

Surah 30. Ar-Rum

30.1 Alif Lam Mim. ³⁵⁰⁴

30.2 The Roman Empire has been defeated ³⁵⁰⁵

30.3 In a land close by; but they (even) after (this) defeat of theirs will soon be victorious ³⁵⁰⁶

30.4 Within a few years. With Allah is the Decision in the Past and in the Future: on that Day shall the Believers rejoice ^{3507 3508}

30.5 With the help of Allah. He helps whom He will and He is Exalted in Might Most Merciful. ³⁵⁰⁹

³⁵¹⁰ 30.6 (It is) the promise of Allah. Never does Allah depart from His promise: but most men understand not.

^{3511 3512} 30.7 They know but the outer (things) in the life of this world: but of the End of things they are heedless.

30.8 Do they not reflect in their own minds? Not but for just ends and for a term appointed did Allah create the heavens and the earth and all between them: yet are there truly many among men who deny the meeting with their Lord (at the Resurrection)! ^{3513 3514}

30.9 Do they not travel through the earth and see what was the End of those before them? They were superior to them in strength: they tilled the soil and populated it in greater numbers than these have done: there came to them their apostles with Clear (Signs) (which they rejected to their own destruction): it was not Allah Who wronged them but they wronged their own souls. ³⁵¹⁵

30.10 In the long run evil in the extreme will be the End of those who do evil; for that they rejected the Signs of Allah and held them up to ridicule. ³⁵¹⁶

30.11 It is Allah Who begins (the process of) creation; then repeats it; then shall ye be brought back to Him. ³⁵¹⁷

30.12 On the Day that the Hour will be established the guilty will be struck dumb with despair. ³⁵¹⁸

30.13 No intercessor will they have among their "Partners" and they will (themselves) reject their "Partners." ³⁵¹⁹

30.14 On the Day that the Hour will be established that Day shall (all men) be sorted out. ³⁵²⁰

30.15 Then those who have believed and worked righteous deeds shall be made happy in a Mead of Delight.

30.16 And those who have rejected Faith and falsely denied Our Signs and the meeting of the Hereafter such shall be brought forth to Punishment.

30.17 So (give) glory to Allah when ye reach eventide and when ye rise in the morning; ³⁵²¹

30.18 Yea To Him be praise in the heavens and on earth; and in the late afternoon and when the day begins to decline.

30.19 It is He Who brings out the living from the dead and brings out the dead from the living and Who gives life to the earth after it is dead: and thus shall ye be brought out (from the dead). ^{3522 3523}

30.20 Among His Signs is this that He created you from dust; and then Behold ye are men scattered (far and wide)! ³⁵²⁴

30.21 And among His Signs is this that He created for you mates from among yourselves that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts); verily in that are

Signs for those who reflect. 3525 3526

30.22 And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variations in your languages and your colors: verily in that are Signs for those who know. ³⁵²⁷

30.23 And among His Signs is the sleep that ye take by night and by day and the quest that ye (make for livelihood) out of His Bounty: verily in that are Signs for those who hearken. ^{3528 3529}

30.24 And among His Signs He shows you the lightning by way both of fear and of hope and He sends down rain from the sky and with it gives life to the earth after it is dead: verily in that are Signs for those who are wise. ³⁵³⁰

30.25 And among His Signs is this that heaven and earth stand by His Command: then when He calls you by a single call from the earth behold ye (straightway) come forth. ³⁵³¹

30.26 To Him belongs every being that is in the heavens and on earth: all are devoutly obedient to Him. ³⁵³²

30.27 It is He Who begins (the process of) creation; then repeats it; and for Him it is most easy. To Him belongs the loftiest similitude (We can think of) in the heavens and the earth: for He is Exalted in Might Full of Wisdom. ^{3533 3534}

30.28 He does propound to you a similitude from your own (experience): do ye have partners among those whom your right hands possess to share as equals in the wealth We have bestowed on you? Do ye fear them as ye fear each other? Thus do We explain the Signs in detail to a people that understand. ³⁵³⁵
^{3536 3537 3538}

30.29 Nay the wrong-doers (merely) follow their own lusts being devoid of knowledge. But who will guide those whom Allah leaves astray? To them there will be no helpers. ³⁵³⁹

30.30 So set thou thy face steadily and truly to the Faith: (Establish) Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind: no change (let there be) in the work (wrought) by Allah: that is the standard Religion: but most among mankind understand not. ^{3540 3541 3542}

