INTRODUCTION TO SÛRAT Al-Ḥijr, 15

This is the last of the six Sûras of the A.L.M. series (x. to xv.). Its place in chronology is the late Makkan period, probably somewhere near the middle of that period. See Introduction to S. x. where will be found also an indication of the general subject-matter of the whole series in the gradation of Quranic teaching.

The special subject-matter of this Sûra is the protection of Allah’s Revelation and Allah’s Truth. Evil arose from Pride and the warping of man’s will, but Allah’s Mercy is the antidote, as was proved in the case of Abraham and Lot, and might have been proved by the people of the Aïka and the Hijr if they had only attended to Allah’s “Signs”. The Qur-ān, beginning with the Seven Oft-repeated Verses, is the precious vehicle for the praises of Allah.

Summary.—Allah will guard His Revelation, in spite of the cavils of the Unbelievers; Allah is the source of all things; He knows His own people, whom He will gather to Himself (xv. 1-25).

How Evil arose through the pride of Iblis, to whom a respite was granted for a period; but neither fear nor evil will affect those who receive Allah’s Message. (xv. 26-50).

The Mercy of Allah to Abraham was conveyed by the same messengers that were sent to destroy the people of Lot for their unspeakable crimes; Evil brought its retribution also on the Companions of the Wood (Aïka) and of the Rocky Tract Hijr (xv. 51-84).

The Qur-ān and its Sûras teach you to celebrate Allah’s praises, learn humility in worship, and serve Allah all your life (xv. 85-99).
Al-Hijr, or The Rocky Tract.

_In the name of Allah, Most Gracious
Most Merciful._

1. **A.L.R.** These are
   The Ayats of Revelation,—
   Of a Qur-ān
   That makes things clear.

2. Often will those
   Who disbelieve, wish that they
   Had been Muslims.

3. Leave them alone, to
   Eat and enjoy

---

1932. For these letters, see Appendix I.

1933. Cf. x. 1. and n. 1382.

1934. Note how appropriately the different phrases in which the Qur-ān is characterised bring out its different aspects as a Revelation. Let us just consider the phrases used at the beginning of the six A.L.M. Suras of which this is the last in order of arrangement. In x. 1 we read, “Ayats (or verses or Signs) of the Book of Wisdom”, the theme being the wonders of Allah’s creation, and its relation to His Revelation. In xi. 1 we read, “a Book, with verses basic or fundamental, further explained in detail”: the theme is Allah’s Justice and punishment, to preserve the fundamental scheme of His Laws. In xii. 1 we read, “The Symbols verses of the Perspicuous Book”: the wonderful unfolding of Allah’s Plan is explained in Joseph’s story. In xiii. 1 we read, “The Signs (or verses) of the Book”: the contrasts in the modes of Allah’s Revelation and its reception by man are pointed out, but not illustrated by detailed examples as in Joseph’s perspicuous story. In xiv. 1 we read, “A Book……revealed……to lead………..out of………..darkness into light”: the theme being Abraham’s prayer for man to be rescued from the darkness of false worship into the light of Unity. Here, in xv, 1 we read, “Ayats (or verses) of Revelation,—of a Qur-ān that makes things clear (or perspicuous)”: the theme being an explanation of evil, and how Allah’s Truth is protected from it.

1935. The time must inevitably come when those who allow themselves to be deceived by falsehood or deliberately break Allah’s Law will find themselves in a terrible plight. They will then wish, ardently and again and again, that they had sought Allah’s Will and walked in the light of Truth. That time may be early or late,—in this life, or at death, or at the Day of Judgment, but it must come. Man’s own highest interest requires that he should awake to the Reality before it is too late for repentance.

And let (false) Hope distract them:
soon
For they will soon know. 1937

4. Never did We destroy
A population that had not
A term decreed and assigned
Beforehand. 1938

5. Neither can a people anticipate
Its Term, nor delay it. 1939

6. They say: “O thou to whom
The Message is being revealed!
Truly thou art mad
(or possessed)!” 1940

7. “Why bringest thou not
Angels to us if it be
That thou hast the Truth?” 1941

1937. The foolish and the wicked set great store by the pleasures of this world. In their pride they think they have all knowledge. In the fulness of knowledge they will see how wrong they were. Meanwhile those who have received the Light should not for a single moment wonder at the apparent prosperity of the ungodly in this world. They should leave them alone, confident in the goodness and justice of Allah.

