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**THE
HOLY QURAN**

**ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 28
SURAH AL-QASAS**

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

028

SURAH AL-QASAS

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Introduction and Summary

This Surah continues the subject of Revelation and its reception by those to whom it is sent. But it emphasises new points: how the recipient of inspiration is prepared for his high destiny, even in the growth of his ordinary life, and how the rejection of Allah's Message by groups of men or by individuals is caused by overweening arrogance or avarice. The plight of those who reject the Truth is contrasted with the reward of the righteous.

With the possible exception of a few verses, it belongs to the late Makkan period, just preceding the Hijrah.

Summary- Pharaoh was arrogant and unjust, but Allah's Plan was to strengthen the weak; in infancy Moses was prepared for his mission; in youth he trusted in the Lord and was guided; in his exile he found help and love; and when he was called, he was supported by Allah (28:1-42, and C. 173).

So was the Holy Prophet Muhammad fed spiritually by Allah's Grace, and his Revelation was recognised by those who knew the earlier Revelations: it came to an old and sacred Centre, to warn those seduced by this world's life (28:43-60, and C. 174).

The Future is with those who repent, have faith, and do good; for all Mercy and Truth are with Allah (28:61-75, and C. 175).

But men puffed up with wealth, like Quraan, will come to an evil end, while the lowly and the righteous will attain Allah's Mercy (8:76-88, C. 176).

C.173 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(28:1-42)

Allah's Messengers are men, and win through good life

By Allah's Grace and their Faith. So Moses

Was saved from the Tyrant's wrath in infancy,

And reared in the Tyrant's own den, but gently

In a mother's love. In youth was he endowed

With wisdom and knowledge; strength and the will

To do right. In sorrow or misfortune

He trusted on Allah and opened his heart

To Him. On self-imposed exile he won

Love by his chivalry and confidence by Truth.

In his mission he triumphed over arrogant

Wrong by his meekness, patience, and Faith.

So good follows good, and Evil must fall.

Cursed, loathed, disgraced, and despised.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

طسم (١)

1. Ta Sin Mim.

C3326. See n. 3137 to 26:1.

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْمُبِينِ (٢)

2. These are Verses of the Book that makes (things) clear.

C3327. See n. 3138 to 26:2.

نَتْلُو عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَبَأِ مُوسَىٰ وَفِرْعَوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ (٣)

3. We rehearse to thee some of the story of Moses and Pharaoh in Truth, for people who believe.

C3328. The part of the story of Moses told here is how Moses and his mother were guided in the child's infancy, that even as he grew up, he might be prepared for his high destiny; how in youth he trusted Allah in the most awkward situations and sought His help; how he fled into exile, and yet found love and support because of his well-doing: and how, when he was called to his mission, he received Allah's favour, which defeated all the plots of his enemies.

Thus Allah's Plan works continuously in the web of events. Those who have faith will thus see the hand of Allah in everything and welcome the light that comes to them by Revelation. With such a Faith there is no room for Chance or blind Fate. (R).

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا...

4. Truly Pharaoh elated himself in the land and broke up its people into sections,

C3329. For a king or ruler to make invidious distinctions between his subjects, and specially to depress or oppress any particular class of his subjects, is a dereliction of his kingly duties, for which he is responsible to Allah.

Pharaoh and his clique were intoxicated with pride of race and pride of material civilization, and grievously oppressed the Israelites.

Pharaoh decreed that all male sons born to his Israelite subjects should be killed, and the females kept alive for the pleasure of the Egyptians. Moses was saved in a wonderful way, as related further.

...يَسْتَضْعِفُ طَائِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُدَبِّحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ...

depressing a small group among them:

their sons he slew but he kept alive their females:

...إِنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (٤)

for he was indeed a maker of mischief.

...وَأُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ...

5. And We wished to be gracious to those who were being depressed in the land,

C3330. What Pharaoh wished was to crush them. But Allah's Plan was to protect them as they were weak, and indeed to make them custodians and leaders in His Faith, and to give them in inheritance a land "flowing with milk and honey".

Here they were established in authority for such time as they followed Allah's Law. As regards Pharaoh and his ministers and hosts, they were to be shown that they would suffer, at the hands of the Israelites, the very calamities against which they were so confidently taking precautions for themselves.

...وَتَجْعَلُهُمْ أُيُمَةً وَتَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ (٥)

to make them leaders (in faith) and make them heirs,

...وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ...

6. To establish a firm place for them in the land,

...وَأُرِي فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ...

and to show Pharaoh, Haman,

C3331. Haman was evidently Pharaoh's minister, not to be confounded with a Haman who is mentioned in the Old Testament (Esther 3:1), as a minister of Ahasuerus (Xerxes) King of Persia, the same who invaded Greece, and ruled from B.C. 485 to 464.

... وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ (٦)

and their hosts, at their hands, the very things against which they were taking precautions.

C3332. Pharaoh was trying to kill the Israelites. Instead, the Plagues of Egypt, invoked by Moses, killed thousands of Egyptians (7:133, and notes 1091-92), because "they were steeped in arrogance,-a people given to sin."

In pursuing the Israelites in their flight, Pharaoh and his army were themselves overwhelmed in the sea.

وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَرْضِعِيهِ...

7. So We sent this inspiration to the mother of Moses:

"Suckle (thy child),

...فَإِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَأَلْقِيهِ فِي الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِي وَلَا تَحْزَنِي...

but when thou hast fears about him, cast him into the river, but fear not nor grieve:

C3333. The Egyptian midwives had orders to kill Israelite babies. Moses was saved from them, and his mother nursed the infant at her breast herself.

But when the danger of discovery was imminent, she put him into a chest or basket, and Boated him on the river Nile. It flowed by the King's palace, and the chest with the baby was picked up, as related further on.

The mother had no -cause to fear or grieve afterwards, as the child grew up under her tender care and became afterwards one of the Prophets of Allah.

...إِنَّا رَأَوُوهُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَاعَلُوهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (٧)

for We shall restore him to thee, and We shall make him one of Our Messengers."

فَالْتَقَطَهُ آلُ فِرْعَوْنَ لِيَكُونَ لَهُمْ عَدُوًّا وَحَزَنًا...

8. Then the people of Pharaoh picked him up (from the river):

(it was intended) that (Moses) should be to them an adversary and a cause of sorrow:

C3334. This was the Plan of Providence: that the wicked might cast a net round themselves by fostering the man who was to bring them to naught and be the instrument of their punishment, or

(looking at it from the other side) that Moses might learn all the wisdom of the Egyptians in order to expose all that was hollow and wicked in it.

...إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا كَانُوا خَاطِبِينَ (٨)

for Pharaoh and Haman and (all) their hosts were men of sin.

وَقَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُرَّتْ عَيْنٌ لِي وَلِكَ...

9. The wife of Pharaoh said:

"(Here is) a joy of the eye, for me and for thee:

C3335. He was a darling to look at, and Pharaoh had apparently no son, but only a daughter, who afterwards shared his throne. This is on the supposition that the Pharaoh was Thothmes I (see Appendix IV, Surah 7)..

...لَا تَقْتُلُوهُ...

slay him not.

...عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَنْفَعَنَا أَوْ نَتَّخِذَهُ وَلَدًا...

It may be that he will be of use to us, or we may adopt him as a son."

...وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ (٩)

And they perceived not (what they were doing)!

C3336. In all life Providence so orders things that Evil is defeated by its own weapons. Not only is it defeated, but it actually, though unwittingly, advances the cause of Good!

In non-religious language this is called the work of the Ironic Fates. If Thomas Hardy had not made Napoleon the Puppet of Fate in his "Dynasts", he could well have taken Pharaoh as an illustration of the Irony of Fate, or, as we should prefer to call it, the working of the Universal Plan of Allah. (R).

وَأَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ أُمِّ مُوسَىٰ قَارِعًا...

10. But there came to be a void in the heart of the mother of Moses:

...إِن كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِي بِهِ لَوْلَا أَن رَّبَطْنَا عَلَىٰ قَلْبِهَا...

she was going almost to disclose his (case), had We not strengthened her heart (with faith),

...لِتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (١٠)

so that she might remain a (firm) believer.

C3337. The mother's heart felt the gaping void at parting from her son; but her Faith in Allah's Providence kept her from betraying herself.