30.31 Turn ye back in repentance to Him and fear Him: establish regular prayers and be not ye among those who join gods with Allah, ³⁵⁴³

30.32 Those who split up their Religion and become (mere) Sects each party rejoicing in that which is with itself! ³⁵⁴⁴

30.33 When trouble touches men they cry to their Lord turning back to Him in repentance: but when He gives them a taste of Mercy as from Himself behold some of them pay part-worship to other gods besides their Lord. ³⁵⁴⁵

30.34 (As if) to show their ingratitude for the (favours) We have bestowed on them! Then enjoy (your brief day); but soon will ye know (your folly). ³⁵⁴⁶

30.35 Or have We sent down authority to them which points out to them the things to which they pay part-worship? ³⁵⁴⁷

30.36 When We give men a taste of Mercy they exult thereat: and when some evil afflicts them because of what their (own) hands have sent forth behold they are in despair! ³⁵⁴⁸

30.37 See they not that Allah enlarges the provision and restricts it to whomsoever He pleases? Verily in that are Signs for those who believe. ³⁵⁴⁹

30.38 So give what is due to kindred the needy and the wayfarer. That is best for those who seek the Countenance of Allah and it is they who will prosper. ^{3550 3551}

30.39 That which ye lay out for increase through the property of (other) people will have no increase with Allah: but that which ye lay out for charity seeking the Countenance of Allah (will increase): it is these who will get a recompense multiplied. ^{3552 3553}

30.40 It is Allah Who has created you: further He has provided for your sustenance; then He will cause you to die; and again He will give you life. Are there any of your (false) "Partners" who can do any single one of these things? Glory to Him! and High is He above the partners they attribute (to Him)! ^{3554 3555}

30.41 Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the meed) that the hands of men have earned that (Allah) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from Evil). ³⁵⁵⁶
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30.42 Say: "Travel through the earth and see what was the End of those before (you): most of them worshipped others besides Allah." ³⁵⁵⁸

30.43 But set thou thy face to the right Religion before there come from Allah the Day which there is no chance of averting: on that Day shall men be divided (in two). ^{3559 3560}

30.44 Those who reject Faith will suffer from that rejection: and those who work righteousness will spread their couch (of repose) for themselves (in heaven):

30.45 That He may reward those who believe and work righteous deeds out of His Bounty: for He loves not those who reject Faith. ^{3561 3562}

30.46 Among His Signs is this that He sends the Winds as heralds of Glad Tidings giving you a taste of His (Grace and) Mercy that the ships may sail (majestically) by His Command and that ye may seek of His Bounty: in order that ye may be grateful. ^{3563 3564 3565}

30.47 We did indeed send before thee apostles to their (respective) peoples and they came to them with Clear Signs: then to those who transgressed We meted out Retribution: and it was due from us to aid those who believed.

30.48 It is Allah Who sends the Winds and they raise the Clouds: then does He spread them in the sky as He wills and break them into fragments until thou seest rain-drops issue from the midst thereof: then when He has made them reach such of his servants as He wills behold they do rejoice! ^{3566 3567}

30.49 Even though before they received (the rain) just before this they were dumb with despair!

30.50 Then contemplate (O man!) the memorials of Allah's Mercy! How He gives life to the earth after its death: verily the Same will give life to the men who are dead: for He has power over all things. ³⁵⁶⁸

30.51 And if We (but) send a Wind from which they see (their tilth) turn yellow behold they become thereafter ungrateful (Unbelievers)! ³⁵⁶⁹

30.52 So verily thou canst not make the dead to hear nor canst thou make the deaf to hear the call when they show their backs and turn away. ³⁵⁷⁰

30.53 Nor canst thou lead back the blind from their straying: only those wilt thou make to hear who believe in Our Signs and submit (their wills in Islam). ³⁵⁷¹

30.54 It is Allah Who created you in a state of (helpless) weakness then gave (you) strength after weakness then after strength give (you) weakness and a hoary head: He creates as He wills and it is He Who has all knowledge and power. ³⁵⁷²

30.55 On the Day that the Hour (of reckoning) will be established the transgressors will swear that they tarried not but an hour: thus were they used to being deluded! ³⁵⁷³

30.56 But those endued with knowledge and faith will say: "Indeed ye did tarry within Allah's Decree to the Day of Resurrection and this is the Day of Resurrection: but ye ye were not aware!" ³⁵⁷⁴

30.57 So on that Day no excuse of theirs will avail the Transgressors nor will they be invited (then) to seek grace (by repentance). ³⁵⁷⁵

30.58 Verily We have propounded for men in this Qur'an every kind of Parable: but if thou bring to them any Sign the Unbelievers are sure to say "Ye do nothing but talk vanities." ³⁵⁷⁶

30.59 Thus does Allah seal up the hearts of those who understand not. ³⁵⁷⁷

30.60 So patiently persevere: for verily the promise of Allah is true: nor let those shake thy firmness who have (themselves) no certainty of faith. ³⁵⁷⁸

Author Comments

3504 - See n. 25 to ii. 1 and Introduction to this Sura.

