those who joyfully receive Allah's Message, and respond to it by deeds of righteousness.

1039 - The story of Noah in greater detail will be found in xi. 25-49. Here the scheme is to tell briefly the stories of some of the Prophets between Noah and Moses, and lead up thus to a lesson for the contemporaries of the Prophet Muhammad himself. When Noah attacked the wickedness of his generation, he was laughed at for a madman, for he mentioned the Great Day to come in the Hereafter. Allah's retribution came soon afterwards-the great Flood, in which his unbelieving people were drowned, but he and those who believed in him and came into the Ark were saved.

1040 - The 'Ad people, with their prophet Had, are mentioned in many places. See especially xxvi. 123-140, and xivi. 21-26. Their story belongs to Arabian tradition. Their eponymous ancestor 'Ad was fourth in generation from Noah, having been a son of 'Aus, the son of Aram, the son of Sam, the son of Noah. They occupied a large tract of country in Southern Arabia, extending from Umman at the mouth of the Arabian Gulf to Hadhramaut and Yemen at the southern end of the Red Sea. The people were tall in

stature and were great builders. Probably the long, winding tracts of sands (ahqaf) in their dominions (xivi. 21) were irrigated with canals. They forsook the true God, and oppressed their people. A three years famine visited them, but yet they took no warning. At length a terrible blast of wind destroyed them and their land, but a remnant, known as the second 'Ad or the Thamud (see below) were saved, and afterwards suffered a similar fate for their sins. The tomb of the Prophet Hud (qabr Nabi Hud) is still traditionally shown in Hadhramaut, latitude 16 N, and longitude 49 1/2 E', about 90 miles north of Mukalla. There are ruins and inscriptions in the neighbourhood. See "Hadhramaut, Some of its Mysteries Unveiled," by D. van der Meulen and H. von Wissmann, Leyden, 1932.

1041 - The past tense may be understood in three ways. (1) A terrible famine had already afflicted the 'Ad as a warning before they were overwhelmed in the final blast of hot wind (see the last note). (2) The terrible insolence and sin into which they had fallen was itself a punishment. (3) The prophetic past is used, as much as to say: "Behold! I see a dreadful calamity: it is already on you!"

1042 - Why dispute over names and imaginary gods, the inventions of your minds? Come to realities. If you ask for the punishment and are waiting in insolent defiance, what can I do but also wait?-in fear and trembling for you, for I know that Allah's punishment is sure!

1043 - The Thamud people were the successors to the culture and civilization of the 'Ad people, for whom see n. 1040 and vii. 65 above. They were cousins to the 'Ad, apparently a younger branch of the same race. Their story also belongs to Arabian tradition, according to which their eponymous ancestor Thamud was a son of 'Abir (a brother of Aram), the son of Sam, the son of Noah. Their seat was in the north-west corner of Arabia (Arabia Petraea), between Madinah and Syria. It included both rocky country (hijr. xv. 80), and the spacious fertile valley (Wadi) and plains country of Qura, which begins just north of the City of Madinah and is traversed by the Hijaz Railway. When the holy Prophet in the 9th year of the Hijra led his expedition to Tabuk (about 400 miles north of Madinah) against the Roman forces, on a reported Roman invasion from Syria, he and his men came across the archaeological remains of the Thamud. The recently excavated rock city of Petra, near Maan, may go back to the Thamud, though its architecture has many features connecting it with Egyptian and Graeco-Roman culture overlaying what is called by European writers Nabataean Culture. Who were the Nabataeans? They were an old Arab tribe which played a considerable part in history after they came into conflict with Antigonus I in 312 B.C. Their capital was Petra, but they extended their territory right up to the Euphrates. In 85 B.C. they were lords of Damascus under their king Haritha (Aretas of Roman history). For some time they were allies of the Roman Empire and held the Red Sea littoral. The Emperor Trajan reduced them and annexed their territory in A.D. 105. The Nabataeans succeeded the Thamud of Arabian tradition. The Thamud are mentioned by name in an inscription of the Assyrian King Sargon, dated 715 B.C., as a people of Eastern and Central Arabia (Encyclopaedia of Islam). See also Appendix VII to S. xxvi. With the advance of material civilisation, the Thamud people became godless and arrogant, and were destroyed by an earthquake. Their prophet and warner was Salih, and the crisis in their history is connected with the story of a wonderful she-camel: see next note.

1044 - The story of this wonderful she-camel, that was a sign to the Thamud, is variously told in tradition. We need not follow the various versions in the traditional story. What we are told in the Qur-an is: that (1) she was a Sign or Symbol, which the prophet Salih, used for a warning to the haughty oppressors of the poor: (2) there was scarcity of water, and the arrogant or privileged classes tried to prevent the access of the poor or their cattle to the springs, while Salih intervened on their behalf (xxvi. 155, liv. 28); (3) like water, pasture was considered a free gift of nature, in this spacious earth of Allah (vii. 73), but the arrogant ones tried to monopolise the pasture also; (4) this particular she-camel was made a test case (liv. 27) to see if the arrogant ones would come to reason; (5) the arrogant ones, instead of yielding to the reasonable rights of the people, ham-strung the poor she-camel and slew her, probably secretly (xci. 14, liv. 29): the cup of their iniquities was full, and the Thamud people were destroyed by a dreadful earthquake, which threw them prone on the ground and buried them with their houses and their fine buildings.

1045 - As usually happens in such cases, the Believers were the lowly and the humble, and the oppressors were the arrogant, who in selfishly keeping back nature's gifts (which are Allah's gifts) from the people, were deaf to the dictates of justice and kindness. Salih took the side of the unprivileged, and was therefore himself attacked.

1046 - Notice the relation between the question and the answer. The godless chiefs wanted to discredit Salih, and put a personal question, as much as to say, "Is he not a liar?" The Believers took back the issue to the higher plane, as much as to say. "We know he is a man of Allah, but look at the justice for which he is making a stand: to resist it is to resist Allah". The answer of the godless was to reject Allah in words, and in action to commit a further act of cruelty and injustice in ham-stringing and killing the she-camel, at the same time hurling defiance at Salih and his God.

1047 - The retribution was not long delayed. A terrible earthquake came and buried the people and destroyed their boasted civilisation. The calamity must have been fairly extensive in area and intense in the terror it inspired, for it is described (liv. 31) as a "single mighty blast" (saihatan wahidatan), the sort of terror-inspiring noise which accompanies all big earthquakes.

1048 - Salih was saved by Allah's mercy as a just and righteous man. His speech here may be either a parting warning, or it may be a soliloquy lamenting the destruction of his people for their sin and folly.

1049 - Lut is the Lot of the English Bible. His story is biblical, but freed from some shameful features which

are a blot on the biblical narrative, (e.g., see Gen. xix. 30-36). He was a nephew of Abraham, and was sent as a Prophet and warner to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, cities utterly destroyed for their unspeakable sins. They cannot be exactly located, but it may be supposed that they were somewhere in the plain east of the Dead Sea. The story of their destruction is told in the 19th chapter of Genesis. Two angels in the shape of handsome young men came to Lot in the evening and became his guests by night. The inhabitants of Sodom in their lust for unnatural crime invaded Lot's house but were repulsed. In the morning, the angels warned Lot to escape with his family. "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and He overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." (Gen. xix. 24-26). Note that Lot's people are the people to whom he is sent on a mission. He was not one of their own brethren, as was Salih or Shu'aib. But he looked upon his people as his brethren (I. 13), as a man of God always does.

1050 - An instance of the withering sarcasm that hardened sinners use against the righteous. They wound with words, and follow up the insult with deeds of injustice, thinking that they would bring the righteous into disgrace. But Allah looks after His own, and in the end, the wicked themselves are overthrown when the cup of their iniquity is full.

