INTRODUCTION TO SÛRAT Ṣâd, 38.

For the place of this Sûra in the series of six, dealing with some aspects of the spiritual world, see Introduction to S. xxxiv.

This Sûra, both in chronology and subject-matter, is cognate to S. xxxvii., and carries forward the same argument. But here the emphasis is laid on the working of earthly power when combined with spiritual power, and it is pointed out how much more significant (and real) spiritual power is. For this reason the illustrative stories are mainly those of David and Solomon who were kings as well as prophets, and a parallel is suggested with the unfolding public life of our holy Prophet.

Summary.—Worldly and evil men are surprised at the renewal of Truth and Righteousness; but righteousness has more power than worldly strength, as is seen in the story of kings like David, who had both (xxxviii. 1-26).

So also Solomon loved the Lord more than worldly power, which may be good but may be misused by evil men; so also Job and other men of power and insight, chose the path of final bliss rather than final misery (xxxviii. 27-64).

So also in the case of the final Messenger: his Gospel of Unity must triumph over all Jealousy and Arrogance in God's good time (xxxviii. 65-88).
\textbf{โฉนดที่ 38 ayah 1-3}

\textit{In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.}

1. **Ṣād**:\textsuperscript{4146} By the Qur-ān, Full of Admonition: (This is the Truth).

2. But the Unbelievers (Are steeped) in Self-glory And opposition.

3. How many generations Before them did We destroy? In the end they cried (For mercy)—when There was no longer time For being saved!

4146. Ṣād is a letter of the Arabic alphabet. It is used here as an Abbreviated Letter, for which see Appendix I (at the end of Sūra ii.). See also the second para, of n. 989 to vii. 1 for this particular letter. No dogmatism is permissible in trying to interpret Abbreviated Letters. This Sūra is concerned mainly with the stories of David and Solomon as illustrative of the relative positions of spiritual and worldly power. Sale's note: “it may stand for Solomon”: is a real howler: for in Arabic the letter Ṣād does not occur at all in the name of Solomon.

4147. Full of admonition: the word zikr is far more comprehensive than any single word or phrase that I can think of in English: it implies (1) remembrance in a spirit of reverence; (2) recital, celebrating the praises of Allah; (3) teaching, admonition, warning; (4) Message, Revelation, as in Ah-lu-zikr, “those who possess the Message” (xvi. 43, and n. 2069). Devotional exercises are also called zikr, with reference to meaning (2) above.

4148. The great root of Evil and Unbelief is Self-glory or Arrogance, as is pointed out in several places with regard to Satan; cf. below, xxxviii. 74-76. This leads to Envy and opposition or a desire to start a peculiar doctrine or sect of one’s own, instead of a desire to find common grounds of belief and life, which lead to the Religion of Unity of Allah. This teaching of Unity was what the Pagans objected to in the holy Prophet (verse 5 below)!

4149. Teaching, Warning, Signs have been given by Allah to all nations and at all times, and yet nations have rebelled and gone wrong and suffered destruction. If only later generations could learn that wrong-doing results in self-destruction! For the justice of Allah merely carries out the result of their own choice and actions. At any time during =
4. So they wonder
   That a Warner has come
   To them from among themselves! \(^{4150}\)
   And the Unbelievers say,
   "This is a sorcerer
   Telling lies!"

5. "Has he made gods\(^ {4151}\)
   (All) into one God?
   Truly this is
   A strange thing!"

6. And the leaders among them
   Go away (impatiently), (saying), \(^ {4152}\)
   "Walk ye away, and remain
   Constant to your gods!
   For this is truly
   A thing designed (against you)!

4150. Their wonder is only stimulated. They are full of envy and spite against one of themselves who has been chosen by Allah to be His Messenger, and they vent their spite by making all sorts of false accusations. The man who was pre-eminent for truth and conscientious consideration, they call "a sorcerer and a liar"!

4151. And what is the offence of the Messenger of Unity? That he has made all their fantastic gods disappear; that in place of chaos he has brought harmony; that in place of conflict he brings peace! It is a wonderful thing, but not in the sarcastic sense in which the Unbelievers scoff at it!

4152. When the message of Islam was being preached in its infancy, and the Preacher and his followers were being persecuted by the Pagans, one of the devices adopted by the Pagan leaders was to get the Prophet's uncle Abū Ta'lib to denounce or renounce his beloved nephew. A conference was held with Abū Ta'lib for this purpose. On its failure the leaders walked away, and began to discredit the great movement by falsely giving out that it was designed against their personal influence, and to throw power into the hands of the Prophet. Ḥadhrat 'Umar's conversion occurred in the sixth year of the Mission (seventh year before the Hijrat). The circumstances connected with it (see Introduction to S. xx.) greatly alarmed the Quraish chiefs, who, greedy of autocracy themselves, confused the issue by accusing the righteous Preacher of plotting against their power.
7. "We never heard (the like)
   Of this in the last religion\footnote{4153}
   This is nothing but
   A made-up tale!"