وَقَالَتْ لِأُخْتِهِ قُصِّيهِ...

11. And she said to the sister of (Moses), "Follow him."

...فَبَصَّرَتْ بِهِ عَنِ جُنُبٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ (١١)

So she (the sister) watched him in the character of a stranger, and they knew not.

وَحَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَرَاضِعَ مِن قَبْلُ...

12. And We ordained that he refused suck at first,

...فَقَالَتْ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَهْلِ بَيْتٍ يَكْفُلُونَهُ لَكُمْ...

until (his sister came up and) said:

"Shall I point out to you the people of a house that will nourish and bring him up for you

C3338. For you: i.e., on your behalf.

Thus Moses got the benefit of his mother's milk as well as the prestige and the opportunities of being brought up

in the royal family, with the best of teachers to teach him Egyptian wisdom. In addition, there was the comfort to his mother.

...وَهُمْ لَهُ نَاصِحُونَ (١٢)

and be sincerely attached to him?"...

فَرَدَدْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ أُمِّهِ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ...

13. Thus did We restore him to his mother, that her eye might be comforted, that she might not grieve,

...وَلِتَعْلَمَ أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (١٣)

and that she might know that the promise of Allah is true:
but most of them do not understand.

C3339. Allah's promise is always true, but short-sighted people, if they are a little thwarted in their plan, do not understand that Allah's wisdom, power, and goodness are far more comprehensive than any hide plans which they may form.

Section 2

وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَاسْتَوَىٰ آتَيْنَاهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا...

14. When he reached full age, and was firmly established (in life), We bestowed on him wisdom and knowledge:

C3340. Full age may be taken to be mature youth, say between 18 and 30 years of age. By that time a person is fully established in life; his physical build is completed, and his mental and moral habits are formed.

In this case, as Moses was good at heart, true and loyal to his people, and obedient and just to those among whom he lived, he was granted wisdom and knowledge from on high, to be used for the times of conflict which were coming for him.

His internal development being complete, he now goes out into the outer world, where he is again tried and proved, until he gets his divine commission.

...وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ (١٤)

for thus do We reward those who do good.

وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِينَةَ عَلَى حِينٍ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا فَوَجَدَ فِيهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلَانِ...

15. And he entered the City at a time when its people were not watching: and he found there two men fighting --

C3341. That may have been either the time of the noontime siesta, when all business is suspended even now in Egypt, or

the time of night, when people are usually asleep.

The latter is more probable, in view of [verse 18 below](#). But there is also another suggestion.

A guest in a Palace is not free to wander about at will in the plebeian quarters of the City at all sorts of hours, and this applies even more to an inmate of the Palace brought up as a son.

Moses was therefore visiting the City privately and eluding the guards. His object may have been to see for himself how things were going on; perhaps he had heard that his people were being oppressed, as we may suppose that he had retained contact with his mother.

...هَذَا مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ وَهَذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ...

one of his own religion, and the other, of his foes.

...فَاسْتَعَاثَهُ الَّذِي مِنْ شِيعَتِهِ عَلَى الَّذِي مِنْ عَدُوِّهِ... ..

Now the man of his own religion appealed to him against his foe,

...فَوَكَرَهُ مُوسَى فَقَضَى عَلَيْهِ... ..

and Moses struck him with his fist and made an end of him.

C3342. His object was apparently to strike him so as to release the Israelite, not to kill the Egyptian,

In fact he killed the Egyptian. This was unfortunate in more ways than one. His visit to the City was clandestine; he had taken the side of the weaker and despised party; and he had taken the life of an Egyptian.

He was full of regrets and repentance, and he prayed to Allah, and obtained Allah's forgiveness.

... قَالَ هَذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ ...

He said:

"This is a work of Evil (Satan):

... إِنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ مُضِلٌّ مُبِينٌ (١٥)

for he is an enemy that manifestly misleads!"

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي فَاغْفِرْ لِي ...

16. He prayed: "O my Lord! I have indeed wronged my soul! Do Thou then forgive me!"

... فَغَفَرَ لَهُ ...

So (Allah) forgave him:

... إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ (١٦)

for He is the Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ فَلَنْ أَكُونَ ظَهِيرًا لِلْمُجْرِمِينَ (١٧)

17. He said: "O my Lord! for that Thou hast bestowed Thy Grace on me, never shall I be a help to those who sin!"

C3343. He takes a conscious and solemn vow to dedicate himself to Allah, and to do nothing that may in any way assist those who were doing wrong.

This was his general idea, but no plan had yet shaped itself in his mind, until a second catastrophe brought matters to a head, and he was plunged in adventure.

فَأَصْبَحَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ ...

18. So he saw the morning in the City, looking about, in a state of fear,

... فَإِذَا الَّذِي اسْتَنْصَرَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَسْتَنْصِرُهُ ...

when behold, the man who had, the day before, sought his help called aloud for his help (again).

...قَالَ لَهُ مُوسَى إِنَّكَ لَعَوِيٌّ مُّبِينٌ (١٨)

Moses said to him: "Thou art truly, it is clear, a quarrelsome fellow!"

C3344. The man was an Israelite. But Moses was himself in a distracted mood, for the reasons given in n. 3342 above, and he was exasperated at this public appeal to him again.

فَلَمَّا أَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يَبْطِشَ بِالَّذِي هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَهُمَا قَالَ...

19. Then, when he decided to lay hold of the man who was an enemy to both of them, that man said:

C3345. When Moses considered further that the Egyptian was unjust, he was going to intervene again, when he received a double warning, one from the Egyptian who was fighting, and the other from some man (Israelite or Egyptian) who was friendly to him, as explained below.

We may suppose that after the first day's fight, there had been a great deal of talk in the bazaars, both among Israelites and Egyptians. Probably the Israelites were elated at finding a champion-perhaps more elated than they should have been, and in a provocative mood, which deserved Moses' rebuke. Probably the Egyptians had discussed who this new champion was, and had already apprised the Palace, to which Moses had not dared to return.

...يَا مُوسَى أَتُرِيدُ أَنْ تَقْتُلَنِي كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا بِالْأَمْسِ...

"O Moses!

is it thy intention to slay me as thou slewest a man yesterday?

...إِنْ تُرِيدُ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ جَبَّارًا فِي الْأَرْضِ...

Thy intention is none other than to become a powerful violent man in the land,

...وَمَا تُرِيدُ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ (١٩)

and not to be one who sets things right!"

C3346. The Egyptian saw the tactical advantage of his position. In effect he said:

"We have found out all about you. You live in the Palace, and yet you come clandestinely and kill our Egyptian. Are you going to do the same with me? You are nothing but a bully! And you talk of setting things right! That is what you should do if you were true to your salt!"

وَجَاءَ رَجُلٌ مِّنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْعَى قَالَ...

20. And there came a man, running, from the furthest end of the City. He said:

C3347. Apparently rumours had reached the Palace, a Council had been held, and the death of Moses had been decreed!

يَا مُوسَى إِنَّ الْمَلَأَ يَأْتَمِرُونَ بِكَ لِيَقْتُلُوكَ فَاخْرُجْ...

"O Moses! the Chiefs are taking counsel together about thee, to slay thee:

so get thee away,

...إِنِّي لَكَ مِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ (٢٠)

for I do give thee sincere advice."

فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَائِفًا يَتَرَقَّبُ...

21. He therefore got away therefrom, looking about, in a state of fear.

C3348. Moses saw that his position was now untenable, both in the Palace and in the City, and indeed anywhere in Pharaoh's territory. So he suffered voluntary exile. But he did not know where to go to.

His mind was in a state of agitation. But he turned to Allah and prayed. He got consolation, and felt that after all it was no hardship to leave Egypt, where there was so much injustice and oppression.

...قَالَ رَبِّ نَجِّنِي مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (٢١)

He prayed:

"O my Lord! save me from people given to wrongdoing."

Section 3

وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تَلْقَاءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ...

22. Then when he turned his face towards (the land of) Madyan, he said:

C3349. East of Lower Egypt, for about 300 miles, runs the Sinai Peninsula, bounded on the south by the Gulf of Suez, and on the north by what was the Isthmus of Suez, now cut by the Suez Canal. Over the Isthmus ran the highroad to Palestine and Syria, but a fugitive could not well take that road, as the Egyptians were after him.