1938. Kitābun maʿlam: literally, “a writing known”. There are many shades of meaning implied. (1) For every people, as for every individual, there is a definite Term assigned: their faculty of choice gives them the opportunity of moulding their will according to Allah’s Will, and thus identifying themselves with Allah’s Universal Law. During that Term they will be given plenty of rope; after that Term is past, there will be no opportunity for repentance. (2) Neither the righteous nor the ungodly can hasten or delay the doom: Allah’s Will must prevail, and He is All-Wise. (3) The destruction of a people is not an arbitrary punishment from Allah: the people bring it on themselves by their own choice; for the fixed Law or Decree of Allah is always made known to them beforehand, and in many ways.

1939. Cf vii. 34. Also see the last note.

1940. Al-Muṣṭafā was accused by the ungodly of being mad or possessed, because he spoke of higher things than they knew, and acted from motives purer and nobler than they could understand. So, in a minor degree, is the lot of all the righteous in the presence of an ungodly world. Their motives, actions, words, hopes, and aspirations are unintelligible to their fellows, and they are accused of being mad or out of their senses. But they know that they are on the right path, and it is the ungodly who are really acting against their own best interests.

1941. Cf. vi. 8-9, and notes 840, 841. On the part of the unbelievers, this is a mere taunt. They neither believe in Allah nor in angels nor in revelation nor in any but material things. It is ridiculous to suppose that they could be taken seriously.
8. We send not the angels
   Down except for just cause.¹⁹⁴²
   If they came (to the ungodly),
   Behold! no respite would they
   have!¹⁹⁴³

9. We have, without doubt,
   Sent down the Message;
   And We will assuredly
   Guard it (from corruption).¹⁹⁴⁴

10. We did send messengers before thee
    Amongst the sects¹⁹⁴⁵
     Of old:

11. But never came a messenger
    To them but they mocked him.

12. Even so do We let it creep
    Into the hearts of the sinners—¹⁹⁴⁶

13. They do not believe
    In the Message, such has been

¹⁹⁴². Angels are not sent down to satisfy the whim or curiosity of the unbelievers. They are sent to bring inspiration to Allah's messengers and to execute Allah's decrees.

¹⁹⁴³. If the angels were to appear before the ungodly, it would mean that they came to execute just punishment, and then there would be no hope of respite possible for the ungodly.

¹⁹⁴⁴. The purity of the text of the Qur'an through fourteen centuries is a foretaste of the eternal care with which Allah's Truth is guarded through all ages. All corruptions, inventions, and accretions pass away, but Allah's pure and holy Truth will never suffer eclipse even though the whole world mocked at it and were bent on destroying it.

¹⁹⁴⁵. Shiya'un, plural of Shi'atun = a sect, a religious division. Mankind sees fragments of Truth at a time, and is apt to fall into fragments and divisions. All true messengers of Allah come to reconcile these fragments or divisions, for they preach the true Gospel of Unity. So came Al-Mustafa to bring back to Unity the many jarring sects among the Jews, Christians, and Pagans. His mission was held up to ridicule, but so was the mission of his predecessors. Mockery itself should not discourage the preachers of Truth.

¹⁹⁴⁶. If evil and disbelief exist in the world, we must not be impatient or lose our faith. We must recognise that if such things are permitted, they are part of the Universal Plan and purpose of Allah, Who is All-Wise and All-Good, but Whose wisdom and goodness we cannot fully fathom. One consolation we have, and that is stated in the next verse and the next note.
The way of those who went
Before them.\textsuperscript{1947}

14. Even if We opened out to them
A gate from heaven,\textsuperscript{1948}
And they were to continue
(All day) ascending therein.

15. They would only say:
“Our eyes have been intoxicated:
Nay, we have been bewitched
By sorcery.”

\textbf{SECTION 2.}

16. It is We Who have set out\textsuperscript{1949}
Constellations\textsuperscript{1950} in the heavens

1947. Sects, divisions, and systems invented by men tend to pass away, but Allah’s pure Truth of Unity endures for ever. This we see in history when we study it on a large scale. \textit{Cf.} the parable in xiv. 24-26 \textit{Khalat}: I have translated it here in the same sense as in xii. 30 x. 102, and other places. Some Commentators give it a slightly different shade of meaning. The other meaning is seen in xlviii. 23.

1948. \textit{Cf.} vi. 35. The spiritual kingdom is open to all to enter. But the entrance is not a mere matter of physical movement. It is a question of a total change of heart. Evil must cease to be evil, before it can see or enjoy Good. If we could suppose Evil, like Bottom the weaver, to be “translated” or in some way carried up to heaven, it would only think that the Truth was an illusion, and the reality was mere witchery. The taint is in its very nature, which must first be purified and rendered fit for the reception of light, truth, and bliss.

