

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 38
SURAH SAD

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

038

SURAH SAD

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Introduction and Summary

For the place of this Surah in the series of six, dealing with some of the mysteries of the spiritual world, see Introduction to Surah 34.

This Surah, both in chronology and subject matter, is cognate to Surah 37, and carries forward the same argument. But here the emphasis is laid on the working of earthly power when combined with spiritual power, and it is pointed out how much more significant (and real) spiritual power is. For this reason the

illustrative stories are mainly those of David and Solomon who were kings as well as prophets, and a parallel is suggested with the unfolding public life of our Holy Prophet.

Summary- Worldly and evil men are surprised at the renewal of Truth of Righteousness; but righteousness has more power than worldly strength, as is seen in the story of kings like David, who had both (38:1-26, and C. 200).

So also Solomon loved the Lord more than worldly power, which may be good but may be misused by evil men; so also Job and other men of power and insight, chose the path of final bliss rather than final misery (38:27-64, and C. 202).

So also in the case of the final Messenger; his Gospel of Unity must triumph over all Jealousy and Arrogance in God's good time (38:65-88, and C. 202).

C.200 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(38:1-26)

*Self-glory and Separatism, these
Are among the rooms of Evil, also Envy
And Suspicion. Not all the combinations
Of Evil can for a moment reverse
Allah's Purpose or His Justice. David,
Endowed with worldly Power and Virtues
Had yet to purge himself of the thought
Of Self-glory, which he did; and thus
He became one of those nearest to Allah.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

ص...ص

1. Sad:

C4146. Sad is a letter of the Arabic alphabet. It is used here as an Abbreviated Letter, for which see Appendix I (at the end of Sarah 2).

See also the second para, of n. 989 to 7:1 for this particular letter.

No dogmatism is permissible in trying to interpret Abbreviated Letters.

This Surah is concerned mainly with the stories of David and Solomon as illustrative of the relative positions of spiritual and worldly power.

Sale's note: "it may stand for Solomon": is a real howler; for in Arabic the letter **Sad** does not occur at all in the name of Solomon.

... وَالْقُرْآنِ ذِي الذِّكْرِ (١)

by the Qur'án, full of Admonition: (this is the Truth).

C4147. Full of admonition: the word **zikr** is far more comprehensive than any single word or phrase that I can think of in English: it implies

1. remembrance in a spirit of reverence;
2. recital, celebrating the praises of Allah;
3. teaching, admonition, warning;
4. Message, Revelation, as in **Ah-luz-zikr**, "those who possess the Message" (16:43, and n. 2069).

Devotional exercises are also called **zikr**, with reference to meaning (2) above.

بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي عِزَّةٍ وَشِقَاقٍ (٢)

2. But the Unbelievers (are steeped) in Self-glory and Separatism.

C4148. The great root of Evil and Unbelief is Self-glory or Arrogance, as is pointed out in several places with regard to Satan; cf. below, 78:74-76.

This leads to Envy and opposition or a desire to start a peculiar doctrine or sect of one's own, instead of a desire to find common grounds of belief and life, which lead to the Religion of Unity of Allah.

This teaching of Unity was what the Pagans objected to in the holy Prophet (verse 5 below)!

كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ...

3. How many generations before them did We destroy?

... فَنَادُوا وَكَلَّتَ حِينٌ مِّنَّا (٣)

In the end they cried (for mercy) -- when there was no longer time for being saved!

C4149. Teaching, Warning, Signs have been given by Allah to all nations and at all times, and yet nations have rebelled and gone wrong and suffered destruction. If only later generations could learn that wrong-doing results in self-destruction! For the justice of Allah merely carries out the result of their own choice and actions. At any time during their probation they could repent and obtain mercy, but their "Self-glory and Separatism" stand in the way. Ultimately they do cry for a way of escape, but it is then too late.

وَعَجِبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنذِرٌ مِنْهُمْ ...

4. So they wonder that a Warner has come to them from among themselves!

C4150. Their wonder is only stimulated. They are full of envy and spite against one of themselves who has been chosen by Allah to be His Messenger, and they vent their spite by making all sorts of false accusations. The man who was pre-eminent for truth and conscientious consideration, they call "a sorcerer and a liar"!

... وَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ (٤)

And the Unbelievers say, "This is a sorcerer telling lies!"

أَجْعَلَ الْتَالِيَةَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا...

5. "Has he made the gods (all) into one Allah?"

C4151. And what is the offence of the Messenger of Unity? That he has made all their fantastic gods disappear; that in place of chaos he has brought harmony; that in place of conflict he brings peace! It is a wonderful thing, but not in the sarcastic sense in which the Unbelievers scoff at it!

... إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ عَجَابٌ (٥)

Truly this is a wonderful thing!"

وَأَنْطَلِقَ الْمَلَأَ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ امْشُوا وَاصْبِرُوا عَلَى آلِهَتِكُمْ...

6. And the leaders among them go away (impatiently), (saying),

"Walk ye away, and remain constant to your gods!

C4152. When the message of Islam was being preached in its infancy, and the Preacher and his followers were being persecuted by the Pagans, one of the devices adopted by the Pagan leaders was to get the Prophet's uncle Abu Talib to denounce or renounce his beloved nephew.

A conference was held with Abu Talib for this purpose. On its failure the leaders walked away, and began to discredit the great movement by falsely giving out that it was designed against their personal influence, and to throw power into the hands of the Prophet.

Hadhrat Umar's conversion occurred in the sixth year of the Mission (seventh year before the Hijrah). The circumstances connected with it (see Introduction to Surah 20) greatly alarmed the Quraish chiefs, who, greedy of autocracy themselves, confused the issue by accusing the righteous Preacher of plotting against their power.

... إِنَّ هَذَا لَشَيْءٌ يُرَادُ (٦)

For this is truly a thing designed (against you)!

مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهِدَا فِي الْمِلَّةِ الْآخِرَةِ...