If he could, after crossing the Isthmus, plunge into the Sinai desert, east or south-east, he would be in the Midianite territory, where the people would be Arabs and not Egyptians. He turned thither, and again prayed to Allah for guidance.

...عَسَى رَبِّي أَنْ يَهْدِيَنِي سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ (٢٢)

"I do hope that my Lord will show me the smooth and straight Path."

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ...

23. And when he arrived at the watering (place) in Madyan, he found there a group of men watering (their flocks),

C3350. The first thing that a wanderer in a desert would make for would be an oasis where he could get water from a spring or well, the shade of trees against the scorching sun, and some human company.

The Midianite watering place was probably a deep well, as surface springs are rare in sandy deserts, where the water level is low, unless there was a hill from which issued a spring.

...يَسْفُونَ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ ...

and besides them he found two women who were keeping back (their flocks).

...قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا...

He said: "What is the matter with you?"

...قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّى يُصْدِرَ الرِّعَاءَ...

They said: "We cannot water (our flocks) until the shepherds take back (their flocks):

...وَأَبُونَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيرٌ (٢٣)

and our father is a very old man."

C3351. Here is a pretty little idyll, told in the fewest and most beautiful words possible.

Moses arrives at an oasis in the desert, weary and travel worn, with his mind full of anxiety and uncertainty owing to his recent experiences in Egypt. He was thirsty and would naturally seek water. At the well or spring he found shepherds (or perhaps goat-herds) watering their flocks.

As a stranger it was not for him to thrust himself among them. He waited under the shade of a tree until they should finish. He noticed two damsels, also waiting with their flocks, which they had come to water. His chivalry was roused. He went at once among the goat-herds, made a place for the flocks of the damsels, gave them water, and then resumed his place in the shade.

They were modest maidens, and had given him in three Arabic words the key of the whole situation.

'**Abuna shaykhun Kabirun** our father is a very old man, and therefore cannot come to water the flocks; we therefore do the work; we could not very well thrust ourselves among these men.'

فَسَقَى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى إِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ...

24. So he watered (their flocks) for them;

then he turned back to the shade, and said:

...رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ (٢٤)

"O my Lord! truly am I in (desperate) need of any good that thou dost send me!"...

C3352. The maidens are gone, with smiles on their lips and gratitude in their hearts. What were the reflections of Moses as he returned to the shade of the tree?

He returned thanks to Allah for the bright little vision which he had just seen. Had he done a good deed? Precious was the opportunity he had had. He had slaked his thirst. But he was a homeless wanderer and had a longing in his soul, which he dared not put into words.

Those shepherds were no company for him. He was truly like a beggar in desperate need. For any little good that came his way, he was grateful.

But what was this? -this vision of a comfortable household, presided over by an old man rich in flocks and herds, and richer still in two daughters, as modest as they were beautiful?

Perhaps he would never see them again! But Allah was preparing another surprise for him.

فَجَاءَهُ إِحْدَاهُمَا تَمْشِي عَلَى اسْتِحْيَاءٍ...

25. Afterwards one of the (damsels) came (back) to him, walking bashfully.

...قَالَتْ إِنَّ أَبِي يَدْعُوكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ أَجْرَ مَا سَقَيْتَ لَنَا ...

She said: "My father invites thee that he may reward thee for having watered (our flocks) for us."

C3353. Scarcely had he rested, when one of the damsels came back, walking with bashful grace! Modestly she gave her message.

'My father is grateful for what you did for us. He invites you, that he may thank you personally, and at least give some return for your kindness.'

...فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُ وَقَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْقِصَصَ قَالَ لَا تَخَفْ...

So when he came to him and narrated the story, he said:

"Fear thou not:

...نَجَوْتَ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ (٢٥)

(well) hast thou escaped from unjust people."

C3354. Nothing could have been more welcome than such a message, and through such a messenger.

Moses went of course, and saw the old man. He found such a well-ordered patriarchal household. The old man was happy in his daughters and they in him. There was mutual confidence. They had evidently described the stranger to him in terms which made his welcome a foregone conclusion.

On the other hand Moses had allowed his imagination to paint the father in something of the glorious colours in which his daughters had appeared to him like an angelic vision.

The two men got to be friends at once. Moses told the old man his story,-who he was, how he was brought up, and what misfortunes had made him quit Egypt. Perhaps the whole household, including the daughters, listened breathlessly to his tale. Perhaps their wonder and admiration were mingled with a certain amount of pity-perhaps with some more tender feeling in the case of the girl who had been to fetch him.

In any case the stranger had won his place in their hearts. The old man, the head of the household, assured him of hospitality and safety under his roof. As one with a long experience of life he congratulated him on his escape. 'Who would live among unjust people? It is as well you are free of them!'

قَالَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا يَا أَبَتِ اسْتَأْجِرْهُ...

26. Said one of the (damsels): "O my (dear) father! engage him on wages:

C3355. A little time passes. A guest after all cannot stay for ever. They all feel that it would be good to have him with them permanently.

The girl who had given her heart to him had spoken their unspoken thoughts. Why not employ him to tend the flocks?

The father was old, and a young man was wanted to look after the flocks. And-there may be other possibilities.

...إِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنْ اسْتَأْجَرْتَ الْقَوِيُّ الْأَمِينُ (٢٦)

truly the best of men for thee to employ is the (man) who is strong and trusty"...

C3356. Strong and trusty: Moses had proved himself to be both, and these were the very qualities which a woman most admires in the man she loves.

قَالَ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُنكِحَكَ إِحْدَى ابْنَتَيَّ هَاتَيْنِ عَلَى أَنْ تَأْجُرَنِي
تَمَانِي حَجَجٍ ...

27. He said:

"I intended to wed one of these my daughters to thee, on condition that thou serve me for eight years;

C3357. A little time passed, and at length the father broached the subject of marriage. It was not for the fugitive to suggest a permanent tie, especially when, in the wealth of this world, the girl's family was superior, and they had an established position, while he was a mere wanderer.

The father asked if he would marry one of the daughters and stay with them for at least eight years, or if he liked, ten years, but the longer term was at his option. If he brought no dowry, his service for that period was more than sufficient in lieu of dowry.

The particular girl intended was no doubt tacitly settled long before, by the mutual attraction of the young hearts themselves. Moses was glad of the proposal, and accepted it.

They ratified it in the most solemn manner, by appealing to Allah. The old man, knowing the worth of his son-in-law, solemnly assured him that in any event he would not take advantage of his position to be a hard task-master or to insist on anything inconsistent with Moses' interests, should a new future open out to him. And a new and glorious future was awaiting him after his apprenticeship.

...فَإِنْ أَتَمَمْتَ عَشْرًا فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ...

but if thou complete ten years, it will be (grace) from thee.

...وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أَمْتُقَ عَلَيْكَ...

But I intend not to place thee under a difficulty:

...سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (٢٧)

thou wilt find me, indeed, if Allah wills, one of the righteous."

قَالَ ذَلِكَ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكَ...

28. He said:

"Be that (the agreement) between me and thee:

...أَيَّمَا الْأَجَلَيْنِ قَضَيْتُ فَلَا عُدْوَانَ عَلَيَّ...

whichever of the two terms I fulfil, let there be no ill-will to me.

...وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا نَقُولُ وَكِيلٌ (٢٨)

Be Allah a witness to what we say."

C3358. In patriarchal society it was not uncommon to have a marriage bargain of this kind conditional on a certain term of service.

In this case the episode conveys two lessons.

- A man destined to be a messenger of Allah is yet a man, and must pass through the ups and downs of life like any other man:

only he will do it with more grace and distinction than other men.

- The beautiful relations in love and marriage may themselves be a preparation for the highest spiritual destiny that may await a Messenger of Allah.

A woman need not necessarily be a snare and a temptation: she may be the understanding help-mate that the Lady Khadija was to the holy Prophet.

Section 4

فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَجَلَ وَسَارَ بِأَهْلِهِ آنَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّورِ نَارًا...

29. Now when Moses had fulfilled the term, and was travelling with his family, he perceived a fire in the direction of Mount Tur.

C3359. The episode in the desert, full of human interest, now closes, and we come to the threshold of the sacred Call to the divine ministry of Moses. Here we may compare this passage with that in 27:7-14 and previous passages.