3505 - The remarkable defeats of the Roman Empire under Heraclius and the straits to which it was reduced are reviewed in Appendix No. 6 (to follow this Sura). It was not merely isolated defeats; the

Roman Empire lost most of its Asiatic territory and was hemmed in on all sides at its capital, Constantinople. The defeat, "in a land close by" must refer to Syria and Palestine, Jerusalem was lost in 614-15 A.D., shortly before this Sura was revealed.

3506 - The Pagan Quraish of Makkah rejoiced at the overthrow of Rome by Persia. They were pro-Persian, and in their heart of hearts they hoped that the nascent movement of Islam, which at that time was, from a worldly point of view, very weak and helpless, would also collapse under their persecution. But they misread the true Signs of the times. They are told here that they would soon be disillusioned in both their calculations, and it actually so happened at the battle of Issus in 622 (the year of Hijrat) and in 624, when Heraclius carried his campaign into the heart of Persia (see Appendix No: 6) and the Makkan Quraish were beaten off at Badr.

3507 - Bidh'un in the text means a short period—a period of from three to nine years. The period between the loss of Jerusalem (614-15) by the Romans and their victory at Issus (622) was seven years, and that to the penetration of Persia by Heraclius was nine years. See last note.

3508 - See n. 3506 and Appendix No: 6. The battle of Badr (2 A.H. = 624 A.D.) was a real time of rejoicing for the Believers and a time of disillusionment for the arrogant Quraish, who thought that they could crush the whole movement of Islam in Madinah as they had tried to do in Makkah. but they were signally repulsed. See n. 352 to iii. 13.

3509 - "Whom He will." As explained elsewhere, Allah's Will or Plan is not arbitrary: it is full of the highest wisdom. His Plan is formed in mercy, so as to safeguard the interests of all his creatures, against the selfish aggrandizement of any section of them. And He is able to carry out His Plan in full, and there is no power that can stop or delay His Plan.

3510 - The promise refers to the Decision of all things by the Command of Allah, Who will remove all troubles and difficulties from the path of His righteous Believers, and help them to rejoice over the success of their righteous Cause. This refers to all times and all situations. The righteous should not despair in their darkest moments, for Allah's help will come. Ordinarily men are puffed up if they score a seeming temporary success against the righteous, and do not realize that Allah's Will can never be thwarted.

3511 - Men are misled by the outward show of things, though the inner reality may be quite different. Many seeming disasters are really godsend if we only understood.

3512 - Akhirat: may refer to the End of things or enterprises in history as well as the Hereafter in the technical theological sense.

3513 - f. xv. 85. Here the argument is about the ebb and flow of worldly power, and the next clause is appropriately added, "and for a term appointed". Let not any one who is granted worldly power or advantage run away with the notion that it is permanent. It is definitely limited in the high Purpose of Allah, which is just and true. And an account will have to be given of it afterwards on basis of strict personal responsibility.

3514 - It is therefore all the more strange that there should be men who not only forget themselves but even deny that there is a return to Allah or an End or Hereafter, when a full reckoning will be due for this period of probation. They are asked to study past history, as in the next verse.

3515 - Let not any generation think that it is superior to all that went before it. We may be "heirs to all the ages, in the foremost files of times." That is no reason for arrogance, but on the contrary adds to our responsibility. When we realize what flourishing cities and kingdoms existed before, how they flourished in numbers and prosperity, what chances they were given, and how they perished when they disobeyed the law of Allah, we shall feel a sense of humility, and see that it was rebellion and self-will that brought them down. Allah was more than just. He was also merciful. But they brought about their own ruin.

3516 - The Arabic superlative feminine, referring to the feminine noun Aqibat, I have translated by "Evil". In this life good and evil may seem to be mixed up, and it may be that some things or persons that are evil get what seem to be good rewards or blessings, while the opposite happens to the good. But this is only a temporary appearance. In the long run Evil will have its own evil consequences, multiplied cumulatively. And this, because evil not only rejected Allah's Message of Good but laughed at Good and misled others.