1949. Evil having been described, not as an external thing, but as a taint of the soul, we have in this section a glorious account of the purity and beauty of Allah’s Creation. Evil is a blot on it, not a normal feature of it. Indeed, the normal feature is the guard which Allah has put on it, to protect it from evil.

1950. In the countless millions of stars in the universe which we see, the first step in our astronomical knowledge is to find marvellous order, beauty, and harmony, on a scale of grandeur which we appreciate more and more as our knowledge increases. The first broad belt that we distinguish is the Zodiac, which marks the sun’s path through the heavens year after year and the limit of the wanderings of the moon and the planets. We make twelve divisions of it and call them Signs of the Zodiac. Each marks the solar path through the heavens as we see it, month after month. We can thus mark off the seasons in our solar year, and express in definite laws the most important facts in meteorology, agriculture, seasonal winds, and tides. Then there are the mansions of the moon, the mapping out of the Constellations, and the other marvellous facts of the heavens, some of which affect our physical life on this earth. But the highest lessons we can draw from them are spiritual. The author of this wonderful Order and Beauty is One, and He alone is entitled to our worship.
And made them fair-seeming
To (all) beholders;
17. And (moreover) We have guarded
them from every accursed Satan.
18. But any that gains a hearing
By stealth, is pursued
By a fiery comet, bright (to see).
19. And the earth We have spread
out (Like a carpet); set thereon
Mountains firm and immovable;
And produced therein all kinds
Of things in due balance.
20. And We have provided therein
Means of subsistence,—for you
And for those for whose sustenance
Ye are not responsible.

1951. Taking the physical heavens, we can imagine the supreme melody of harmony—guarded from every disturbing force.
1952. Rajim: driven away with stones, rejected, accursed. Cf. iii. 36.
1955. Majesty, order, beauty and harmony are shown in all Allah’s Creation, but especially in the heavens. Coming nearer to man, Allah’s care for man and His goodness are shown (besides His other qualities) in His creation of the earth. In highly poetical language, the earth is described as spread out like a carpet, on which the hills act as weights to keep it steady.
1956. And every kind of thing is produced on the earth in due balance and measure. The mineral kingdom supports the vegetable and they in their turn support the animal, and there is a link of mutual dependence between them. Excess is eliminated. The waste of one is made the food of another, and vice versa. And this is a chain of gradation and inter-dependence.
1957. See last note. ‘We provide sustenance of every kind, physical, mental, spiritual, etc., for you (i.e. for mankind). But We do more. We provide for everyone of Our creatures. And there are those of which mankind is not even cognisant. We provide for them also. There are those who may at first sight appear hostile to man, or whom man may consider hostile, such as wild and noxious animals. They are Our creatures, and We provide for them also, as they are Our creatures. But there is due order and balance in the economy of Our universal Plan.’
21. And there is not a thing
But its (sources and) treasures\(^{1958}\) (Inexhaustible) are with Us;
But We only send down
Thereof in due and ascertainable measures.\(^{1959}\)

22. And We send the fecundating\(^{1960}\) winds,

Then cause the rain to descend
From the sky, therewith providing You with water (in abundance),
Though ye are not the guardians\(^{1961}\) Of its stores\(^{1962}\)

---

1958. *Khazâ’in*: treasures; store-houses; places where valuable things are accumulated, from which supplies are distributed from time to time as need arises.

1959. All the wonderful gifts and forces and energies which we see in the world around us have their sources and fountain-heads with Allah, the Creator and Sustainer of the Worlds. And what we see or perceive or imagine is just a small portion of what exists. That portion is sent out to us and to our world according to our needs or its needs from time to time as the occasion arises. It is strictly limited according to rule and plan. Its source is unlimited and inexhaustible. In the same way the forces which we see operating around us, in nature or in the spiritual world, according to laws which we can grasp and ascertain, are mere derived forces, in the 2nd, 3rd, or nth degree. Their source and ultimate fountain head is with Allah.

1960. *Lawâqîḥ*, plural of *lâqîḥ*, from *laqâha*, to impregnate or fecundate the female date-palm by putting the pollen of the male tree on to the ovaries of the female tree. The date palm is uni-sexual. The wind performs this office for many flowers. Here, by a bold metaphor, its fecundating quality is transferred to the clouds, which by means of rain produce all kinds of fruit, grain, and vegetation. The clouds as vapour are manipulated by the winds, which set up atmospheric currents resulting in condensation and the descent of rain. Note the appropriateness of the little article "then", showing the connection of winds with rain.

