INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Jāthiyya, 45.

This is the sixth Sūra of the Ḥā-Mīm series: for their general theme and chronology, see the Introduction to S. xl.

Summary.—The title, “Bowing the knee”, taken from verse 28, expresses the leading idea in the Sūra. In this life, in spite of the Signs of Allah, and the evidences of His goodness all around, men go about in Unfaith, and mocking at Faith; but the End will bring them all to their knees.
Al-Jāthiyya, or Bowing the Knee.

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

1. Hā-Mim. 4735

2. The revelation 4736
   Of the Book
   Is from Allah
   The Exalted in Power,
   Full of Wisdom.

3. Verily in the heavens 4737
   And the earth, are Signs
   For those who believe.

4. And in the creation 4738
   Of yourselves and the fact
   That animals are scattered
   (Through the earth), are Signs
   For those of assured Faith.

5. And in the alternation 4739
   Of Night and Day,
   And the fact that Allah

4735. See Introduction to S. xl.

4736. This verse is the same as xl. 2, except that “wisdom” is here substituted in
   the last line for “knowledge”. This is appropriate, as in this Sūra we are dealing with
   the folly of those who reject Allah and His Signs, while S. xl. dealt with the individual
   soul’s witness to Faith and Virtue.

4737. Verses 3-5 deal with some of the points in the noble argument in ii. 164, but
   again there are differences on account of the different context. Note that here the
   argument is divided into three parts, one in each verse. (1) In verse 3 we are dealing
   with big Signs external to ourselves, some of which are far beyond our personal
   experiences: for them we require Faith: they are Signs “for those who believe.” For the
   other two see the next two notes.

4738. (2) These Signs are in our own nature and in the animals we meet with every
   day; here we have certainty within human limits: these are “for those of assured Faith”.

4739. (3) These are our daily experiences from external things, but they affect us and
   our lives intimately: here are questions of deductions “for those that are wise.”
Sends down Sustenance⁴⁷⁴⁰ from
The sky, and revives therewith
The earth after its death,
And in the change
Of the winds,—are Signs
For those that are wise.

6. Such are the Signs⁴⁷⁴¹
Of Allah, which We rehearse to thee
In truth: then in what
Exposition will they believe
After Allah
And His Signs?

7. Woe to each sinful
Imposter.⁴⁷⁴²

8. He hears the Signs
Of Allah rehearsed to him,
Yet is obstinate and lofty,
As if he had not
Heard them: then announce
To him a Chastisement Grievous!

9. And when he learns
Something of Our Signs,
He takes them in jest:

⁴⁷⁴⁰. "Sustenance" is almost equivalent here to "rain". And "rain" itself, and its
revival of a dead earth, refer symbolically to Revelation and its putting new life into a
dead soul. Similarly the alternation of Night and Day, and the change of the winds,
besides being Signs as wonderful phenomena of Nature, refer to spiritual ignorance and
knowledge, rest and activity, and the constant beneficent changes that are going on in
the world, making for the spread of the blessing of Allah's Revelation.

⁴⁷⁴¹. If there are any to whom the Signs from Nature, from within their own heart
and conscience, and from the voice of Revelation, are not enough to convince them, what
possible kind of exposition will they accept?

⁴⁷⁴². A soul so dead, as described in the last note, is indeed wretched. It will resort
to falsehoods, in worship, in conduct, and in its attitude towards Allah. It will be
obstinate, and pretend to be 'above such things'. It will hear the most beautiful Message
but not profit by it. The loss or punishment is its own, and grievous it is!
10. In front of them is
Hell: and of no profit
To them is anything
They may have earned,
Nor any protectors they
May have taken to themselves
Besides Allah: for them
Is a tremendous Chastisement. 4744

11. This is (true) Guidance:
And for those who reject
The Signs of their Lord,
Is a grievous Chastisement
Of abomination. 4745

SECTION 2.

12. It is Allah Who has
Subjected the sea to you, 4746
That ships may sail
Through it by His command,
That ye may seek
Of His Bounty, and that
Ye may be grateful.

13. And He has subjected
To you, as from Him,
All that is in the heavens\(^{4747}\)
And on earth: behold,
In that are Signs indeed
For those who reflect.

14. Tell those who believe,
To forgive those who
Do not hope
For the Days of Allah;\(^{4748}\)
It is for Him to recompense\(^{4749}\)
(For good or ill) each People\(^{4750}\)
According to what
They have earned.

15. If any one does\(^{4751}\)
A righteous deed,
It is to his
Own benefit;

= help us to seek the “Bounty of Allah”, not only in a commercial but in an intellectual and spiritual sense. All this is through “Allah’s command” i.e., by His beneficent ordering of the universe, and we should be grateful.

4747. Cf. xxxi. 20, and n. 3605. The sea was only one example of Allah’s cherishing care in making all things in nature available for the use of man, through the genius and faculties which He has given to man. Man should never forget that it is all “as from Him”, i.e., from Allah.

4748. Cf. xiv: 5.

4749. Allah will give due recompense for good or evil according to His own full Knowledge and righteous Plan, and in His own good time.