8. "What! Has the Message
   Been sent to him\footnote{4154}
   (Of all persons) among us?...
   But they are in doubt
   Concerning My (own) Message!\footnote{4155}
   Nay, they have not yet
   Tasted My Punishment!

9. Or have they the Treasures
   Of the Mercy of thy Lord,\footnote{4156}
   The Exalted in Power,
   The Grantor of Bounties
   Without measure?

10. Or have they the dominion
    Of the heavens and the earth
    And all between? If so,
    Let them mount up\footnote{4157}

\footnote{4153. 'Whatever may have been the case in the past', they said, 'our own immediate ancestors worshipped these idols in Makkah and why should we give them up?' Self-complacency was stronger with them than Truth; and so they call Truth "a made-up tale"! Some Commentators interpret \textit{millat \textit{\check{a}kh\textit{rat}} to refer to the last religion preached before Islam, viz. Christianity, which had itself departed from Monotheism to Trinity.}

\footnote{4154. Here comes in envy. 'If a Message had to come, why should it come to him, the orphan son of 'Abdullah, and not to one of our own great men?'

\footnote{4155. They have no clear idea of how Allah's Message comes! It is not a worldly thing to be given to any one. It is a divine thing requiring spiritual preparation. If they close their eyes to it now, it will be brought home to them when they taste the consequences of their folly!

\footnote{4156. If they set themselves to judge Allah, have they anything to show comparable to Allah's Mercy and Power! He has both in infinite measure. Who are they to question the grant of His Mercy and Revelation to His own Chosen One?

\footnote{4157. Weak and puny creatures though they are, they dare to raise their heads against the Omnipotent, as if they had dominion over Creation and not He! If they had any power, let them mount up to heaven and use all the means they have to that end, and see how they can frustrate Allah's Purpose!}
With the ropes and means
(To reach that end)!

11. They are but
A host of confederates
And they will be
Put to flight.\textsuperscript{4158}

12. Before them (were many
Who) rejected messengers,\textsuperscript{4159}
The People of Noah,
And 'Ad, and Pharaoh
The Lord of Stakes,\textsuperscript{4160}

13. And Thamūd, and the People
Of Lūt, and the Companions!\textsuperscript{4161}
Of the Wood;--such were
The Confederates.\textsuperscript{4162}

14. Not one (of them) but
Rejected the messengers,
But My Punishment
Came justly and inevitably\textsuperscript{4163}
(On them).

\textsuperscript{4158}. Of course they cannot frustrate Allah's Purpose. In that world--they will be
ignominiously routed, even if they form the strongest confederacy of the Powers of Evil
that ever could combine. Cf. the last clause of verse 13 below.

\textsuperscript{4159}. In their day, Noah's contemporaries, or the 'Ad and the Thamūd, so frequently
mentioned, or Pharaoh the mighty king of Egypt, or the people to whom Lot was sent
(cf. xxxvii. 75-82; vii. 65-73; vii. 103-137; vii. 80-84) were examples of arrogance and
rebellion against Allah: they rejected the divine Message brought by their messengers, and
they all came to an evil end. Will not their posterity learn their lesson?

\textsuperscript{4160}. The title of Pharaoh, "Lord of the Stakes", denotes power and arrogance, in
all or any of the following ways: (1) the stake makes a tent firm and stable, and is a
symbol of firmness and stability; (2) many stakes mean a large camp and a numerous
army to fight; (3) impaling with stakes was a cruel punishment resorted to by the
Pharaohs in arrogant pride of power.

\textsuperscript{4161}. Companions of the Wood; see xv. 78, and n. 2000.

\textsuperscript{4162}. Cf. above, verse 11, and n. 4158.

\textsuperscript{4163}. Cf. xv. 64, n. 1990; and xxii. 18.
SECTION 2.

15. These (to-day) only wait
   For a single mighty Blast,\(^{4164}\)
   Which (when it comes)
   Will brook no delay.\(^{4165}\)

16. They say: “Our Lord!
   Hasten to us our sentence\(^{4166}\)
   (Even) before the Day
   Of Account!”

17. Have patience at what they
   Say, and remember Our Servant
   David, the man of strength:\(^{4167}\)
   For he ever turned (in repentance
   to Allah).

18. It was We that made
   The hills declare,\(^{4168}\)

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\(^{4164}\). Cf. xxxvi. 29, n. 3973.

\(^{4165}\). Fawaq: delay, the interval between one milking of a she-camel, and another, either to give her a breathing space or to give her young time to suck, or perhaps the milker to adjust his fingers. Such interval will be quite short. The derived meaning is that when the inevitable just punishment for sin arrives, it will not tarry, but do its work without delay.