1961. Cf. the previous verse, and n. 1958. Man may store water in cisterns, tanks, lakes, and head-waters of canals. But he has no control over its original sources, which are the clouds, which by the help of the winds, act as the grand distributors of water over wide spaces of the world's surface.

1962. This verse must be understood as furnishing an example of illustration of what is said in the last verse.
23. And verily, it is We Who give life, and Who give Death: it is We Who remain Inheritors (After all else passes away).

24. To Us are known those of you Who hasten forward, and those Who lag behind.

25. Assuredly it is thy Lord Who will gather them together: For He is Perfect in Wisdom And Knowledge

SECTION 3.

26. We created man from sounding clay,

From mud moulded into shape;

27. And the Jinn race, We had

1963. Note how the argument has mounted up from xv. 16 onwards to xv. 23—from things most remote from man to things touching his inmost being, and each of them in its own way is a wonderful instance of Allah’s glory and goodness, and the beauty, order and harmony of His creation. First, the heavens, the zodiacal Signs, the stars, and the mysterious phenomena that we see above us; then the earth, and the perfect balance of life and forces therein, with man as an important factor, but not the only factor; then, the inexhaustible sources of energy, of which Allah alone is the Provider, but which come to us in measured proportions, as needed; and lastly, Life and Death itself, which will pass away but Allah will remain. A noble passage, and a fine vindication of Allah’s wisdom and providence in dealing with His creatures.

1964. Literally, “We are the Heirs, or Inheritors.” Cf. iii. 180; “To Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth.” See also the latter part of n. 988 to vi. 165.

1965. Meaning may be: “those who preceded you in point of time and those who come after you in point of time; they are all known to Allah, and He will gather them all together on the Day of Judgment.”

1966. Sâdâl: dry clay which produces a sound, like pottery. Cf. iv. 14. Taking verses 26 and 29 together, I understand the meaning to be: that man’s body was formed from wet clay moulded into shape and then dried until it could emit sound; that it was then further fashioned and completed; that into the animal form thus fashioned was breathed the spirit from Allah, which gave it a superiority over other Creation: and that the order for obeisance was then given.
28. Behold! thy Lord said
To the angels: "I am about
To create man, from sounding clay
From mud moulded into shape;
29. "When I have fashioned him
(In due proportion) and breathed
Into him of My spirit,
Fall ye down in obeisance
Unto him." 1968
30. So the angels prostrated themselves,
All of them together:
31. Not so Iblis: he refused to be
Among those who prostrated
themselves. 1971
32. (Allah) said: "O Iblis!
What is your reason
For not being among those
Who prostrated themselves?"

1967. Cf. vi. 100 and n. 929.
1968. Among other passages where the creation of Adam is referred to, cf. the
following: ii. 30-39; vii. 11-25. Note that here the emphasis is on three points: (1) the
breathing from Allah's spirit into man i.e., the faculty of God-like knowledge and will,
which, if rightly used, would give man superiority over other creatures: (2) the origin of
evil in arrogance and jealousy on the part of Satan, who saw only the lower side of man
(his clay) and failed to see the higher side, the faculty brought in from the spirit of Allah;
(3) that this evil only touches those who yield to it, and has no power over Allah's sincere
servants, purified by His grace (xv. 40, 42). Adam is not here mentioned by name, but
only Man.
1969. Cf. n. 49 to ii. 34.
1970. Iblis: the name has in it the root-idea of desperateness or rebellion. Cf. n. 52
to ii. 36.
1971. Apparently Iblis's arrogance had two grounds: (1) that man was made of clay
while he was made of fire; (2) that he did not wish to do what others did. Both grounds
were false; (1) because man had the spirit of Allah breathed into him; (2) because
contempt of the angels who obeyed Allah's words showed not Iblis's superiority but his
inferiority.
33. (Iblis) said: “I am not one
To prostrate myself to man,
Whom Thou didst create
From sounding clay, from mud
Moulded into shape.”

34. (Allah) said: “Then get thee out
From here; for thou art
Rejected, accursed.

35. “And the Curse shall be
On thee till the Day of
Judgment.”

36. (Iblis) said: “O my Lord!
Give me then respite
Till the Day
The (dead) are raised.”

37. (Allah) said: “Respite
Is granted thee–

38. “Till the Day
Of the Time Appointed.”

