

Surah 57. Al-Hadid

57.1 Whatever is in the heavens and on earth let it declare the Praises and Glory of Allah: for He is the Exalted in Might the Wise. ⁵²⁷⁵

57.2 To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; it is He Who gives life and Death; and He has Power over all things.

⁵²⁷⁶ 57.3 He is the First and the Last the Evident and the immanent: and He has full knowledge of all things.

57.4 He it is Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days and is moreover firmly established on the Throne (of authority). He knows what enters within the earth and what comes forth out of it what comes down from heaven and what mounts up to it. And He is with you wheresoever ye may be. And Allah sees well all that ye do. ^{5277 5278 5279}

⁵²⁸⁰ 57.5 To Him belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth: and all affairs are referred back to Allah.

57.6 He merges Night into Day and He merges Day into Night; and He has full knowledge of the secrets of (all) hearts.

57.7 Believe in Allah and His Apostle and spend (in charity) out of the (substance) whereof He has made you heirs. For those of you who believe and spend (in charity) for them is a great Reward. ⁵²⁸¹

57.8 What cause have ye why ye should not believe in Allah? And the Apostle invites you to believe in your Lord and has indeed taken your Covenant if ye are men of faith. ^{5282 5283}

57.9 He is the One Who Sends to His Servants manifest Signs that He may lead you from the depths of Darkness into the Light. And verily Allah is to you Most Kind and Merciful. ⁵²⁸⁴

57.10 And what cause have ye why ye should not spend in the cause of Allah? For to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth. Not equal among you are those who spent (freely) and fought before the Victory (with those who did so later). Those are higher in rank than those who spent (freely) and fought afterwards. But to all has Allah promised a goodly (reward) and Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do. ^{5285 5286}

57.11 Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful Loan? For (Allah) will increase it manifold to his credit and he will have (besides) a liberal reward. ⁵²⁸⁷

57.12 One Day shalt thou see the believing men and the believing women how their Light runs forward before them and by their right hands: (their greeting will be): "Good News for you this Day! Gardens beneath which flow rivers! To dwell therein for aye! this is indeed the highest Achievement!" ^{5288 5289}

57.13 One day will the Hypocrites men and women say to the Believers: "Wait for us! let us borrow (a light) from your Light!" It will be said: "turn ye back to your rear! then seek a light (where ye can)!" So a wall will be put up betwixt them with a gate therein. Within it will be Mercy throughout and without it all alongside will be (wrath and) Punishment! ^{5290 5291}

57.14 (Those without) will call out "were we not with you?" (The others) will reply "True! but ye led yourselves into temptation; ye looked forward (to our ruin); ye doubted (Allah's promise); and (your false) desires deceived you; until there issued the Command of Allah. And the Deceiver deceived you in respect of Allah. ^{5292 5293}

57.15 "This Day shall no ransom be accepted of you nor of those who rejected Allah. Your abode is the fire: That is the proper place to claim you: and an evil refuge it is!" ⁵²⁹⁴

57.16 Has not the time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of Allah and of the truth which has been revealed (to them) and that they should not become like those to whom was given Revelation aforetime but long ages passed over them and their hearts grew hard? For many among them are rebellious transgressors. ^{5295 5296}

57.17 Know ye (all) that Allah giveth life to the earth after its death! already have We shown the Signs plainly to you that ye may learn wisdom. ⁵²⁹⁷

57.18 For those who give in Charity men and women and loan to Allah a Beautiful Loan it shall be increased manifold (to their credit) and they shall have (besides) a liberal reward. ⁵²⁹⁸

57.19 And those who believe in Allah and His apostles they are the Sincere (Lovers of truth) and the witnesses (who testify) in the eyes of their Lord: they shall have their Reward and their Light but those who reject Allah and deny Our Signs they are the Companions of Hell-Fire. ^{5299 5300 5301}

57.20 Know ye (all) that the life of this world is but play and amusement pomp and mutual boasting and multiplying (in rivalry) among yourselves riches and children: Here is a similitude: How rain and the growth which it brings forth delight (the hearts of) the tillers; soon it withers; thou wilt see it grow yellow; then it becomes dry and crumbles away. But in the Hereafter is a Penalty severe (for the devotees of wrong) and Forgiveness from Allah and (His) Good Pleasure (for the devotees of Allah). And what is the life of this world but goods and chattels of deception? ^{5302 5303 5304 5305}

