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THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 41
SURAH FUSSILAT

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

041

SURAH FUSSILAT

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Introduction and Summary

This is the second of the series of seven Surahs bearing the Abbreviated Letters *Ha Mim*, as explained in the Introduction to Surah 40. To prevent confusion with other Surahs of the *Ha Mim* series, the word *Sajdah* is sometimes added to the title, making it *Ha Mim al Sajdah*, the double title being necessary as there is another Surah called *Sajdah* (Surah 32). To avoid the double title it is sometimes called Fussilat, from the occurrence of the word in verse 3.

The meaning of *Ha Mim* has been explained in the Introduction to Surah 40, where will also be found a note on the chronology and general theme of the seven *Ha Mim* Surahs.

For this particular Surah the theme is that the basis of Faith and Revelation is Allah's Power and Goodness, and the fruit of both in man's righteousness and healing.

Summary- What is Revelation and faith, and what is man's attitude to both, and what are its consequences? (41:1-32, and C.209).

The fruits of Faith and Unfaith, truth and Falsehood, (41:3:54, C.210).

C.209 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(41:1-32)

*Revelation explains, and makes things clear;
It gives the message of hope and mercy,
And it warns men against the snares
Of Evil. Deny not Allah, the Lord
Of the Worlds, Whose glory and power
Are shown in Creation, and His Mercy
in Revelation. Learn from the fate
Of the People of old! Learn from the warnings
Of your own nature: your very limbs
And faculties, if misused, bear witness
Against you. Repent ere it be too late.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

حم (1)

1. Ha Mim.

C4462. Abbreviated Letters: see Introduction to Surah 40.

See also n.4382 to 40:18, and [n. 4505 to 41:34](#).

تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (٢)

2. A revelation from (Allah), Most Gracious, Most Merciful --

C4463. In the last Surah (40:2-3) the revelation was described with reference to some of the qualities of Allah from Whom it came.

Here it is described mainly with reference to its subject-matter.

1. It brings the Message of Grace and Mercy;
2. it is not merely a book of Dark Sayings, but everything is explained clearly and from various points of view;
3. it is in Arabic, the language of the people among whom it was first promulgated, and therefore easily intelligible to them if they take the trouble to understand; and
4. it opens the way to Forgiveness through Repentance and gives warning of all spiritual Dangers.

كِتَابٌ فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ فَرَأْنَا عَرَبِيًّا لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ (٣)

3. A Book, whereof the verses are explained in detail -- a Qur'an in Arabic, for people who understand --

بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا فَأَعْرَضَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ (٤)

4. Giving Good News and Admonition yet most of them turn away, and so they hear not.

C4464. With all the qualities mentioned in the last note, if men do not profit by its blessings, the fault lies in their will: they turn away, and thus fail to hear the voice that calls to them.

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا فِي أَكِنَّةٍ مِّمَّا نَدْعُونَآ إِلَيْهِ...

5. They say:

"Our hearts are under veils, (concealed) from that to which thou dost invite us,

C4465. The consequence of their willful rejection is that a distance is created between Revelation and those for

whom it is meant; their ears become deaf, so that the voice falls fainter and fainter on their ears: they feel a bar between themselves and the Messenger who comes to teach them.

Cf. 7:25.

...وَفِي آذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَمِنْ بَيْنِنَا وَبَيْنَكَ حِجَابٌ...

and in ours ears in a deafness, and between us and thee is a screen:

...فَاعْمَلْ إِنَّا عَامِلُونَ (٥)

so do thou (what thou wilt); for us, we shall do (what we will!)."

C4466. This is either a superiority complex adopting the sarcastic tone of an inferiority complex, or it expresses calculated indifference to spiritual teaching.

In effect it says: 'Our hearts and minds are not intelligent enough to understand your noble ideas, nor our ears sufficiently acute to hear their exposition: you and we are quite different; there is a gulf between us. Why worry about us? You go your way, and we shall go ours!'

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُمُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ...

6. Say thou:

"I am but a man like you: it is revealed to me by inspiration, that your Allah is One Allah:

C4467. The reply is in effect: that the bringer of the Message is not an angel nor a god, and so there can and ought to be no barrier between him and his hearers; but he has been chosen to bring a Message of Truth and Hope to them; they should accept the Gospel of Unity, and by Repentance. obtain Allah's Grace and Forgiveness.