1051 - In the biblical narrative she looks back, a physical act (see n. 1049): here she is a type of those who lag behind, i.e, whose mental and moral attitude, in spite of their association with the righteous, is to hark back to the glitter of wickedness and sin. The righteous should have one sole objective, the Way of Allah. They should not look behind, nor yet to the right or the left.

1052 - The shower is expressly stated in Q. xi. 82 to have been of stones. In xv. 73-74, we are told that there was a terrible blast or noise (saihat) in addition to the shower of stones. Taking these passages into consideration along with Gen. xix. 24. (see n. 1049 above), I think it is legitimate to translate: "a shower of brimstone."

1053 - "Madyan" may be identified with "Midian". Midian and the Midianites are frequently mentioned in the Old Testament, though the particular incident here mentioned belongs to Arab rather than to Jewish tradition. The Midianites were of Arab race, though, as neighbours of the Canaanites, they probably intermixed with them. They were a wandering tribe: it was Midianite merchants to whom Joseph was sold into slavery, and who took him to Egypt. Their principal territory in the time of Moses was in the northeast of the Sinai Peninsula, and east of the Amalekites. Under Moses the Israelites waged a war of extermination against them: they slew the kings of Midian, slaughtered all the males, burnt their cities and castles, and captured their cattle (Num. xxxi, 7-11). This sounds like total extermination. Yet a few generations afterwards, they were so powerful that the Israelites for their sins were delivered into the captivity of the Midianites for seven years: both the Midianites and their camels were without number: and the Israelites hid from them in "dens.... caves, and strongholds" (Judges vii. 1-6). Gideon destroyed them

again, (Judges vii. 1-25), say about two centuries after Moses. As the decisive battle was near the hill of Moreh, not far south of Mount Tabor, we may localise the Midianites on this occasion in the northern parts of the Jordan valley, at least 200 miles north of the Sinai Peninsula. This and the previous destruction under Moses were local, and mention no town of Midian. In later times there was a town of Madyan on the east side of the Gulf of 'Aqaba. It is mentioned in Josephus, Eusebius, and Ptolemy: (Encyclopaedia of Islam). Then it disappears from geography. In Muslim times it was a revived town with quite a different kind of population, but it never flourished. The Midianites disappeared from history.

1054 - Shu'aib belongs to Arab rather than to Jewish tradition, to which he is unknown. His identification with Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, has no warrant, and I reject it. There is no similarity either in names or incidents, and there are chronological difficulties (see n. 1064 below). If, as the Commentators tell us, Shuaib was in the fourth generation from Abraham, being a great-grandson of Madyan (a son of Abraham), he would be only about a century from the time of Abraham, whereas the Hebrew Bible would give us a period of four to six centuries between Abraham and Moses. The mere fact that Jathro was a Midianite and that another name, Hobab, is mentioned for a father-in-law of Moses in Num x. 29, is slender ground for identification. As the Midianites were mainly a nomad tribe, we need not be surprised that their destruction in one or two settlements did not affect their life in wandering sections of the tribe in other geographical regions. Shu'aib's mission was apparently in one of the settled towns of the Midianites, which was completely destroyed by an earthquake (vii. 91). If this happened in the century after Abraham, there is no difficulty in supposing that they were again a numerous tribe, three or five centuries later, in the time of Moses (see last note). As they were a mixed wandering tribe, both their resilience and their eventual absorption can be easily understood. But the destruction of the settlement or settlements (if the Wood or Aika was a separate settlement, see n. 2000 to xv. 78) to which Shu'aib was sent to preach was complete, and no traces of it now remain. The name of the highest mountain of Yemen, Nabi Shu'aib (11,000 ft.) has probably no connection with the geographical territory of the nomad Midianites, unless we suppose that their wanderings extended so far south from the territories mentioned in the last note.

1055 - The Midianites were in the path of a commercial highway of Asia, viz., that between two such opulent and highly organised nations as Egypt and the Mesopotamian group comprising Assyria and Babylonia. Their besetting sins are thus characterised here: (1) giving short measure or weight, whereas the strictest commercial probity is necessary for success, (2) a more general form of such fraud, depriving people of rightful dues, (3) producing mischief and disorder, whereas peace and order had been established (again in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense); (4) not content with upsetting settled life, taking to highway robbery, literally as well as (5) metaphorically, in two ways, viz., cutting off people from access to the worship of Allah, and abusing religion and piety for crooked purposes, i.e., exploiting religion itself for their crooked ends, as when a man builds houses of prayer out of unlawful gains or ostentatiously gives charity out of money which he has obtained by force or fraud, etc. After setting out this catalogue of besetting sins Shu'aib makes two appeals to the past: (1) You began as an insignificant tribe, and by Allah's favour you increased and multiplied in numbers and resources: do you not then owe a duty to Allah to fulfil His Law? (2) What was the result in the case of those who fell into sin? Will you not take warning by their example? So Shu'aib began his argument with faith in Allah as the source of all virtue, and ended it with destruction as the result of all sin. In the next verse he pleads with them to end their controversies and come to Allah.

1056 - Madyan is torn by internal conflict. Shu'aib comes as a peace-maker, not in virtue of his own wisdom, but by appeal to the truth, righteousness and justice of God. As we see later, the real motives of his opponents were selfishness, arrogance, violence, lawlessness, and injustice. But he appeals to their better nature, and is prepared to argue on the basis that the party which wants to suppress those who believe in God's Message and in righteousness, has some sincere mental difficulty in accepting Shu'aib's mission, "If," he says to them, "that is the case, do you think it justifies your intolerance, your violence, or your persecution? On the contrary, events will prove by themselves who is right and who is wrong." To the small band who believe in his mission and follow his teaching, he would preach patience and perseverance. His argument to them would be: "You have faith; surely your faith is strong enough to sustain you in the hope that Allah's truth will triumph in the end; there is no cause for despair or dejection." How exactly these past experiences fit the times of our holy guide Muhammad! And it is for that analogy and that lesson that the stories of Noah, Hud, Salih, Lut, and Shuaib are related to us, -all different, and yet all pointing to the great lessons in Muhammad's life.

1057 - See the argument in the last note. Allah's decision may come partly in this very life, either for the same generation or for succeeding generations, by the logic of external events. But in any case it is bound to come spiritually on a higher plane eventually, when the righteous will be comforted and the sinners will be convinced of sin from their own inner conviction.

1058 - The gentle, all-persuasive arguments of Shuaib fell on hard hearts. Their only reply was: "Turn him out!-him and his people." When courtesy and a plea for toleration are pitted against bigotry, what room is there for logic? But bigotry and unrighteousness have their own crooked ways of pretending to be tolerant. "O yes!" they said, "we are very tolerant and long-suffering! But we are for our country and religion. Come back to the ways of our fathers, and we shall graciously forgive you!" "Ways of their fathers!"- they meant injustice and oppression, high-handedness to the poor and the weak, fraud under cover of religion, and so on! Perhaps the righteous were the poor and the weak. Were they likely to love such ways? Perhaps there was implied a bribe as well as a threat. "If you come back and wink at our iniquities, you shall have scraps of prosperity thrown at you. If not, out you go in disgrace!"

1059 - The answer of the righteous is threefold. (1) "Coming back is all very well. But do you mean that we should practise the vices we detest?" (2) "You want us to lie against our conscience and our Lord, after we have seen the evil of your ways." (3) "Neither bribes nor threats, nor specious appeals to patriotism or ancestral religion can move us: the matter rests with Allah, Whose will and pleasure we obey, and on Whom alone we rely. His knowledge will search out all your specious pretences."