57.21 Be ye foremost (in seeking) forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden (of Bliss) the width whereof is as the width of heaven and earth prepared for those who believe in Allah and His apostles: that is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He pleases: and Allah is the Lord of Grace abounding. ^{5306 5307}

57.22 No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence: that is truly easy for Allah: ^{5308 5309}

57.23 In order that ye may not despair over matters that pass you by nor exult over favors bestowed upon you. For Allah loveth not any vainglorious boaster ⁵³¹⁰

57.24 Such persons as are covetous and commend covetousness to men. And if any turn back (from Allah's Way) verily Allah is free of all needs worthy of all praise. ^{5311 5312}

57.25 We sent aforetime our apostles with Clear Signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of Right and Wrong) that men may stand forth in justice; and We sent down Iron in which is (material for) mighty war as well as many benefits for mankind that Allah may test who it is that will help ~~unseen Him and His~~ apostles; for Allah is Full of Strength exalted in Might (and able to enforce His will). ^{5313 5314 5315 5316 5317}

57.26 And We sent Noah and Abraham and established in their line Prophethood and Revelation: and some of them were on right guidance but many of them became rebellious transgressors. ⁵³¹⁹

57.27 Then in their wake We followed them up with (others of) Our apostles: We sent after them Jesus the son of Mary and bestowed on him the Gospel; and We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him Compassion and Mercy. But the monasticism which they invented for themselves We did not prescribe for them: (We commanded) only the seeking for the Good pleasure of Allah; but that they did not foster as they should have done. Yet We bestowed on those among them who believed their (due) reward but many of them are rebellious transgressors. ^{5320 5321 5322 5323 5324}

57.28 O ye that believe! fear Allah and believe in His apostle and He will bestow on you a double portion of His Mercy: He will provide for you a light by which ye shall walk (straight in your path) and He will forgive you (your past): For Allah is Oft-Forgiving. Most Merciful: ^{5325 5326 5327 5328}

57.29 That the People of the Book may know that they have no power whatever over the Grace of Allah that (His) Grace is (entirely) in his hand to bestow it on whomsoever He wills. For Allah is the Lord of Grace abounding. ⁵³²⁹

Author Comments

5275 - A connecting thought between this and the last Sura, of which see verse 96. See also paragraph 3 of the Introduction to S. liii.

5276 - Allah is Evident in so far as there is ample evidence of His existence and providence all around us. On the other hand, Allah is Hidden in so far as intellect cannot grasp His essence nor can He be seen in the present world. The following tradition in Sahih Muslim is also significant for an understanding of this verse. The Prophet (peace be on him) said: "Thou art the First, so that there was nothing before Thee; and Thou art the Last, so that there is nothing after Thee; and Thou art Evident, (or Ascendant) so that there is nothing above Thee, and Thou art the the Hidden, the Knower of hidden things, so that there is nothing hidden from Thee."

5277 - "In six Days": see xli. 9-12, and notes; also more briefly, n. 1031 to vii. 54.

5278 - Cf. x. 3, and n. 1386. It is not that Allah completed His Creation in six days and rested on the seventh day, or rests now. Certain external forms of the universe were by Allah's Command completed in six periods of evolution. But His creative process still goes on, and He is still, and will always be, in full control, knowing all and guiding all affairs.

5279 - Allah watches over man and observes his deeds. His knowledge comprehends all, the earth, heavens, what is in them or above them or whatever is in between them, comes out of them or goes into them, for "not a leaf doth fall but with His knowledge", and "there is not a grain in the darkness (or depths) of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry (green or withered), but is inscribed in a Record". (vi. 59).

5280 - See lvii. 2 above, where this phrase referred to Allah's complete authority over the whole of the external universe: the same phrase now refers to His complete authority over the abstract world-of thoughts and affairs. Every affair must finally go back to Him, whether it comes out here from Darkness into Light, or hides itself from Light into Darkness. Allah's knowledge penetrates into the inmost recesses of all Hearts.

5281 - Whenever power or wealth or influence or any good thing is transferred from one person or group of persons to another, it involves added responsibilities to the persons receiving these advantages. They must be the more zealous in real charity and all good works, for that is a part of the evidence which they give of their faith and gratitude. And, besides, their good deeds carry their own reward.

5282 - A figure of speech implying a far wider meaning than the words express. It is equivalent to saying: "There is every reason why ye should believe in Allah", etc. The same construction applies to verse 10 below.