...فَاسْتَقِيمُوا إِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ...

so stand true to Him, and ask for His forgiveness."

C4468. There is nothing but pity for those who reject Truth, run after false worship, have no sympathy or charity for their fellow-men, and even deny that there is any future Life.

...وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِينَ (٦)

And woe to those who join gods with Allah --

الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ كَافِرُونَ (٧)

7. Those who practice not Regular Charity, and who even deny the Hereafter.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ (٨)

8. For those who believe and work deeds of righteousness is a reward that will never fail.

C4469. But blessed are those who have Faith. They will have a Future and a Bliss that will never fail.

Section 2

قُلْ أَنتُمْ لَكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُونَ بِالَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ ...

9. Say:

Is it that ye Deny Him Who created the earth in two Days?

C4470. This is a difficult passage, describing the primal creation of our physical earth and the physical heavens around us.

If we count the two Days mentioned in this verse, the four Days, mentioned in verse 10, and the two Days mentioned in verse 12, we get a total of eight Days, while in many passages the creation is stated to have taken place in six Days:

see 7:54, n. 1031; and 32:4, n. 3632.

The Commentators understand the "four Days" in verse 10 to include the two Days in verse 9, so that the total for the universe comes to six Days. This is reasonable, because the processes described in verses 9 and 10 form really one series.

In the one case it is the creation of the formless matter of the earth; in the other case it is the gradual evolution of the form of the earth, its mountains and seas, and its animal and vegetable life, with the "nourishment in due proportion", proper to each. Cf. also 15:19-20.

... وَتَجْعَلُونَ لَهُ أُنْدَادًا ...

And do ye join equals with Him?

... ذَلِكَ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٩)

He is the Lord of (all) the Worlds.

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَارَكَ فِيهَا ...

10. He set on the (earth), Mountains standing firm, high above it, and bestowed blessings on the earth,

C4471. Cf. 13:3 and 16:15, n. 2038.

High above it: the highest mountains are 29,000 feet above sea-level, and the lowest depths of the bottom of the ocean are 31,600 feet below sea-level, so that the vertical difference between the highest and lowest points on the solid crust of the earth is about 11-1/2 miles. The highland areas are the main sources of the water-supply in all the regions of the earth, and vegetable and animal life depends on water-supply.

... وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَاتَهَا فِي أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ ...

and measured therein all things to give them nourishment in due proportion, in four Days,

C4472. See [n. 4470](#) above.

... سَوَاءً لِلْسَّائِلِينَ (١٠)

in accordance with (the needs of) those who seek (sustenance).

C4473. Sailin may mean either

- those who seek, or
- those who ask or enquire.

If the former meaning is adopted, the clause means that everything is apportioned to the needs and appetites of Allah's creatures.

If the latter, it means that the needs of enquirers are sufficiently met by what is stated here.

ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ...

11. Moreover He Comprehended in His design the sky, and it had been (as) smoke:

C4474. For **istawa** see n. 1386 to 10:3. Cf. also 2:29.

C4475. From 79:30 it would appear as if the earth was spread out after the sky was made.

In the present passage the creation of the earth and the evolution of life on our globe are mentioned first; and the making of the sky into the seven firmaments is mentioned last. The two statements are not inconsistent.

It is stated here that when the sky was made into seven firmaments, it had existed previously as smoke, or vapour, or steam.

The idea I derive from a collation of the relevant Quranic passages is that Allah first created primeval matter, which was as yet without order, shape, or symmetry. This state is called Chaos as opposed to Cosmos in Greek Cosmogony.

The next stage would be the condensation of this primeval matter, into gases, liquids, or solids: on this subject no precise information is given to us: it belongs to the realm of Physics.

About the earth we are told of four stages or Days, and about the heavens, of two stages or Days. For Days see [n. 4477 below](#).

If these stages proceeded or proceed together in time, it is obvious that each stage as we know it on earth is half as long as each stage in the heavens. But these are questions of Physics, Astronomy, or Geology, nor questions of Religion.

... فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا...