4750. “People” here may be taken to be a group of common characteristics, e.g., the righteous in contrast with the unrighteous, the oppressed in contrast with the oppressors, and so on.

4751. Ordinarily good and evil come to their own even in this world; but in any case there is the final Judgment before Allah.
If he does evil,
It works against
(His own soul).
In the end will ye
(All) be brought back
To your Lord.

16. We did aforetime
Grant to the Children⁴⁷⁵²
Of Israel the Book,
The Power of Command,
And Prophethood; We gave
Them, for Sustenance, things⁴⁷⁵³
Good and pure; and We
Favoured them above the nations.

17. And We granted them
Clear Signs in affairs
(Of Religion): it was only⁴⁷⁵⁴
After knowledge had been
Granted to them that they
Fell into schisms, through
Insolent envy⁴⁷⁵⁵ among themselves
Verily thy Lord will judge
Between them on the Day
Of Judgment as to those
Matters in which they
Set up differences.

⁴⁷⁵² The argument here is similar to that in xlv. 32-33 but; it is more particularised
here. Israel had the Revelation given through Moses, the power of judgment and
command through the Kingdom of David and Solomon, and numerous prophetic warnings
through such men as Isaiah and Jeremiah.

⁴⁷⁵³ “Sustenance”. The Mosaic Law laid down rules of diet, excluding things
unclean, and it laid down rules for a pure and honourable life. In this way Israel became
the standard-bearer of Allah’s law, thus “favoured above the nations”.

⁴⁷⁵⁴ Cf. x. 93. The Jews were the more to blame that they fell from Grace after
all the divine favours which they had enjoyed. Their schisms and differences arose from
mutual envy, which was rebellious insolence against Allah. As the next verse shows, some
of them (not all) rejected the mission of the holy Prophet, also through envy that a
Prophet had come among the Arabians.

⁴⁷⁵⁵ Cf. ii. 90, and that whole passage, with its notes.
18. Then We put thee
   On the (right) Way⁴⁷⁵⁶
Of Religion: so follow
Thou that (Way),
And follow not the desires
Of those who know not.

19. They will be of no
   Use to thee in the sight⁴⁷⁵⁷
Of Allah: it is only
Wrong-doers (that stand as)
Protectors, one to another:
But Allah is the Protector
Of the Righteous.

20. These are clear evidences⁴⁷⁵⁸
   To men, and a Guidance
And Mercy to those
Of assured Faith.

21. What! do those who
   Do evil deeds
Think that We shall
Make them as equal with⁴⁷⁵⁹
Those who believe and
Do righteous deeds,—that

---

⁴⁷⁵⁶. Sharrat is best translated the “right Way of Religion”, which is wider than the mere formal rites and legal provisions, which mostly came in the Madinah period, long after this Makkah verse had been revealed.

⁴⁷⁵⁷. That is, in the service of Allah. Ignorant and contentious men are of no use or service to any Cause. The more you seek their help, the more do their ignorance and their contentiousness increase their own importance in their own eyes. Evil protects (or thinks it protects) evil: it has really no power of protection at all, for itself or for others. The righteous seek the protection of Allah, Who can and will protect them.

⁴⁷⁵⁸. The evidences of Allah’s Signs should be clear to all men: to men of Faith, who accept Allah’s Grace, they are a Guide and a Mercy.

⁴⁷⁵⁹. Three meanings can be deduced. (1) The evil ones are not in Allah’s sight like the righteous ones; neither in life nor in death are they equal; in life the righteous are guided by Allah and receive His Grace, and after death His Mercy, while the others reject His Grace, and after death receive condemnation. (2) Neither are the two the same in this life and in the after-life; if the wicked flourish here, they will be condemned in the
Equal will be their
Life and their death?
Ill is the judgment
That they make.

SECTION 3.

22. Allah created the heavens
And the earth for
Just ends, and in order
That each soul may find
The recompense of what
It has earned, and none
Of them shall be wronged.

23. Then seest thou such
A one as takes
As his god his own
Vain desire? Allah has,
Knowing (him as such),
Left him astray, and sealed
His hearing and his heart
(And understanding), and put
A cover on his sight.
Who, then, will guide him

= Hereafter; if the good are in suffering or sorrow here, they will receive comfort and consolation in the Hereafter. (3) The real life of the righteous is not like the nominal life of the wicked, which is really death; nor is the physical death of the righteous, which will bring them into eternal life, like the terrible death of the wicked which will bring them to eternal misery.

4760. Cf. xlv. 38-39, and n. 4717. The government of the world is so ordered that each soul gets every chance for its full development, and it reaps the fruit of all its activities. If it breaks away from Allah's Grace, it suffers, but no injustice is done to anyone: on the contrary Allah's Bounty is always beyond man's deserts.

4761. If a man follows, not the laws of Allah, which are also the laws of his own pure nature as made by Allah, but the desires of his own distorted self, as shaped by the rebellion of his will, the inevitable consequence will be the withdrawal of Allah's grace and guidance. All his faculties will then be debased, and there will be nothing to guide him, unless he turns in repentance again to Allah.