7. "We never heard (the like) of this among the people of these latter days:

C4153. 'Whatever may have been the case in the past', they said, 'our own immediate ancestors worshipped these idols in Makkah and why should we give them up?'

Self- complacency was stronger with them than Truth; and so they call Truth "a made-up tale"!

Some Commentators interpret **millat akhirat** to refer to the last religion preached before Islam, viz. Christianity, which had itself departed from Monotheism to Trinity. (R).

... إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا اِخْتِلَاقٌ (٧)

this is nothing but a made-up tale!

أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا...

8. "What! Has the Message been sent to him -- (of all persons) among us?"...

C4154. Here comes in envy. 'If a Message had to come, why should it come to him, the orphan son of 'Abdullah, and not to one of our own great men?'

... بَلْ هُمْ فِي شَكٍّ مِّنْ نَّذْرِي...

But they are in doubt concerning My (own) Message!

C4155. They have no clear idea of how Allah's Message comes!

It is not a worldly thing to be given to any one. It is a divine thing requiring spiritual preparation. If they close their eyes to it now, it will be brought home to them when they taste the consequences of their folly!

... بَلْ لَمَّا يَدُوُّوْا عَذَابِ (٨)

Nay, they have not yet tasted My Punishment!

أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ...

9. Or have they the Treasures of the Mercy of thy Lord --

C4156. If they set themselves to judge Allah, have they anything to show comparable to Allah's Mercy and Power! He has both in infinite measure. Who are they to question the grant of His Mercy and Revelation to His own Chosen One?

... الْعَزِيزِ الْوَهَّابِ (٩)

the Exalted in Power, the Grantor of Bounties without measure!

أَمْ لَهُمْ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا...

10. Or have they the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all between?

... فَلْيِرْتَفُوا فِي الْأَسْبَابِ (١٠)

If so, let them mount up with the ropes and means (to reach that end)!

C4157. Weak and puny creatures though they are, they dare to raise their heads against the Omnipotent, as if they had dominion over Creation and not He! If they had any power, let them mount up to heaven and use all the means they have to that end, and see how they can frustrate Allah's Purpose!

جُنْدٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُومٌ مِّنَ الْأَحْزَابِ (١١)

11. But there -- will be put to flight even a host of confederates.

C4158. Of course they cannot frustrate Allah's Purpose. In that world-they will be ignominiously routed, even if they form the strongest confederacy of the Powers of Evil that ever could combine.

Cf. the last clause of verse 13 below.

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ ...

12. Before them (were many who) rejected messengers --
the People of Noah, and 'Ad,

C4159. In their day, Noah's contemporaries, or the 'Ad and the Thamud, so frequently mentioned, or Pharaoh the mighty king of Egypt, or the people to whom Lut was sent (cf. 37:75-82; 7:65-73; 7:103-137; 7:80-84) were

examples of arrogance and rebellion against Allah: they rejected the divine Message brought by their messengers, and they all came to an evil end. Will not their posterity learn their lesson?

... وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذُو الْأَوْتَادِ (١٢)

and Pharaoh the Lord of Stakes.

C4160. The title of Pharaoh, "**Lord of the Stakes**", denotes power and arrogance, in all or any of the following ways:

- the stake makes a tent firm and stable, and is a symbol of firmness and stability;
- many stakes mean a large camp and a numerous army to fight;
- impaling with stakes was a cruel punishment resorted to by the Pharaohs in arrogant pride of power.

وَتَمُودَ وَقَوْمَ لُوطٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ ...

13. And Thamud, and the People of Lut, and the Companions of the Wood;

C4161. Companions of the Wood; see 15:78, and n. 2000.

... أُولَئِكَ الْأَحْزَابُ (١٣)

such were the Confederates.

C4162. Cf. above, verse 11, and n. 4158.

إِنْ كُلُّ إِلَّا كَذَّبَ الرَّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ (١٤)

14. Not one (of them) but rejected the messengers, but My Punishment came justly and inevitably (on them).

C4163. Cf. 15:64, n. 1990; and 22:18.

Section 2

وَمَا يَنْظُرُ هَؤُلَاءِ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً ...

15. These (to-day) only wait for a single mighty Blast,

C4164. Cf. 36:29, n. 3973.

... مَا لَهَا مِنْ فَوَاقٍ (١٥)

which (when it comes) will brook no delay.

C4165. Fawaq: delay, the interval between one milking of a she-camel, and another, either to give her a breathing space or to give her young time to suck,-or perhaps the milker to adjust his fingers. Such interval will be quite short.

The derived meaning is that when the inevitable just punishment for sin arrives, it will not tarry, but do its work without delay.

وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَنَا قِطْنَا قَبْلَ يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ (١٦)

16. They say:

"Our Lord! Hasten to us our sentence (even) before the Day of Account!"

C4166. Cf. 26:204 and n. 3230.

Those who do not believe in the Hereafter say ironically: "Let us have our punishment and sentence now: why delay it?"

The last verse and the next verse supply the commentary. As to those who mock, they will find out the truth soon enough, when it is too late for repentance or mercy.

As to the prophets of Allah, who are mocked, they must wait patiently for Allah to fulfil His Plan: even men who had worldly strength and power, like David had to exercise infinite patience when mocked by their contemporaries.

اصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوُودَ ذَا الْأَيْدِ...

17. Have patience at what they say, and remember Our Servant David, the man of strength:

C4167. David was a man of exceptional strength, for even as a raw youth, he slew the Philistine giant Goliath. See 2:249-252, and notes 286-287.

Before that fight, he was mocked by his enemies and chidden even by his own elder brother. But he relied upon Allah, and won through, and afterwards became king.

... إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ (١٧)

for he ever turned (to Allah).

إِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ...

18. It was We that made the hills declare,

C4168. See n. 2733 to 21:79.

All nature sings in unison and celebrates the praises of Allah.