He said to it and to the earth: "Come ye together, willingly or unwillingly."

... قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ (١١)

They said: "We do come (together), in willing obedience."

C4476. I take this to mean that Allah's design in creation was not to keep heaven and earth separate, but together, as we indeed are, being part of the solar system, and travellers through space, crossing the path of several comets. And all matter created by Allah willingly obeys the laws laid down for it.

فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا...

12. So He completed them as seven firmaments in two Days and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command.

C4477. For "**Days**", which may include thousands of years, see 7:54, and n. 1031.

They refer to stages in the evolution of physical nature. In the Biblical cosmogony, (Gen. 1:1-7 and 2:1-7), which reflects old Babylonian cosmogony, the scheme is apparently to be taken literally as to days and is as follows.

- The first day Allah created light;
- the second, the firmament;
- the third, the earth and vegetation;
- the fourth, the stars and plants;
- the fifth, fish and fowl from the sea; and
- the sixth, cattle, creeping things, beasts on land, and man;
- on the seventh day He ended His work and rested.

Our scheme is wholly different.

- Allah did not rest, and never rests. "His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them";
- Allah's work has not ended; His activity still goes on: 32:5 5; 7:54;
- man in our scheme does not come in with land animals; his advent is much later;
- our stages are not sharply divided from each other, as in the above scheme, where the stars and planets

having been created on the fourth day, it is not intelligible how the first three days were counted, nor how vegetation grew on the third day.

Our stages for earth and heaven are not in sequence of time for the heavens and the earth. Our six stages are broadly speaking,

- the throwing off of our planet from cosmic matter;
- its cooling and condensing;
- 3 and 4 the growth of vegetable and animal life;
- 5 and 6 the parallel growth of the starry realm and our solar system.

...وَرَيَّنا السَّماءَ الدُّنْيا بِمَصابيحَ وَحَفْظًا...

And We adorned the lower heaven with lights, and (provided it) with guard.

C4478. Cf. 15:17, and n. 1951; also 37:6-9.

The transition from the third person ("He completed," etc.) to the first person ("**We adorned,**" etc.) may be noted.

The act of creation is an impersonal act: the act of adornment and guarding is a personal favour to Allah's creatures.

...ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ العَزِيزِ العَلِيمِ (١٢)

Such is the Decree of (Him) the Exalted in Might, Full of knowledge.

فَإِنْ أَعْرَضُوا فَقُلْ أَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صاعِقَةً مِثْلَ صاعِقَةِ عادٍ وَثَمُودَ (١٣)

13. But if they turn away, say thou:

"I have warned you of a stunning Punishment (as of thunder and lightning) like that which (overtook) the 'Ad and the Thamud!"

C4479. See [verse 17 below](#).

إِذْ جاءَهُمُ الرُّسُلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ...

14. Behold, the messengers came to them, from before them and behind them, (preaching):

C4480. "From before them and behind them": i.e., from every side. They were warned from every point of view.

... أَلَا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا اللَّهَ ...

"Serve none but Allah."

... قَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّنَا لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً ...

They said,

"If our Lord had so pleased, He would certainly have sent down angels (to preach):

C4481. Cf. 15:7, n. 1941; 6:8-9, n. 841-842.

The 'Ad had more power and material civilisation than the Pagan Arabs contemporary with the holy Prophet. But the greater the material civilisation, the greater the arrogance as the besetting sin.

... فَإِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كَافِرُونَ (١٤)

now we reject your mission (altogether)."

فَأَمَّا عَادُ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ...

15. Now the 'Ad behaved arrogantly through the land, against (all) truth and reason,

C4482. Against (all) truth and reason: Cf. 7:33.

Their estimate of their own strength was greater than was justified by facts, but if they had all the strength which they arrogated to themselves, yet how could they stand before Allah?

... وَقَالُوا مَنْ أَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً ...

and said: "Who is superior to us in strength?"

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ...

What! did they not see that Allah, Who created them, was superior to them in strength?

... وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ (١٥)

But they continued to reject Our Signs!

فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي أَيَّامٍ نَحْسَاتٍ...

16. So We sent against them a furious Wind through days of disaster,

C4483. The detailed story of the 'Ad and their besetting sin, and the preaching of their Prophet Hud to them will be found in 26:123-140;

also 7:65-72, and n. 1040 to 7:65.