1060 - This, of course, does not mean that anyone can ever return to evil ways with Allah's consent. Shu'aib has already emphatically repudiated the idea of returning "to your ways after Allah hath rescued us therefrom." But even if their ways had been good, the human will, he goes on to say, has no data to rely

upon, and he and his followers would only be guided by Allah's Will and Plan.

1061 - Having answered the insincere quibblers among the godless, the righteous turn to Allah in earnest prayer. The endless controversies in this world about abstract or speculative things never end even where both sides are sincere in their beliefs. The decision must be taken to Allah, Who sits on the throne of Truth, and Whose decisions will, therefore, be free from the errors and imperfections of all human judgment. The sincere have nothing to fear in the appeal to Him, as their motives are pure.

1062 - The answer of the Unbelievers is characteristic. As all their bribes and subtleties have failed, they resort to threats, which are worse than the argument of the stick. "All right," they say, "there is nothing but ruin before you!" That means that the Believers will be persecuted, held up to obloquy, ostracised, and prevented from access to all means of honourable livelihood; their families and dependants will be insulted, reviled, and tortured, if they could but be got into the enemy's power: their homes destroyed, and their names held up to ridicule and contempt even when they are gone. But, as verse 92 says, their wicked designs recoiled on themselves; it was the wicked who were ruined and blotted out.

1063 - The fate of the Madyan people is described in the same terms as that of the Thamud in verse 78 above. An earthquake seized them by night, and they were buried in their own homes, no longer to vex Allah's earth. But a supplementary detail is mentioned in xxvi. 189, "the punishment of a day of overshadowing gloom," which may be understood to mean a shower of ashes and cinders accompanying a volcanic eruption. Thus a day of terror drove them into their homes, and the earthquake finished them. The lament of Shu'aib in verse 93 is almost the same as that of Salih in verse 79, with two differences: (1) Shu'aib's messages attacked the many sins of his people (see n. 1055) and are, therefore, expressed in the plural, while Salih's fight was chiefly against selfish arrogance, and his message is expressed in the singular; (2) the Thamud were the more cultured people of the two, and perished in their own pride; as Salih said, "ye love not good counsellors"; the Midianites were a rougher people, and their minds were less receptive of argument or faith; as Shu'aib said, they were a people who "refused to believe."

1064 - Can we get any idea of the chronological place of the destruction of the Midianites? In n. 1053 (vii. 85) we have discussed the geographical aspects. The following considerations will help us in getting some idea of their period. (1) The stories of Noah, Hud, Salih, Lut, and Shu'aib seem to be in chronological order. Therefore Shu'aib came after Abraham, whose nephew Lut was. (2) If Shu'aib was in the fourth generation from Abraham, (see n. 1590 to xi. 80), it would be impossible for him to have been a contemporary of Moses, who came many centuries later. This difficulty is recognised by Ibn Kathir and other classical commentators. (3) The identification of Shu'aib with Jethro the father-in-law of Moses is without warrant; see n. 1054 (vii. 85). (4) Shu'aib must have been before Moses; see vii. 103. (5) The Midianites who were destroyed by Moses and by Gideon after him (n. 1053) were local remnants, as we may speak of the Jews at the present day; but their existence as a nation in their original home-lands seems to have ended before Moses: "they became as if they had never been in the homes where they had

flourished" (vii. 92). (6) Josephus, Eusebius, and Ptolemy mention a town of Madyan, but it was not of any importance (n. 1053). (7) After the first centuries of the Christian era, Madyan as a town appears as an unimportant place resting on its past.

1065 - Man was originally created pure. The need of a prophet arises when there is some corruption and iniquity, which he is sent to combat. His coming means much trial and suffering, especially to those who join him in his protest against wrong. Even so peaceful a prophet as Jesus said; "I came not to send peace but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). But it is all in Allah's Plan, for we must learn humility if we would be worthy of Him.

1066 - Allah gives enough rope to the sinful. They grow and multiply, and become scornful. Neither suffering nor affluence teaches them the lessons which they are meant to learn, viz., patience and humility, gratitude and kindness to others. They take adversity and prosperity alike as a matter of chance. "O yes!" they say, "such things have happened in all ages! Our fathers had such experience before us, and our sons will have them after us. Thus goes on the world for all time!" But does it? What about the decree of Allah? They are found napping when Nemesis overtakes them in the midst of their impious tomfoolery!

1067 - This and the two following verses should be read together. They furnish a commentary on the story of the five prophets that has already been related. Allah's wrath may come by night or by day, whether people are arrogantly defying Allah's laws or are sunk in lethargy or vain dreams of unreality. Who can escape Allah's decree, and who can feel themselves outside it except those who are seeking their own ruin?

1068 - This closes that chapter of the narrative which deals with Prophets who were rejected by their own people, but who stood firm on Allah's message and were able to rescue a remnant who believed. In each case there were special circumstances and special besetting sins, which have been explained in the notes. The nations which as a body could not be won over to Allah's Law perished. So far we have been dealing with the corruptions and iniquities within each nation. In the story of Moses we have first a struggle against the bondage of Egypt, one of the foremost powers then in the world, the rescue of the Israelites and their wanderings, and their proving themselves unworthy and being left to wander in a new sense when they rejected the new Prophet (Muhammad) who came to renew Allah's Message.

1069 - The stories which have been related should give a warning to present and future generations which have inherited the land, the power, or the experience of the past. They should know that if they fall into the

same sins they will meet with the same fate: when through their contumacy their hearts are hardened, they do not listen to the advice that falls on their ears.

1070 - Those who have heard the Message and rejected it find it more difficult afterwards to retrace their steps. Evil has blocked the channels of Allah's grace to them. It begins with their breaking their Covenant with Allah; with each step afterwards they fall deeper and deeper into the mire.

1071 - The story of Moses is told in many places in the Holy Qur-an, with a special lesson in each context. In ii. 49-71, the story is an appeal to the Jews from their own scripture and traditions, to show their true place in the religious history of mankind, and how they forfeited it. Here we have an instructive parallelism in that story to the story of Muhammad's mission,-how both these men of Allah had to fight against (1) a foreign foe, arrogant, unjust, faithless, and superstitious, and (2) against the same class of internal foe among their own people. Both of them won through. In the case of Moses, the foreign foe was Pharaoh and his Egyptians, who boasted of their earlier and superior civilisation; in the case of the Prophet Muhammad the foreign foes were the Jews themselves and the Christians of his day. Moses led his people nearly to the land of promise in spite of rebellions among his own people; Muhammad succeeded completely in overcoming the resistance of his own people by his own virtues and firmness of character, and by the guidance of Allah. What was a hope when these Makkan verses were revealed became an accomplishment before the end of his life and mission on earth.

1072 - "Pharaoh" (Arabic, Fir'aun) is a dynastic title, not the name of any particular king in Egypt. It has been traced to the ancient Hieroglyphic words, Per-aa, which mean "Great House." The nun is an "infirm" letter added in the process of Arabisation. Who was the Pharaoh in the story of Moses? If the Inscriptions had helped us, we could have answered with some confidence, but unfortunately the Inscriptions fail us. It is probable that it was an early Pharaoh of the XVIIIth Dynasty, say Thothmes 1, about 1540 B.C. See appendix IV on Egyptian Chronology and Israel, printed at the end of this Sura.