\(^{4166}\). Cf. xxvi. 204 and n. 3230. Those who do not believe in the Hereafter say ironically: “Let us have our punishment and sentence now: why delay it?” The last verse and the next verse supply the commentary. As to those who mock, they will find out the truth soon enough, when it is too late for repentance or mercy. As to the prophets of Allah, who are mocked, they must wait patiently for Allah to fulfil His Plan: even men who had worldly strength and power, like David had to exercise infinite patience when mocked by their contemporaries.

\(^{4167}\). David was a man of exceptional strength, for even as a raw youth, he slew the Philistine giant Goliath. See ii. 249-252, and notes 286-87. Before that fight, he was mocked by his enemies and chidden even by his own elder brother. But he relied upon Allah, and won through, and afterwards became king.

\(^{4168}\). See n. 2733 to xxii. 79. All nature sings in unison and celebrates the praises of Allah. David was given the gift of music and psalmody, and therefore the hills and birds are expressed as singing Allah’s praises in unison with him. The special hours when the hills and groves echo the songs of birds are in the evening and at dawn, when also the birds gather together, for those are respectively their roosting hours and the hours of their concerted flight for the day.

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In unison with him,
Our Praises, at eventide
And at break of day,

19. And the birds gathered
(In assemblies): all with him
Did turn (to Allah).\(^{4169}\)

20. We strengthened his kingdom,
And gave him wisdom
And sound judgment\(^{4170}\)
In speech and decision.

21. Has the Story of
The Disputants reached thee?\(^{4171}\)
Behold, they climbed over
The wall of the private chamber;

22. When they entered
To David,\(^{4172}\)
And he was terrified
Of them, they said:
"Fear not: we are two
Disputants, one of whom
Has wronged the other:
Decide now between us
With truth, and treat us not

4169. Note the mutual echo between this verse and verse 17 above. The Arabic awwa\(b\) is common to both, and it furnishes the rhyme or rhythm of the greater part of the Sūra, thus echoing the main theme: 'Turn to Allah in Prayer and Praise, for that is more than any worldly power or wisdom.'

4170. Cf. n. 2732 to xxi. 79 for David's sound judgment in decisions; he could also express himself aptly.

4171. This story or Parable is not found in the Bible, unless the vision here described be considered as equivalent to Nathan's parable in II Samuel, xi, and xii. Baidhāwī would seem to favour that view, but other Commentators reject it. David was a pious man, and he had a well-guarded private chamber (mīhrāb) for Prayer and Praise.

4172. David used to retire to his private chamber at stated times for his devotions. One day, suddenly, his privacy was invaded by two men, who had obtained access by climbing over a wall. David was frightened at the apparition. But they said: "We have come to seek thy justice as king: we are brothers, and we have a quarrel, which we wish thee to decide."
With injustice, but guide us
To the even Path

23. “This man is my brother:4173
He has nine and ninety
Ewes, and I have (but) one:
Yet he says, ‘Commit her
To my care,’ and he overcame me
In the argument.

24. (David) said: “He has
Undoubtedly wronged thee4174
In demanding thy (single) ewe
To be added to his (flock
Of) ewes: truly many
Are the Partners (in business)4175
Who wrong each other:
Not so do those who believe
And work deeds of righteousness,
And how few are they?”...
And David gathered that We
Had tried him: he asked

4173. The brother who was most aggrieved said: “This my brother has a flock of ninety-nine sheep, and I have but one; yet he wants me to give up my one sheep to his keeping; and moreover he is not even fair-spoken. He talks like one meditating mischief, and he has not even the grace to ask as an equal, or one sharing in a business or an inheritance. What shall I do?”

4174. The circumstances were mysterious; the accusation was noval; it was not clear why the unjust brother should also have come with the complainant, risking his life in climbing the wall to evade the guard, and he certainly said nothing. David took them literally, and began to preach about the falsehood and the fraud of men, who should be content with what they have, but who always covet more.

4175. Especially, said David, is it wrong for brothers or men in partnership to take advantage of each other; but how few are the men who are righteous? He had in his mind his own devotion and justice. But lo and behold! the men disappeared as mysteriously as they had come. It was then that David realised that the incident had been a trial or temptation—a test of his moral or spiritual fibre! Great though he was as a king, and just though he was as a judge, the moment that he thought of these things in self-pride, his merit vanished. In himself he was as other men: it was Allah’s grace that gave him wisdom and justice, and he should have been humble in the sight of Allah.
Forgiveness of his Lord,\footnote{4176} 
Fell down, bowing 
(\textit{In prostration}), and turned 
(\textit{To Allah in repentance}).\footnote{4176}A

25. So We forgave him 
This (lapse): he enjoyed, 
Indeed, a Near Approach to Us, 
And a beautiful Place 
Of (final) Return.