For the furious Wind, Cf. 54:19.

...لِنُذِيقَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا...

that We might give them a taste of a Penalty of humiliation in this Life;

...وَلِعَذَابِ الْآخِرَةِ أَخْزَىٰ وَهُمْ لَا يُنصَرُونَ (١٦)

but the Penalty of the Hereafter will be more humiliating still:
and they will find no help.

وَأَمَّا تَمُودُ فَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمَىٰ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ...

17. As to the Thamud, We gave them guidance, but they preferred blindness (of heart) to Guidance;

C4484. The story of the Thamud usually goes with that of the 'Ad.

Cf. 26:141-158; also 7:73-79, and n. 1043.

...فَأَخَذْتَهُمْ صَاعِقَةً الْعَذَابِ الْهُونِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (١٧)

so the stunning Punishment of humiliation seized them, because of what they had earned.

C4485. "**The stunning Punishment**" i.e., deafening noises like those of thunder and lightning; or the rumbling of a terrible earthquake.

In 7:78, an earthquake is suggested: see n. 1047 to that verse. Cf. also above. 41:13.

وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ (١٨)

18. But We delivered those who believed and practiced righteousness.

Section 3

وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُ أَعْدَاءُ اللَّهِ إِلَى النَّارِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ (١٩)

19. On the Day that the enemies of Allah will be gathered together to the Fire, they will be marched in ranks.

C4486. "Marched in ranks": to show their further humiliation: for they will be like prisoners going to Punishment.

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا مَا جَاؤُوهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَأَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُودُهُمْ...

20. At length, when they reach the (Fire), their hearing, their sight, and their skins will bear witness against them,

C4487. All the members of their bodies and the faculties of their minds, which they misused, will bear witness against them.

Similarly, in 36:65, their hands and their feet bear witness against them.

The "**skin**" not only includes the sense of touch (which is so often misused in sex), but also the sense of taste and the sense of smell, which are specialized forms of the organ of touch. All the sensory organs, and all their intellectual and emotional counterparts advance us by their use and pull us down by their misuse. They become tell-tale witnesses against us if abused.

...بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (٢٠)

as to (all) their deeds.

وَقَالُوا لِمَ لَجُّوْهُمْ لِمَ شَهِدْتُمْ عَلَيْنَا...

21. They will say to their skins: "Why bear ye witness against us?"

C4488. A new phase of their existence will now dawn on them.

They used to think that if they concealed their evil deeds from the rest of the world, nothing would happen to them! But Allah can give "tongues to trees", and can make every fact in life, known and unknown to the

world, contribute to the elucidation of truth and justice. When we succumb to evil, our limbs and faculties themselves betray us.

...قَالُوا أَنْطَقَنَا اللَّهُ الَّذِي أَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ...

They will say:

"Allah hath given us speech, (He) Who giveth speech to everything:

...وَهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ (٢١)

He created you for the first time, and unto Him were ye to return.

وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَتِرُونَ أَنْ يَشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلَا أَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلَا
جُلُودُكُمْ...

22. "Ye did not seek to hide yourselves, lest your hearing, your sight, and your skins should bear witness against you!

C4489. The limbs and faculties will say:

"You did not seek to hide your evil from us: in fact you used us for your evil, because we were in your power.

Did you not know that Allah knew everything and that our knowledge would be evidence against you?"

...وَلَكِنْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ (٢٢)

But ye did think that Allah knew not many of the things that ye used to do!

وَدَلَّكُمْ ظَنُّكُمْ الَّذِي ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ أَرْدَاكُمْ...

23. "But this thought of yours which ye did entertain concerning your Lord, hath brought you to destruction,

C4490. "You now see the situation! We were given for your use and service. You misused us, to your own utter and irretrievable destruction!"

...فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ (٢٣)

and (now) have ye become of those utterly lost!"

فَإِنْ يَصْبِرُوا قَالَ نَارٌ مَثْوًى لَهُمْ...

24. If, then, they have patience, the Fire will be a Home for them!

C4491. If they have patience: there is sarcasm in the meaning.