In this passage we are told, after reference to Moses' preparation for his high destiny, of the particular sin of Arrogance and Sacrilege of which Pharaoh was guilty (28:38-39), how it was punished, and with what instruments in the hands of Moses and Pharaoh.

The notes on the earlier passage should be read, as explanations already given need not now be repeated. (R).

...قَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوا إِنِّي آنَسْتُ نَارًا...

He said to his family: "Tarry ye; I perceive a fire;

...لَعَلِّي آتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ جَذْوَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ (٢٩)

I hope to bring you from there some information, or a burning firebrand, that ye may warm yourselves."

C3360. Note how the transition is effected from the happy life of Moses to the new prophetic mission.

...فَلَمَّا أَتَاهَا نُودِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِي الْأَيْمَنِ...

30. But when he came to the (Fire), a voice was heard from the right bank of the valley,

...فِي الْبُقْعَةِ الْمُبَارَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ أَنْ يَا مُوسَى...

from a tree in hallowed ground: "O Moses!

C3361. We are to suppose the appearance of a bush burning but not consumed (Exod. 3:2), a device adopted by the Scottish Church in its armorial bearings. Scotland apparently took that emblem and motto (Nec tamen consumebatur, 'nevertheless it was not consumed') from the Synod of the Reformed Church of France, which had adopted it in 1583. (I am indebted for this information to the Rev. D.Y. Robertson, Chaplain of the Church of Scotland in Simla, India).

The real explanation of the Burning Bush will be found in [27:8](#), [n. 3245](#): it was not a fire, but a reflection of the Glory of God.

...إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٣٠)

verily I am Allah, the Lord of the Worlds...

وَأَنْ أَلْقَ عَصَاكَ...

31. "Now do thou throw thy rod!"

...فَلَمَّا رَأَاهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّى مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ...

But when he saw it moving (of its own accord) as if it had been a snake, He turned back in retreat and retraced not his steps:

...يَا مُوسَى أَقْبِلْ وَلَا تَخَفْ ...

"O Moses!" (it was said), "draw near, and fear not:

...إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْآمِنِينَ (٣١)

for thou art of those who are secure.

C3362. The verbal meaning is: 'you have nothing to fear from what appears to be a snake: it is a snake, not for you, but for Pharaoh.'

But there is a deeper meaning besides.

Moses had now been called to a higher prophetic mission. He had to meet the hatred of the Egyptians and circumvent their trickery and magic. He had now the security of Faith: in all dangers and difficulties Allah would guide and protect him, for he was actually in Allah's service, one of the Elect.

...اسْلُكْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضًا مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوءٍ...

32. "Move thy hand into thy bosom, and it will come forth white without stain (or harm),

...وَأَضْمُ يَدَكَ إِلَى جَنَاحِكَ مِنَ الرَّهْبِ...

and draw thy hand close to thy side (to guard) against fear.

C3363. Literally, "draw thy wing close to thy side, (away) from fear".

When a bird is frightened, it ruffles its wings and prepares to fly away, but when it is calm and composed, it sits with its wings drawn close to its sides, showing a mind secure from danger.

Cf. also n. 2550 to 20:22.

...فَدَانِكَ بُرْهَاتَانِ مِنْ رَبِّكَ إِلَى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ...

Those are the two credentials from thy Lord to Pharaoh and his Chiefs:

...إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ (٣٢)

for truly they are a people rebellious and wicked."

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي قَتَلْتُ مِنْهُمْ نَفْسًا فَأَخَافُ أَنْ يَقْتُلُونِ (٣٣)

33. He said: "O my Lord! I have slain a man among them, and I fear lest they slay me.

C3364. It is not that Moses is not reassured from all fear on account of the apparent snake which his rod had become, or from the sacred and unfamiliar surroundings in which he found himself.

On this point his heart has been completely assured. But he is still new to his mission, and the future is obscure to his mind. Pharaoh was after him, to take his life, and apparently with good cause, because one of Pharaoh's men had been slain at his hands. And now he is commanded to go to Pharaoh and rebuke him and his Chiefs.

The inner doubts and difficulties of his human mind he frankly lays before his Lord, and asks for a little human and visible support, which is granted him at once, viz.; the help of his brother Aaron.

وَأَخِي هَارُونُ هُوَ أَفْصَحُ مِنِّي لِسَانًا فَأَرْسِلْهُ مَعِيَ رِدْءًا يُصَدِّقُنِي...

34. "And my brother Aaron -- he is more eloquent in speech than I: so send him with me as a helper, to confirm (and strengthen) me;

...إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يُكَدِّبُونِ (٣٤)

for I fear that they may accuse me of falsehood."

قَالَ سَنَشُدُّ عَضُدَكَ بِأَخِيكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطَانًا فَلَا يَصِيلُونَ إِلَيْكُمَا...

35. He said: "We will certainly strengthen thy arm through thy brother, and invest you both with authority, so they shall not be able to touch you:

C3365. To touch you: to approach you anywhere near, in the wonders and Signs that you will show them under the divine authority with which you are invested.

...بِآيَاتِنَا أَنْتُمَا وَمَنْ اتَّبَعَكُمَا الْغَالِبُونَ (٣٥)

with Our Signs shall ye triumph -- you two as well as those who follow you."

C3366. The potency of Allah's Light is such that its divine rays reach the humblest of those who seek after Him.

The Prophets can certainly work wonders, but their sincere followers in Faith can do so also in their own spheres. Wonders may appeal to people, but they are not the highest signs of Allah's workings, and they are around us every day in our lives.

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ قَالُوا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّفْتَرَىٰ...

36. When Moses came to them with Our Clear Signs, they said:

"This is nothing but sorcery faked up:

C3367. This is what Moses was thinking of when he had said: "They may accuse me of falsehood".

To accuse the purest Truth of lying is a favourite trick of those whose chief stock-in-trade is deception and sorcery and catching the attention of the vulgar by arts adapted to their ignorant minds!

...وَمَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي آبَائِنَا الْأُولِينَ (٣٦)

never did we hear the like among our fathers of old!"

C3368. 'As to this higher talk of the worship of the One true God, why, our ancestors have worshipped power and patronage, as concentrated in Pharaoh, from the most ancient times!'

وَقَالَ مُوسَى رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ جَاءَ بِالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ...

37. Moses said:

"My Lord knows best who it is that comes with guidance from Him

...وَمَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ...

and whose End will be best in the Hereafter:

...إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ (٣٧)

certain it is that the wrongdoers will not prosper."

C3369. Cf. 6:135.

The only argument in such a case is an appeal to Allah, and to the ultimate Future. Both of these appeals require Faith. But even if you do not rely on anything so high, you can see that Falsehood or evils crystallised in ancestral customs are not going to do any one any good.

وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَلَأَ مَا عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِي...

38. Pharaoh said: "O Chiefs! no god do I know for you but myself:

C3370. Pharaoh claimed, himself, to be God,-not only one god among many, but the only god: "I am your Lord Most High": 79:24.

At any rate he did not see why his people should worship any one but him.

...فَأَوْقِدْ لِي يَا هَامَانَ عَلَى الطِّينِ فَاجْعَلْ لِي صَرْحًا...

therefore, o Haman! light me a (kiln to bake bricks) out of clay, and build me a lofty palace,

C3371. I understand his speech to his minister Haman to be sarcastic. But some Commentators have taken it very seriously and imagined that he actually thought of reaching the heavens by budding lofty towers.

...أَلْعَلِّي أُطَّعُ إِلَى إِلَهِ مُوسَى...

that I may mount up to the god of Moses:

...وَأِنِّي لَأَظُنُّهُ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ (٣٨)

but as far as I am concerned, I think (Moses) is a liar!"

وَأَسْتَكْبَرَ هُوَ وَجُنُودُهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ...

39. And he was arrogant and insolent in the land, beyond reason -- he and his hosts:

...وَوَظَنُوا أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا يُرْجَعُونَ (٣٩)

they thought that they would not have to return to Us!

C3372. They did not believe in the Hereafter. They did not understand that every deed must have its inevitable consequence, good, or evil, unless the Grace of Allah intervenes to save us from ourselves!

فَأَخَذْنَاهُ وَجُنُودَهُ فَنَبَذْنَاهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ...

40. So We seized him and his hosts, and We flung them into the sea:

C3373. Pharaoh and his hosts were drowned in the sea in their pursuit of the Israelites: see 7:130-136.