26. O David! We did indeed 
Make thee a vicegerent\footnote{4177} 
On earth: so judge thou 
Between men in truth (and justice): 
Nor follow thou the lust 
(Of thy heart), for it will 
Mislead thee from the Path\footnote{4178}

\footnote{4176. Judged by ordinary standards, David had done no wrong; he was a good and just king. Judged by the highest standard of those nearest to Allah (\textit{Muqarrabùn}, lvi. 11), the thought of self-pride and self-righteousness had to be washed off from him by his own act of self-realisation and repentance. This was freely accepted by Allah, as the next verse shows.}

\footnote{4176-A. Some commentators say that David's fault here was his hastiness in judging before hearing the case of the other party. When he realised his lapse, he fell down in repentance.}

\footnote{4177. Cf. ii. 30, and n. 47. David's kingly power, and the gifts of wisdom, justice, psalmody, and prophethood were bestowed on him as a trust. These great gifts were not to be a matter of self-glory.}

\footnote{4178. As stated in n. 1471 above, this vision and its moral are nowhere to be found in the Bible. Those who think they see a resemblance to the Parable of the prophet Nathan (2 Samuel, xii. 1-12) have nothing to go upon but the mention of the "one ewe" here and the "one little ewe-lamb" in Nathan's Parable. The whole story is here different, and the whole atmosphere is different. The Biblical title given to David, "a man after God's own heart" is refuted by the Bible itself in the scandalous tale of heinous crimes attributed to David in chapters xi and xii. of 2 Samuel, \textit{viz.}, adultery, fraudulent dealing with one of his own servants, and the contriving of his murder. Further, in chapter xiii, we have the story of rapes, incest, and fratricide in David's own household! The fact is that passages like those are mere \textit{chroniques scanda\lues}, \textit{i.e.}, narratives of scandalous crimes of the grossest character. The Muslim idea of David is that of a man just and upright, endowed with all the virtues, in whom even the least thought of self-elation has to be washed off by repentance and forgiveness.}
Of Allah: for those who
Wander astray from the Path
Of Allah, is a Chastisement
Grievous,
For that they forget
The Day of Account.

SECTION 3.

27. Not without purpose did We
Create heaven and earth
And all between! That
Were the thought of Unbelievers!
But woe to the Unbelievers
Because of the Fire (of Hell)!

28. Shall We treat those
Who believe and work deeds
Of righteousness, the same
As those who do mischief
On earth? Shall We treat
Those who guard against evil,
The same as those who
Turn aside from the right?

29. (Here is) a Book which
We have sent down

4179. Cf. iii. 191. Unbelief is the subjective negation of a belief in Order, Beauty, Purpose, and Eternal Life. Unbelief is to Faith as Chaos is to Cosmos, as the Fire of Misery is to the Garden of Bliss.

4180. The reference to the Hereafter at the end of verse 26 above is of a piece with the whole tenor of this Sûra, which deals with the superiority of the spiritual kingdom and the Hereafter. If there were no Hereafter, how could you reconcile the inequalities of this world? Would not the Unbelievers be right in acting as if all Creation and all life were futile? But there is a Hereafter and Allah will not treat the Good and Evil alike. He is just and will fully restore the balance disturbed in this life.
Unto thee, full of blessings,\(^{4181}\)
That they may meditate
On its Signs, and that
Men of understanding may
Receive admonition.

30. To David We bestowed
Solomon (for a son),\(^{4182}\)
How excellent is the servant!
Ever did he turn (to Us in
repentance)!

31. Behold, there were brought\(^{4183}\)
Before him, at eventide,
Coursers of the highest breeding,\(^{4184}\)
And swift of foot;

32. And he said, “Truly
Do I prefer wealth\(^{4185}\)

\(^{4181}\) Revelation is not a mere chance or haphazard thing. It is a real blessing—among the greatest that Allah has bestowed on man. By meditation on it in an earnest spirit man may learn of himself, and his relation to nature around him and to Allah the Author of all. Men of understanding may, by its help, resolve all genuine doubts that there may be in their minds, and learn the true lessons of spiritual life.

\(^{4182}\) The greatest in this life have yet need of this spiritual blessing: without it all worldly good is futile. Referring back to the story of David, we are now introduced to Solomon, who was a great king but greater still because he served Allah and turned to Him. The Qur-an, unlike the old Testament, represents Solomon as a righteous king, not as an idolater, doing “evil in the sight of the Lord” (1 Kings. xi. 6).

\(^{4183}\) The passages about David and Solomon have been variously interpreted by the Commentators. The versions which I have suggested have good authority behind them, though I have followed my own judgment in filling in the details.

\(^{4184}\) \(\text{Sāfīnāt}:\) literally, horses that stand, when at ease, on three legs, firmly planted, with the hoof of the fourth leg resting lightly on the ground. This would imply breeding and a steady temper, to match with their quality of swiftness mentioned in the next clause.