5283 - There are two shades of meaning. (1) There is the implied Covenant in a man who accepts the Gospel of Unity that he will bring forth all the fruits of that Gospel, i.e., believe in Allah, and serve Allah and humanity. See n. 682 to v. 1. (2) There were at various times express Covenants entered into by the Muslims to serve Allah and be true to the Prophet, comparable to the Covenants of the Jewish nation about the Message of Moses; e.g., the two Covenants of 'Aqaba (v. 8, and n. 705) and the Pledge of Hudaibiya (xlvi. 10, n. 4877). For the Covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai, see. ii. 63, n. 78.

5284 - The holy Prophet Muhammad. The Signs sent to him were: (1) the Ayats of the Qur-an, and (2) his life and work, in which Allah's Plan and Purpose were unfolded.

5285 - "To Allah belongs the heritage of...": see n. 485 to iii. 180; also n. 988 to vi. 165; and n. 1964 to xv. 23.

5286 - This is usually understood to refer to the Conquest of Makkah, after which the Muslims succeeded to the power and position which the Pagan Quraish had so misused at Makkah. Thereafter the Muslims had the hegemony of Arabia, and in a few centuries, for a time, the hegemony of the world. But the words are perfectly general, and we must understand the general meaning also: that the people who fight and struggle in Allah's Cause and give of their best to it at any time are worthy of praise: but those are worthy of special distinction who do it when the Cause is being persecuted and in most need of assistance, before victory comes.

5287 - Cf. ii. 245, n. 276.

5288 - In the Darkness of the Day of Judgment there will be a Light to guide the righteous to their Destination. This will be the Light of their Faith and their Good Works. Perhaps the Light of the Right Hand mentioned here is the Light of their Good Works: for the Blessed will receive their Record in their right hand (Ixi. 19-24).

5289 - The highest Achievement, the highest felicity, the attainment of Salvation, the fulfilment of all desires. See n. 4733 to xlv. 57.

5290 - Watchful preparation in Life, and the light of Faith, which reflects the divine Light, are matters of personal Life, and cannot be borrowed from another. So, in Christ's parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. xv. 1-13), when the foolish ones had let their lamps go out for want of oil, they asked to borrow oil from the wise ones, but the wise ones answered and said, "Not so;...but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves".

5291 - The wall will divide the Good from the Evil. But the Gateway in it will show that communication will not be cut off. Evil must realise that Good-ie., Mercy and Felicity-had been within its reach, and that the Wrath which envelops it is due to its own rejection of Mercy.

5292 - The evil will now claim some right of kinship or association or proximity with the good in earthly life; but in fact they had been arrogant and had selfishly despised them before. The reply will be: (1) you yourselves chose temptation and evil; (2) when you had power in your earthly life, you hoped for ruin to the good, and perhaps plotted for it; (3) you were warned by prophets of Allah, but you doubted Allah's very existence and certainly His Mercy and Justice, and the Hereafter; (4) you followed your own lusts and neglected Reason and Truth; (5) you were given plenty of rope, but you followed your mad career, until Judgment came upon you, and now it is too late for repentance.

5293 - The Arch-Deceiver (Satan) deceived you in respect of Allah in many ways: for example, he made you oblivious of Allah's Mercy and loving-kindness; he made you reject His Grace; he made you think that Allah's Justice may not overtake you; etc.

5294 - In personal responsibility there is no room for vicarious ransom or for ransom by payments of gold or silver or by sacrifice of possessions. Nor can the crime be expiated for after Judgment. 'You' and 'those who rejected Allah' are two ways of looking at the same persons. 'You are rejected because you rejected Allah.'

5295 - Humility and the remembrance of Allah and His Message are never more necessary than in the hour of victory and prosperity.

5296 - The men immediately referred to are the contemporary Jews and Christians. To each of these Ummats was given Allah's Revelation, but as time passed, they corrupted it, became arrogant and hard-hearted, and subverted justice, truth, and the purity of Life. But the general lesson is far wider. No one is favoured of Allah except on the score of righteousness. Except on that score, there is no chosen individual or race. There is no blind good fortune or ill fortune. All happens according to the just laws and will of Allah. But at no time is humility or righteousness more necessary than in the hour of victory or triumph.