1073 - Notice that Moses, in addressing Pharaoh and the Egyptians, claims his mission to be not from his God, or his people's God but from "your Lord," from "the Lord of the Worlds." And his mission is not to his people only: "I come unto you (Egyptian people) from your Lord." "The spirit of our version is entirely different from the spirit of the same story as told in the Old Testament (Exod. chapters i. to xv.). In Exod. iii. 18, the mission of Moses is expressed to be as from "the Lord God of the Hebrews." The essence of the whole Islamic story is this: Joseph's sufferings and good fortune were not merely a story in a romance. Joseph was a prophet; his sufferings and his subsequent rise to power and position in Egypt were to be a lesson (a) to his wicked brothers who sold him into slavery, (b) to his people who were stricken with famine and found a welcome in Egypt, and (c) to the Egyptians, who were arrogant over their high material civilisation, but had yet to be taught the pure faith of Abraham. Israel prospered in Egypt, and stayed there perhaps two to four centuries. (Renan allows only one century). Times changed, and the racial bigotry of the Egyptians showed its head again, and Israel was oppressed. Moses was raised up with a threefold

mission again (a) to learn all the learning of the Egyptians and preach Allah's Truth to them as one who had been brought up among themselves, (b) to unite and reclaim his own people, and (c) to rescue them and lead them to a new world, which was to open out their spiritual horizon and lead them to the Psalms of David and the glories of Solomon.

1074 - The ensuing dialogue shows the psychology on the two sides. Pharaoh is sitting in his court, with his ministers and chiefs around him. In their arrogance they are only amused at the effrontery and apparent revolt of the Israelite leaders, and they rely upon their own superior worldly power, aided by the magic which was a part of the Egyptian religion. Confronting them stand two men, Moses with his mission from Allah, and his brother Aaron who was his lieutenant. They are confident, not in their own powers, but in the mission they had received. The first thing they have to do is to act on the subjective mind of the Egyptians, and by methods which by Allah's miracle show that Egyptian magic was nothing before the true power of Allah.

1075 - The serpent played a large part in Egyptian mythology. The great sun-god Ra won a great victory over the serpent Apophis, typifying the victory of light over darkness. Many of their gods and goddesses took the forms of snakes to impress their foes with terror. Moses's rod as a type of a serpent at once appealed to the Egyptian mentality. The contempt which the Egyptians had entertained in their minds before was converted into terror. Here was some one who could control the reptile which their great god Ra himself had such difficulty in overcoming!

1076 - But the second Sign displayed by Moses was even more puzzling to the Egyptians. Moses drew out his hand from the folds of the garments on his breast, and it was white and shining as with divine light! This was to counter any suggestions of evil, which the serpent might have created. This was no work of evil, of black magic, or a trick or illusion. His hand was transfigured with a light which no Egyptian sorcerers could produce. In Islamic literature the "white hand" of Moses has passed into a proverb, for a symbol of divine glory dazzling to the beholders.

1077 - The two Signs had the desired effect on the Egyptians. They were impressed, but they judged them by their own standards. They thought to themselves, "These are ordinary sorcerers: let us search out our best sorcerers and show them that they have superior power." But like all worldly people, they began to fear for their own power and possessions. It was far from Moses's intention to drive out the Egyptians from their own land. He merely wanted to end the Egyptian oppression. But the Egyptians had a guilty conscience, and they judged other people's motives by their own. They discussed the matter in Council on quite wrong premises.

1078 - The advice of the Council to Pharaoh shows a misreading of the situation. They were in a panic about what the magic of this evidently powerful sorcerer could do against them. So they advised the Pharaoh to summon their most powerful sorcerers from all over the country, and in the meantime to hold Moses and Aaron in suspense,-neither to yield to them nor definitely to oppose them. The Prophets of Allah could well afford to wait. Time is always in favour of Truth.

1079 - The most noted sorcerers of Pharaoh came. Their art was built up on trickery and imposture, and the first thing they could think of was to make a selfish bargain for themselves. The Pharaoh and his Council would in their present state of panic agree to anything. And so they did. Pharaoh not only promised them any rewards they desired if they foiled the strange power of these men, but he also promised them the highest dignities round his own person. And so the contest begins, with due observance of the amenities observed by combatants before they come to close grips.

1080 - Moses and his brother Aaron were pitted against the most skilful magic-men of Egypt, but they were calm and confident and let the magic-men have their innings first. As is usual in this world, the magicians' trickery made a great impression on the people, but when Moses threw his rod, the illusion was broken, and the falsehood was all shown up. In the Old Testament story (Exod. vii. 10-12) it was Aaron that threw the rod, and he threw it before the magicians. Aaron's rod became a serpent. Then the magicians threw their rods, and they became serpents, but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. The story given to us is more dramatic and less literal. We are told in general terms that Moses first allowed the magic-men to play their tricks. It was a simple shepherd's crook with which he used to feed his flocks. With Allah's grace behind him, he was able to expose all false trickery and establish the Truth.

1081 - The proud ones of the Court-Pharaoh and his chiefs-were hard-hearted, and the exposure of the imposture only made them wreak their rage on those whom they could reach. On the other hand the effect on the humbler ones-those who had been made the dupes and instruments of the imposture-was quite different. Their conscience was awakened. They fell down to the ground in adoration of the Lord of the Worlds, and confessed their faith.

1082 - Pharaoh and his Court were doubly angry: first because they were made to look small when confronted by the power of Allah, and secondly, because their dupes and instruments were snatched away from them. These men, the sorcerers, at once recognised the Signs of Allah, and in their case the mission of Moses, and Aaron was fulfilled. They turned back on their past life of false worship, and oppression of the weak, and confessed the One true God. As usually happens, hardened sinners resent all the more the saving of any of their companions from sin and error. Judging other people's motives by their own, they accuse them of duplicity, and if they have the power, they take cruel revenge. Here the Pharaoh threatens the repentant sinners with the extreme punishment for treason and apostasy (cutting off of hands and feet, combined with an ignominious death on the cross, as in the case of the worst malefactors). But they

remained firm, and prayed to Allah for patience and constancy. Probably their influence spread quietly in the commonalty. Ultimately it appeared on the throne itself, in the person of Amenophis IV about five or six generations afterwards.

1083 - These Egyptians, by their patience and constancy, show that their repentance was true. Thus in their case the mission of Moses was fulfilled directly, and their number must have amounted to a considerable figure. They were martyrs to their faith, and their martyrdom affected their nation in two ways. In the first place, as they were the pick of those who practised magic in Egypt, their conversion and disappearance dealt a staggering blow to the whole system. Secondly, the indirect effect of their martyrdom on the commonalty of Egypt must have been far greater than can be measured by numbers. The banner of Allah was planted, and the silent spiritual fight must have gone on ever since, though history, in recording outward events, is silent on the slow and gradual processes of transformation undergone by Egyptian religion. From a chaotic pantheon of animals and animal gods, the worship of the sun and the heavenly bodies, and the worship of the Pharaoh as the embodiment of power, they gradually came to realise the oneness and mercy of the true God. After many glimpses of Monotheism on Egyptian soil itself, the (gospel of Jesus reached them, and eventually Islam.)

1084 - Pharaoh's order against the sorcerers was drastic enough. But his Council is not satisfied. What about Moses and the Israelites? They had a seeming victory, and will now be more mischievous than ever. They appeal to Pharaoh's vanity and his superstition and sense of power. "If you leave them alone," they say, "where will be your authority? You and your gods will be defied!" Pharaoh has a ready answer. He was really inwardly cowed by the apparent power of Moses. He dared not openly act against him. But he had already, before the birth of Moses, passed a cunning order to destroy the whole people of Israel. Through the instrumentality of midwives (Exod. i. 15) all the male children were to be destroyed, and the females would then be for the Egyptians: the race of Israel would thus be at an end. This order was still in force, and would remain in force until the despised race was absorbed. But Egyptian cunning and wickedness had no power against Allah's Plan for those who had faith. See verse 129 below.