\(^{4185}\) The story is not found in the Old Testament. I interpret it to mean that, like his father David, Solomon was also most meticulous in not allowing the least motive of self to be mixed up with his spiritual virtues. He was fond of horses; he had great armies and wealth; but he used them all in Allah’s service. \(\text{Cf. xxvii. 19. n. 3259; xxvii. 40. n. 3276, etc.}\) His battles were not fought for lust of blood, but as \text{Jihāds} in the cause of
To the remembrance of my Lord.
Until (the sun) was hidden
In the veil (of Night). 4186

33. “Bring them back to me.”
Then began he to pass 4187
His hand over (their) legs
And their necks.

34. And We did try 4188
Solomon: We placed
On his throne a body 4189
But he did turn
(To Us in true devotion):

= righteousness. His love of horses was not like that of a mere race-goer or of a warrior: there was a spiritual element in it. He loved by a kind of love which was spiritual,—the love of the highest Good.

Some commentators interpret this verse saying that Solomon, peace be upon him, was so engrossed in the inspection of his fine horses that he completely forgot to say his ‘Asr prayer before the sunset’.

4186. His review of his fine horses was interrupted by his evening devotions, but he resumed it after his devotions.

4187. Like all lovers of horses, he patted them on their necks and passed his hands over their fore-legs and was proud of having them—not as vanities but as a “lover of Good”.

4188. What was the trial of Solomon? All the power, wealth, and glory, which were given to him were a spiritual trial to him. They might have turned another man’s head, but he was staunch and true, and while he enjoyed and used all the power he had—over the jinns, men, and the forces of nature, (see below), he kept his mind steady to the service of Allah. Cf. viii. 28, where “your possessions and your porgeny” are declared to be “but a trial”.

4189. “The body on his throne has been variously interpreted. The interpretation that appeals more is the following:

Sulaiman was at his utmost height of power and glory. Allah Ta’ala tested him with a severe illness during which he was no more than a lifeless body on his throne. He came to realize how weak and powerless he was in the eyes of Allah. In this state of weakness and misery he turned to Allah with humility and humbleness.
35. He said, “O my Lord! Forgive me, and grant me A Kingdom which, Will not belong to Another after me: For Thou art the Grantor Of Bounties (without measure).

36. Then We subjected the Wind To his power, to flow Gently to his order, Whithersoever he willed,—

37. As also the Satans, (Including) every kind Of builder and diver,—

38. As also others bound Together in fetters.

39. “Such are Our Bounties: Whether thou bestow them (On others) or withhold them, No account will be asked.”

4190. The seeking of worldly Power, even if intended to be used for Allah’s service, has a little of Self in it. It may be quite legitimate and even meritorious in ordinary men, but even the thought of it in a Prophet is to be apologised for. See a similar idea in the case of David explained in n. 4176 to xxxviii. 24 above.

4191. He asked for a Power that he would not misuse, though others might not be able to refrain from misusing it,—such as power over forces of nature or forces of violence (see the next three verses).

4192. Cf. xxxviii. 9 above.

4193. Cf. xxi. 81, and n. 2736.

4194. Cf. xxi. 82, and n. 2738. Cf. also xxxiv. 12-13 and notes there: in the latter passage the spirits mentioned are called Jinns. The divers were probably those employed in pearl-fisheries.

4195. Cf. xiv. 49, where the same expression “bound together in fetters” is applied to Sinners on the Day of Judgment.

4196. Allah bestowed such abundant powers and bounties on Solomon that they could not be counted or measured: and he was free to give away anything he liked or keep anything he liked. In this was great temptation for an ordinary man. Solomon as —
40. And he enjoyed, indeed,\textsuperscript{4197} A Near Approach to Us, And a beautiful Place Of (final) Return.

SECTION 4.

41. Commemorate Our Servant Job,\textsuperscript{4198} Behold he cried to his Lord: “Satan has afflicted Me with distress\textsuperscript{4199} and suffering!”

42. “Strike with thy foot:\textsuperscript{4200} Here is (water) wherein To wash, cool and refreshing, And (water) to drink.”

43. And We gave him (back) His people and doubled Their number,—as a Grace\textsuperscript{4201} From Us, and a thing For commemoration, for all Who have Understanding.

\textsuperscript{4197} The same words are used of David in xxxviii. 25 above, thus symmetrically closing the argument about the two greatest kings in Israel.

\textsuperscript{4198} For this passage, verses 41-44, Cf. xxi. 83-84.

\textsuperscript{4199} The distress was of many kinds. See n. 2739 to xxi. 83. He suffered from loathsome sores; he lost his home, his possessions, and his family; and almost his balance of mind. But he did not lose Faith but turned to Allah (see verse 44 below), and the recuperative process began.