They are the type of men who lead-only to Destruction. They invite, not to Peace and Happiness, but to the Fire of Wrath, mutual Envy, and Hatred.

...فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظَّالِمِينَ (٤٠)

now behold what was the End of those who did wrong!

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أُمَمَةً يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ...

41. And We made them (but) leaders inviting to the Fire;

...وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا يُنصَرُونَ (٤١)

and on the Day of Judgment no help shall they find.

وَأَنْبَعَثْنَاهُمْ فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً...

42. In this world We made a Curse to follow them:

C3374. Power and patronage may be lauded by sycophants and selfish place-hunters; but when they are misused, and when their exposure causes their fall, they suffer ignominy even in this life. If they manage to escape exposure while alive, it often happens that they are found out after their death, and the curses of many

generations follow those whose oppressions and wrongdoing spoiled the fair face of Allah's earth.

But even this is nothing to the true Punishment that will come in the Hereafter. There, true values will be restored, and some of the highest and mightiest will be in the lowest depths of degradation.

...وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ هُمْ مِنَ الْمَقْبُوحِينَ (٤٢)

and on the Day of Judgment they will be among the loathed (and despised).

C.174 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(28:43-60)

*As with Moses, so with the Prophet Muhammad;
Revelation was given to him, by which
He knew and understood, and led men and was kind.
He was a Mercy to men, sent by Allah, to warn
Those in sin, and, be precept and example,
To bring the Light to their very doors.
Those who had spiritual eyes rejoiced,
And walked in Allah's ancient Way, now reopened,
Valuing the things of the Spirit as Allah's
Own gifts, to be their possession forever!*

Section 5

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُونَ الْأُولَى...

43. We did reveal to Moses the Book after We had destroyed the earlier generations,

...بَصَائِرَ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ (٤٣)

(to give) Insight to men and Guidance and Mercy, that they might receive admonition.

C3375. After the destruction of the Pharaonic Tyranny and other similar Tyrannies before them, Allah began a new age of Revelation, the age of Moses and his Book.

Humanity began as it were with a clean slate again. It was a full Revelation (or Shariah) which may be looked at from three points of view:

1. as Light or Insight for men, so that they should not grope in darkness;
2. as a Guide to show them the Way, so that they should not be misled into wrong Paths; and
3. as a Mercy from Allah, so that by following the Way they may receive Allah's Forgiveness and Grace.

In 6:91, we have a reference to Light and Guidance in connection with the Revelation of Moses, and in 6:154 we have a reference to Guidance and Mercy in the same connection.

Here all three are combined, with the substitution of **Basair** for Nur.

Basair is the plural of **Basirat**, and may also be translated Proofs, as I have done in 6:104.

Cf. also 7:203, n. 1175, where the word is translated "Lights".

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الْعَرَبِيِّ إِذْ قَضَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَى الْأَمْرَ...

44. Thou wast not on the Western Side when We decreed the commission to Moses,

C3376. The Sinai Peninsula is in the north-west corner of Arabia. But the reference here is, I think, to the western side of the valley of Tuwa. Mount Tur, where Moses received his prophetic commission, is on the western side of the valley.

...وَمَا كُنْتَ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ (٤٤)

nor wast thou a witness (of those events).

وَلَكِنَّا أَنْشَأْنَا فُرُوعًا وَفَنَّاوَلَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرَ...

45. But We raised up (new) generations, and long were the ages that passed over them;

C3377. That is, there were many generations that passed between Moses and the holy Prophet. Yet he knew by inspiration of the events of those times. Even if he had lived then, he could not have known the events that took place among the Midianites, except by inspiration, as he did not dwell among them.

...وَمَا كُنْتَ تَأْوِيًا فِي أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ تَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا...

but thou wast not a dweller among the people of Madyan, rehearsing Our Signs to them;

...وَلَكِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ (٤٥)

but it is We Who send Messengers (with inspiration).

C3378. 'Though thou wast not among the Midianites, Our inspiration has told thee of the momentous events that took place among them when Moses was with them. This is itself a Sign that should make thy people understand.'

وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّورِ إِذْ نَادَيْنَا...

46. Nor wast thou at the side of (the Mountain of) Tur when We called (to Moses),

...وَلَكِنْ رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ لِنُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَاهُمْ مِّن نَّذِيرٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ...

Yet (art thou sent) as a Mercy from thy Lord, to give warning to a people to whom no warner had come before thee:

C3379. This people was the Quraish.

'Though thou didst not see how Moses was invested with the prophetic office at Mount Tur, thou hast had similar experience thyself, and We have sent thee to the Quraish to warn them of all their sins, and to repent and come into the Faith'.

...لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ (٤٦)

in order that they may receive admonition.

...وَلَوْ أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُوا...

47. If (We had) not (sent thee to the Quraish) -- in case a calamity should seize them for (the deeds) that their hands have sent forth, they might say:

... رَبَّنَا لَوْلَا أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا ...

"Our Lord! why didst Thou not send us a messenger?"

C3380. Now that a warner has come among them with all the authority that previous Messengers possessed and with all the knowledge which can only come by divine inspiration, they have no excuse left whatever. They cannot say, "No warner came to us."

If any evil comes to them, as the inevitable result of their ill-deeds, they cannot blame Allah and say that they were not warned.

Cf. 20:134.

... فَتَتَّبِعَ آيَاتِكَ وَتَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٤٧)

We should then have followed the Signs and been amongst those who believe!"

فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوا لَوْلَا أُوتِيَ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى...

48. But (now), when the Truth has come to them from Ourselves, they say,

"Why are not (Signs) sent to him, like those which were sent to Moses?"

... أَوْلَمْ يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى مِنْ قَبْلُ...

Do they not then reject (the Signs) which were formerly sent to Moses?

C3381. When a Revelation is sent to them, in the Quran, adapted to all their needs and the needs of the time they live in, they hark back to antiquity.

The holy Prophet was in many respects like Moses, but the times in which he lived were different from the times of Moses, and his age did not suffer from the deceptions of sorcery, like that of Moses.

The remedies which his age and future ages required (for his Message was universal) were different. His miracle of the Quran was different and most permanent than the Rod and the Radiant-White Hand of Moses.

But supposing that the Quraish had been humoured in their insincere demands, would they have believed?

Did they believe in Moses?

They were only put up by the Jews to make objections which they themselves did not believe in.

...قَالُوا سِحْرَانِ تَظَاهَرَا...

They say: "Two kinds of sorcery, each assisting the other!"

C3382. Moses was called a sorcerer by the Egyptians, and the wonderful words of the Quran were called sorcery by the Quraish.

As the Quran confirmed the Message of Moses, the Quraish objectors said that they were in collusion.

The Quraish did not believe in Allah's Revelation at all.

...وَقَالُوا إِنَّا بِكُلِّ كَافِرُونَ (٤٨)

And they say: "For us, we reject all (such things)!"

قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِكِتَابٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ هُوَ أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمَا أَتَّبَعُهُ...

49. Say: "Then bring ye a Book from Allah, which is a better Guide than either of them, that I may follow it!

...إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (٤٩)

(Do), if ye are truthful!"

فَإِن لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُونَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ...

50. But if they hearken not to thee, know that they only follow their own lusts:

C3383. They were challenged to produce something better, to be a guide in life. But as they could not, it was evident that their objections were fractious. They were only following their own selfish lusts of power, monopoly, and exploitation of the poor and ignorant.

How can such people receive guidance?

...وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّن اتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللَّهِ...

and who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, devoid of guidance from Allah?

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (٥٠)

For Allah guides not people given to wrongdoing.

Section 6

وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ (٥١)

51. Now have We caused the word to reach them themselves, in order that they may receive admonition.

C3384. Before this the Quraish might have said that the Word of Allah had come to the Hebrews in their tongue or in Greek, which was used by the Hebrews in the time of Jesus. Now that Word is brought to their own doors, in their own Arabic tongue, by a man of their own race and family. Surely they have no excuse now for remaining strangers to the higher moral and spiritual law.

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ هُمْ بِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ (٥٢)

52. Those to whom We sent the Book before this -- they do believe in this (Revelation);

وَإِذَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْهِمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِهِ...