"Let them not be impatient: they will soon find a home in the Fire of Hell! If they ask for grace and forgiveness then, it will be too late."

...وَإِنْ يَسْتَغِيثُوا فَمَا هُمْ مِنَ الْمُعْتَبِينَ (٢٤)

And if they beg to be received into favor, into favor will they not (then) be received.

وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَاءَ فَزَيَّوْنَا ...

25. And We have destined for them intimate companions (of like nature),

C4492. Just as the idea of happiness in heaven is expressed, not only by individual satisfaction, but by congenial society, so the idea of Punishment in hell is deepened by the fact that Evil will be made to meet evil: those who made sin fair-seeming in this life will be there to share in the regrets and mutual recriminations which will make life a burden. In fact, in these *Ha-Mim* verses, the idea of fit companionship for the Good and uncongenial company for the Evil, runs like a thread throughout.

See Introduction to Surah 40.

... لَهُمْ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ...

Who made alluring to them what was before them and behind them;

C4493. They painted in glowing colours the pleasures of sin in the past and the pleasure of sin in the future, thus practicing a double deception, which will now be found out.

...وَحَقَّقَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِي أُمَّةٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنَ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ...

and the sentence among the previous generations of Jinns and men, who have passed away, is proved against them;

C4494. Jinns: see n. 929 to 6:100.

All spirits of wickedness and all men who submitted to them, in the past, were under one common sentence; and future generations who embrace evil will also join them. Cf. 6:128.

...إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا خَاسِرِينَ (٢٥)

for they are utterly lost.

C4495. The echo here of verse 23 above completes the argument from another point of view.

Section 4

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَسْمَعُوا لِهَذَا الْقُرْآنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (٢٦)

26. The Unbelievers say:

"Listen not to this Qur'án, but talk at random in the midst of its (reading), that ye may gain the upper hand!"

C4496. A favourite trick of those who wish to dishonour Revelation is, not only not to listen to it themselves, but to talk loudly and insolently when it is being read, so that even the true listeners may not be able to perform their devotions. They think that they are drowning the voice of Allah: in fact they are piling up misery for themselves in the future. For Allah's voice can never be silenced.

فَلَنذِيقَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا...

27. But We will certainly give the Unbelievers a taste of a severe Penalty,

...وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَسْوَأَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (٢٧)

and We will requite them for the worst of their deeds.

C4497. Nothing that they can do, however outrageous, will escape its fit punishment. And to reject Allah's Signs is to shut the very door to His Grace and Mercy.

ذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ أَعْدَاءِ اللَّهِ النَّارُ لَهُمْ فِيهَا دَارُ الْخُلْدِ...

28. Such is the requital of the enemies of Allah -- the Fire:
therein will be for them the Eternal Home:

...جَزَاءُ بِمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ (٢٨)

a (fit) requital, for that they were wont to reject Our Signs.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا رَبَّنَا أَرْنَا الَّذِينَ ضَلَّانَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ...

29. And the Unbelievers will say:

"Our Lord!

show us those, among Jinns and men, who misled us:

C4498. It is one of the qualities of sin and all evil, that it wishes to drag down others in its own camp, and rejoices to see them humiliated and disgraced, just as, in the opposite case, the good rejoice to help and honour others and make them happy wherever they can.

Cf. 6:112-113.

...نَجْعَلُهُمَا تَحْتَ أَقْدَامِنَا لِيَكُونَا مِنَ الْأَسْفَلِينَ (٢٩)

we shall crush them beneath our feet, so that they become the vilest (before all)."

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوا...

30. In the case of those who say,

"Our Lord is Allah,"

and, further, stand straight and steadfast,

C4499. The people who succeed in eternal Life are those who recognise and understand the one and only Eternal Reality, that is Allah, and further shape their probationary Life firmly and steadfastly on the principles of that Truth and Reality. They will have their friends and protectors in the good angels, in contrast to the evil ones, who will have no friendship or protection, but only the reproaches of the Evil Ones.

...تَنْزَلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَلَّا تَخَافُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا...

the angels descend on them (from time to time):

"Fear ye not!" (they suggest), "nor grieve!

...وَأَبَشِرُوا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ (٣٠)

but receive the Glad Tidings of the Garden (of Bliss), the which ye were promised!