3517 - Nothing exists of its own accord or fortuitously. It is Allah Who originates all creation. What appears

to be death may be only transformation: for Allah can and does recreate. And His creative activity is continuous. Our death is but a phenomenal event. What we become after death is the result of a process of recreation by Allah, Who is both the source and the goal of all things. When we are brought back to him, it will be as conscious and responsible beings, to receive the consequences of our brief life on this earth.

3518 - The Hour will be established: in due time the Hour will come when Judgment will be established, and the seeming disturbance of balance in this world will be redressed. Then the Good will rejoice, and the Guilty, faced with the Realities, will lose all their illusions and be struck dumb with despair.

3519 - False worship will then appear in its true colors. Anything to which we offered the worship due to Allah alone, will vanish instead of being of any help. Indeed the deluded false worshipers, whose eyes will now be opened, will themselves reject their falsehoods, as the Truth will now shine with unquestioned splendor.

3520 - In the fullness of time good and evil will all be sorted out and separated. The good will reach their destination of felicity in rich and luscious, well-watered meadows, which stand as the type of all that is fair to see and pleasant to feel. The evil will no longer imagine that they are enjoying good fortune, for the testing time will be over, and the grim reality will stare them in the face. They will receive their just Punishment.

3521 - The special times for Allah's remembrance are so described as to include all our activities in life,-when we rise early in the morning, and when we go to rest in the evening; when we are in the midst of our work, at the decline of the sun, and in the late afternoon. It may be noted that these are all striking stages in the passage of the sun through our terrestrial day, as well as stages in our daily working lives. On this are based the hours of the five canonical prayers afterwards prescribed in Madinah; viz. (1) early morning before sunrise (Fajr); (2) when the day begins to decline, just after noon (Zuhr); (3) in the late afternoon, say midway between noon and sunset ('Asr); and (4) and (5) the two evening prayers, one just after sunset (Maghrib); and the other after the evening twilight has all faded from the horizon, the hour indicated for rest and sleep ('Isha). Cf. xi. 114 nn. 1616-17; xvii. 78-79, n. 2275; xx. 130. n. 2655.

3522 - Cf. x. 31. From dead matter Allah's creative act produces life and living matter, and even science has not yet been able to explain the mystery of life. Life and living matter again seem to reach maturity and again die, as we see every day. No material thing seems to have perpetual life. But again we see the creative process of Allah constantly at work, and the cycle of life and death seems to go on.

3523 - Cf. ii. 164. The earth itself, seemingly so inert, produces vegetable life at once from a single shower of rain, and in various ways sustains animal life. Normally it seems to die in the winter in northern climates, and in a drought everywhere, and the spring revives it in all its glory. Metaphorically many movements, institutions, organizations, seem to die and then to live again, all under the wonderful dispensation of Allah. So will our personality be revived when we die on this earth, in order to reap the fruit of this our probationary life.

3524 - Cf. xviii. 37 and n. 2379. In spite of the lowly origin of man's body, Allah has given him a mind and soul by which he can almost compass the farthest reaches of Time and Space. Is this not enough for a miracle or Sign? From a physical point of view, see how man, a creature of dust, scatters himself over the farthest corners of the earth!

3525 - This refers to the wonderful mystery of sex. Children arise out of the union of the sexes. And it is always the female sex that bring forth the offspring, whether female or male. And the father is as necessary as the mother for bringing forth daughters.

3526 - Cf. vii. 189. Unregenerate man is pugnacious in the male sex, but rest and tranquility are found in the normal relations of a father and mother dwelling together and bringing up a family. A man's chivalry to the opposite sex is natural and Allah-given. The friendship of two men between each other is quite different in quality and temper from the feeling which unspoilt nature expects as between men and women. There is a special kind of love and tenderness between them. And as woman is the weaker vessel, that tenderness may from a certain aspect be likened to mercy, the protecting kindness which the strong should give to the weak.

3527 - The variations in languages and colors may be viewed from the geographical aspect or from the aspect of periods of time. All mankind were created of a single pair of parents; yet they have spread to different countries and climates and developed different languages and different shades of complexions. And yet their basic unity remains unaltered. They feel in the same way, and are all equally under Allah's care. Then there are the variations in time. Old languages die out and new ones are evolved. New conditions of life and thought are constantly evolving new words and expressions, new syntactical structures, and new modes of pronunciation. Even old races die, and new races are born.