David was given the gift of music and psalmody, and therefore the hills and birds are expressed as singing Allah's praises in unison with him.

The special hours when the hills and groves echo the songs of birds are in the evening and at dawn, when also the birds gather together, for those are respectively their roosting hours and the hours of their concerted flight for the day.

... مَعَهُ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِشْرَاقِ (١٨)

in unison with him, Our Praises, at eventide and at break of day.

وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُورَةً...

19. And the birds gathered (in assemblies):

... كُلُّ لَّهُ أَوَّابٌ (١٩)

all with him did turn (to Allah).

C4169. Note the mutual echo between this verse and verse 17 above.

The Arabic **awwab** is common to both, and it furnishes the rhyme or rhythm of the greater part of the Surah, thus echoing the main theme: 'Turn to Allah in Prayer and Praise, for that is more than any worldly power or wisdom.'

وَسَدَّدْنَا مُلْكُهُ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَقَصَلْنَا الْخُطَابَ (٢٠)

20. We strengthened his kingdom, and gave him wisdom and sound judgment in speech and decision.

C4170. Cf. n. 2732 to 21:79 for David's sound judgment in decisions; he could also express himself aptly, as his Psalms bear witness.

وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ نَبَأَ الْخَصْمِ ...

21. Has the Story of the Disputants reached thee?

C4171. This story or Parable is not found in the Bible, unless the vision here described be considered as equivalent to Nathan's parable in 11 Samuel, 11, and 12. Baydawi would seem to favour that view, but other Commentators reject it.

David was a pious man, and he had a well-guarded private chamber (mihrab) for Prayer and Praise.

... إِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا الْمِحْرَابَ (٢١)

Behold, they climbed over the wall of the private chamber;

إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَى دَاوُدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ...

22. When they entered the presence of David, and he was terrified of them,

C4172. David used to retire to his private chamber at stated times for his devotions. One day, suddenly, his privacy was invaded by two men, who had obtained access by climbing over a wall. David was frightened at the apparition. But they said: "We have come to seek thy justice as king: we are brothers, and we have a quarrel, which we wish thee to decide."

... قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ ...

they said: "Fear not:

... خَصْمَانِ بَغَى بَعْضُنَا عَلَى بَعْضٍ ...

We are two disputants, one of whom has wronged the other:

... فَاحْكُم بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ ...

decide now between us with truth,

... وَلَا تُنْظِرْ طِوَاهِدَنَا إِلَى سَوَاءِ الصِّرَاطِ (٢٢)

and treat us not with injustice, but guide us to the even Path.

إِنَّ هَذَا أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ نَعْجَةً وَلِيَ نَعْجَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ...

23. "This man is my brother;

he has nine and ninety ewes, and I have (but) one:

C4173. The brother who was most aggrieved said: "This my brother has a flock of ninety-nine sheep, and I have but one; yet he wants me to give up my one sheep to his keeping; and moreover he is not even fair-spoken. He talks like one meditating mischief, and he has not even the grace to ask as an equal, or one sharing in a business or an inheritance. What shall I do?"

... فَقَالَ أَكْفُلْنِيهَا وَعَزَّنِي فِي الْخِطَابِ (٢٣)

Yet he says, 'Commit her to my care,' and is (moreover) harsh to me in speech."

قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعْجَتِكَ إِلَى نِعَاجِهِ ...

24. (David) said:

"He has undoubtedly wronged thee in demanding thy (single) ewe to be added to his (flock of) ewes:

C4174. The circumstances were mysterious; the accusation was novel; it was not clear why the unjust brother should also have come with the complainant, risking his life in climbing the wall to evade the guard, and he certainly said nothing.

David took them literally, and began to preach about the falsehood and the fraud of men, who should be content with what they have, but who always covet more. (R).

... وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَاءِ لِيَبْغِيَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ...

truly many are the Partners (in business) who wrong each other:

C4175. Especially, said David, is it wrong for brothers or men in partnership to take advantage of each other; but how few are the men who are righteous?

He had in his mind his own devotion and justice. But lo and behold! the men disappeared as mysteriously as they had come.

It was then that David realized that the incident had been a trial or temptation—a test of his moral or spiritual fibre! Great though he was as a king, and just though he was as a judge, the moment that he thought of these things in self-pride, his merit vanished.

In himself he was as other men: it was Allah's grace that gave him wisdom and justice, and he should have been humble in the sight of Allah.

... إِنَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمَلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَّا هُمْ...

not so do those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, and how few are they?"...

... وَظَنَّ دَاوُودُ أَنَّمَا فَتَنَّاهُ...

And David gathered that We had tried him:

... فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ ...

he asked forgiveness of his Lord,

C4176. Judged by ordinary standards, David had done no wrong; he was a good and just king.

Judged by the highest standard of those nearest to Allah (Muqarraban, 56:11), the thought of self-pride and self-righteousness had to be washed off from him by his own act of self-realisation and repentance.

This was freely accepted by Allah, as the next verse shows.

... وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ (٢٤)

fell down, bowing (in prostration), and turned (to Allah in repentance).

C4176a. Some commentators say that David's fault here was his hastiness in judging before hearing the case of the other party. When he realized his lapse, he fell down in repentance. [Eds.].

فَعَفَرْنَا لَهُ ذَلِكَ...

25. So We forgave him this (lapse):

... وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَنَا لَزُفَىٰ وَحُسْنَ مَآبٍ (٢٥)

he enjoyed, indeed, a Near Approach to Us, and a beautiful place of (final) Return.

يَا دَاوُودُ إِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيفَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ...

26. O David!

We did indeed make thee a vicegerent on earth:

C4177. Cf. 2:30, and n. 47.

David's kingly power, and the gifts of wisdom, justice, psalmody, and prophethood were bestowed on him as a trust. These great gifts were not to be a matter of self-glory.

... فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ...

so judge thou between men in truth (and justice):

... وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوَىٰ فَيُضِلَّكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...

nor follow thou the lusts (of thy heart), for they will mislead thee from the Path of Allah:

C4178. As stated in [n. 4171 above](#), this vision and its moral are nowhere to be found in the Bible. Those who think they see a resemblance to the Parable of the

prophet Nathan (2 Samuel, 12:1-12) have nothing to go upon but the mention of the "one ewe" here and the "one little ewe-lamb" in Nathan's Parable.

The whole story is here different, and the whole atmosphere is different. The Biblical title given to David, "a man after God's own heart" is refuted by the Bible itself in the scandalous tale of heinous crimes attributed to David in chapters 11 and 12 of 2 Samuel, viz., adultery, fraudulent dealing with one of his own servants, and the contriving of his murder. Further, in chapter 13, we have the story of rapes, incest, and fratricide in David's own household! The fact is that passages like those are mere chroniques scandaleuses, i.e., narratives of scandalous crimes of the grossest character.

The Muslim idea of David is that of a man just and upright, endowed with all the virtues, in whom even the least thought of self-elation has to be washed off by repentance and forgiveness. (R).

...إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَضِلُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ...

for those who wander astray from the Path of Allah, is a Penalty Grievous,

... بِمَا نَسُوا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ (٢٦)

for that they forget the Day of Account.

C.202 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(38:27-64)

*For just ends was the world created.
Solomon, in the midst of his worldly power
And glory, never forgot Allah, not Job
In the midst of affliction; nor other men
Of Power and Vision, whose patience and constancy
Brought them nearer to Allah. So should*

*All the righteous strive to win
The final Bliss, for truly grievous
Are the woes of Evil in the final Account.*

Section 3

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلًا...

27. Not without purpose did We create heaven and earth and all between!

C4179. Cf. 3:191.

Unbelief is the subjective negation of a belief in Order, Beauty, Purpose, and Eternal Life. Unbelief is to Faith as Chaos is to Cosmos, as the Fire of Misery is to the Garden of Bliss.

... ذَلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا...

That were the thought of Unbelievers!

... فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ (٢٧)

But woe to the Unbelievers because of the Fire (of Hell)!

أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ...

28. Shall We treat those who believe and work **deeds** of righteousness, the same as those who do mischief on earth?

C4180. The reference to the Hereafter at the end of verse 26 above is of a piece with the whole tenor of this Surah, which deals with the superiority of the spiritual kingdom and the Hereafter.

If there were no Hereafter, how could you reconcile the inequalities of this world?

Would not the Unbelievers be right in acting as if all Creation and all life were futile?

But there is a Hereafter and Allah will not treat the Good and Evil alike. He is just and will fully restore the balance disturbed in this life.

... أَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِينَ كَالْفُجَّارِ (٢٨)

Shall We treat those who guard against evil, the same as those who turn aside from the right?

كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ إِلَيْكَ مُبَارَكٌ...

29. (Here is) a Book which We have sent down unto thee, full of blessings,

C4181. Revelation is not a mere chance or haphazard thing. It is a real blessing-among the greatest that Allah has bestowed on man.

... لِيَذَّبَرُوا آيَاتِهِ ...

that they may meditate on its Signs,

By meditation on it in an earnest spirit man may learn of himself, and his relation to nature around him and to Allah the Author of all.

... وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ (٢٩)

and that men of understanding may receive admonition.

Men of understanding may, by its help, resolve all genuine doubts that there may be in their minds, and learn the true lessons of spiritual life.

... وَوَهَبْنَا لِذَاوُودَ سُلَيْمَانَ...

30. To David We gave Solomon (for a son) --

C4182. The greatest in this life have yet need of this spiritual blessing! without it all worldly good is futile.

Referring back to the story of David, we are now introduced to Solomon, who was a great king but greater still because he served Allah and turned to Him.

The Quran, unlike the old Testament, represents Solomon as a righteous king, not as an idolater, doing "evil in the sight of the Lord" (1 Kings. 11:6).

... نِعَمَ الْعَبْدِ ...

how excellent in Our service!

... إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ (٣٠)

Ever did he turn (to Us)!

إِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ بِالْعَشِيِّ ...

31. Behold, there were brought before him, at eventide,

C4183. The passages about David and Solomon have been variously interpreted by the Commentators. The versions which I have suggested have good authority behind them, though I have followed my own judgment in filling in the details.

... الصَّافِنَاتُ الْجَيَّادُ (٣١)

coursers of the highest breeding; and swift of foot;

C4184. Safinat: literally, horses that stand, when at ease, on three legs, firmly planted, with the hoof of the fourth leg resting lightly on the ground.

This would imply breeding and a steady temper, to match with their quality of swiftness mentioned in the next clause.

فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَحْبَبْتُ حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّي ...

32. And he said, "Truly do I love the love of Good, with a view to the glory of my Lord,"

C4185. The story is not found in the Old Testament.

I interpret it to mean that, like his father David, Solomon was also most meticulous in not allowing the least motive of self to be mixed up with his spiritual virtues. He was fond of horses; he had great armies and wealth; but he used them all in Allah's service. Cf. 27:19. n. 3259; 27:40. n. 3276, etc.

His battles were not fought for lust of blood, but as Jihad in the cause of righteousness. His love of horses was not like that of a mere race-goer or of a warrior: there was a spiritual element in it. He loved by a kind of love which was spiritual,-the love of the highest Good.

Some commentators interpret this verse saying that Solomon, peace be upon him, was so engrossed in the

inspection of his fine horses that he completely forgot to say his 'Asr prayer before the sunset'.

In the light of this interpretation the verse may be translated:

"And he said, Truly did I prefer the good things (of this world) to the remembrance of my Lord". (R).

... حَتَّى تُوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ (٣٢)

until (the sun) was hidden in the veil (of Night):

C4186. His review of his fine horses was interrupted by his evening devotions, but he resumed it after his devotions.

رُدُّوْهَا عَلَيَّ...