39. (Iblis) said: “O my Lord!
Because Thou hast put me
In the wrong, I will

1972. After the Day of Judgment the whole constitution of the universe will be different. There will be a new world altogether, on a wholly different plane. (Cf. xxi. 104).

1973. What was this respite? The curse on Iblis remained, i.e. he was deprived of Allah’s grace and became in the spiritual world what an outlaw is in a political kingdom. An earthly kingdom may not be able to catch and destroy an outlaw. But Allah is Omnipotent, and such power as Iblis may have can only come through the respite granted by Allah. The respite then is what is expressed in xv. 39 below. In Allah’s grant of limited free-will to man is implied the faculty of choosing between good and evil, and the faculty is exercised through the temptations and allurements put forward by Satan, “the open enemy” of man. This is for the period of man’s probation on this earth. Even so, no temptations have power over the sincere worshippers of Allah, who are purified by His grace.

1974. Agwaiani: ‘thrown me out of the way, put me in the wrong’: Cf. vii. 16. Satan cannot be straight or truthful even before Allah. By his own arrogance and rebellion he fell; he attributes this to Allah. Between Allah’s righteous judgment and Satan’s snares and temptations there cannot be the remotest comparison. Yet he presumes to put them on an equal footing. He is taking advantage of the respite.
Make (wrong) fair-seeming
To them on the earth,
And I will put them among them.\textsuperscript{1975}
All in the wrong.

40. "Except Thy chosen servants among them.

41. (Allah) said: "This is for me a Straight path.\textsuperscript{1976}

42. "For over My servants
No authority shalt thou Have, except such as Put themselves in the wrong And follow thee."

43. And verily, Hell Is the promised abode For them all!

44. To it are seven Gates: For each of those Gates Is a (special) class (Of sinners) assigned.

SECTION 4.

45. The righteous (will be) Amid Gardens And fountains (Of clear-flowing water).

\textsuperscript{1975} Iblis (the Satan) is powerless against Allah. He turns therefore against man.

\textsuperscript{1976} To be sincere in the worship of Allah is to obtain purification from all stain of evil and exemption from all influence of evil. It changes the whole nature of man. After that, evil cannot touch him. Evil will acknowledge him to be beyond its power and will not even tempt him. Apart from such purified souls, everyone who worships Allah invites Allah's grace to protect him. But if he puts himself in the way of wrong and deliberately chooses evil, he must take the consequences. The blame is not even on Satan, the power of evil, it is on the sinner himself, who puts himself into his power; xiv. 22: xv. 42.

\textsuperscript{1977} The ways of sin are numerous, and if they are classified into seven, each of them points to a Gate that leads to Hell.
46. (Their greeting will be);
   “Enter ye here
   In Peace and Security.”

47. And We shall remove
   From their hearts any
   Lurking sense of injury; 1978
   (They will be) brothers
   (Joyfully) facing each other
   On raised couches.

48. There no sense of fatigue
   Shall touch them,
   Nor shall they (ever)
   Be asked to leave.

49. Tell My servants 1979
   That I am indeed
   The Oft-Forgiving,
   Most Merciful;

50. And that My Chastisement
   Will be indeed
   The most grievous Chastisement

51. Tell them about
   The guests of Abraham. 1980

52. When they entered his presence
   And said, “Peace!”

1978. Cf. vii. 43, and n. 1021. The hearts and minds will be so purified that all past
rancour, jealousy, or sense of injury will be obliterated. The true Brotherhood will be
realised there, when each will have his own dignity, there will be no question of invidious
comparisons; each will face the others with joy and confidence. There will be no sense
of toil or fatigue, and the joy will last for ever.

1979. We must realise both sides of Allah’s attributes: His mercy, grace, and
forgiveness are unbounded; if we reject all this, His justice and punishment will also be
beyond all that we can conceive.

1980. In illustration of the contrasts between Good and Evil, and the consequences
that flow from them, we have now a reference to four incidents from the past, viz.,: (1)
an incident from the story of Abraham; (2) from that of Lot, nephew of Abraham, and
the end of the Cities of the Plain, which he was sent to warn; (3) the People of the
Wood; and (4) the People of the Rocky Tract (Hijr), after whom this Sūra is called. As
usual, the recital of Allah’s abounding grace comes first.
He said, "We feel
Afraid of you!"1981

53. They said: "Fear not!
We give thee glad tidings
Of a son endowed
With knowledge".1982

54. He said: "Do ye give me such
Glad tidings even though old age
Has seized me? Of what,
Then, is your good news?"

55. They said: "We give thee
Glad tidings in truth;
Be not then in despair!"

56. He said: "And who
Despairs of the mercy
Of his Lord, but such
As go astray?"1983

57. Abraham said:1984 "What then
Is the business on which
Ye (Have come), O ye
Messengers (of Allah)?"

1981. For a full understanding of this reference to the angels who were Abraham's guests and came to announce the birth of a son to him in his old age, read xi. 69-73 and notes. The appearance of two strangers of uncommon appearance, who refused to partake of the host's sumptuous hospitality, made Abraham at first suspicious and afraid.