1085 - Notice the contrast between the arrogant tone of Pharaoh and the humility and faith taught by Moses. In the end the arrogance was humbled, and humility and faith were protected and advanced.

1086 - There is a slight note of querulousness in the people's answer. But Moses allays it by his own example and courage, and his vision of the future: which was amply fulfilled in time. See verse 137 below.

1087 - The Israelites, despised and enslaved, were to be rescued and made rulers in Palestine. David and

Solomon were great kings and played a notable part in history. But the greatness of Israel was conditional: they were to be judged by their deeds. When they fell from grace, other people were given honour and power. And so it came to be the turn of the Muslims, and so on. Allah gives His gifts to those who are righteous and obey His Law.

1088 - Their superstition ascribed the punishment of their own wickedness to some evil omen. They thought Moses and his people brought them ill-luck. They did not look within themselves to see the root of evil, and the cause of their punishment! So it happens in all ages. People blame the righteous for something which they do, different from other men, instead of searching out their own lapses from rectitude, which are punished by Allah.

1089 - A type of obstinacy and resistance to Allah's message. As they believed in sorcery and magic, they thought anything unusual was but sorcery and magic, and hardened their hearts against Truth.

1090 - Tufan = a widespread calamity, causing wholesale death and destruction. It may be a flood, or a typhoon, or an epidemic, among men or cattle. Perhaps the last is meant, if we may interpret by the Old Testament story. See also Exod. ix. 3, 9, 15; xii. 29.

1091 - In xvii. 101, the reference is to nine Clear Signs. These are: (1) the Rod (vii. 107), (2) the Radiant Hand (vii. 108), (3) the years of drought or shortage of water (vii, 130), (4) short crops (vii. 130), and the five mentioned in this verse, viz., (5) epidemics among men and beasts, (6) locusts, (7) lice, (8) frogs, and (9) the water turning to blood.

1092 - The demand of Moses was two-fold: (1) come to Allah and cease from oppression, and (2) let me take Israel out of Egypt. At first it was laughed at and rejected with scorn. When the Plagues came for punishment, each time the Egyptians suffered, they promised amendment and begged Moses to intercede and cause the plague to cease. But every time it ceased, they went back to their evil attitude, until the final retribution came. This is a type of the sinner's attitude for all times.

1093 - The intercession of Moses was to pray. Each plague or penalty had its appointed term in Allah's decree. That term was duly fulfilled before the plague ceased. The intercession meant two things: (1) that

Allah's name was invoked and His presence duly brought home to the mind and heart of the sinner who promised repentance, and (2) that the sinner was given a further chance when the prayer was accepted. This again is a universal truth.

1094 - When at last Pharaoh let Israel go, they selected, not the highway to Canaan, along the Mediterranean and by Gaza, because they were unarmed and would have encountered immediate opposition there, but by way of the wilderness of Sinai. They crossed the Red Sea, while Pharaoh's host which came in pursuit was drowned. Cf. ii. 50.

1095 - Where was the Council of Pharaoh held in which Moses addressed Pharaoh? Egypt's primary capital in the XVIIIth Dynasty was Thebes (=Not-Ammon), but that was more than 400 miles to the south of the Delta, in whose corner Israel dwelt. Memphis, on the apex of the Delta, a little south of where Cairo is now, was also over 100 miles from Israel's habitations. The interview must have been either in a Palace near Goshen, where the Israelites dwelt, or in Zoan (=Tanis), the Deltaic capital built by a former dynasty, which was of course still available for the reigning dynasty, and which was not far from the Israelite settlement.

1096 - Israel, which was despised, became a great and glorious nation under Solomon. He had goodly territory, and was doubly blest. His land and people were prosperous, and he was blessed with wisdom from Allah. His sway and his fame spread east and west. And thus Allah's promise to Israel was fulfilled. Note that Syria and Palestine had once been under the sway of Egypt. At the same time the proud and rebellious Pharaoh and his people were brought low. The splendid monuments which they had erected with so much skill and pride were mingled with the dust. Their great cities-Thebes (or No-Ammon), Memphis (or Noph, sacred to the Bull of Osiris), and the other splendid cities, became as if they had not existed, and archaeologists have had to dig up their ruins from the sands. The splendid monuments-temples, palaces, tombs, statues, columns, and stately structures of all kinds-were buried in the sands. Even monuments like the Great Sphinx, which seem to defy the ages, were partly buried in the sands, and owe their rescue to the comparatively recent researches of archaeologists. As late as 1743 Richard Pococke in his Travels in Egypt (p. 41), remarked: "Most of those pyramids are very much ruined."

1097 - Who were these people? We are now in the Sinai Peninsula. Two conjectures are possible. (1) The Amalekites of the Sinai Peninsula were at perpetual war with the Israelites. They were probably an idolatrous nation, but we have very little knowledge of their cult. (2) From Egyptian history we know that Egypt had worked from very ancient times some copper mines in Sinai. An Egyptian settlement may have been here. Like all mining camps it contained from the beginning the dregs of the population. When the mines ceased to be worked, the settlement, or what remained of it, must have degenerated further. Cut off from civilisation, its cult must have become still narrower, without the refining influences which a progressive nation applies even to its idolatry. Perhaps Apis, the sacred bull of Memphis, lost all its allegorical meaning for them, and only gross and superstitious rites remained among them. The text

speaks of "some idols they had," implying that they had merely a detached fragment of a complete religion. This was a snare in the path of the Israelites, whom many generations of slavery in Egypt had debased into ignorance and superstition.

1098 - If conjecture 2 in the last note is correct, this idolatrous worship was but the fragment of a ruin from Egypt, and Moses's reproach is biting: "You, who have been rescued from the bondage of living Egypt, -do you hanker after the bondage of a dead cult debased even from that from which you have been rescued?" Mutabbar = broken in pieces, smashed into fragments, destroyed.

1099 - This is Allah's reminder to Israel through the mouth of Moses. There was a double trial: (1) while the bondage lasted, the people were to learn patience and constancy in the midst of affliction: (2) when they were rescued, they were to learn humility; justice, and righteous deeds of prosperity.

1100 - The forty nights' exclusion of Moses on the Mount may be compared with the forty days fast of Jesus in the wilderness before he took up his ministry (Matt. iv, 2). In each case the Prophets lived alone apart from their people, before they came into the full blaze of the events of their Ministry.

1101 - When for any reason the man of God is absent from his people, his duty of leadership (khilafat) should be taken up by his brother, -not necessarily a blood-brother, but one of his society or brotherhood. The deputy should discharge it in all humility, remembering three things: (1) that he is only a deputy, and bound to follow the directions of his Principal, (2) that right and justice are of the essence of power, and (3) that mischief gets its best chance to raise its head in the absence of the Principal, and that the deputy should always guard against the traps laid for him in the Principal's absence.

1102 - Even the best of us may be betrayed into overweening confidence of spiritual ambition not yet justified by the stage we have reached. Moses had already seen part of the glory of Allah in his Radiant White Hand, that shone with the glory of Divine light (vii. 108, n. 1076). But he was still in the flesh, and the mission to his people was to begin after the Covenant of Sinai.

1103 - But Allah-the Cherisher of all His creatures-treats even our improper requests with mercy, compassion, and understanding. Even the reflected glory of Allah is too great for the grosser substance of

matter. The peak on which it shone became as powder before the ineffable glory, and Moses could only live by being taken out of his bodily senses. When he recovered from his swoon, he saw the true position, and the distance between our grosser bodily senses and the true splendour of Allah's glory. He at once turned in penitence to Allah, and confessed his faith.

1104 - "First to believe." Cf. the expression "first of those who bow to Allah in Islam" in vi. 14 and vi. 163. "First" means here not the first in time, but most zealous in faith. It has the intensive and not the comparative meaning.