نَحْنُ أَوْلِيَاؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ...

31. "We are your protectors in this life and in the Hereafter:

C4500. "Protectors": Cf. [n. 4492 to 41:25](#) above, and [n. 4505 to 41:34](#) below.

...وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهُي أَنْفُسُكُمْ ...

therein shall ye have all that your souls shall desire;

C4501. Cf. [21:102](#), [43:71](#), [52:22](#). [Eds.]

...وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَا تَدَّعُونَ (٣١)

therein shall ye have all that ye ask for! --

نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُورٍ رَّحِيمٍ (٣٢)

32. "A hospitable gift from One Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!"

C4502. Cf. [3:198](#).

Through Allah's infinite Mercy and Forgiveness, they will now be in the position of guests to Host, and will receive unnumbered gifts out of all proportion to their own merits.

C.210 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(41:33-54)

*The best of men is the man of Faith,
Who calls all men to share his faith,
Whose life is pure, and whose law of life
Is the Will of Allah. Eschew all evil,*

*And adore Allah, and Him alone.
His Signs are everywhere, and His Message
Is the same through all the ages, a guide
And a healing to those who believe.
Dispute not, but the live righteousness.
Knowledge belongs to Allah, but Falsehood
Deprives man of hope, humility,
And clear sight, and drives him to
Hypocrisy. So turn to Truth, and live.*

Section 5

وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ...

33. Who is better in speech than one who calls (men) to Allah, works righteousness,

C4503. Better in speech: i.e., speaks better counsel; or is more worthy of being listened to.

That his word reaches the highest mark of human speech is evidenced by three facts:

1. that he calls all to the Truth of Allah, showing that his thoughts are not centered on himself;
2. every deed of his is righteousness, showing that there is no divergence between his preaching and his conduct; and
3. he completely associates himself with the Will of Allah, showing that he is the full embodiment of Islam.

What a fine description of the holy Prophet!

... وَقَالَ إِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ (٣٣)

and says, "I am of those who bow in Islam"?

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ...

34. Nor can Goodness and Evil be equal. Repel (Evil) with what is better:

C4504. You do not return good for evil, for there is no equality or comparison between the two.

You repel or destroy evil with something which is far better, just as an antidote is better than poison.

- You foil hatred with love.
- You repel ignorance with knowledge, folly and wickedness with the friendly message of Revelation.
- The man who was in the bondage of sin, you not only liberate from sin, but make him your greatest friend and helper in the cause of Allah!

Such is the alchemy of the Word of Allah!

Cf. 23:96; 28:54.

...فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ (٣٤)

then will he between whom and thee was hatred become as it were thy friend and intimate!

C4505. Hamim: See [n. 4500 above](#), and Introduction to Surah 40.

وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا دُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ (٣٥)

35. And no one will be granted such goodness except those who exercise patience and self-restraint, none but persons of the greatest good fortune.

C4506. The moral standard referred to in the last verse can only be reached by the exercise of the highest patience and self-restraint.

All sorts of human weaknesses and counsels of pseudo-wisdom and "self-respect" will keep breaking in, but resist them as suggestions of Evil (see next verse).

If you reach anywhere near that high standard, you will be indeed most fortunate in a spiritual sense, for Allah's Revelation will have made you great and free.

وَأِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ ...

36. And if (at any time) an incitement to discord is made to thee by the Evil One, seek refuge in Allah.

C4507. Nazagha has in it the idea of **discord**, slander, disharmony, as well as incitements to such disturbances in the soul.

They can only proceed from evil, and should be resisted with the help of Allah.

See also last note.

... إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ (٣٦)

He is the One Who hears and knows all things.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ اللَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ لَا تَسْجُدُوا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا
لِلْقَمَرِ...

37. Among His Signs are the Night and the Day, and the sun and moon.

Adore not the Sun and the Moon,

C4508. Night and Day are opposites, and yet, by the alchemy of Allah, they can both subserve the purpose of human good, because the Night can give rest while the Day can promote activity.

The **Sun and the Moon** are similarly complementary.

So, in moral and spiritual affairs, seeming opposites may by Allah's alchemy be made to subserve the purposes of Good. They are but instruments: Allah is the Cause.