53. And when it is recited to them, they say:

"We believe therein,

...إِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّنَا ...

for it is the Truth from our Lord:

...إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مُسْلِمِينَ (٥٣)

indeed we have been Muslims (bowing to Allah's Will) from before this."

C3385. There were Christians and Jews who recognised that Islam was a logical and natural development of Allah's revelations as given in earlier ages, and they not only welcomed and accepted Islam, but claimed, and rightly, that they had always been Muslims.

In that sense Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus had all been Muslims. (R).

أُولَئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ أَجْرَهُمْ مَرَّتَيْنِ...

54. Twice will they be given their reward,

C3386. Their credit is twofold,

- in that before they knew Islam, they followed the earlier Law in truth and sincerity, and
- when they were offered Islam, they readily recognised and accepted it, suffered in patient perseverance for its sake, and brought forth the fruits of righteousness.

...بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيَدْرُؤُونَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةِ ...

for that they have persevered, that they avert Evil with Good,

...وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ (٥٤)

and that they spend (in charity) out of what We have given them.

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّعْوَ أَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُ...

55. And when they hear vain talk, they turn away therefrom

...وَقَالُوا لَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ ...

and say: "To us our deeds, and to you yours;

C3387. The righteous do not encourage idle talk or foolish arguments about things sacred. If they find themselves in some company in which such things are fashionable, they leave politely. Their only rejoinder is:

"We are responsible for our deeds, and you for yours; we have no ill-will against you; we wish you well, and that is why we wish you to know of the knowledge we have received; after that knowledge you cannot expect us to go back to the Ignorance which we have left."

... سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ...

peace be to you:

...لَا نَبْتَغِي الْجَاهِلِينَ (٥٥)

we seek not the ignorant."

إِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِي مَنْ أَحْبَبْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ...

56. It is true thou wilt not be able to guide everyone whom thou lovest: but Allah guides those whom He will

C3388. The immediate occasion for this was the death of Abu Talib, an uncle whom the holy Prophet loved dearly and who had befriended and protected him.

The Prophet was naturally anxious that he should die in the profession of the true Faith, but the pagan Quraish leaders persuaded him to remain true to the faith of his fathers. This was an occasion of disappointment and grief to the Prophet.

We are told that in such circumstances we should not grieve. All whom we love do not necessarily share our views or beliefs. We must not judge.

Allah will guide whom He pleases and as He pleases. He alone knows the true inwardness of things.

...وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ (٥٦)

and He knows best those who receive guidance.

وَقَالُوا إِنْ تَتَّبِعِ الْهُدَىٰ مَعَكَ نُنْخَطِفُ مِنْ أَرْضِنَا...

57. They say: "If we were to follow the guidance with thee, we should be snatched away from our land."

C3389. Some Quraish said: "We see the truth of Islam, but if we abandon our people, we shall lose our hold on the land, and other people will dispossess us."

The answer is twofold, one literal and the other of deeper import.

1. 'Your land?

Why, the sanctuary of Makkah is sacred and secure because Allah has made it so. If you obey Allah's Word, you will be strengthened, not weakened.'

2. 'Makkah is the symbol of the Fortress of Spiritual Well-being. The Fruit of every Deed comes or should come as a tribute to Spiritual Well-being.

What are you afraid of?

It is Allah's Fortress. The more you seek Allah, the stronger you are in the Fortress.'

...أَوْلَمْ نُمْكِّنْ لَهُمْ حَرَمًا آمِنًا...

Have We not established for them a secure Sanctuary,

...يُجْبَىٰ إِلَيْهِ ثَمَرَاتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِّزْقًا مِن لَّدُنَّا...

to which are brought as tribute fruits of all kinds? --
a provision from Ourselves?

...وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٥٧)

But most of them understand not.

...وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِن قَرْيَةٍ بَطَرَتْ مَعِيشَتَهَا...

58. And how many populations We destroyed, which exulted in their life (of ease and plenty)!

...فَتِلْكَ مَسَاكِينُهُمْ لَم نُنسِكَنَّ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا...

Now those habitations of theirs, after them, are deserted -- all but a (miserable) few!

...وَكُنَّا نَحْنُ الْوَارِثِينَ (٥٨)

and We are their heirs!

C3390. A life of ease and plenty is nothing to boast of. Yet peoples or cities or civilisations grow insolently proud of such things.

There were many such in the past, which are now mere names! Their very sites are deserted in most cases, or buried in the debris of ages.

India is full of such sites nearly everywhere. The sites of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro are the most ancient hitherto unearthed in India, and they are themselves in layers covering centuries of time! And how many more there may be, of which we do not know even names! Fatehpur-Sikri was a magnificent ruin within a single generation. And there are thousands of Qasbas once flourishing and now reduced to small villages or altogether deserted.

But God is merciful and just. He does not destroy or degrade a people until they have had full opportunities of turning in repentance to Him and they have deliberately rejected His Law and continued in the practice of iniquity.

وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ يَبْعَثَ فِي أُمَّهَاتِ رُسُلًا يَلْتَمِسُوا
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا...

59. Nor was thy Lord the one to destroy a population until He had sent to its Center a Messenger, rehearsing to them Our Signs:

...وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرَىٰ إِلَّا وَأَهْلُهَا ظَالِمُونَ (٥٩)

nor are We going to destroy a population except when its members practice iniquity.

...وَمَا أَوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَّاعٌ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِينَتُهَا...

60. The (material) things which ye are given are but the conveniences of this life and the glitter thereof;

C3391. The good things of this life have their uses and serve their convenience. But they are fleeting and their value is infinitely lower than that of Truth and Justice and Spiritual Well-being, the gifts which come as it were from Allah. No wise soul will be absorbed in the one and neglect the other, or will hesitate for a moment if it comes to be a choice between them.

...وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ...

but that which is with Allah is better and more enduring:

...أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ (٦٠)

will ye not then be wise?

C.175 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(28:61-75)

*Material good is nothing compared
To the spiritual. In the Hereafter*

*No plea 'that others misled' will avail.
 Each soul must, answer for itself.
 Whether it honoured Allah alone
 Or worshipped something else,
 And whether it received or rejected
 The Teachers sent by Allah. The Wisdom
 And Plan of Allah are beyond all praise:
 And Mercy and truth proceed from Him.
 And there is no other-none-besides Him.*

Section 7

أَقْمَنَ وَعَدَّنَاهُ وَعَدًّا حَسَنًا...

61. Are (these two) alike? --

one to whom We have made a goodly promise, and who is going to reach its (fulfillment),

C3392. The two classes of people are:

1. those who have faith in the goodly promise of Allah to the righteous, and who are doing everything in life to reach the fulfilment of that promise, i.e., those who believe and work righteousness, and
2. those who are ungrateful for such good things in this life as Allah has bestowed on them, by worshipping wealth or power or other symbols or idols of their fancy, i.e., those who reject Faith and lead evil lives, for which they will have to answer in the Hereafter.

The two classes are poles asunder, and their future is described below.

...فَهُوَ لَاقِيهِ كَمَنْ مَتَّعْنَاهُ مَتَاعَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا...

and one to whom we have given the good things of this life,

...ثُمَّ هُوَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِينَ (٦١)

but who, on the Day of Judgment, is to be among those brought up (for punishment)?

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ...

62. That Day Allah will call to them, and say:

...أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ (٦٢)

"Where are my 'partners'? -- whom ye imagined (to be such)?"

قَالَ الَّذِينَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ...

63. Those against whom the charge will be proved, will say:

C3393. This and the next verse are concerned with the examination of those who neglected truth and righteousness and went after the worship of false gods. These were the "partners" they associated with Allah.

In so far as they were embodied in false or wicked leaders, the leaders will disown responsibility for them. 'We ourselves went wrong, and they followed our example, because it suited them: they worshipped, not us, but their own lusts.'

...رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَغْوَيْنَا أَغْوَيْنَاهُمْ كَمَا غَوَيْنَا...

"Our Lord! these are the ones whom we led astray:
we led them astray, as we were astray ourselves:

...تَبَرَّأْنَا إِلَيْكَ...

we free ourselves (from them) in Thy presence!

...مَا كَانُوا إِلَّا نَا يَعْبُدُونَ (٦٣)

It was not us they worshipped."

C3394. Cf. 10:28.

