INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Mujādila, 58.

This is the second of the ten Madinah Sūras referred to in the Introduction to the last Sūra. Its subject-matter is the acceptance of a woman's Plea on behalf of herself and her children (see n. 5330 to Iviii. 1 below), and a condemnation of all secret counsels and intrigues in the Muslim Brotherhood.

The date is somewhat close to that of S. xxxiii. say between A.H. 5 and A.H. 7.

Summary.— All false pretences, especially those that degrade a woman's position, are condemned,—as well as secret consultations between men and intrigues with falsehood, mischief, and sedition. (Iviii. 1-22).
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

1. Allah has indeed heard (and accepted) the statement of the woman who pleads with thee concerning her husband and carries her complaint (In prayer) to Allah: And Allah (always) hears the arguments between both of you: for Allah hears and sees (all things).

2. If any men among you divorce their wives by Zihār (Calling them mothers), they cannot be their mothers: None can be their mothers except those who gave them birth. And in fact they use words (both) iniquitous and false: but truly

5330. The immediate occasion was what happened to Khawla bint Tha'laba, wife of Aus son of Šāmīt. Though in Islam, he divorced her by an old Pagan custom: the formula was known as Zihār, and consisted of the words “Thou art to me as the back of my mother”. This was held by Pagan custom to imply a divorce and freed the husband from any responsibility for conjugal duties. Such a custom was in any case degrading to a woman. It was particularly hard on Khawla, for she loved her husband and pleaded that she had little children whom she had no resources herself to support. She urged her plea to the Prophet and in prayer to Allah. Her just plea was accepted, and this iniquitous custom, based on false words, was abolished. See also n. 3670 to xxxiii. 4.

5331. For He is a just God, and will not allow human customs or pretences to trample on the just rights of the weakest of His creatures.

5332. See n. 5330 above.

5333. Such words are false in fact and iniquitous, inasmuch as they are unfair to the wife and unseemly in decent society.
Allah is All-Pardoning,\textsuperscript{5334} All-Forgiving.

3. But those who pronounce The word *Zihār* To their wives Then wish to go back\textsuperscript{5335} On the words they uttered, (It is ordained that Such a one) Should free a slave Before they touch each other: This are ye admonished To perform: and Allah is Well-acquainted with (all) That ye do.

4. And if any has not (The means),\textsuperscript{5336} He should fast for Two months consecutively Before they touch each other, But if any is unable To do so, he should feed

\textsuperscript{5334} Cf. iv. 99 and xxii. 60. Were it not that Allah in His Mercy makes allowances for our weaknesses and the various grades of motives that actuate us, such conduct would be inexpiable. But He prescribes expiation as in the next verse, because He wishes to blot out what is wrong and give us a chance to reform by His forgiveness.

\textsuperscript{5335} If *Zihār* were to be ignored as if the words were never uttered, it would mean that men may foolishly resort to it without penalty. It is therefore recognised in respect of the penalty which the man incurs, but safeguards the woman's rights. She can sue for maintenance for herself. If it was a hasty act and be repented of it, he could not claim his conjugal rights until after the performance of his penalty as provided below.

\textsuperscript{5336} Cf. iv. 92. The penalty is: to get a slave his freedom, whether it is your own slave or you purchase his freedom from another; if that is not possible, to fast for two months consecutively (in the manner of the Ramādhān fast); if that is not possible, to feed sixty poor. See next note.
Sixty indigent ones.\textsuperscript{5337}
This, that ye may show
Your faith in Allah\textsuperscript{5338}
And His Messenger.
Those are limits (set
By) Allah. For those who
Reject (Him), there is
A grievous Chastisement.\textsuperscript{5339}

5. Those who oppose
(The commands of) Allah
And His Messenger will be
Humbled to dust, as were
Those before them: for We
Have already sent down
Clear Signs. And the Unbelievers
(Will have) a humiliating
Chastisement,

6. On the Day that
Allah will raise them
All up (again) and tell them

\textsuperscript{5337} There is a great deal of learned argument among the jurists as to the precise requirements of Canon Law under the term “feeding” the indigent. For example, it is laid down that half a Șa’s of wheat or a full Șa’s of dates or their equivalent in money would fulfil the requirements, a Șa’s being a measure corresponding roughly to about 9 lbs. of wheat in weight. Others hold that a Mudd measure equivalent to about 2\textsuperscript{1/4} lbs. would be sufficient. This would certainly be nearer the daily ration of a man. It is better to take the spirit of the text in its plain simplicity, and say that an indigent man should be given enough to eat for two meals a day. The sixty indigent ones fed for a day would be equivalent to a single individual fed for sixty days, or two for thirty days, and so on. But there is no need to go into minutiae in such matters.