3528 - If we consider deeply, sleep and dreams, the refreshment we get from sleep to wakefulness as well as from wakefulness to sleep, as also the state of our thoughts and feelings and sub-conscious self in these conditions, are both wonderful and mysterious. Normally we sleep by night and do our ordinary work "in quest of the Bounty of Allah" by day. But sleep and rest may come and be necessary by day, and we may have to work by night. And our work for our livelihood may pass by insensible transitions to our work or thought or service of a higher and spiritual kind. These processes suggest a background of things which we know but vaguely, but which are as much miracles as other Signs of Allah.

3529 - From verse 20 to verse 25 are mentioned a series of Signs or Miracles, which should awaken our souls and lead us to true Reality if we try to understand Allah. (1) There is our own origin and destiny, which must necessarily be our subjective startingpoint: "I think; therefore I am": no particular exertion of our being is here necessary (xxx. 20). (2) The first beginnings of social life arise through sex and love: see iv. 1, and n. 506; to understand this in all its bearing, we must "reflect" (xxx. 21). (3) The next point is to understand our diversities in speech, color, etc., arising from differences of climate and external conditions; yet there is unity beneath that diversity, which we shall realize by extended knowledge (xxx. 22). (4) Next we turn to our psychological conditions, sleep, rest, visions, insight, etc.; here we want teaching and guidance, to which we must hearken (xxx. 23). (5) Next, we must approach the higher reaches of spiritual hopes and fears, as symbolized by such subtle forces of nature as lightning and electricity, which may kill the foolish or bring prosperity in its train by rain and abundant harvest; to understand the highest spiritual hopes and fears so symbolized, we want the highest wisdom (xxx. 24). (6) And lastly, we may become so transformed that we rise above all petty, worldly, ephemeral things: Allah calls to us and we rise, as from our dead selves to a Height which we can only describe as the Heaven of stability: here no human processes serve, for the Call of Allah Himself has come (xxx. 25-27).

3530 - See last note, item (5). Cf. xiii. 12. To cowards lightning and thunder appear as terrible forces of nature: lightning seems to kill and destroy where its irresistible progress is not assisted by proper lightning-conductors. But lightning is also a herald of rain-bearing clouds and showers that bring fertility and prosperity in their train. This double aspect is also symbolical of spiritual fears and hopes, fears lest we may not be found receptive or worthy of the irresistible perspicuous Message of Allah, and hopes that we may receive it in the right spirit and be blessed by its mighty power of transformation to achieve spiritual well-being. Note that the repetition of the phrase "gives life to the earth after it is dead" connects this verse, with verse 19 above; in other words, the Revelation, which we must receive with wisdom and understanding, is a Sign of Allah's own power and mercy, and is vouchsafed in order to safeguard our own final Future.

3531 - In the physical world, the sky and the earth, as we see them, stand unsupported, by the artistry of Allah. They bear witness to Allah, and in that our physical life depends on them-the earth for its produce and the sky for rain, the heat of the sun, and other phenomena of nature-they call to our mind our relation to Allah Who made them and us. How can we then be so dense as not to realize that our higher Future, our Ma'ad, is bound up with the call and the mercy of Allah?

3532 - All nature in Creation not only obeys Allah, but devoutly obeys Him, i.e., glories in its privilege of service and obedience. Why should we not do likewise? It is part of our original unspoilt nature, and we must respond to it, as all beings do, by their very nature.

3533 - Cf. xxx. 11 above, where the same phrase began the argument about the beginning and end of all things being with Allah. This has been illustrated by reference to various Signs in Creation, and now the argument is rounded off with the same phrase.

3534 - Allah's glory and Allah's attributes are above any names we can give to them. Human language is not adequate to express them. We can only form some idea of them at our present stage by means of Similitudes and Parables. But even so, the highest we can think of falls short of the true Reality. For Allah is higher and wiser than the highest and wisest we can think of.

3535 - One way in which we can get some idea of the things higher than our own plane is to think of Parables and Similitudes. But even so, the highest we can think of falls short of the true Reality. For Allah is higher and wiser than the highest and wisest we can think of.

3536 - Allah is far higher above His Creation than any, the highest, of His creatures can be above any, the lowest, of His creatures. And yet would a man share his wealth on equal terms with his dependants? Even what he calls his wealth is not really his own, but given by Allah. It is "his" in common speech by reason merely of certain accidental circumstances. How then can men raise Allah's creatures to equality with Allah in worship?