5297 - As the dead earth is revived after the refreshing showers of rain, so is it with the spirit of man, whether as an individual or a race or Ummat. There is no cause for despair. Allah's Truth will revive the spiritual faculties if it is accepted with humility and zeal.

5298 - Cf. lvii. 11; also see ii. 245, n. 276.

5299 - Cf. iv. 69, and n. 586. The four categories there mentioned as constituting the beautiful Company of Faith are: the Prophets who teach, the Sincere Lovers of Truth, the Martyrs, and the Righteous who do good. Of these, the prophets or messengers have already been mentioned in this verse. The Righteous who do good are mentioned as the men and women given over to deeds of charity in verse 18.

5300 - The Martyrs (witnesses) are all those who carry the Banner of Truth against all odds and in all positions of danger, whether by pen or speech, or deed or counsel.

5301 - Note that these two are specially high degrees in the Hereafter, just short of Prophethood. For they have not only their reward in the Hereafter, like those who practise charity (verse 18 above), but they themselves become sources of light and leading.

5302 - Cf. vi. 32, and n. 855. In the present passage the idea is further amplified. In this life people not only play and amuse themselves and each other, but they show off, and boast, and pile up riches and man-power and influence, in rivalry with each other.

5303 - Cf. xxxix. 21, and n. 4273. Here the Parable is meant to teach a slightly different lesson. Allah's mercies are free and open to all, like His rain. But how do men make use of them? The good men take the real spiritual harvest and store the Spiritual grain. The men who are in love with the ephemeral are delighted with the green of the tares and the grass; but such things give no real nourishment; they soon wither, become dry, and crumble to pieces, like the worldly pleasures and pomps, boasting and tumults, possessions and friends.

5304 - Kuffar is here used in the unusual sense of 'tillers or husbandmen', because they sow the seed and cover it up with soil. But the ordinary meaning, 'Rejecters of Truth', is not absent. The allegory refers to such men.

5305 - Cf. iii. 185, and n. 492. Many of the attractive vanities of this world are but nets set by Satan to deceive man. The only thing real and lasting is the Good Life lived in the Light of Allah.

5306 - Cf. iii. 133, and n. 452.

5307 - "Bestows on whom He pleases." That is, such grace and favour is beyond any one's own merits. It is bestowed by Allah according to His holy Will and Plan, which is just, merciful, and righteous.

5308 - External disasters or misfortunes may strike people's eye or imagination, but there are worse crisis and misfortunes in the spiritual world, which are of equal or greater importance to man's future. All this happens according to the Will and Plan of Allah. Even where we are allowed the exercise of our own wills, the consequences that follow are in accordance with the laws and Plan decreed by Allah beforehand.

5309 - For baraa, 'to bring into existence', and other words denoting Allah's creative energy, see n. 120 to ii. 117; n. 916 to vi. 94; and n. 923 to vi. 98.

5310 - In the external world, what people may consider misfortune or good fortune may both turn out to be illusory,-in Kipling's words, "both imposters just the same". The righteous man does not grumble if some one else has possessions, nor exult if he has them. He does not covet and he does not boast. If he has any advantages, he shares them with other people, as he considers them not due to his own merits, but as gifts of Allah.

5311 - Neither the Covetous nor the Boasters have any place in the Good Pleasure of Allah. The Covetous are particularly insidious, as their avarice and niggardliness not only keep back the gifts of Allah from men, but their pernicious example dries up the streams of Charity in others.

5312 - It is Charity in Allah's Way that is specially in view here. If people are selfish and withhold their hand, they only injure themselves. They do not hurt Allah's Cause, for He is independent of all needs, and He will find other means of assisting His more meagrely-endowed servants; He is worthy of all praise in His care for His creatures.

5313 - Three things are mentioned as gifts of Allah. In concrete terms they are the Book, the Balance, and Iron, which stand as emblems of three things which hold society together, viz. Revelation, which commands Good and forbids Evil; Justice, which gives to each person his due; and the strong arm of the Law, which maintains sanctions for evil-doers. For Balance, see also xlii. 17, and n. 4550.

5314 - "Sent down": anzala: in the sense of revealed to man the use of certain things, created in him the capacity of understanding and using them: cf. xxxix. 6: "sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs".

5315 - Iron: the most useful metal known to man. Out of it is made steel, and from steel and iron are made implements of war, such as swords, spears, guns, etc., as well as instruments of peace, such as ploughshares, bricklayers' trowels, architects' and engineers' instruments, etc. Iron stands as the emblem

of Strength, Power, Discipline, Law's sanctions, etc. Iron and steel industries have also been the foundation of the prosperity and power of modern manufacturing nations'.