\textsuperscript{5338} These penalties in the alternative are prescribed, that we may show our repentance and Faith and our renunciation of “iniquity and falsehood” (verse 2 above), whatever our circumstances may be.

\textsuperscript{5339} It would seem that this refers to the Penalty in the Hereafter for not complying with the small penalty here prescribed. The next verse would then refer to the bigger “humiliating Penalty” for “resistance” to Allah’s Law generally.
Of their deeds (which)\textsuperscript{5340} Allah has reckoned and Which they forgot, For Allah is Witness To all things.

SECTION 2.

7. Seest thou not that Allah doth know (all) that is In the heavens and On earth? There is not A secret consultation Between three, but He Is the fourth of them,—\textsuperscript{5341} Nor between five but He is the sixth,— Nor between fewer nor more, But He is with them, Wheresoever they be: In the end will He Tell them what They did on the Day Of Judgment. For Allah Has full knowledge Of all things.

\textsuperscript{5340} This phrase, “Allah will tell them of their deeds (or their doings or their conduct)” occurs frequently. See v. 51, n. 762; v. 108, n. 811; vi. 60; ix. 94; etc. In this life there is a certain mist or illusion in our spiritual sight. We see things from different angles and dispute about them; we hide real motives, and pretend to virtues which we do not possess; others may attribute such virtues to us, and we may come to believe it ourselves; we conceive likes and hatreds on insufficient grounds; we forget what we should remember, and remember what we should forget. Our vision is narrow, and our values are false. On the Day of Account all this will be remedied. Not only will true values be restored, but we shall ourselves see the inwardness of things in our own lives, which we never saw before.

\textsuperscript{5341} Secrecy is a relative and limited term among ourselves. There is nothing hidden or unknown to Allah. Usually secrecy implies fear or distrust, plotting or wrong-doing. But all is open before Allah’s sight.
8. Seest thou not
Those who were Forbidden secret counsels Yet revert to that which They were forbidden (to do)? And they hold secret counsels Among themselves for iniquity And hostility, and disobedience To the Messenger, And when They come to thee, They salute thee, Not as Allah salutes thee, (But in crooked ways): And they say to themselves, “Why does not Allah Punish us for our words?” Enough for them is Hell: In it will they burn, And evil is that destination!

9. O ye who believe!
When ye hold secret counsel, Do it not for iniquity And hostility, and disobedience To the Messenger; but do it

5342. When the Muslim Brotherhood was acquiring strength in Madinah and the forces of disruption were being discomfited in open fight against the Messenger of Righteousness, the wicked resorted to duplicity and secret intrigues, in which the ringleaders were the disaffected Jews and the Hypocrites, whose machinations have been frequently referred to in the Qur-an. E.g. see ii. 8-16; and iv. 142-145.

5343. The salutation of Allah was (and is) “Peace!” But the enemies, who had not the courage to fight openly often twisted the words, and by using a word like “Sām”, which meant “Death!” or “ Destruction!” instead of “ Salām!” (Peace!), they thought they were secretly venting their spite and yet apparently using a polite form of salutation. Cf. ii. 106, and n. 107, where another similar trick is exposed.

5344. The enemies derisively enjoyed their trick (see last note) according to their own perverted mentality. They asked blasphemously, “Why does not Allah punish us?” The answer is given: there is a Punishment, far greater than they imagine: it will come in good time: it will be the final Punishment after Judgment: it is delayed in order to give them a chance of repentance and reformation.
And fear Allah, to Whom Ye shall be brought back.

10. Secret counsels are only (Inspired) by Satan, In order that he may Cause grief to the Believers; But he cannot harm them In the least, except as Allah permits; and on Allah Let the Believers Put their trust.

11. O ye who believe! When ye are told To make room In the assemblies, (Spread out and) make room: (Ample) room will Allah provide For you. And when Ye are told to rise up,

5345. Ordinarily secrecy implies deeds of darkness, something which men have to hide; see the next verse. But there are good deeds which may be concerted and done in secret: e.g., charity, or the prevention of mischief, or the defeat of the dark plots of evil. The determining factor is the motive. Is the man doing some wrong or venting his spite, or trying to disobey a lawful command? Or is he doing some good, which out of modesty or self-renunciation he does not want known, or is he in a righteous cause defeating the machinations of Evil, which may involve great sacrifice of himself?