1105 - "Above (other) men": i.e. among his contemporaries. He had a high mission, and he had the honour of speaking to Allah.

1106 - Allah's revelation is for the benefit of His creatures, who should receive it with reverence and gratitude. While Moses was having these great spiritual experiences on the Mount, his people below were ungrateful enough to forget Allah and make a golden calf for worship (vii. 147).

1107 - The Tablets of the Law contained the essential Truth, from which were derived the positive injunctions and prohibitions, explanations and interpretations, which it was the function of the prophetic office to hold up for the people to follow. The precepts would contain, as the Shari'at does, matters absolutely prohibited, matters not prohibited but disapproved, matters about which there was no prohibition or injunction, but in which conduct was to be regulated by circumstances; matters of positive and universal duty, matters recommended for those whose zeal was sufficient to enable them to work on higher than minimum standards. No soul is burdened beyond its capacity; but we are asked to seek the best and highest possible for us in conduct.

1108 - Notice the transition from the "We" of authority and honour and impersonal dignity, to the "I" of personal concern in specially guiding the righteous.

1109 - Literally, the homes of the wicked, both individuals and nations, lie desolate, as in the case of the ancient Egyptians, the 'Ad, and the Thamud.

1110 - The argument may be simplified thus in paraphrase. The right is established on the earth as Allah created it: Nature recognises and obeys Allah's law as fixed for each portion of Creation. But man, because of the gift of Will, sometimes upsets this balance. The root-cause is his arrogance, as it was in the case of Iblis. Allah's Signs are everywhere, but if they are rejected with scorn and blasphemy, Allah will withdraw His grace, for sin hardens the heart and makes it impervious to the truth. Want of faith produces a kind of blindness to spiritual facts, a kind of deafness to the warnings of a Day of Account. If we had contumaciously rejected faith, can we hope for anything but justice,-the just punishment of our sins.

1111 - Rejected Our Signs: again a return to the Plural of impersonal Dignity and Authority, from the singular of personal concern in granting grace and guidance to the Righteous.

1112 - The making of the golden calf and its worship by the Israelites during the absence of Moses on the Mount were referred to in ii. 51, and some further details are given in xx. 95-97. Notice how in each case only those points are referred to which are necessary to the argument in hand. A narrator whose object is mere narration, tells the story in all its details, and is done with it. A consummate artist, whose object is to enforce lessons, brings out each point in its proper place. Master of all details, he does not ramble, but with supreme literary skill, just adds the touch that is necessary in each place to complete the spiritual picture. His object is not a story but a lesson. Here notice the contrast between the intense spiritual communion of Moses on the Mount and the simultaneous corruption of his people in his absence. We can understand his righteous indignation and bitter grief (vii. 150). The people had melted all their gold ornaments, and made the image of a calf like the bull of Osiris in the city of Memphis in the wicked Egypt that they had turned their backs upon.

1113 - Image of a Calf. *Jasad* is literally a body, especially the body of a man according to Khalil quoted by Ragib. In xxi. 8, it is used obviously for the human body, as also in xxxviii. 34; but in the latter case, the idea of an image, without any real life or soul, is also suggested. In the present passage I understand many suggestions: (1) that it was a mere image, without life, (2) as such, it could not low, therefore the appearance of lowing, mentioned immediately afterwards, was a fraud: (3) unlike its prototype, the bull of Osiris, it had not even the symbolism of Osiris behind it; the Osiris myth, in the living religion of Egypt, had at least some ethical principles behind it.

1114 - The lowing of the golden calf was obviously a deception practised by the promoters of the cult. Lytton in his "Last Days of Pompeii" exposes the deception practised by the priests of Isis. Men hidden behind images imposed on the credulity of the commonalty.

1115 - Did ye inake haste...? 'In your impatience, could you not wait for me? Your lapse into idolatry has only hastened Allah's wrath. If you had only waited, I was bringing to you in the Tablets the most excellent teaching in the commands of Allah.' There is subtle irony in the speech of Moses. There is also a play upon words: 'ijl = calf: and 'ajila = to make haste: no translation can bring out these niceties.

1116 - Put down the Tablets: we are not told that the Tablets were broken: in fact vii. 154 (below) shows that they were whole. They contained Allah's Message. There is a touch of disrespect (if not blasphemy) in supposing that Allah's Messenger broke the Tablets in his incontinent rage, as is stated in the Old Testament: "Moses's anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and brake them beneath the Mount." (Exod. xxxii. 10). On this point and also on the point that Aaron (in the Old Testament story) ordered the gold to be brought, made a molten calf, fashioned it with a graving tool, and built an altar before the calf (Exd. xxxii. 2-5), our version differs from that of the Old Testament. We cannot believe that Aaron, who was appointed by Allah to assist Moses as Allah's Messenger, could descend so low as to seduce the people into idolatry, whatever his human weaknesses might be.

1117 - Moses was but human. Remembering the charge he had given to Aaron (vii. 142) he had a just grievance at the turn events had taken. But he did not wreak his vengeance on the Tablets of Allah's law by breaking them. He laid hands on his brother, and his brother at once explained.

1118 - Aaron's speech is full of tenderness and regret. He addresses Moses as "son of my mother."-an affectionate term. He explains how the turbulent people nearly killed him for resisting them. And he states in the clearest terms that the idolatry neither originated with him nor had his consent. In xx. 85, we are told that a fellow described as the Samiri had led them astray. We shall discuss this when we come to that passage.

1119 - As Moses was convinced that his brother was guiltless, his wrath was turned to gentleness. He prayed for forgiveness-for himself and his brother: for himself because of his wrath and for his brother because he had been unable to suppress idolatry among his people. And like a true leader that he is, he identifies himself with his lieutenant for all that has happened. Even more, he identifies himself with his whole people in his prayer in verse 155 below. Herein, again, is a type of what the Holy Prophet Muhammad did for his people.

1120 - The consequences were twofold: (1) spiritual, in that Allah's grace is withdrawn, and (2) even in the present life of this world, in that godly men also shun the sinner's company, and he is isolated.

1121 - Seventy of the elders were taken up to the Mount, but left at some distance from the place where Allah spoke to Moses. They were to be silent witnesses, but their faith was not yet complete, and they dared to say to Moses: "We shall never believe in thee until we see Allah in public" (ii.55). They were dazed with thunder and lightning, and might have been destroyed but for Allah's mercy on the intercession of Moses.

1122 - Rajfat: violent quaking, earthquake, I take it to refer to the same event as is described by the word Sa'iqa in ii. 55, the thunder and lightning that shook the mountainside.

1123 - Moses was guiltless, but he identifies himself with his whole people, and intercedes with Allah on their behalf. He recognises that it was a trial, in which some of his people failed to stand the test. Such failure was worthy of punishment. But he pleads for mercy for such as erred from weakness and not from contumacy, and were truly repentant, although all who erred were in their several degrees worthy of punishment.

1124 - Cf. ii. 26.

1125 - Allah's mercy is in and for all things. All nature subserves a common purpose, which is for the good of all His creatures. Our faculties and our understandings are all instances of His grace and mercy. Each unit or factor among his creatures benefits from the others and receives them as Allah's mercy to itself: and in its turn, each contributes to the benefit of the others and is thus an instance of Allah's mercy to them. His mercy is universal and all-pervasive; while His justice and punishment are reserved for those who swerve from His plan and (to use a mediaeval juridical formula) go out of His Peace.

1126 - The personal grace and mercy-and their opposite-are referred to the singular pronoun "I" while the impersonal Law, by which Allah's Signs operate in His universe, is referred to the plural pronoun of authority and dignity, "We".