1982. The birth of a son in old age, to a sonless father was glad tidings to Abraham personally. The birth of a son endowed with wisdom promised something infinitely more. Considering that the angels were divine messengers, the wisdom referred to was divine wisdom, and the event became an event of prime importance in the world's religious history. For Abraham became, through his progeny, the root of the three great universal religions, diffused throughout the world.

1983. Cf. xi. 69.

1984. When cordial understanding was established between Abraham and his guests and probably when the guests were about to depart, Abraham put a question to them: "What is the mission on which you are going?" It was further implied: "Is there anything I can do to help?" But no. The mission was one of Punishment for abominable sins. Note that the mention of Allah's Wrath is always linked with that of Allah's Mercy, and the Mercy comes first. The same angels that came to punish Sodom and Gomorrah were charged first to give the good news of Allah's Mercy to Abraham in the shape of a long line of Teachers of Righteousness.
58. They said: "We have been
Sent to a people (Deep) in sin. 1985

59. "Excepting the adherents
Of Lūṭ: them we are certainly
(Charged) to save (from harm)." 1986
All-

60. "Except his wife, who,
We have ascertained,
Will be among those
Who will lag behind." 1987

SECTION 5.

61. At length when the messengers
Arrived among the adherents 1988
Of Lūṭ.

62. He said; "Ye appear
To be uncommon folk."

63. They said: "Yea,
We have come to thee
To accomplish that
Of which they doubt." 1989

1985. The Cities of the Plain round the Dead Sea, which to this day is called the
Bahr Lūṭ. They were given to unspeakable abominations. Read in this connection xi. 77­
83 and notes.

1986. Here, again, Allah's saving Grace is linked with His Wrath, and is mentioned
first.

1987. See xi. 81, and n. 1577.

1988. Āl means people who adhere to the ways and teaching of a great Teacher; e.g.,
Āl-u-Muḥammad: it does not necessarily mean race or descendants. Ahl (xv. 65 below)
usually implies "household" but may be taken in an extended sense to include People
generally: see xv. 67 Qaum (xv. 62) may be any collection or aggregate of people. In
xi. 70 the hostile inhabitants of the Cities of the Plain are called the qaum-u-Lūṭ (the
People of Lūṭ). Ashāb (companions) refers to a Group rather than to a People: Cf. xv:
78.

1989. The unusual appearance of the angels struck Lot as it had struck Abraham.
Knowing the abominable vices to which the Cities were addicted, he feared to entertain
handsome young men. They at once disclosed their mission to him. In effect they said:
64. “We have come to thee with the Truth\textsuperscript{1990}

And assuredly We tell the truth.

65. “Then travel by night
With thy household,
When a portion of the night
(Yet remains), and do thou
Go behind them:
Let no one amongst you
Look back, but pass on
Whither ye are ordered.”

66. And We made known
This decree to him,
That the last remnants
Of those (sinners) should be
Cut off by the morning.\textsuperscript{1991}

67. The inhabitants of the City
Came in (mad) joy
(At news of the young men).\textsuperscript{1992}

68. Lūt said: “These are
My guests: disgrace me not:

69. “But fear Allah,
And shame me not.”

“You, Lot, have been preaching in vain to these wicked Cities. When you warn them of their inevitable end: Destruction, they laugh and doubt. Now their doubt will be resolved. Their destruction will be accomplished before the morning.”

1990. \textit{Al-Haqq}: the Punishment which is justly and inevitably due, which must certainly come to pass. \textit{Cf.} xxii. 18.

1991. As the last remnants of the wicked were to be cut off, and as the Mercy of Allah wished to save every true soul who might be with Lot, Allah’s decree was made known to Lot, so that he might save his adherents.

1992. They were addicted to unnatural crime, and the news of the advent of handsome young men inflamed them. How true it is that at the very verge of destruction, men rush blindly to their fate, and cut off any last hope of repentance and mercy for themselves. \textit{Cf.} xv. 72 below.
70. They said: “Did we not
   forbid thee (to speak)
   For all and sundry?”