5346. Evil can harm no one who is good, except in so far as (1) there is some question of trial in Allah's Universal Plan, or (2) what appears to be harm may be real good. Nothing happens without Allah's will and permission. And we must always trust Him, and not our cleverness or any adventitious circumstances that draw us the least bit from the path of rectitude.

5347. Even when a great man or a Leader comes into an Assembly, we are not to press forward without discipline, as it causes inconvenience to him and detriment to public business. Nor are we to shut out other people who have equal rights to be in the Assembly. We must spread out, for Allah's earth is spacious, and so are our opportunities.

5348. "Rise up" here may imply: 'when the Assembly is dismissed, do not loiter about'.

- 1708 -
Rise up: Allah will
Raise up, to (suitable) ranks
(And degrees), those of you
Who believe and who have
Been granted Knowledge.\textsuperscript{5349}
And Allah is well-acquainted
With all ye do.

12. O ye who believe!
When ye consult
The Messenger in private,\textsuperscript{5350}
Spend something in charity
Before your private consultation.
That will be best for you,
And most conducive
To purity (of conduct).\textsuperscript{5351}
But if ye find not
(The wherewithal), Allah is
Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

\textsuperscript{5349} Faith makes all people equal in the Kindom of Allah, as regards the essentials of citizenship in the Kingdom. But there is leadership, and rank and degree, joined with greater or less responsibility, and that depends on true knowledge and insight.

\textsuperscript{5350} In the Kingdom of Allah all instruction or consultation is open and free. But human nature is weak. And people want special instruction or private consultation with the Prophet from one of several motives: (1) they may have, or think they have, a special case, which they are not willing to disclose to their brethren in general; (2) they may have some sense of delicacy or dignity, which can only be satisfied by a private interview; (3) they may even be selfish enough to want to monopolise the Prophet’s time. These motives are, in an ascending order, worth discouraging; and yet, considering the weakness of human nature, they cannot be reprobated to the extent of shutting out their victims from chances of improvement. It is therefore recommended that they spend something in charity for the good of their poorer brethren before they indulge in such weaknesses.

\textsuperscript{5351} The charity is a sort of expiation for their pardonable weakness. Having made some monetary sacrifice for their poorer brethren they could face them with less shame, and the charity would direct their attention to the need for purifying their motives and conduct. At the same time, this special charity is not made obligatory, lest such persons should be shut out altogether from chances of the higher teaching on account of their pardonable foibles.
13. Is it that ye are afraid of spending sums\textsuperscript{5352} in charity before your private consultation (with him)? If, then, ye do not so, and Allah forgives you, then (at least) establish regular prayer; give\textsuperscript{5353} Zakat and obey Allah and His Messenger. And Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

SECTION 3.

14. Seest thou not those\textsuperscript{5354} who turn (in friendship) to such as have the wrath of Allah upon them? They are neither of you nor of them, and they swear to falsehood knowingly.\textsuperscript{5356}

\textsuperscript{5352} Note the plural here, \textit{\textsuperscript{5352}Sad\textsuperscript{5352}}\textsuperscript{aq\textsuperscript{5352}}\textsuperscript{at}, instead of the singular, \textit{\textsuperscript{5352}Sad\textsuperscript{5352}}\textsuperscript{aq\textsuperscript{5352}}\textsuperscript{at} in verse 12 above. While people with the foibles described in n. 5350 may be willing to spend "something" (small) in charity for a special consultation occasionally, they may be frightened of spending large sums when their needs for consultation may be numerous. What is to be done then? Are they to be shut out altogether? No. They are asked to be punctilious in the discharge of their normal duties of at least normal regular prayers and regular charity, "if Allah forgives you", \textit{i.e.}, if Allah's Messenger relieves them of further special contributions such as those noted in verse 12. This condition, "if Allah forgives you", provides the safeguard against the abuse of the privilege. The messenger would know in each case what is best for the individual and for the community.

\textsuperscript{5353} Zakat, was instituted about A.H. 2.

\textsuperscript{5354} This refers to the Hypocrites of Madinah who pretended to be in Islam but intrigued with the Jews. See references as given in n. 5342 above.

\textsuperscript{5355} By this time the Jews of Madinah and the Jewish tribes around had become actively hostile to Islam, and were being sharply called to account for their treachery.