\textsuperscript{4200} The recuperative process having begun, he was commanded to strike the earth or a rock with his foot, and a fountain or fountains gushed forth,—to give him a bath and clean his body; to refresh his spirits; and to give him drink and rest. This is a fresh touch, not mentioned in S. xxi. or in the Book of Job, but adding beautifully to our realisation of the picture.

\textsuperscript{4201} Cf. xxi. 84, and notes 2739-2740.
44. “And take in thy hand A little grass, and strike Therewith: and break not (Thy oath).” Truly We found Him full of patience and constancy. How excellent is the servant Ever did he turn (to Us)!

45. And commemorate Our Servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Possessors of Power and Vision. 4204

46. Verily We did choose them For a special (purpose)— The remembrance Of the Hereafter.

47. They were, in Our sight, Truly, of the company Of the Elect and the Good.

4202. In his worst distress Job was patient and constant in faith, but apparently his wife was not. According to the Book of Job (ii. 9-10), “Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.” He must have said in his haste to the woman that he would beat her: he is asked now to correct her with only a wisp of grass, to show that he was gentle and humble as well as patient and constant.

4203. Cf. xxxviii. 30 above, where similar words are spoken of Solomon. Patience and constancy are also a form of service, if our attitude is due to an active faith in Allah, and not mere passivity. So Milton in his Sonnet: “They also serve who only stand and wait.”

4204. In the last Sûra (xxxvii. 83-113). Abraham and Isaac (and by implication Jacob) were mentioned as resisting Evil and winning through. Here they are mentioned as men with spiritual power and vision. Israelite patriarchs, who bore witness to the Gospel of the Hereafter, and were therefore a blessing to their people, for they taught the Truth.
48. And commemorate Isma'il, Elisha, and Zul-Kifl:
Each of them was
Of the company of the Good.

49. This is a Message
(Of admonition): and verily,
For the Righteous,
Is a beautiful place
Of (final) Return,—

50. Gardens of Eternity,
Whose doors will (ever)
Be open to them;

51. Therein will they
Recline (at ease);
Therein can they
Call (at pleasure)
For fruit in abundance,
And (delicious) drink;

52. And beside them will be
Chaste women restraining

4205. Isma'il, the Patriarch of the Arab race, was also mentioned (xxxvii. 101-107) as a pattern of self-sacrifice; now he is mentioned in the company of the Good, i.e., of those who were a blessing to their people. Here he is bracketed with Elisha (for whom see n. 906 to vi. 86), and Zul-Kifl (for whom see n. 2743 to xxxi. 85). All these three were examples of constancy and patience under suffering.

4206. Some of the pre-eminent examples of the Elect and the Good having been mentioned, we have now a reference to the Righteous as a body (rank and file as well as leaders) and their future in the Hereafter as won by victory over Evil.

4207. The Final Bliss will not be a hole-and-corner thing, a pale reflection of some Palace or Retreat, where mystery reigns behind closed doors. Its doors will be open, and its inmates will be free to go in and out as they will, because their wills will be purified and brought into accord with the Universal Law.

4208. See n. 4003 to xxxvi. 57.

4209. Cf. xxxvii. 48 and n. 4064, and xxxvi. 56, n. 4002. As we conceive happiness in this life, it is not complete if it is only solitary. How we hanker after some one who can share in our highest joy! That feeling is also figured here.
Their glances, (companions)
Of equal age. 4210

53. Such is the Promise
Made to you
For the Day of Account!

54. Truly such will be
Our Bounty (to you);
It will never fail;—

55. Yea, such! But—
For the wrong-doers
Will be an evil place 4211
Of (final) Return!—

56. Hell!—they will burn
Therein,—an evil bed
(Indeed, to lie on)!— 4212

57. Yea, such!—Then
Shall they taste it,—
A boiling fluid, and a fluid 4213
Dark, murky, intensely cold!—

58. And other Penalties
Of a similar kind,
To match them!

4210. To make the social happiness complete, we want companionship of equal age. Age and youth cannot be happy together. It is not suggested that in the Timeless state figured here, there will be old age; but if it is possible to conceive of temperamental differences then, the company will be so arranged that it will be congenial. Or we can accept the type of youth and freshness as common to all in that happy state.

4211. This is in parallel contrast to the state of the Blessed in xxxviii. 49 above.

4212. Cf. xiv. 29. This continues the parallel contrast to the state of the Blessed already described.

4213. Cf. x. 4, and n. 1390. The conjunction of the boiling fluid with the dark, murky, intensely cold fluid heightens the effect of the Penalty. In place of harmony, there is the discord of extreme opposites. And the discord is not confined to this: it runs through the whole idea of Hell. See the next verse.
59. Here is a troop
Rushing headlong with you!\textsuperscript{4214}
No welcome for them!
Truly, they shall burn
In the Fire!