71. He said: “There are
   My daughters (to marry),
   If ye must act (so).”

72. Verily, by thy life (O Prophet),
   In their wild intoxication,
   They wander in distraction,
   To and fro.

73. But the (mighty) Blast
   Overtook them at sunrise,

74. And We turned (the cities)
   Upside down, and rained down
   On them brimstones
   Hard as baked clay.

75. Behold! in this are Signs
   For those who by tokens
   Do understand.

1993. I understand the meaning to be that Lot, the only righteous man in the City,
   had frequently remonstrated with the inhabitants against their unnatural crimes, and they
   had forbidden him to speak to them again on behalf of any one, “as if” (they might
   tauntingly say) “he was the protector of all and sundry”

Some Commentators understand the verse to mean: ‘Did we not forbid thee to
   entertain any strangers?’

1994. Cf. xi. 78, n. 1575. “My daughters” in the mouth of a venerable man may
   mean young girls of the City, which would be appropriate considering the large number
   of men who came to besiege Lot’s house.

1995. The wild, mad fury of passion and sin attains its own destruction and cuts off
   the last hope of repentance or mercy.

1996. As-Saihat, the mighty Blast, is mentioned as accompanying earthquakes: Cf. xi.
   67-94. Here it was the violent wind and noise accompanying the shower of brimstones,
   possibly with some volcanic action.

1997. Cf. xi. 82 and notes, in which the word Sijji and its origin are explained.
76. And the (Cities were) Right on the high-road. 1998

77. Behold! in this Is a Sign For those who believe! 1999

78. And the Companions of the Wood 2000 Were also wrong-doers;

79. So We exacted retribution From them. They were both 2001 On an open highway, Plain to see.

SECTION 6.

80. The Companions of the Rocky Tract 2002 Also rejected the messengers:

---

1998. The Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were utterly destroyed, and even their precise position cannot be identified. But the brimstone plain of the tract still exists, right on the highway between Arabia and Syria. To the traveller in the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea the whole locality presents a scene of dismal desolation which truly suggests the awful punishment for unspeakable crimes.

1999. Verse 75 refers to all who have the intelligence to grasp the Signs of Allah. Verses 76-77 specially refer to those who use the Arabia-Syria highroad. The desolation is specially brought home to them.

2000. “Companions of the Wood”: As-hāb ul Aikati. Perhaps Aika is after all a proper noun, the name of a town or tract. Who were the Companions of the Aika? They are mentioned four times in the Qur-an, viz., here, and in xxvi. 176-191; xxxviii. 13; and 1. 14. The only passage in which any details are given is xxvi. 176-191. There we are told that their Prophet was Shu'aib, and other details given correspond to those of the Madyan, to whom Shu’aib was sent as Prophet; see vii. 85-93. In my notes to that passage I have discussed the question of Shu’aib and the Madyan people. It is reasonable to suppose that the Companions of the Wood were either the same as the Madyan, or a Group among them or in their neighbourhood.

2001. Both: i.e., The Cities of the Plain and the Companions of the Aika.

2002. “The Rocky Tract” is undoubtedly a geographical name. On the maps of Arabia will be found a tract called the Hijr, north of Medinah, Jabal Hijr is about 150 miles north of Madinah. The tract would fall on the highway to Syria. This was the country of the Thamūd For them and the country see vii. 73, n. 1043.
1. We sent them Our Signs,
   But they persisted
   In turning away from them.

2. Out of the mountains
   Did they hew (their) edifices,
   (Feeling themselves) secure.

3. But the (mighty) Blast
   Seized them of a morning,

4. And of no avail to them
   Was all that they did
   (With such art and care)!

5. We created not the heavens,
   The earth, and all between them,
   But for just ends.
   And the Hour is surely
   Coming (when this will be manifest).
   So overlook (any human faults)
   With gracious forgiveness.

6. For verily it is thy Lord
   Who is the All-Creator,
   Knowing all things.

2003. Remains of these rock edifices in the Hijr are still found, and the City of Petra is not more than 380 miles from Jabal Hijr. See n. 1043 to vii. 73. “Petra” in Greek means “Rock”. For the Inscriptions found there, and their significance, see Appendix IV to S. xxvi.


2005. Allah’s Creation is all for a true, just, and righteous purpose. Cf. x. 5. It is not for mere whim or sport: xxi. 16.

2006. The Hour will not be long delayed when the true Design and Pattern of Life will be manifest. We must not be impatient, if there appear to be, to our limited vision, apparent injustices. We must bear and forbear, and as far as our own personal feelings are concerned, we must overlook other people’s faults with “a gracious forgiveness”.