4762. Cf. ii. 7 and notes.
After Allah (has withdrawn Guidance)? Will ye not Then receive admonition?

24. And they say: “What is There but our life In this world? We shall die and we live, And nothing but Time Can destroy us.” But Of that they have no Knowledge: they merely conjecture:

25. And when Our Clear Signs are rehearsed to them, Their argument is nothing But this: they say, “Bring (Back) our forefathers, if What ye say is true!”

26. Say: “It is Allah Who Gives you life, then Gives you death; then He will gather you together For the Day of Judgment About which there is No doubt”: but most Men do not know.

4763. Cf. xxiii. 37, and n. 2896. The additional touch here, “And nothing but Time can destroy us”, suggests the materialist philosophy that Matter and Time are eternal backwards and forwards; and possibly also that though each individual perishes, the race lasts till Time destroys it. This is not knowledge but conjecture. Why not accept light from Him Who knows all.

4764. Cf. xlv. 36. It is no argument to say, “If there is a future life, bring back our forefathers and let us see them here and now!” It is not for a man to raise the dead when and where he pleases. It is for Allah to command. And His promise is about the general Resurrection for the Day of Judgment. In His hands are the keys of life and death.
SECTION 4.

27. To Allah belongs
   The dominion of the heavens
   And the earth, and
   The Day that the Hour
   Of Judgment is established,—
   That Day will the followers\^4765
   Of Falsehood perish!

28. And thou wilt see
   Every nation bowing the knee:\^4766
   Every nation will be called
   To its Record: “This Day
   Shall ye be recompensed
   For all that ye did!”

29. “This Our Record speaks
   About you with truth:
   For We were wont\^4767
   To put on record
   All that ye did.”

30. Then, as to those who
   Believed and did righteous
   Deeds, their Lord will

---

4765. These vain wranglers about the future life and deniers of the Truth may have
a run in this fleeting world; but the moment the world of Reality is established, they
will see what they now deny. The facts will destroy their fancies, and they themselves
will find themselves humiliated and lost, for having deliberately ignored Allah’s Signs and
acted on opposition to His holy Will.

Whatever the arrogance of the wicked may be in this life, whatever exclusive sects and
divisions they may form, in this life, the time will come when they will humbly submit
and bow the knee to the Truth. Before Allah, when their Record is produced, they must
necessarily be dumb.

4767. Cf. xliii. 80. Nothing misses the Recording Angel, and whatever is said in the
Record is true.
Admit them to His Mercy:  
*That will be the manifest triumph.*

31. But as to those who 
Rejected Allah, (to them 
Will be said): "Were not 
Our Signs rehearsed to you? 
But ye were arrogant, 
And were a people 
Given to sin!

32. "And when it was said 
That the promise of Allah 
Was true, and that the Hour— 
There was no doubt 
About its (coming), ye 
Used to say, 'We 
Know not what is' 
The Hour: we only think 
It a conjecture, and we 
Have no firm assurance.'"

33. Then will appear to them 
The evil (fruits) of what 
They did, and they will be 
Completely encircled by that 
Which they used to mock at!

---

4768. The attainment and satisfaction of all hopes and desires; the reaching of the final goal of Bliss. *Cf.* xliv. 57, and n. 4733.

4769. There is arrogance as well as untruth in this pretence. The coming of Judgment has been proclaimed times out of number by every prophet of Allah. They cannot dismiss it as a mere idea or superstition. Their object is merely an ostentatious and lofty rejection of Faith.

4770. *Cf.* xi. 8. Their mockery will be turned against themselves, for they will be hemmed in by the very Realities which they had ignored or doubted or laughed at.
34. It will also be said:

“This Day We will forget\textsuperscript{4771}
You as ye forgot
The meeting of this Day
Of yours! And your
Abode is the Fire, and
No helpers have ye!

35. “This, because ye used
To take the Signs of Allah
In jest, and the life
Of the world deceived you:\textsuperscript{4772}
(From) that Day, therefore,
They shall not be taken out
Thence, nor can they
Make amends.

36. Then Praise be to Allah,\textsuperscript{4773}
Lord of the heavens
And Lord of the earth,
Lord and Cherisher
Of all the worlds!

37. And unto Him (alone)
Belongeth Majesty in the heavens
And the earth: and He
Is Exalted in Power,
Full of Wisdom!

\textsuperscript{4771} Cf. vii. 51 and n. 1029. “Forget” is of course metaphorical for “deliberately
to ignore”.

\textsuperscript{4772} It is implied that ‘you deliberately allowed yourselves to be deceived by the
vanities of this world’, or ‘that you put yourselves into a position where you were
deceived, for you were expressly warned against Evil.’

\textsuperscript{4773} The argument having been completed about the fruits of this life being reaped
in the \textit{Ma‘ād}, or the Hereafter, when perfect balance will be restored and perfect Justice
will reign supreme, the Sura closes with praise and glory to Allah, Who is not only
Omnipotent but is full of Wisdom, and cherishes and cares for all His creation. We began
with the remembrance of His Revelation and Mercy, and we close with the celebration
of His goodness, power, and wisdom. Note how the argument is rounded off by the
reminiscence of the last clause of the second verse of this Sūra.