3537 - Men fear each other as equals in a state of society at perpetual warfare. To remove this fear they appoint an authority among themselves-a King or sovereign authority whom they consider just-to preserve them from this fear and give them an established order. But they must obey and revere this authority and depend upon this authority for their own tranquility and security. Even with their equals there is always the fear of public opinion. But men do not fear, or obey, or revere those who are their slaves or dependents. Man is dependent on Allah. And Allah is the Sovereign authority in an infinitely higher sense. He is in no sense dependent on us, but we must honor and revere Him and fear to disobey His Will or His Law. "The fear of Allah is the beginning of wisdom."

3538 - Cf vi. 55, and vii. 32, 174. etc.

3539 - The wrong-doers-those who deliberately reject Allah's guidance and break Allah's Law-have put themselves out of the region of Allah's mercy. In this they have put themselves outside the pale of the knowledge of what is for their own good. In such a case they must suffer the consequences of the personal responsibility which flows from the grant of a limited free-will. Who can then guide them or help them?

3540 - For Hanif see n. 134 to ii. 135. Here "true" is used in the sense in which we say, "the magnetic needle is true to the north." Those who have been privileged to receive the Truth should never hesitate or swerve but remain constant, as men who know.

3541 - As turned out from the creative hand of Allah, man is innocent, pure, true, free, inclined to right and virtue, and endued with true understanding about his own position in the Universe and about Allah's goodness, wisdom, and power. That is his true nature, just as the nature of a lamb is to be gentle and of a horse is to be swift. But man is caught in the meshes of customs, superstitions, selfish desires, and false teaching. This may make him pugnacious, unclean, false, slavish, hankering after what is wrong or forbidden, and deflected from the love of his fellow-men and the pure worship of the One True God. The problem before the Prophets is to cure this crookedness, and to restore human nature to what it should be under the Will of Allah.

3542 - Din Qaiyim here includes the whole life, thoughts and desires of man. The "standard Religion," or the Straight Way is thus contrasted with the various human systems that conflict with each other and call themselves separate "religions" or "sects" (see verse 32 below). Allah's standard Religion is one, as Allah is One.

3543 - "Repentance" does not mean sackcloth and ashes, or putting on a gloom pessimism. It means giving up disease for health, crookedness (which is abnormal) for the Straight Way, the restoration of our nature as Allah created it from the falsity introduced by the enticements of Evil. To revert to the simile of the magnetic needle (n. 3540 above), if the needle is held back by obstructions, we must restore its freedom, so that it points true again to the magnetic pole.

3544 - A good description of self-satisfied sectarianism as against real Religion. See n. 3542 above.

3545 - Cf. x. 12. It is trouble, distress, or adversity that makes men realize their helplessness and turns their attention back to the true Source of all goodness and happiness. But when they are shown special Mercy-often more than they deserve-they forget themselves and attribute it to their own cleverness, or to the stars, or to some false ideas to which they pay court and worship, either to the exclusion of Allah or in addition to the lip-worship which they pay to Allah. Their action in any case amounts to gross ingratitude; but in the circumstances it looks as if they had gone out of their way to show ingratitude.

3546 - C.J. xvi. 54. They are welcome to their fancies and false worship, and to the enjoyment of the pleasures of this Life, but they will soon be disillusioned. Then they will realize the true values of the things they neglected and the things they cultivated.

3547 - Their behavior is exactly as if they were satisfied within themselves that they were entitled or given a license to worship God and Mammon. In fact the whole thing is their own invention or delusion.

3548 - Cf xxx. 33. In that passage the unreasonable behavior of men in sorrow and in affluence is considered with reference to their attitude to Allah: in distress they turn to Him, but in prosperity they turn to other things. Here the contrast in the two situations is considered with reference to men's inner psychology: in affluence they are puffed up and unduly elated, and in adversity they lose all heart. Both attitudes are wrong. In prosperity men should realize that it is not their merits that deserve all the Bounty of Allah, but that it is given out of Allah's abundant generosity; in adversity they should remember that their suffering is brought on by their own folly and sin, and humbly pray for Allah's grace and mercy, in order that they may be set on their feet again. For, as the next verse points out, Allah gives opportunities, gifts, and the good things of life to every one, but in a greater or less measure, and at some time or other, according to His All-Wise Plan, which is the expression of His holy and benevolent Will.

3549 - Cf. xxviii. 82 and n. 3412. Also see last note. Allah's grant of certain gifts to some, as well as His withholding of certain gifts from others, are themselves Signs (trials or warnings) to men of faith and understanding.