False worship often names others, but really it is the worship of Self. The others whom they name will have nothing to do with them when the awful Penalty stands in the sight of both. Then each wrong-doer will have to look to his own case.

The wicked will then realise the gravity of the situation and wish that they had accepted the true guidance of Allah's Messengers.

وَقِيلَ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيبُوا لَهُمْ وَرَأُوا الْعَذَابَ...

64. It will be said (to them): "Call upon your 'partners' (for help)":
they will call upon them, but they will not listen to them; and they
will see the Penalty (before them);

...لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَهْتَدُونَ (٦٤)

(how they will wish) 'If only they had been open to guidance!'

وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ الْمُرْسَلِينَ (٦٥)

65. That Day (Allah) will call to them, and say: "What was the answer
ye gave to the Messengers?"

C3395. Now we come to the examination of those who
rejected or persecuted Allah's Messengers on the earth.

It may be the same men as those mentioned in 28:62-
64, but this is a different count in the charge.

فَعَمِيَّتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَنْبَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَهُمْ لَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ (٦٦)

66. Then the (whole) story that day will seem obscure to them (like
light to the blind) and they will not be able (even) to question each
other.

C3396. In their utter confusion and despair their minds
will be blank. The past will seem to them unreal, and the
present unintelligible, and they will not even be able to
consult each other, as every one's state will be the
same.

فَأَمَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَآمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَعَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُفْلِحِينَ (٦٧)

67. But any that (in this life) had repented, believed, and worked
righteousness, will have hopes to be among those who achieve
salvation.

وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَيَخْتَارُ...

68. Thy Lord does create and choose as He pleases:

C3397. As He pleases: according to His own Will and
Plan.

Allah is not dependent on other people for advice or help. He has no partners. All creation is an act of His Will, and no one can direct Him how or why certain things should be, because He is supreme in wisdom and knowledge.

He chooses His messengers also by His own unfettered choice. Inspiration or spiritual knowledge and dignity cannot be judged of by our relative or temporary standards. Worldly greatness or even wisdom do not necessarily go with spiritual insight.

...مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ ...

no choice have they (in the matter):

...سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَتَعَالَى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (٦٨)

Glory to Allah! and far is He above the partners they ascribe (to Him)!

وَرَبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُورُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ (٦٩)

69. And thy Lord knows all that their hearts conceal and all that they reveal.

C3398. Men may form all sorts of vain wishes or conceal their designs. But Allah's Will is supreme, and nothing can withstand its fulfilment.

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ...

70. And He is Allah: there is no god but He.

...لَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي الْأُولَى وَالْآخِرَةِ...

To him be praise, at the first and at the last:

...وَلَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (٧٠)

or Him is the Command, and to Him shall ye (all) be brought back.

فَلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ اللَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ...

71. Say: see ye?

If Allah were to make the Night perpetual over you to the Day of Judgment,

C3399. In the physical world the Night and the Day are both blessings, the one for rest and the other for work, and the alternation itself is one of the mercies of Allah, and none but He can give us these blessings.

- If we were perpetually resting, or screened from the light, our faculties would be blunted and we should be worse than dead.
- If we were perpetually working, we should be tired, and we should also be dead in another way.

This daily miracle keeps us alive and prepares us, in this our probationary life, for our final destiny in the Hereafter.

In the same way our spiritual strivings require periodical alternations of rest in the form of attention to our temporal concerns: hence the justification of a good and pure life on the plane of this earth also.

Also, in the world's history, there are periods when a living messenger stimulates intense spiritual activity, and periods when it is comparatively quiescent (the so-called Dark Ages); but both are examples of the working of Allah's Plan of wisdom and mercy.

But this applies only up to the Day of Judgment. After that we shall be on another plane altogether.

...مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بضيَاء...

what god is there other than Allah, who can give you enlightenment?

...أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ (٧١)

Will ye not then hearken?

فَلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ...

72. Say: see ye? If Allah were to make the Day perpetual over you to the Day of Judgment,

...مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بليْلِ تَسْكُونُونَ فِيهِ...

what god is there other than Allah, who can give you a Night in which ye can rest?

...أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ (٧٢)

Will ye not then see?

C3400. In verse 71 was mentioned a "perpetual Night," for which the faculty of "hearkening" was appropriate, as all light was shut out.

In this verse a **perpetual Day** is mentioned, for which the faculty of "seeing" is appropriate. Through many doors can the higher knowledge enter our souls.

Shall we not use each of them as the occasion demands?

وَمِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ...

73. It is out of His Mercy that He has made for you Night and Day -- that ye may rest therein,

...وَلِيَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (٧٣)

and that ye may seek of His Grace --
and in order that ye may be grateful.

وَيَوْمَ يَنَادِيهِمْ فَيَقُولُ...

74. The Day that He will call on them, He will say:

C3401. Cf. 28:62 above.

The reminiscence of the words closes and rounds off the argument of this Section.

...أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِيَ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ (٧٤)

"Where are My 'partners' whom ye imagined (to be such)?"

وَتَزْعُمَانَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا...

75. And from each people shall We draw a witness,

C3402. Cf. 4:41.

The Prophet from each People or Nation will bear testimony that he preached the true gospel of Unity, and the People who rejected him will be asked to show the Proof or authority on which they rejected him: Cf. 2:111

...فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ...

and We shall say: "Produce your Proof":

...فَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ الْحَقَّ لِلَّهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ (٧٥)

then shall they know that the Truth is in Allah (alone), and the (lies) which they invented will leave them in the lurch.

C3403. In that new world, Allah will be the only Truth or Reality, and all the fancies or lies, which had been invented in this world of reflected or relative truths mixed with illusions, will have vanished, and left those who relied on them in the lurch. Cf. 6:24.

C.176 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(28:76-88)

*Men puffed up with wealth, like Qarun,
Are not pleasing to Allah; for wealth
Is for service, not for hoarding or show
In the midst of his pride was Qarun
Swallowed up in the earth, and the earth
Knew him no more! It is the righteous
That attain a happy End. Let nothing
Keep your eyes back from that End:
Then, and only then, shall ye reach
The Eternal Reality, the glorious Reality,
Which is Allah, Who endureth forever!*

Section 8

إِنَّ قَارُونَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى ...

76. Qarun was doubtless, of the people of Moses;

C3404. **Qarun** is identified with the Korah of the English Bible. His story is told in Num. 16:1-35.

He and his followers, numbering 250 men, rose in rebellion against Moses and Aaron, on the ground that their position and fame in the congregation entitled them to equality in spiritual matters with the Priests, -that they were as holy as any, and they claimed to burn incense at the sacred Altar reserved for the Priests.

They had an exemplary punishment: "the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods: they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation."

... فَبَغَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ...

but he acted insolently towards them:

... وَأَتَيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْكُنُوزِ مَا ...

such were the treasures We had bestowed on him,

C3405. Qarun's boundless wealth is described in the Midrashim, or the Jewish compilations based on the oral teachings of the Synagogues, which however exaggerate the weight of the keys to be the equivalent of the load of 300 mules!

... إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهُ لَتَنُوءُ بِالْعُصْبَةِ أُولِي الْقُوَّةِ ...

that their very keys would have been a burden to a body of strong men:

C3406. Usbat: a body of men, here used indefinitely. It usually implies a body of 10 to 40 men.

The old-fashioned keys were big and heavy, and if there were hundreds of treasure-chests, the keys must have been a great weight. As they were travelling in the desert, the treasures were presumably left behind in Egypt, and only the keys were carried. The disloyal Qarun had left his heart in Egypt, with his treasures.

... إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ قَوْمُهُ لَا تَفْرَحْ ...

Behold, his people said to him:

"Exult not,

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ (٧٦)

for Allah loveth not those who exult (in riches).

وَابْتَغِ فِيهَا ذَاتَ اللَّهِ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ...

77. "But seek, with the (wealth) which Allah has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter,

C3407. That is, 'spend your wealth in charity and good works. It is Allah Who has given it to you, and you should spend it in Allah's cause. Nor should you forget the legitimate needs of this life, as misers do, and most people become misers who think too exclusively of their wealth'.

If wealth is not used properly, there are three evils that follow:

1. its possessor may be a miser and forget all claims due to himself and those about him;
2. he may forget the higher needs of the poor and needy, or the good causes which require support; and
3. he may even misspend on occasions and cause a great deal of harm and mischief. Apparently Qarun had all three vices.

...وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا...

nor forget thy portion in this world:

...وَأَحْسِنَ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ...

but do thou good, as Allah has been good to thee,

...وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ...

and seek not (occasions for) mischief in the land:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (٧٧)

for Allah loves not those who do mischief."

قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْنُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي...

78. He said: "This has been given to me because of a certain knowledge which I have."

C3408. He was so blind and arrogant that he thought that his own merit, knowledge, and skill or cleverness had earned him his wealth, and that now, on account of it, he was superior to everybody else and was entitled to ride rough-shod over them. Fool!-he was soon pulled up by -Allah.

... أَوْلَمْ يَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَهْلَكَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ...

Did he not know that Allah had destroyed, before him (whole) generations --

...مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرُ جَمْعًا...

which were superior to him in strength and greater in amount (of riches) they had collected?

...وَلَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذُنُوبِهِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ (٧٨)

But the wicked are not called (immediately) to account for their sins.

C3409. Even Qarun was given a long run of enjoyment with his fabulous wealth before he had to be removed for the mischief he was doing.

فَخَرَجَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ...

79. So he went forth among his people in the (pride of his worldly) glitter.

...قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ...

Said those whose aim is the Life of this World:

"Oh that we had the like of what Qarun has got!

...إِنَّهُ لَدُوٌّ حَظٌّ عَظِيمٍ (٧٩)

For he is truly a lord of mighty good fortune."

C3410. When he was in the hey-day of his glory, worldly people envied him and thought how happy they would be if they were in his place. Not so the people of wisdom and discernment. They knew a more precious and lasting wealth, which is described in the next verse.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ...

80. But those who had been granted (true) knowledge said:

...وَيَلْكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِّمَن آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا...

"Alas for you! the reward of Allah (in the Hereafter) is best for those who believe and work righteousness:

...وَلَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الصَّابِرُونَ (٨٠)

but this none shall attain, save those who steadfastly persevere (in good)."

فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبَدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ...

81. Then We caused the earth to swallow him up and his house;

C3411. See n. 3404 above. Cf. also 16:45 and n. 2071.

Besides the obvious moral in the literal interpretation of the story, that material wealth is fleeting and may be a temptation and a cause of fall, there are some metaphorical implications that occur to me.

1. Material wealth has no value in itself, but only a relative and local value.
2. In body he was with Israel in the wilderness, but his heart was in Egypt with its fertility and its slavery. Such is the case of many hypocrites, who like to be seen in righteous company but whose thoughts, longings, and doing are inconsistent with such company.
3. There is no good in this life but comes from Allah. To think otherwise is to set up a false god besides Allah, Our own merits are so small that they should never be the object of our idolatry.
4. If Qarun on account of his wealth was setting himself up in rivalry with Moses and Aaron, he was blind to the fact that spiritual knowledge is far above any little cleverness in worldly affairs. Mob-leaders have no position before spiritual guides.

...فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ مِنْ فِئَةٍ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ...

and he had not (the least little) party to help him against Allah,

...وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُنتَصِرِينَ (٨١)

nor could he defend himself.

وَأَصْبَحَ الَّذِينَ تَمَتُّوا مَكَانَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَقُولُونَ وَيَكَآئِن...

82. And those who had envied his position the day before began to say on the morrow: "Ah!

...اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ...

it is indeed Allah Who enlarges the provision or restricts it, to any of His servants He pleases!

C3412. Provision or Sustenance, both literally and figuratively: wealth and material things in life as well as the things that sustain our higher and spiritual faculties.

The rabble, that admired Qarun's wealth when he was in worldly prosperity, now sees the other side of the question and understands that there are other gifts more precious and desirable, and that these may actually be withheld from men who enjoy wealth and worldly prosperity.

In fact it is false prosperity, or no prosperity in the real sense of the word, which is without spiritual well-being.

...لوْلاَ أَن مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَا...

Had it not been that Allah was gracious to us, He could have caused the earth to swallow us up!

...وَيَكَآئِنَهُ لَأَيُّفِلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ (٨٢)

Ah!

those who reject Allah will assuredly never prosper."

Section 9

تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فُسَادًا...

83. That House of the Hereafter We shall give to those who intend not high-handedness or mischief on earth:

C3413. High-handedness or arrogance, as opposed to submission to the Will of Allah, Islam.

Mischief, as opposed to doing good, bringing forth fruits of righteousness.

It is the righteous who will win in the end.

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ (٨٣)

and the End is (best) for the righteous.

مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا...

84. If any does good, the reward to him is better than his deed;

وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى الَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا

يَعْمَلُونَ (٨٤)

but if any does evil, the doers of evil are only punished (to the extent) of their deeds.

C3414. A good deed has its sure reward, and that reward will be better than the merits of the doer.

An evil deed may be forgiven by repentance, but in any case will not be punished with a severer penalty than justice demands.

إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ ...

85. Verily He Who ordained the Qur'an for thee,

C3415. That is:

- order in His wisdom and mercy that the Quran should be revealed, containing guidance for conduct in this life and
- the next, and further ordered that it should be read out and taught and its principles observed in practice.

It is because of this teaching and preaching that the holy Prophet was persecuted, but as Allah sent the Quran, He will see that those who follow it will not eventually suffer, but be restored to happiness in the Place of Return, for which see next note.

... لِرَاذِكَ إِلَى مَعَادٍ...

will bring thee back to the Place of Return.

C3416. Place of Return:

1. a title of Makkah;
2. the occasion when we shall be restored to the Presence of our Lord.

It is said that this verse was revealed at Juhfa, on the road from Makkah to Madinah, a short distance from Makkah on the Hijrah journey.

The Prophet was sad at heart, and this was given as consolation to him. If this was the particular occasion, the general meaning would refer the Place of Return to the occasion of the Resurrection, when all true values will be restored, however they may be disturbed by the temporary interference of evil in this life.

...قُلْ رَبِّي أَعْلَمُ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَمَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ (٨٥)

Say: "My Lord knows best who it is that brings true guidance, and who is in manifest error."

C3417. Allah knows the true from the false, and if we are persecuted for our Faith and attacked or spoken ill of because we dare to do right, our surest refuge is an appeal to Allah rather than to men.

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُو أَنْ يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ...

86. And thou hadst not expected that the Book would be sent to thee except as a Mercy from thy Lord:

C3418. Revelation and the preaching of Truth may in the beginning bring persecution, conflict, and sorrow in its train; but in reality it is the truest mercy from Allah, which comes even without our expecting it, as it came to the Prophets without their consciously asking for it.

This is proved in the history of Moses related in this Surah, and the history of the holy Prophet which it is meant to illustrate.

...فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ ظَهِيرًا لِلْكَافِرِينَ (٨٦)

therefore lend not thou support in any way to those who reject (Allah's Message).

C3419. If Allah's Message is unpalatable to evil and is rejected by it, those who accept it may (in their natural human feelings) sometimes wonder that such should be the case, and whether it is really Allah's Will that the conflict which ensues should be pursued.

Any such hesitation would lend unconscious support to the aggressions of evil and should be discarded. The servant of Allah stands forth boldly as His Mujahid (fighter of the good fight), daring all, and knowing that Allah is behind him.

وَلَا يَصُدُّكَ عَنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أُنزِلَتْ إِلَيْكَ...

87. And let nothing keep thee back from the Signs of Allah after they have been revealed to thee:

...وَادْعُ إِلَى رَبِّكَ...

and invite (men) to thy Lord,

...وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (٨٧)

and be not of the company of those who join gods with Allah.

C3420. The soldier of Allah, having taken up the fight against evil, and knowing that he is in touch with the true Light, never yields an inch of ground. He is always to the fore in inviting others to his own ranks, but he himself refuses to be with those who worship anything else but Allah.

وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ...

88. And call not, besides Allah, on another god.

...لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ...

There is no god but He.

...كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ...

Everything (that exists) will perish except His own Face.

C3421. This sums up the lesson of the whole Surah.

The only Eternal Reality is Allah. The whole phenomenal world is subject to flux and change and will pass away, but He will endure for ever.

لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (٨٨)

To Him belongs the Command, and to Him will ye (all) be brought back.