33. "Bring them back to me."

... فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًا بِالسُّوقِ وَالْأَعْنَاقِ (٣٣)

Then began he to pass his hand over (their) legs and their necks.

In the light of the alternative interpretation this verse would mean that upon missing 'Asr prayer, Solomon, peace be upon him, was so upset and sorry that he asked for the horses to be brought back to him and then "he fell to slashing with his sword their legs and necks", that is, he slaughtered them in expiation of his lapse seeking the forgiveness and pleasure of Allah. (R).

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمَانَ ...

34. And We did try Solomon:

C4188. What was the trial of Solomon?

All the power, wealth, and glory, which were given to him were a spiritual trial to him. They might have turned another man's head, but he was staunch and true, and while he enjoyed and used all the power he had-over the jinns, men, and the forces of nature, (see below), he kept his mind steady to the service of Allah.

Cf. 8:28, where "your possessions and your progeny" are declared to be "but a trial".

... وَالْقَيْنَا عَلَى كُرْسِيِّهِ جَسَدًا ...

We placed on his throne a body (without life):

C4189. *The body (without life) on his throne* has been variously interpreted.

The interpretation that appeals to me most is that his earthly power, great as it was, was like a body without a soul, unless it was vivified by Allah's spirit. But Solomon did turn to Allah in true devotion, and his real power lay there. He did his best to root out idolatry, and he completed the Temple in Jerusalem for the worship of the One True God.

Cf. his conversion of Bilqis the Queen of Sheba, 27:40. n. 3276.

See also 7:148, where the same word **jasad** is used in connection with the image of a calf which the Israelites had set up the worship in the absence of Moses. Men may worship worldly Power as they may worship an idol, and there is great temptation in such Power, through Solomon withstood such temptation.

I do not think that a reference to 34:14 (n. 3808) will fit the context here. (R).

... ثُمَّ أَنَابَ (٣٤)

but he did turn (to Us in true devotion):

قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي ...

35. He said,

"O my Lord! Forgive me,

C4190. The seeking of worldly Power, even if intended to be used for Allah's service, has a little of Self in it. It may be quite legitimate and even meritorious in ordinary men, but even the thought of it in a Prophet is to be apologized for.

See a similar idea in the case of David explained in n. 4176 to 38:24 above.

... وَهَبْ لِي مَلَكًا لَّا يَبْغِي لِأَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِي...

and grant me a Kingdom, which, (it may be), suits not another after me:

C4191. He asked for a Power that he would not misuse, though others might not be able to refrain from misusing it,-such as power over forces of nature or forces of violence (see the next three verses).

... إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ (٣٥)

for Thou art the Grantor of Bounties (without measure)."

C4192. Cf. [38:9 above](#).

فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيحَ...

36. Then We subjected the Wind to his power,

C4193. Cf. 21:81, and n. 2736.

... تَجْرِي بِأَمْرِهِ رُخَاءَ حَيْثُ أَصَابَ (٣٦)

to flow gently to his order, whithersoever he willed --

وَالشَّيَاطِينِ كُلِّ بِنَاءٍ وَغَوَّاصٍ (٣٧)

37. As also the evil ones, (including) every kind of builder and diver --

C4194. Cf. 21:82, and n. 2738.

Cf. also 34:12-13 and notes there:

in the latter passage the spirits mentioned are called Jinns. The divers were probably those employed in pearl-fisheries,

وَأَخْرَيْنَ مُقَرَّنِينَ فِي الْأَصْفَادِ (٣٨)

38. As also others bound together in fetters.

C4195. Cf. 14:49, where the same expression "**bound together in fetters**" is applied to Sinners on the Day of Judgment.

هَذَا عَطَاؤُنَا...

39. "Such are Our Bounties:

... فَاْمُنُّنْ اَوْ اٰمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (٣٩)

whether thou bestow them (on others) or withhold them, no account will be asked."

C4196. Allah bestowed such abundant powers and bounties on Solomon that they could not be counted or measured: and he was free to give away anything he liked or keep anything he liked.

In this was great temptation for an ordinary man. Solomon as a prophet withstood it and asked to be forgiven for power and such a kingdom as others might not be able to use lawfully.

His earthly kingdom went to pieces after his death. But his name and fame endure. And what is more, he obtained a place among the Nearest Ones to Allah.

See next verse.

وَإِنَّ لَهُ عِنْدَنَا لَزُلْفَىٰ وَحُسْنَ مَّآبٍ (٤٠)

40. And he enjoyed, indeed, a Near Approach to Us, and a beautiful Place of (final) Return.

C4197. The same words are used of David in [38:25 above](#), thus symmetrically closing the argument about the two greatest kings in Israel.

Section 4

وَادْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَيُّوبَ...

41. Commemorate Our servant Job,

C4198. For this passage, verses 41-44, Cf. 21:83-84.

... إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ (٤١)

behold he cried to his Lord: "The Evil One has afflicted me with distress and suffering"!

C4199. The distress was of many kinds. See n. 2739 to 21:83.

He suffered from loathsome sores; he lost his home, his possessions, and his family; and almost his balance of mind. But he did not lose Faith but turned to Allah (see verse 44 below), and the recuperative process began.

ارْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ ...

42. (The command was given:) "Strike with thy foot:

C4200. The recuperative process having begun, he was commanded to strike the earth or a rock with his foot, and a fountain or fountains gushed forth,-to give him a bath and clean his body; to refresh his spirits; and to give him drink and rest.

This is a fresh touch, not mentioned in Surah 21. or in the Book of Job, but adding beautifully to our realisation of the picture.

... هَذَا مُعْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ (٤٢)

here is (water) wherein to wash, cool and refreshing, and (water) to drink."

... وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ أَهْلَهُ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا

43. And We gave him (back) his people, and doubled their number -- as a Grace from Ourselves,

C4201. Cf. 21:84, and notes n. 2739 - 2740.

... وَذَكَرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ (٤٣)

and a thing for commemoration, for all who have Understanding.

وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ ضِغْتًا ...

44. "And take in thy hand a little grass,

... فَأَضْرِبْ بِهِ وَلَا تَحْنُتْ ...

and strike therewith: and break not (thy oath)."

C4202. In his worst distress Job was patient and constant in faith, but apparently his wife was not. According to the Book of Job (2:9-10),

"Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. But he said

unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

He must have said in his haste to the woman that he would beat her: he is asked now to correct her with only a wisp of grass, to show that he was gentle and humble as well as patient and constant.

... إِنَّا وَجَدْنَاهُ صَابِرًا نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ...

Truly We found him full of patience and constancy:
how excellent in Our service!

C4203. Cf. 38:30 above, where similar words are spoken of Solomon. Patience and constancy are also a form of service, if our attitude is due to an active faith in Allah, and not mere passivity.

So Milton in his Sonnet: "They also serve who only stand and wait. "

... إِنَّهُ أَوَّابٌ (٤٤)

Ever did he turn (to Us)!

وَاذْكُرْ عِبَادَنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ...

45. And commemorate Our servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

... أُولِي الْأَيْدِي وَالْأَبْصَارِ (٤٥)

possessors of Power and Vision.

C4204. In the last Surah (37:83-113). Abraham and Isaac (and by implication Jacob) were mentioned as resisting Evil and winning through.

Here they are mentioned as men with spiritual power and vision. Israelite patriarchs, who bore witness to the Gospel of the Hereafter, and were therefore a blessing to their people, for they taught the Truth.

إِنَّا أَخْلَصْنَاهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ (٤٦)

46. Verily We did chose them for a special (purpose) --
proclaiming the Message of the Hereafter.

وَأَنَّهُمْ عِندَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْأَخْيَارِ (٤٧)

47. They were, in Our sight, truly, of the company of the Elect and
the Good.

وَأذْكَرُ إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ...

48. And commemorate Isma'il, Elisha, and Dhu al Kifl:

C4205. Ismail, the Patriarch of the Arab race, was also
mentioned (37:101-107) as a pattern of self-sacrifice;

now he is mentioned in the company of the Good, i.e., of
those who were a blessing to their people. Here he is
bracketed with Elisha (for whom see n. 906 to 6:86),
and Dhu al Kifl (for whom see n. 2743 to 21:85).

All these three were examples of constancy and patience
under suffering.

... وَكُلٌّ مِّنَ الْأَخْيَارِ (٤٨)

each of them was of the company of the Good.

هَذَا ذِكْرٌ...

49. This is a Message (of admonition):

... وَإِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ لَحُسْنَ مَّآبٍ (٤٩)

and verily, for the Righteous, is a beautiful place of (final) Return.

--

C4206. Some of the preeminent examples of the Elect
and the Good having been mentioned, we have now a
reference to the Righteous as a body (rank and file as
well as leaders) and their future in the Hereafter as won
by victory over Evil.

جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ مُّفْتَحَةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَبْوَابُ (٥٠)

50. Gardens of Eternity, whose doors will (ever) be open to them;

C4207. The Final Bliss will not be a hole-and-come thing, a pale reflection of some Palace or Retreat, where mystery reigns behind closed doors. Its doors will be open, and its inmates will be free to go in and out as they will, because their wins will be purified and brought into accord with the Universal Law.

مُتَّكِنِينَ فِيهَا يَدْعُونَ فِيهَا بِفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ وَشَرَابٍ (٥١)

51. Therein will they recline (at ease);

therein can they call (at pleasure) for fruit in abundance, and (delicious) drink;

C4208. See n. 4003 to 36:57.

- the free Gardens are types of satisfaction in external surroundings;
- the comfortable reclining thrones, the fruit and the drink are types of the soul's individual satisfaction;
- and the society of pure-minded companions of equal ages, in the type of a soul's social satisfaction.

وَعِنْدَهُمْ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ ...

52. And beside them will be chaste women restraining their glances,

C4209. Cf. 37:48 and n. 4064, and 36:56, n. 4002.

As we conceive happiness in this life, it is not complete if it is only solitary. How we hanker after some one who can share in our highest joy! That feeling is also figured here.

... أَثْرَابٌ (٥٢)

(companions) of equal age.

C4210. To make the social happiness complete, we want companionship of equal age. Age and youth cannot be happy together.

It is not suggested that in the Timeless state figured here, there will be old age; but if it is possible to conceive of temperamental differences then, the

company will be so arranged that it will be congenial. Or we can accept the type of youth and freshness as common to all in that happy state.

هَذَا مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ (٥٣)

53. Such is the promise made to you for the Day of Account!

إِنَّ هَذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَا لَهُ مِنْ نَفَادٍ (٥٤)

54. Truly such will be Our Bounty (to you);

it will never fail --

هَذَا...

55. Yea, such!

... وَإِنَّ لِلطَّاغِينَ لَشَرَّ مَآبٍ (٥٥)

But -- for the wrongdoers will be an evil place of (final) Return!

C4211. This is in parallel contrast to the state of the Blessed in [38:49](#) above.

جَهَنَّمَ...

56. Hell! --

... يَصْلَوْنَهَا...

they will burn therein --

... فَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ (٥٦)

an evil bed (indeed, to lie on)! --

C4212. Cf. 14:29.

This continues the parallel contrast to the state of the Blessed already described.

هَذَا...

57. Yea, such! --

... فَلْيَذُوقُوهُ حَمِيمٌ وَعَسَاقٌ (٥٧)

then shall they taste it -- a boiling fluid, and a fluid dark, murky, intensely cold! --

C4213. Cf. 10:4, and n. 1390.

The conjunction of the boiling fluid with the dark, murky, intensely cold fluid heightens the effect of the Penalty.

In place of harmony, there is the discord of extreme opposites. And the discord is not confined to this: it runs through the whole idea of Hell.