1127 - In this verse is a prefiguring, to Moses, of the Arabian Messenger, the last and greatest of the messengers of Allah. Prophecies about him will be found in the Taurat and the Injil. In the reflex of the Taurat as now accepted by the Jews, Moses says: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me" (Deut. xviii. 15): the only Prophet who brought a Shari'at like that of Moses was Muhammad Al- Mustafa, and he came of the house of Ismail the brother of Isaac the father of Israel. In the reflex of the Gospel as now accepted by the Christians, Christ promised another Comforter (John xiv. 16): the Greek word Paraclete which the Christians interpret as referring to the Holy Spirit is by our Doctors taken to be Periclyte, which would be the Greek form of Ahmad. See Q. lxi. 6.

1128 - Aglal: plural of gullun, a yoke, an iron collar. In the formalism and exclusiveness of the Jews there were many restrictions which were removed by Islam, a religion of freedom in the faith of Allah, of universality in the variety of races, languages, manners and customs.

1129 - Light which is sent down with him: the words are "with him", not "to him", emphasizing the fact that the Light which he brought illumines every one who has the privilege of joining his great and universal Fellowship.

1130 - Falah = prosperity in its general sense as well as in its spiritual sense. In the general sense it means that right conduct is the only door to happiness and well-being. In the spiritual sense it means that Faith and its fruits (right conduct) are the only gates to salvation.

1131 - Our attention having been directed to various prophets, who were sent with missions to their several peoples, and in each of whose careers there is some prefiguration of the life of the last and greatest of them, we are now asked to listen to the proclamation of Muhammad's universal mission. We contemplate no longer, after this, partial truths. It is not now a question of saving Israel from the bondage of Egypt, nor teaching Midian the ethics of business, nor reclaiming the people of Lot from sexual sin or Thamud from the sin of oppression in power, or 'Ad from arrogance and ancestorworship. Now are set forth plainly the issues of Life and Death, the Message of Allah, the One Universal God to all mankind.

1132 - "Unlettered," as applied to the Prophet here and in verse 157 above, has three special

significations. (1) He was not versed in human learning: yet he was full of the highest wisdom, and had a most wonderful knowledge of the previous Scriptures. This was a proof of his inspiration. It was a miracle of the highest kind, a "Sign", which every one could test then, and every one can test now. (2) All organised human knowledge tends to be crystallized, to acquire a partial bias or flavour of some "school" of thought. The highest Teacher had to be free from any such taint, just as a clean slate is necessary if a perfectly clear and bold message has to be written on it. (3) In iii.20 and lxii. 2, the epithet is applied to the Pagan Arabs, because, before the advent of Islam, they were unlearned.

1133 - We now come to some incidents in Jewish history, which have been referred to in ii. 57-60. Here they have special reference to their bearing on the times when early Islam was preached. The Twelve Tribes and the parable drawn from them have been explained in n. 73 to ii. 60.

1134 - Cf. ii. 57 and n. 71.

1135 - As in vii. 19, we may construe "eat" here to mean not only eating literally, but enjoying the good things of life.

1136 - Cf. ii, 58-59, and n. 72. The story is here told by way of parable for the times of Islam. Hence we have a few verbal changes: e.g., "dwell in this town" instead of "enter this town." etc.

1137 - Cf. ii. 65 and n. 79. Fishing, like every other activity, was prohibited to Israel on the Sabbath day. As this practice was usually observed, the fish used to come up with a sense of security to their water channels or pools openly on the Sabbath day, but not on other days when fishing was open. This was a great temptation to the law-breakers, which they could not resist. Some of their men of piety protested, but it had no effect. When their transgressions, which we may suppose, extended to other commandments, passed beyond bounds, the punishment came.

1138 - There are always people who wonder, no doubt sincerely, what good it is to preach to the wicked. The answer is given to them here: (1) every man who sees evil must speak out against it; it is his duty and responsibility to Allah; (2) there is always a chance that the warning may have effect and save a precious soul. This passage has a special meaning for the times when our Holy Prophet was preaching in Makkah,

apparently without results. But it applies to all times.

1139 - Cf. ii. 65, n. 79.

1140 - See Deut, xi. 28: "A curse if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day": also Deut, xxviii. 49; "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth: a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand"; and many other passages.

1141 - The dispersal of the Jews is a great fact in the world's history. Nor has their persecution ended yet, nor is it likely to end as far as we can foresee.

1142 - Merely inheriting a Book, or doing lip service to it, does not make a nation righteous. If they succumb to the temptations of the world, their hypocrisy becomes all the more glaring. "High finance" is one of these temptations. Cf. also ii. 80: "the Fire shall not touch us except for a few numbered days": and ii. 88, about their blasphemous self-sufficiency.

1143 - Cf- Exod. xix. 5-8; xxiv 3; xxxiv. 27; and many other passages.

1144 - Cf. ii. 63 and n.

1145 - Therein = in the Book or Revelation, in "what We have given you."

1146 - This passage has led to differences of opinion in interpretation. According to the dominant opinion of commentators each individual in the posterity of Adam had a separate existence from the time of Adam, and a Covenant was taken from all of them, which is binding accordingly on each individual. The words in the text refer to the descendants of the Children of Adam, i.e., to all humanity, born or unborn, without any limit of time. Adam's seed carries on the existence of Adam and succeeds to his spiritual heritage. Humanity has been given by Allah certain powers and faculties, whose possession creates on our side special spiritual obligations which we must faithfully discharge: see v. 1. and n. 682. These obligations may from a legal point of view be considered as arising from implied Covenants. In the preceding verse (vii. 171) a reference was made to the implied Covenant of the Jewish nation. Now we consider the implied Covenant of the whole of humanity, for the Holy Prophet's mission was world-wide.

1147 - The Covenant is completed in this way. We acknowledge that Allah is our Creator, Cherisher, and Sustainer: therefore we acknowledge our duty to Him: when we so testify concerning ourselves, the obligation is as it were assumed by us; for it follows from our very nature when it is pure and uncorrupted.

1148 - The latent faculties in man are enough to teach him the distinction between good and evil, to warn him of the dangers that beset his life. But to awaken and stimulate them, a personal appeal is made to each individual through the "still small voice" within him. This in its uncorrupted state acknowledges the truth and, as it were, swears its Covenant with Allah. There is, therefore, no excuse for any individual to say, either (1) that he was unmindful, or (2) that he should not be punished for the sins of his fathers, because his punishment (if any) comes from his personal responsibility and is for his own rejection of faith and the higher spiritual influences.

1149 - Commentators differ whether this story or parable refers to a particular individual, and if so, to whom. The story of Balaam the seer, who was called out by Israel's enemies to curse Israel, but who blessed Israel instead, (Num. xxii., xxiii., xxiv,) is quite different. It is better to take the parable in general sense. There are men, of talents and position, to whom great opportunities of spiritual insight come, but they perversely pass them by. Satan sees his opportunity and catches them up. Instead of rising higher in the spiritual world, their selfish and worldly desires and ambitions pull them down, and they are lost.

1150 - Notice the contrast between the exalted spiritual honours which they would have received from Allah if they had followed His Will, and the earthly desires which eventually bring them low to the position of beasts and worse.

1151 - The dog, especially in the hot weather, lolls out his tongue, whether he is attacked and pursued and

is tired, or he is left alone. It is part of his nature to slobber. So with the man who rejects Allah. Whether he is warned or left alone, he continues to throw out his dirty saliva. The injury he will do will be to his own soul. But there may be infection in his evil example. So we must protect others. And we must never give up hope of his own amendment. So we must continue to warn him and make him think.

1152 - Those who reject Allah will be deprived of Allah's grace and guidance. His Mercy is always open for sincere repentance. But with each step downwards, they go lower and lower, until they perish.