3550 - For Wajh (Face, Countenance), see n. 114 to ii. 112. Also see vi. 52.

3551 - In both this life and the next. See n. 29 to ii. 5.

3552 - Riba (literally 'usury' or 'interest') is prohibited, for the principle is that any profit which we should seek should be through our own exertions and at our own expense, not through exploiting other people or at their expense, however we may wrap up the process in the spacious phraseology of high finance or City jargon. But we are asked to go beyond this negative precept of avoiding what is wrong. We should show our active love for our neighbor by spending of our own substance or resources or the utilization of our own talents and opportunities in the service of those who need them. Then our reward or recompense will not be merely what we deserve. It will be multiplied to many times more than our strict account. According to Commentators this verse specially applies to those who give to others, whether gifts or services, in order to receive from them greater benefits in return. Such seemingly good acts are void of any merit and deserve no reward from Allah, since He knows the real intention behind such ostensibly good deeds.

3553 - Seeking the "Face" or "Countenance" of Allah, i.e., out of our pure love for the true vision of Allah's own Self. See also n. 3550 above.

3554 - The persons or things or ideas to which we give part-worship, while our whole and exclusive worship is due to Allah, are the "Partners" we set up. Do we owe our existence to them? Do they sustain our being? Can they take our life or give it back to us? Certainly not. Then how foolish of us to give them part-worship!

3555 - Cf. x. 18 and similar passages.

3556 - Allah's Creation was pure and good in itself. All the mischief or corruption was introduced by Evil, viz., arrogance, selfishness, etc. See n. 3541 to xxx. 30 above. As soon as the mischief has come in, Allah's mercy and goodness step in to stop it. The consequences of Evil must be evil, and this should be shown in such partial punishment as 'the hands of men have earned,' so that it may be a warning for the

future and an invitation to enter the door of repentance.

3557 - The ultimate object of Allah's justice and punishment is to reclaim man from Evil, and to restore him to the pristine purity and innocence in which he was created. The Evil introduced by his possession of a limited free-will should be eliminated by the education and purification of man's own will. For, with his will and motives purified, he is capable of much greater heights than a creature not endowed with any free-will.

3558 - If you contemplate history and past experience (including spiritual experience), you will find that evil and corruption tended to destroy themselves, because they had false idols for worship, false standards of conduct, and false goals of desire.

3559 - We should recover the balance that has been upset by Evil and Falsehood before it is too late. For a Day will surely come when true values will be restored and all falsehood and evil will be destroyed. Nothing but repentance and amendment can avert the consequences of Evil. When the Day actually comes, repentance will be too late: for the impassable barrier between Evil and Good will have been fixed, and the chance of return to Allah's pattern will have been lost.

3560 - The sharp division will then have been accomplished between the unfortunate ones who rejected Truth and Faith and will suffer for their rejection, and the righteous who will attain Peace and Salvation: see next verse. Note that the state of the Blessed will not be merely a passive state. They will actively earn and contribute to their own happiness.

3561 - Though the repose and bliss will have been won by the righteous by their own efforts, it must not be supposed that their own merits were equal to the reward they will earn. What they will get will be due to the infinite Grace and Bounty of Allah.

3562 - In form this clause is (here as elsewhere) negative, but it has a positive meaning: Allah loves those who have faith and trust in Him, and will, out of His Grace and Bounty, reward them in abundant measure.

3563 - The theme of Allah's artistry in the physical and the spiritual world was placed before us above in xxx. 20-27. Then, in verse 28-40, we were shown how man and nature were pure as they came out of the hand of Allah, and how we must restore this purity in order to fulfill the Will and Plan of Allah. Now we are told how the restorative and purifying agencies are sent by Allah Himself, -in both the physical and the spiritual world.

3564 - Cf. vii. 57 and n. 1036 and xxv. 48 and n. 3104.

3565 - In the physical world, the winds not only cool and purify the air, and bring the blessings of rain, which fertilizes the soil, but they help international commerce and intercourse among men through sea-ways and now by air-ways. Those who know how to take advantage of these blessings of Allah prosper and rejoice, while those who ignore or fail to understand these Signs perish in storms. So in the spiritual world: heralds of glad tidings were sent by Allah in the shape of Messengers: those who profited by their Message prospered and those who ignored or opposed the Clear Signs perished, see next verse.