See the next verse.

وَأَخْرُ مِنْ شَكْلِهِ أَزْوَاجٌ (٥٨)

58. And other Penalties of a similar kind, to match them!

هَذَا فَوْجٌ مُقْتَحِمٌ مَعَكُمْ...

59. Here is a troop rushing headlong with you!

C4214. The wonder is that so many people should embrace Evil, and in so much hurry and eagerness! Here they may be welcomed by the leaders of Evil, but in the final state it will be the opposite of welcome. They will be followed with reproaches and curses.

... لَا مَرْحَبًا بِهِمْ... ..

No welcome for them!

... إِنَّهُمْ صَالُوا النَّارِ (٥٩)

Truly, they shall burn in the Fire!

قَالُوا بَلْ أَنْتُمْ لَأَمْحَبَّاءُ بِكُمْ...

60. (The followers shall cry to the misleaders:)

"Nay, ye (too)!

No welcome for you!

... أَنْتُمْ قَدَّمْتُمُوهُ لَنَا

It is ye who have brought this upon us!

C4215. It is the nature of Evil to shift the blame on to others. The followers will reproach the leaders, but none can escape personal responsibility for his own acts and deeds!

... قَبِيسَ الْقَرَارِ (٦٠)

Now evil is (this) place to stay in!"

قَالُوا رَبَّنَا مَنْ قَدَّمَ لَنَا هَذَا فَزِدْهُ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا فِي النَّارِ (٦١)

61. They will say:

"Our Lord! Whoever brought this upon us, add to him a double Penalty in the fire!"

C4216. Cf. 7:38, and n. 1019. See also 11:20.

The evil ones now vent their spite on others. Here they ask for a double penalty for their misleaders, but they forget their own personal responsibility.

In the next verse, they express their surprise that others have escaped the torments, which they themselves have earned!

وَقَالُوا مَا لَنَا لِمَا نَرَى رَجَالًا كُنَّا نَعُدُّهُمْ مِّنَ الْأَشْرَارِ (٦٢)

62. And they will say:

"What has happened to us that we see not men whom we used to number among the bad ones?"

C4217. The bad ones: i.e., the ones whom they (evil ones) ridiculed as fools sure to come to an evil end, because they refused to join in with the evil ones in their plots. The values are now reversed.

The good ones are among the Blessed, and are not to be seen in the "Bed of Misery". The ridicule is now against the evil ones.

أَتَّخَذْنَا هُمْ سِخْرِيًّا أَمْ زَاغَتْ عَنْهُمْ الْأَبْصَارُ (٦٣)

63. "Did we treat them (as such) in ridicule or have (our) eyes failed to perceive them?"

إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَحَقٌّ تَخَاصُمُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ (٦٤)

64. Truly that is just and fitting, the mutual recriminations of the People of the Fire!

C4218. The mutual recriminations and spite are themselves a part of the Penalty, for such feelings increase their unhappiness.

C.203 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(38:65-88)

*The Gospel of Unity is the true cure
For Evil: for it gives the good news
Of Allah's Power Supreme, and His Mercy
And Forgiveness again and again. It warns
Us to avoid Evil, for Evil arose
From selfish Pride and Rebellion. No power
Has it over Allah's servants, sincere
And true: while Revelation comes
As a gift free to all Allah's Creation.*

Section 5

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مُنذِرٌ...

65. Say: "Truly am I a Warner:

... وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ (٦٥)

no god is there but the One Allah,
Supreme and Irresistible --

C4219. Cf. 12:39, where Joseph preaches to the men in prison.

The one supreme Message of importance to mankind was (and is) the Unity of Allah:

- that He is the Creator and Sustainer of all;
- that His Will is supreme;
- that He can carry out His Will without question, and no powers of Evil can defeat it;
- and that He forgives by His grace again and again.

This Message the holy Prophet came to deliver, and he delivered it.

رَبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا...

66. "The Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all between --

... الْعَزِيزُ ...

Exalted in Might, Able to enforce His will,

C4220. In n. 2818 to 22:40, 1 have explained the full import of 'Aziz as a title applied to Allah, and I have expressed two of the leading ideas involved, in the two lines here.

he argument in this Surah turns upon the contrast between earthly Power and the Divine Power: the one is impotent and the other is supreme.

... الْعَفَّارُ (٦٦)

forgiving again and again."

C4221. Gaffar is the emphatic intensive form, and I have accordingly translated it as "forgiving again and again".

Cf. 20:82.

قُلْ هُوَ نَبَأٌ عَظِيمٌ (٦٧)

67. Say: "That is a Message supreme (above all) --

أَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُونَ (٦٨)

68. "From which ye do turn away!

C4222. The Message which is of supreme import to mankind,-from that they turn away. Instead of profiting by it, they turn away to side issues, or unprofitable speculation: such as: what is the origin of Evil; when will Judgment come? etc.

مَا كَانَ لِي مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ (٦٩)

69. "No knowledge have I of the Chiefs on high, when they discuss (matters) among themselves.

C4223. The hierarchy of angels in Heaven, discuss questions of high import in the Universe. Those are not

necessarily revealed to men, except in so far as it is good for men to know, as in verses 71-85 below.

But the chief thing for man is to know that Allah is Most Merciful, that He forgives again and again, and that Evil has no power over those who trust in Allah.

إِن يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ إِلَّا أَنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ (٧٠)

70. "Only this has been revealed to me: that I am to give warning plainly and publicly."

C4224. Two things are implied in **Mubin**:

1. that the warning should be clear and perspicuous;
there should be no mincing of matters, no ambiguity, no compromise with evil, 7:184;
2. that the warning should be delivered publicly, before all people, in spite of opposition and persecution, 26:115.

Both these ideas I have tried to express in this passage.

إِذ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ ...