\textsuperscript{5356} They knew that as Muslims their duty was to refrain from the intrigues of the enemies of Islam and to assist Islam against them.
15. Allah has prepared for them
   A severe Chastisement: evil
   Indeed are their deeds.

16. They have made their oaths
   A screen (for their misdeeds):
   Thus they obstruct (men)\(^{5357}\)
   From the Path of Allah:
   Therefore shall they have
   A humiliating Chastisement.

17. Of no profit whatever
   To them, against Allah,
   Will be their riches\(^{5358}\)
   Nor their sons:
   They will be Companions
   Of the Fire, to dwell
   Therein (for aye)!

18. The Day will Allah
   Raise them all up
   (For Judgment): then
   Will they swear to Him\(^{5359}\)
   As they swear to you:
   And they think that they
   Have something (to stand upon).
   No, indeed! they are
   But liars!

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5357. A false man, by swearing that he is true, makes his falsehood all the more heinous. He stands in the way of other people accepting Truth. He gives a handle to the cynics and the sceptics.

5358. They may arrogantly boast of riches of alliances and followers in man-power. But what are such worldly advantages before the Throne of the Disposer of all events? They must come to utter misery.

5359. When Judgment is established, and before they realise the Truth, they may think (as now) that some oaths or excuses will save them. But they have not now—much less will they have then—any footing to stand upon. Falsehood is falsehood, and must perish. They must learn the worthlessness of their falsehood.
19. Satan has
Got the better of them: 5360
So he has made them
Forgot the remembrance
Of Allah. They are the Party
Of Satan. Truly,
It is the Party
Of Satan
That will lose.

20. Those who oppose
(The commands of)
Allah and His Messenger
Will be among those
Most humiliated. 5361

21. Allah has decreed:
"It is I and My messengers
Who must prevail":
For Allah is Strong, Mighty. 5362

22. Thou wilt not find
Any people who believe
In Allah and the Last Day,
Loving those who oppose
Allah and His Messenger,
Even though they were
Their fathers or their sons, 5363
Or their brothers, or

5360. Man’s original nature as created by Allah is good (xxx. 30, and n. 3541). It is because man, in spite of the warnings he has received, allows Evil to get the mastery over him, that man forgets Allah and the divine qualities which Allah give him. The result of the perversion is that man becomes a partisan of Evil, and as such dooms himself to perdition.

5361. There are various degrees of humiliation in the final state in the next world. But the worst is the humiliation of being numbered among those who ignominiously attempted to resist the Irresistible.

5362. For the meaning of ‘Azîz, see n. 2818 to xxii. 40.

5363. If any one believes in Allah and His goodness and justice, and in the Hereafter, in which all true values will be restored he will never love evil or wrong-doing or rebellion against Allah, even if these things are found in his nearest kith and kin.
Their kindred. For such
He has written Faith\(^{5364}\)
In their hearts, and strengthened
Them with a spirit\(^{5365}\)
From Himself. And He
Will admit them to Gardens
Beneath which Rivers flow,
To dwell therein (for ever).
Allah will be well pleased
With them, and they with Him.\(^{5366}\)
They are the Party\(^{5367}\)
Of Allah. Truly it is
The Party of Allah that
Will achieve Success.

\(^{5364}\) Faith in Allah is indelibly written on the tablets of their hearts and they can never be false to Allah.

\(^{5365}\) Cf. ii. 87 and 253, where it is said that Allah strengthened the Prophet Jesus with the holy spirit. Here we learn that all good and righteous men are strengthened by Allah. If anything, the phrase used here is stronger. "a spirit from Himself". Whenever any one offers his heart in faith and purity to Allah, Allah accepts it, engraves that Faith on the seeker's heart, and further fortifies him with his help which we can no more define adequately than we can define in human language the nature and attributes of Allah.

\(^{5366}\) Again we have the doctrine of Allah's Good Pleasure as the highest goal of man, the spiritual heaven which he achieves by a life of purity and faith. He not only attains Allah's Good Pleasure as the crown of his felicity, but his own nature is so far transformed to the pattern of Allah's original creation that his own good pleasure is in nothing but in Allah's Good Pleasure. The mutual good pleasure shows the heights to which man can attain.

\(^{5367}\) This is in antithesis to the Party of the Satan, mentioned in verse 19 above. The Party of Evil will perish, but while it has its run in the scheme of the present world, the Party of Truth and Reality may be rightly called the Party of Allah, even though all Creation is Allah's in another sense.