Adore Allah, and not the things which He has created. Use the things which He has created, but do not adore them.

...وَأَسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَهُنَّ إِن كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ (٣٧)

but adore Allah Who created them,
if it is Him ye wish to serve.

فَإِنْ اسْتَكْبَرُوا ...

38. But if they (Unbelievers) are arrogant, (no matter):

C4509. It does not in any way affect Allah if men rebel against Him. It is men's own loss.

Allah's glory is being celebrated night and day by angels and men who receive the privilege of approaching His presence. To them it is delight and an honour to be in the sunshine of Truth and Happiness.

... فَأَلْذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُونَ لَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْأَمُونَ (٣٨)

for in the presence of thy Lord are those who celebrate His praises by night and by day. And they never flag (nor feel themselves above it).

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْكَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً...

39. And among His Signs is this: thou seest the earth barren and desolate;

C4510. Evil makes of the souls of men what drought makes of land: it kills life, beauty, and fruitfulness.

...فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَرَّتْ وَرَبَّتْ...

but when We send down rain to it, it is stirred to life and yields increase.

Allah's Word in the spiritual world has the same wonderful effect as rain has on barren land: it gives life, beauty, and fruitfulness. And the effect of Allah's Word is also seen through the lives of men who repel evil with what is better. They also convert dead souls (which harbour spite and hatred) into living souls, which come into the main current of spiritual life, and help in carrying out Allah's beneficent Purpose.

...إِنَّ الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لِمُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى...

Truly, He Who gives life to the (dead) earth can surely give life to (men) who are dead.

C4511. Why should we wonder then at the potency of Allah's Word, whether in our probationary lives here, or in the eternal life of the Hereafter.

...إِنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٣٩)

For He has power over all things.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا...

40. Those who pervert the Truth in Our Signs are not hidden from Us.

C4512. Pervert the Truth in Our Signs; either by corrupting the scriptures or turning them to false and selfish uses; or by neglecting the Signs of Allah in nature around them, or silencing His voice in their own conscience. Everything is known to Allah. Why not work for true salvation at the final Judgment?

...أَفَمَنْ يُقَى فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ أَمْ مَنْ يَأْتِي آمِنًا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ...

Which is better? --

he that is cast into the Fire, or he that comes safe through, on the Day of Judgement?

...اعْمَلُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ (٤٠)

Do what ye will:

Verily He seeth (clearly) all that ye do.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ ...

41. Those who reject the Message when it comes to them (are not hidden from Us);

C4513. Mere rejection by men will not silence the Signs of Allah, which will work unintermittently and with the fullest potency.

... وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ (٤١)

and indeed it is a Book of exalted power.

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ...

42. No falsehood can approach it from before or behind it:

C4514. Allah's Truth is fully guarded on all sides. No one can get the better of it by attacking it from before or behind it, openly or secretly, or in any way whatever.

...تَنْزِيلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ (٤٢)

it is sent down by One Full of Wisdom, Worthy of all Praise.

مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ...

43. Nothing is said to thee that was not said to the messengers before thee:

C4515. The gist of Allah's Message, now, before, and for ever, is the same: Mercy to the erring and repentant; just punishment to those who willfully rebel against Allah.

...إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ وَذُو عِقَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (٤٣)

That thy Lord has at His command (all) Forgiveness as well as a most Grievous Penalty.

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا أُعْجَمِيًّا ...

44. Had We sent this as a Qur'án (in a language) other than Arabic,

C4516. Cf. 16:103-105; 12:2; etc.

It was most natural and reasonable that the Messenger being Arab, the Message should be in his own tongue, that he might explain it in every detail, with the greatest power and eloquence. Even though it was to be for the whole world, its initial exposition was thus to be in Arabic. But if people had no faith and were spiritually deaf or blind, it would not matter in what language it came.

...لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ...

they would have said: "Why are not its verses explained in detail?"

...أَأَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ...

What! (a Book) not in Arabic and (a Messenger) an Arab?"

...قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاء...

Say: "It is a guide and a healing to those who believe;

...وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى...

and for those who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears, and it is blindness in their (eyes);

C4517. Cf. 41:5, and 6:25.