71. Behold, thy Lord said to the angels:

C4225. Two passages may be compared with this: viz.:

1. 2:30-39, where merely the first stages of the Rebellion against Allah and its consequences to mankind are mentioned, and
2. 15:29-40, where the further intrusion of evil in man's life here below is referred to, and an assurance is given that Evil will have no power except over those who yield to it.

The latter is the passage most relevant here, as we are now dealing with the spiritual power of Revelation to defeat the machinations of Evil.

... إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِنْ طِينٍ (٧١)

"I am about to create man from clay:

C4226. This shows that the material world round us was created by Allah before Allah fashioned man and breathed of His soul into him. Geology also shows that man came on the scene at a very late stage in the history of this planet.

فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَتَفَخَّتْ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَفَعُّوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ (٧٢)

72. "When I have fashioned him (in due proportion) and breathed into him of **My spirit**, fall ye down in obeisance unto him."

C4227. See n. 1968 to 15:29, where the spiritual significance of this is explained.

فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ (٧٣)

73. So the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together;

إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ...

74. Not so Iblis:

... اسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ (٧٤)

he was haughty, and became one of those who reject Faith.

C4228. Arrogance (self-love) is thus the root of Evil and of Unfaith.

قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ...

75. (Allah) said:

"O Iblis! what prevents thee from prostrating thyself to one whom I have created with My hands?"

C4229. Man, as typified by Adam, is in himself nothing but frail clay. But as fashioned by Allah's creative power into something with Allah's spirit breathed into him, his dignity is raised above that of the highest creatures.

... أَسْتَكْبَرْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ (٧٥)

Art thou haughty?

Or art thou one of the high (and mighty) ones?"

C4230. If, then, Satan refuses, it is a rebellion against Allah. It arises from arrogance or haughtiness, an exaggerated idea of Self.

Or, it is asked, are you really sufficiently high in rank to dispute with the Almighty?

Of course he was not.

قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْهُ ...

76. (Iblis) said:

"I am better than he:

... خَلَقْتَنِي مِن نَّارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِن طِينٍ (٧٦)

Thou createdst me from fire, and him Thou createdst from clay."

قَالَ فَاحْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ (٧٧)

77. (Allah) said:

"Then get thee out from here: for thou art rejected, accursed.

وَأِنَّ عَلَيْكَ لَعْنَتِي إِلَى يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (٧٨)

78. "And My Curse shall be on thee till the Day of Judgement."

C4231. See n. 1972 to 15:35, where it is explained why the respite is to the Day of Judgment. The whole of that passage in Surah 15 forms a good commentary on this.

قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ (٧٩)

79. (Iblis) said: "O my Lord! give me then **respite** till the Day the (dead) are raised."

C4232. For the significance of the **respite** see n. 1973 to 15:36.

قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ (٨٠)

80. (Allah) said:

"Respite then is granted thee --

إِلَى يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ (٨١)

81. "Till the day of the Time Appointed."

C4233. It is not an indefinite respite. It is for a period definitely limited, while this our Probation lasts in this world. It is part of the test as to how we use our limited free-will.

After that, our whole existence will be on a different plane. The good will have been sorted out, the chain of consequences of the present world will be broken, and "a new Creation" will have taken the place of the present World.

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ ...

82. (Iblis) said:

"Then, by Thy power,

C4234. This phrase, this oath of Satan, is a fresh point introduced in this passage, because here we are dealing with Power,

- the Power of Good contrasted with Evil,
- the Power of Allah as contrasted with the power that we see in our earthly affairs.

Satan acknowledges that even his Power, such as it is, has no reality except in so far as it is permitted to operate by Allah in Allah's wise and universal Plan, and that it cannot harm the true and sincere worshippers of Allah.

... لِأَعْوِيَّتِهِمْ أَجْمَعِينَ (٨٢)

I will put them all in the wrong --

C4235. See n. 1974 to 15:39.

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلِصِينَ (٨٣)

83. "Except Thy Servants amongst them, sincere and purified (by Thy grace)."

قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ وَالْحَقَّ أَقُولُ (٨٤)

84. (Allah) said:

"Then it is just and fitting -- and I say what is just and fitting --

C4236. Cf. n. 1990 to 15:64.

لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَمِمَّن تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ (٨٥)

85. "That I will certainly fill Hell with thee and those that follow thee -- every one."

C4237. Cf. 7:18; 7:179; and 11:119, n. 1623.

The punishment of defiance, disobedience, and rebellion is inevitable and just, and the followers who chose to identify themselves with the disobedience must suffer as well as the leaders.

Cf. 10:33.

فَلَمْ مَّا أَسْأَلْكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ...

86. Say:

"No reward do I ask of you for this (Qur'an),

C4238. Cf. 25:57; 26:109; and many other passages.

The prophet of Allah neither seeks nor expects any reward from men. On the contrary he suffers much at their hands. He is unselfish and offers his services under Allah's inspiration. He is satisfied with the hope "that each one who will may take a straight Path to his Lord." That is his reward.

And the reward he hopes for from Allah is similarly unselfish. He earnestly hopes to win His Good Pleasure i.e. "to see His Face."

... وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ (٨٦)

nor am I a pretender.

C4239. Mutakallif.-

- a man who pretends to things that are not true,
- or declares as facts things that do not exist,
- one who takes upon himself tasks to which he is not equal.

True prophets are not people of that kind.

إِنَّ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (٨٧)

87. "This is no less than a Message to (all) the Worlds.

C4240. So far from there being any false or selfish motive in the Message proclaimed in Revelation, it is a healing mercy to all mankind. More, it is in accord with all parts of Allah's Creation, and makes us kin with all Creation, the handiwork of the One True God.

وَلَتَعْلَمَنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِينٍ (٨٨)

88. "And ye shall certainly know the truth of it (all) after a while."

C4241. There may be many things which we in our "muddy vesture of decay" may not fully understand or take in. If we only follow the right Path, we shall arrive at the Goal in the Hereafter, and then everything will be dear to us.