2007. Khallaq: the emphatic intensive form, as meaning the Creator, Who is perfect in His skill and knowledge, and Whose creation answers perfectly to His design. Therefore no one should think that anything has gone wrong in Allah’s creation. What may seem out of joint is merely the result of our short-sighted standards. It often happens that what appears to us to be evil or imperfect or unjust is a reflection of our own imperfect minds. See the next two verses and notes.
87. And We have bestowed
   Upon thee the Seven
   Oft-repeated (Verses)\textsuperscript{2008}
   And the Grand Qur-an.

88. Strain not thine eyes.
   (Wistfully) at what We
   Have bestowed on certain classes\textsuperscript{2009}
   Of them, nor grieve over them:\textsuperscript{2010}
   But lower thy wing (in gentleness)\textsuperscript{2011}
   To the Believers.

89. And say: “I am indeed he
   That warneth openly
   And without ambiguity,”\textsuperscript{2012}

90. (Of just such wrath)
   As We sent down
   On those who divided
   (Scripture into arbitrary parts),\textsuperscript{2013}

2008. The Seven Oft-repeated Verses are usually understood to be the Opening Sûra, the \textit{Fatîha}. They sum up the whole teaching of the Qur-an. What can be a more precious gift to a Muslim than the glorious Qur-an or any Sûra of it? Worldly wealth, honour, possessions, or anything else, sinks into insignificance in comparison with it.

2009. It may be that other people have worldly goods which worldly men envy. Do they necessarily bring happiness? Even the temporary pleasure that they may give is not unmixed with spiritual poisons, and even so, will not last. The man of God looks with wistful eyes at other things, the favour and countenance of Allah.

2010. The Prophet of Allah, in his human love and sympathy, may grieve over certain classes of people who are puffed up with false notions and callous to the Message of Allah. But he should not make himself unhappy. There is no flaw in Allah’s Plan, and it must prevail. This was addressed in the first instance to Al-Muṣṭafâ, but in a minor degree, it applies to all righteous men.

2011. The metaphor is from a bird who lowers her wing in tender solicitude for her little ones. \textit{Cf.} xvii. 24, where it is applied to “lowering the wing” to aged parents.

2012. In the ministry of Al-Muṣṭafâ there was no mincing of matters, no compromises with evil. Evil was denounced in unambiguous terms. \textit{Mubin} implies both openness and clearness, \textit{i.e.} freedom from ambiguity.

2013. The Commentators differ as to the precise signification of verses 90 and 91. Are the persons referred to in the two verses the same, or different? And who were they? I adopt the view, for which there is good authority, that the two classes of persons were different but similar. Verse 90, I think, refers to the Jews and Christians, who took out of Scripture what suited them, and ignored or rejected the rest: ii. 85, 101. For verse 91 see next note.
91. (So also on such)
Who have made Qur-ān
Into shreds (as they please).\textsuperscript{2014}

92. Therefore, by thy Lord,
We will, of a surety,
Call them to account,

93. For all their deeds.\textsuperscript{2015}

94. Therefore expound openly
What thou art commanded,
And turn away from those
Who join false gods with Allah.

95. For sufficient are We
Unto thee against those
Who scoff.\textsuperscript{2016}

96. Those who adopt, with Allah,
Another god: but soon
Will they come to know.

97. We do indeed know
How thy heart is distressed\textsuperscript{2017}
At what they say.

98. But celebrate the praises
Of thy Lord and be of those
Who prostrate themselves
In adoration.

\textsuperscript{2014} The Makkān Pagans, in the early days of Islam, in order to dishonour and ridicule the Qur-ān, divided what was so far revealed, into bits, and apportioned them to people coming on pilgrimage to Makkah by different routes, slandering and abusing the Prophet of Allah.

\textsuperscript{2015} Those who ridicule Scripture in any form will all be called to account for their insolence, for they are all alike.

\textsuperscript{2016} If the whole world is ranged against the Prophet of Allah, as was-at one time the case with the Prophet, and scoffs at all that is sacred, the sense of Allah’s presence and protection outweighs all. And after all, the scoffers are creatures of a day. Soon will they find their level, and be undeceived as to all their falsehoods. But the Truth of Allah endures for ever.

\textsuperscript{2017} Literally, ‘that thy breast is constrained.’
99. And serve thy Lord
   Until there come unto thee
   The Hour that is Certain.  

2018. *Yaqin*: Certainty; the Hour that is Certain; death.