3566 - Again the Parable of the Winds is presented from another aspect, both physical and spiritual. In the physical world, see their play with the Clouds: how they suck up the moisture from terrestrial water, carry it about in dark clouds as needed, and break it up with rain as needed. So Allah's wonderful Grace draws up men's spiritual aspirations from the most unlikely places and suspends them as dark mysteries, according to His holy Will and Plan: and when His Message reaches the hearts of men even in the smallest fragments, how its recipients rejoice, even though before it, they were in utter despair!

3567 - See last note.

3568 - After the two Parables about the purifying action of the Winds and their fertilizing action, we now have the Parable of the earth that dies in winter or drought and lives again in spring or rain, by Allah's Grace: so in the spiritual sphere, man may be dead and may live again by the Breath of Allah and His Mercy if she will only place himself in Allah's hands.

3569 - Another Parable from the forces of nature. We saw how the Winds gladdened, vivified, and enriched those who utilized them in the right spirit. But a wind might be destructive to tilth in certain circumstances: so the blessings of Allah may-by the wrongdoers resisting and blaspheming-bring punishment to the wrong-doers. Instead of taking the punishment in the right spirit-in the spirit in which Believers of Allah take their misfortunes,-the Unbelievers curse and deepen their sin!

3570 - The marvels of Allah's creation can be realized in a general way by every one who has a disposition to allow such knowledge to penetrate his mind. But if men, out of perversity, kill the very faculties which Allah has given them, how can they then understand? Besides the men who deaden their spiritual sense, there are men who may be likened to the deaf, who lack one faculty but to whom an appeal can be made through other faculties, such as the sense of sight; but if they turn their backs and refuse to be instructed at all, how can the Truth reach them?

3571 - See last note. Then there is the case of men about whom the saying holds true, that none are so blind as those who will not see. They prefer to stray in paths of wrong and of sense-pleasures. How can they be guided in any way? The only persons who gain by spiritual teaching are those who bring a mind to it-who believe and submit their wills to Allah's Will. This is the central doctrine of Islam.

3572 - What was said before about the people who make Allah's teaching of "of none effect" does not mean that Evil will defeat Allah. On the contrary we are asked to contemplate the mysteries of Allah's wisdom with another Parable. In our physical life we see how strength is evolved out of weakness and weakness out of strength. The helpless babe becomes a lusty man in the pride of his manhood, and then sinks to a feeble old age: and yet there is wisdom in all these stages in the Universal Plan. So Allah carries out His Plan in this world "as He wills", i.e., according to His Will and Plan, and none can gainsay it. And His Plan is wise and can never be frustrated.

3573 - Whatever the seeming inequalities may be now-when the good appear to be weak and the strong seem to oppress-will be removed when the balance will be finally redressed. That will happen in good time,-indeed so quickly that the Transgressors will be taken by Surprise. They were deluded by the fact that what they took to be their triumph or their freedom to do what they liked was only a reprieve, a "Term Appointed", in which they could repent and amend and get Allah's Mercy. Failing this, they will then be up against the Penalties which they thought they had evaded or defied.

3574 - The men of knowledge and faith knew all along of the true values-of the things of this ephemeral life and the things that will endure and face them at the End,-unlike the wrong-doers who were content

with falsehoods and were taken by surprise, like ignorant men, when they faced the Realities.

3575 - It will be no use for those who deliberately rejected the clearest warnings in Allah's Message to say: "Oh we did not realize this!" The excuse will be false, and it would be unreasonable to suppose that they would then be asked to seek Grace by repentance. It will then be too late.

3576 - Things of the highest moment have been explained in the Qur-an from various points of view. as in this Sura itself, by means of parables and similitudes drawn from nature and from our ordinary daily life. But whatever the explanation, however convincing it may be to men who earnestly seek after Truth, those who deliberately turn their backs to Truth can find nothing convincing. In their eyes the explanations are mere "vain talk" or false arguments.

3577 - When an attitude of obstinate resistance to Truth is adopted, the natural consequence (by Allah's Law) is that the heart and mind get more and more hardened with every act of deliberate rejection. It becomes more and more impervious to the reception of Truth, just as a sealed envelope is unable to receive any further letter or message after it is sealed. Cf. also ii. 7 and n. 31.

3578 - The Prophet of Allah does not slacken in his efforts or feel discouraged because the Unbelievers laugh at him or persecute him or even seem to succeed in blocking his Message. He has firm faith, and he knows that Allah will finally establish His Truth. He goes on in his divinely entrusted task, with patience and perseverance, which must win against the levity of his opponents, who have no faith or certainty at all to sustain them.

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