60. (The followers shall cry
To the misleaders:)
“Nay, ye (too)! No welcome
For you! It is ye who
Have brought this upon us!\textsuperscript{4215}
Now evil is (this) place
To stay in!”

61. They will say: “Our Lord!
Whoever brought this upon us,-
Add to him a double\textsuperscript{4216}
Chastisement in the Fire!”

62. And they will say:
How is it with us:
That we see not men
Who we used to number
Among the bad ones?\textsuperscript{4217}

63. “Did we treat them
(As such) in ridicule,

\textsuperscript{4214} The wonder is that so many people should embrace Evil, and in so much hurry and eagerness! Here they may be welcomed by the leaders of Evil, but in the final state it will be the opposite of welcome. They will be followed with reproaches and curses.

\textsuperscript{4215} It is the nature of Evil to shift the blame on to others. The followers will reproach the leaders, but none can escape personal responsibility for his own acts and deeds!

\textsuperscript{4216} Cf. vii. 38, and n. 1019. See also xi. 20. The evil ones now vent their spite on others. Here they ask for a double penalty for their misleaders, but they forget their own personal responsibility. In the next verse, they express their surprise that others have escaped the torments, which they themselves have earned!

\textsuperscript{4217} The bad ones: i.e., the ones whom they (evil ones) ridiculed as fools sure to come to an evil end, because they refused to join in with the evil ones in their plots. The values are now reversed. The good ones are among the Blessed, and are not to be seen in the “Bed of Misery”. The ridicule is now against the evil ones.
Or have (our) eyes
Failed to perceive them?"

64. That is true,—

The mutual recriminations
Of the People of the Fire!

SECTION 5.

65. Say: "Truly am I
A Warner: no god
Is there but Allah,
The One, Supreme and
Irresistible,—

66. "The Lord of the heavens
And the earth, and all
Between,—Exalted in Might,
Ever-Forgiving.

67. Say: "That is a Tremendous
Tidings.

68. "From which ye
Do turn away!"

4218. The mutual recriminations and spite are themselves a part of the Penalty, for such feelings increase their unhappiness.

4219. Cf. xii. 39, where Joseph preaches to the men in prison. The one supreme Message of importance to mankind was (and is) the Unity of Allah: that He is the Creator and Sustainer of all: that His Will is supreme; that He can carry out His Will without question, and no powers of Evil can defeat it; and that He forgives by His grace again and again. This Message the holy Prophet came to deliver, and he delivered it.

4220. In n. 2818 to xxii. 40, I have explained the full import of ‘Azīz as a title applied to Allah, and I have expressed two of the leading ideas involved, in the two lines here. The argument in this Sūra turns upon the contrast between earthly Power and the Divine Power: the one is impotent and the other is supreme.

4221. Gaffār is the emphatic intensive form, and I have accordingly translated it as "forgiving again and again". Cf. xx. 82.

4222. The Message which is of supreme import to mankind,—from that they turn away. Instead of profiting by it, they turn away to side issues, or unprofitable speculation: such as: what is the origin of Evil; when will Judgment come? etc.
69. "No knowledge have I
Of the Exalted Chiefs,
When they discuss
(Matters) among themselves." 4223

70. "Only this has been revealed
To me: that I am
To give warning
Plainly and publicly." 4224

71. Behold, thy Lord said 4225
To the angels: "I am
About to create man
From clay:" 4226

72. "When I have fashioned him
And breathed
Into him of My spirit, 4227
Fall ye down in prostration
Unto him."

73. So the angels prostrated themselves,
All of them together:

4223. The hierarchy of angels in Heaven, discuss questions of high import in the Universe. Those are not necessarily revealed to men, except in so far as it is good for men to know, as in verses 71-85 below. But the chief thing for man is to know that Allah is Most Merciful, that He forgives again and again, and that Evil has no power over those who trust in Allah.

4224. Two things are implied in Mubin: (1) that the warning should be clear and perspicuous; there should be no mincing of matters, no ambiguity, no compromise with evil, vii. 184; (2) that the warning should be delivered publicly, before all people, in spite of opposition and persecution, xxvi. 115. Both these ideas I have tried to express in this passage.

4225. Two passages may be compared with this: viz.: (1) ii. 30-39, where merely the first stages of the Rebellion against Allah and its consequences to mankind are mentioned, and (2) xv. 29-40, where the further intrusion of evil in man's life here below is referred to, and an assurance is given that Evil will have no power except over those who yield to it. The latter is the passage most relevant here, as we are now dealing with the spiritual power of Revelation to defeat the machinations of Evil.

4226. This shows that the material world round us was created by Allah before Allah fashioned man and breathed of His soul into him. Geology also shows that man came on the scene at a very late stage in the history of this planet.