5316 - In xxi. 49, I have translated "in their most secret thoughts" for the more literal "unseen" (bilgaibi). Perhaps the more literal "unseen" may do if understood in the adverbial sense; as explained in xxxv. 18, n. 3902. The sincere man will help the Cause, whether he is seen or brought under notice or not.

5317 - To help Allah and His messengers is to help their Cause. It is to give men an opportunity of striving and fighting for His Cause and proving their true mettle, for thus is their spirit tested. As explained in the next line, Allah in Himself is Full of Strength, Exalted in Power, and Able to enforce His Will, and He has no need of others' assistance.

5319 - Some of them: i.e., of their line, or posterity, or Ummat. When the Book that was given to them became corrupted, many of them followed their own fancies and became transgressors.

5320 - The chief characteristic of the teaching in the Gospels is humility and other-worldliness. The first blessings in the Sermon on the Mount are on "the poor in spirit", "they that mourn", and they that are "meek" (Matt. v. 3-5). Christ's disciples were enjoined to "take no thought for the morrow", and told "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. vi. 34). They were also commanded "that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. v. 39). These are fragmentary presentments of an imperfect philosophy as seen through monastic eyes. In so far as they represent pity, sympathy with suffering, and deeds of mercy, they represent the spirit of Christ.

5321 - But Allah's Kingdom requires also courage, resistance to evil, the firmness, law, and discipline which will enforce justice among men. It requires men to mingle with men, so that they can uphold the standard of Truth, against odds if necessary. These were lost sight of in Monasticism, which was not prescribed by Allah.

5322 - Allah certainly requires that men shall renounce the idle pleasures of this world, and turn to the Path which leads to Allah's Good Pleasure. But that does not mean gloomy lives, ("they that mourn"), nor perpetual and formal prayers in isolation. Allah's service is done through pure lives in the turmoil of this

world. This spirit was lost, or at least not fostered by monastic institutions. On the contrary a great part of the "struggle and striving" for noble lives was suppressed.

5323 - Many of them lost true Faith, or had their Faith corrupted by superstitions. But those who continued firm in Faith saw the natural development of Religion in Islam. Their previous belief was not a disadvantage to them, but helped them, because they kept it free from false and selfish prejudices. These are the ones who are further addressed at the beginning of verse 28 below.

5324 - The corruptions in the Christian Church, the hair-splitting disputes, and mutual strife and hatred of sects had become a scandal by the time that the light of Islam came into the world. The pages of Gibbon's great History bear witness. Not only had the religion become void of grace, but the lives of the people, priests and laity, had fallen into great depths of degradation.

5325 - From the context before (see n. 5323 above) and after (see next note), this is held to refer to the Christians and People of the Book who kept their Faith true and undefiled.

5326 - The double portion refers to the past and the future. As noted in the last note, this passage is addressed to the Christians and the People of the Book, who, when honestly facing the question of the new Revelation in Islam, find in it the fulfilment of previous revelations, and therefore believe in Allah's Messenger Muhammad, and walk by the new light. Their previous merits will be duly recognised, and they will be treated on fully equal terms in the new Ummat. This is their double share, not necessarily more in quantity than that of their brethren in Islam who passed through no other gate, but having a twofold aspect.

5327 - As this refers to the Christians and the People of the Book, the following saying of Christ in his last days may interest them: "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you... While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them". (John, xii. 35-36). The light of Christ's Gospel soon departed; his Church was enveloped in darkness; then came the light again, in the fuller light of Islam. And they are asked to believe in the light, and to walk in it. Cf. also lvii. 12. and n. 5288 above.

5328 - Any wrong they may have committed through ignorance or misconceptions in their previous religion

will be forgiven them, as they have seen the new light and walk by it.

5329 - Let not any race, or people, or community, or group, believe that they have exclusive possession of Allah's Grace, or that they can influence its grant or its withholding. Allah's Grace is free, and entirely controlled by Him, independently of any priests and privileged people. He dispenses it according to His own wise and holy Will and Plan; and to His Grace there is no limit. It is up to Him to bestow His Grace upon whom He likes. The Qur-an is the final revelation in which He said: "ye are the best Ummah brought forward to mankind." So in order to receive His Grace, one should submit to Islam.

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