1153 - Cf. ii. 18. Though they have apparently all the faculties of reason and perception, they have so deadened them that those faculties do not work, and they go headlong into hell. They are, as it were, made for Hell.

1154 - As we contemplate Allah's nature, we can use the most beautiful names to express His attributes. There are hundreds of such attributes. In the opening Sura, we have this indicated in a few comprehensive words, such as Rahman (most Gracious), Rahim (most Merciful), Rabb-ul-'alamin (Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds). Our bringing such names to remembrance is part of our Prayer and Praise. But we must not associate with people who use Allah's names profanely, or so as to suggest anything derogatory to His dignity or His unity. Cf. xvii. 110. A) See also lxviii. 44 and n. 5626.

1155 - Their companion, i.e., the Holy Prophet, who lived with and amongst them. He was accused of madness because he behaved differently from them. He had no selfish ambitions; he was always true, in thought, word, and deed: he was kind and considerate to the weak, and was not dazzled by worldly power or wealth or position: he was undeterred by fear of the strong, the mockery of the cynics, the bitterness of the evil, or the indifference of the heedless. That is why he stood out boldly against wrong: he did not mince his words, and his warnings were not mealy-mouthed.

1156 - Mubin; perspicuous. The reason why I have not used a simpler word, such as "plain" or "clear" is explained in n. 716 to v. 15. Al-Mustafa's sermons were not polite reminders, with an eye to the flattery of weaknesses in high places or national vanities or crowd passions. They brought out every foible into the glare of light, by a fiery eloquence fed by inspiration from Allah.

1157 - An appeal to Allah's most wonderful universe should at once convince a thinking mind of man's nothingness, and Allah's power, glory, and goodness. Man's term here is fleeting. If he is not warned by the great Signs, and the Messages which call his attention to them, is he capable of any faith at all?

1158 - Cf. ii. 15. If Allah's light is removed, the best of them can only wander hither and thither, like blind men, in distraction.

1159 - The fact of its coming is a certainty: the exact time appointed for it is not revealed by Allah. If it were it would be so momentous as to disturb our thoughts and life. It would be a heavy burden to us. Our duty is to be prepared for it at all times. It will come when we least expect it. In the present Gospels Jesus says the same thing: he does not know the Hour, but it will come suddenly. "But of that day and that Hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." (Mark. xiii. 32-33).

1160 - Hafi is usually construed to mean; "eager or anxious in search of": the preposition following here is 'an = concerning, about. Some commentators (including Ragib) understand it in this passage to mean "well-acquainted." In xix. 47, with the preposition by following it, it signifies "well-disposed to", favourable to, good to, kind to."

1161 - A warner to all, and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith, because they will profit by the glad tidings. As every one is invited to faith, the glad tidings are offered to all, but they are not necessarily accepted by all.

1162 - Cf. iv. 1, and n. 504, where the construction is explained.

1163 - The mystery of the physical birth of man, as it affects the father and the mother, only touches the imagination of the parents in the later stages when the child is yet unborn and yet the life stirs within the body of the expectant mother. The coming of the new life is a solemn thing, and is fraught with much hope as well as much unknown risk to the mother herself. The parents in their anxiety turn to Allah. If this feeling of solemnity, hope, and looking towards Allah were maintained after birth, all would be well for the parents as well as for the rising generation. But the attitude changes, as the verses following show.

1164 - Goodly: salih: includes the following ideas: sound in body and mind; healthy; righteous; of good moral disposition.

1165 - When the child is born, the parents forget that it is a precious gift of Allah,-a miracle of Creation, which should lift their minds up to the higher things of Allah. Instead, their gradual familiarity with the new life makes them connect it with many superstitious ideas or rites and ceremonies, or they take it as a matter of course, is a little plaything of the material world. This leads to idolatry or false worship, or the selling up of false standards, in derogation of the dignity of Allah.

1166 - When false worship takes root, the teacher of Truth finds much to discourage him. As far as he is concerned, it seems as if he has produced no effect. Yet his duty is to continue his work, in the spirit of verse 199 below, forgiving all opposition, teaching what is right, and not joining the ignorant in their attitude of doubt and indecision.

1167 - False gods, whether idols or deified men, or ideas and superstitions, have no existence of their own, independent of Allah's creation. They are Allah's creatures, and like servants are subject to His authority. Deified men are not real men, but false ideas of men. They cannot help themselves: how can they help others?

1168 - Here is a test and a challenge. If the false gods had any power or even existence, collect them all together, and, says the Prophet of Allah, "Let them do their worst against me." They cannot: because the whole thing is based on a superstition and a chimaera.

1169 - The beauty and righteousness of Al-Mustafa's life were acknowledged on all hands, until he received the mission to preach and to fight against evil. What happened then? Evil erected barricades for itself. It had eyes, but it refused to see. It had ears, but it refused to hear. It had intelligence, but it blocked up its channels of understanding. Even now, after Fourteen Centuries, a life of unexampled purity, probity, justice, and righteousness is seen in false lights by blind detractors!

1170 - Allah comforts the Prophet and directs his mind to three precepts: (1) to forgive injuries, insults, and persecution; (2) to continue to declare the faith that was in him, and not only to declare it, but to act up to it in all his dealings with friends and foes; (3) to pay no attention to ignorant fools, who raised doubts or difficulties, hurled taunts or reproaches, or devised plots to defeat the truth: they were to be ignored and passed by, not to be engaged in fights and fruitless controversies, or conciliated by compromises.

1171 - Even a Prophet of Allah is but human. He might think that revenge or retaliation, or a little tactful silence when evil stalks abroad, or some compromise with ignorance, might be best for the cause. He is to reject such suggestions.

1172 - Allah protects His own, as no one else can. He is the sure refuge-and the only one-for men of faith. If we are confused or angry, being blinded by this world, He will open our eyes.

1173 - We go back to consider the ungodly, whom we left at verse 198, in order to be taught our behaviour towards evil. The forces of evil never relax their efforts to draw their "brethren" (those who go into their family) deeper and deeper into the mire of sin and destruction.

1174 - "Ayat" here, I think, means specially an Ayat of the Holy Qur-an. The infidels did not believe in revelation, and used to taunt the Holy Prophet, as much as to say that he used to put together words and promulgate them as revelation. The answer is contained in the sentence that follows. No human composition could contain the beauty, power, and spiritual insight of the Qur-An. Without inspiration it is impossible to suppose that a man, with or without literary and philosophic training could produce such a book as the Qur-an. Commentators of the Qur-An, however, consider Ayah here to refer to miracle as the context seems to evidence.

1175 - "Lights": eyes, faculty of spiritual insight. The revelation is for us (1) spiritual eyes, (2) guidance, and (3) mercy, (1) is the highest in degree: just as a blind man, if he is given eyes and the faculty of sight, is at once removed into an entirely new world, so those who can reach the stage of spiritual insight pass into and become citizens of a wholly new spiritual World, (2) is next in degree; the man of the world can act up to the teaching about right conduct and prepare for the Hereafter, (3) is the Mercy of Allah, free to every one, saint and sinner, who sincerely believes and puts his trust in Allah.

1176 - The higher you are in spiritual attainment, the more is your desire and your opportunity to serve and worship your Lord and Cherisher and the Lord and Cherisher of all the worlds: and the greater is your pride in that service and that worship.

1177 - At this stage a Sajda or prostration is indicated, as a sign of our humble acceptance of the privilege of serving and worshipping Allah,-a fitting close to Sura in which we are led, through a contemplation of the stories of the Messengers of Allah, to the meaning of revelation and its relation to our moral and spiritual progress.

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