4227. See n. 1968 to xv. 29, where the spiritual significance of this is explained.
74. Not so Iblis: he
Was haughty, and became\textsuperscript{4228}
One of those who reject Faith.

75. (Allah) said: "O Iblis!
What prevents thee from
Prostrating thyself to one
Whom I have created
With My hands?\textsuperscript{4229}
Art thou haughty?
Or art thou one\textsuperscript{4230}
Of the high (and mighty) ones?

76. (Iblis) said: "I am better
Than he: Thou createst
Me from fire, and him
Thou createst from clay."

77. (Allah) said: "Then get thee
Out from here: for thou
Art rejected, accursed.

78. "And My Curse shall be
On thee till the Day\textsuperscript{4231}
Of Judgment."

79. (Iblis) said: "O my Lord!
Give me then respite\textsuperscript{4232}
Till the Day
The (dead) are raised."

\textsuperscript{4228}. Arrogance (self-love) is thus the root of Evil and of Unfaith.

\textsuperscript{4229}. Man, as typified by Adam, is in himself nothing but frail clay. But as fashioned
by Allah's creative power into something with Allah's spirit breathed into him, his dignity
is raised above that of the highest creatures.

\textsuperscript{4230}. If, then, Satan refuses, it is a rebellion against Allah. It arises from arrogance
or haughtiness, an exaggerated idea of Self. Or, it is asked, are you really sufficiently
high in rank to dispute with the Almighty? Of course he was not.

\textsuperscript{4231}. See n. 1972 to xv. 35, where it is explained why the respite is to the Day of
Judgment. The whole of that passage in S. xv. forms a good commentary on this.

\textsuperscript{4232}. For the significance of the respite see n. 1973 to xv. 36.
80. (Allah) said: "Respite then
   Is granted thee—
81. "Till the Day
   Of the Time Appointed." 4233
82. (Iblis) said: "Then,
   By Thy Power, 4234 I will
   Lead them all astray. 4235
83. "Except Thy Servants
   Amongst them, sincere
   And purified (by Thy grace)."
84. (Allah) said:
   "This is the Truth,
   And the Truth
   I say. 4236
85. "That I will certainly fill 4237
   Hell with thee
   And those that follow thee,−
   Every one."

4233. It is not an indefinite respite. It is for a period definitely limited, while this
our Probation lasts in this world. It is part of the test as to how we use our limited free-
will. After that, our whole existence will be on a different plane. The good will have
been sorted out, the chain of consequences of the present world will be broken, and "a
new Creation" will have taken the place of the present World.

4234. This phrase, this oath of Satan, is a fresh point introduced in this passage,
because here we are dealing with Power—the Power of Good contrasted with Evil,—the
Power of Allah as contrasted with the power that we see in our earthly affairs. Satan
acknowledges that even his Power, such as it is, has no reality except in so far as it is
permitted to operate by Allah in Allah's wise and universal Plan, and that it cannot harm
the true and sincere worshippers of Allah.

4235. See n. 1974 to xv. 39.

4236. Cf. n. 1990 to xv. 64.

4237. Cf. vii. 18; vii. 179; and xi. 119, n. 1623. The punishment of defiance,
disobedience, and rebellion is inevitable and just, and the followers who chose to identify
themselves with the disobedience must suffer as well as the leaders. Cf. x. 33.
86. Say: "No reward do I ask\textsuperscript{4238}
Of you for this (Qur-\textsuperscript{\textcircled{a}}\textsuperscript{n}),
Nor am I a pretender.\textsuperscript{4239}

87. "This is no less than
A Reminder to (all)\textsuperscript{4240}
The Worlds.

88. "And ye shall certainly
Know the truth of it (all)\textsuperscript{4241}
After a while."

\textsuperscript{4238} Cf. xxv. 57; xxvi. 109; and many other passages. The prophet of Allah neither seeks nor expects any reward from men. On the contrary he suffers much at their hands. He is unselfish and offers his services under Allah’s inspiration. He is satisfied with the hope “that each one who will may take a straight Path to his Lord.” That is his reward. And the reward he hopes for from Allah is similarly unselfish. He earnestly hopes to win His Good Pleasure i.e. “to see His Face.”

\textsuperscript{4239} Mutakallif: a man who pretends to things that are not true, or declares as facts things that do not exist, one who takes upon himself tasks to which he is not equal. True prophets are not people of that kind.

\textsuperscript{4240} So far from there being any false or selfish motive in the Message proclaimed in Revelation, it is a healing mercy to all mankind. More, it is in accord with all parts of Allah’s Creation, and makes us kin with all Creation, the handiwork of the One True God.

\textsuperscript{4241} There may be many things which we in our “muddy vesture of decay” may not fully understand or take in. If we only follow the right Path, we shall arrive at the Goal in the Hereafter, and then everything will be clear to us.