They pretended that it was too deep for them, when they meant that they were superior to it! The fact was that by putting themselves in an artificially false position, they rendered themselves impervious to the Message. The voice of Revelation or the voice of conscience sounded to them as if it came from a far-off place! They themselves made themselves strangers to it.

...أُولَئِكَ يُنَادُونَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ (٤٤)

they are (as it were) being called from a place far distant!"

Section 6

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ...

45. We certainly gave Moses the Book aforetime: but dispute arose therein.

...وَلَوْ لَأُكَلِّمَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَفُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ...

Had it not been for a word that went forth before from thy Lord, (their differences) would have been settled between them:

C4518. Callousness and self-sufficiency in religion are often illustrated by sects like the Pharisees and Sadducees among the Jews. Where there are honest differences of opinion, they can, in Allah's Plan, lead to greater enquiry and emulation. Where the differences are fractious, there is often even then time left for repentance.

In any case the Word or Decree of God is for the best good of all, and should not disturb Faith. Cf. 10:19.

A good life, of faith and truth, is in our own interests, and the opposite against our own interests. Allah is never unjust.

...وَأَنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيبٍ (٤٥)

but they remained in suspicious disquieting doubt thereon.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا...

46. Whoever works righteousness benefits his own soul; whoever works evil, it is against his own soul:

...وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ (٤٦)

nor is thy Lord ever unjust (in the least) to His servants.

إِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ...

47. To Him is referred the Knowledge of the Hour (of Judgment: He knows all):

C4519. There are profound mysteries which the knowledge of man cannot fathom but which are all open knowledge to Allah, because He plans, guides and controls all things. The precise time of the Hour of Judgment is one of these.

We are not to dispute about matters like these, which are matters of speculation as far as human intelligence is concerned. Such speculations ruined the Ummah of Moses, and set them on the and path of doubts and controversies. Our task is to do our duty and love Allah and man (see the last two verses).

Cf. also 21:4.

...وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرَاتٍ مِّنْ أَكْمَامِهَا وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أُنْثَىٰ وَلَا

تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ...

no date-fruit comes out of its sheath, nor does a female conceive (within her womb) nor bring forth (young), but by His Knowledge.

...وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ أَيُّنَ شُرَكَائِي...

"Where are the partners (ye attributed) to Me?"

The Day that (Allah) will propound to them the (question),

C4520. When the final restoration of true values comes, all falsehood will be exposed openly and publicly. The false gods will vanish, and their falsehood will be acknowledged by those who had lapsed from true worship. But it will be too late then for repentance.

...قَالُوا أَذْنَاكَ مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيدٍ (٤٧)

They will say,

"We do assure thee not one of us can bear witness!"

وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَظَنُّوا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مَّخِصٍ (٤٨)

48. The (deities) they used to invoke aforetime will leave them in the lurch, and they will perceive that they have no way of escape.

لَا يَسْأَلُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَئُوسٌ قَنُوطٌ (٤٩)

49. Man does not weary of asking for good (things), but if ill touches him, he gives up all hope (and) is lost in despair.

C4521. Not only is man prone to doubts and speculations in matters beyond his ken, thus disturbing the even tenor of his spiritual life: he is apt to run into opposite extremes in his daily experiences in this life. He is always hankering after the good things of this life. They are not all good for him. If he receives a little check, even though it may be to bring him to his bearings and turn his thoughts to higher things, he is apt to fall into despair.

وَلَئِنْ أَدْقْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّهُ ...

50. When We give him a taste of some mercy from Ourselves, after some adversity has touched him,

C4522. When men entertain false ideas of values in life, there are two or three possible attitudes they may adopt in reaction to their experiences.

- In the first place, their desire may be inordinate for the good things of this life, and any little check brings them into a mood of despair. See last note.
- In the second place, if their desire is granted, they are puffed up, and think that everything is due to their own cleverness or merit, and they forget Allah.
- Not only that, but they go a step further, and begin to doubt a Hereafter at all! If by chance they have a faint glimmering of the Hereafter, which they cannot

help recognising, they think themselves "favoured of Heaven", because of some small favours given to them in this life by way of trial. Thus they turn all things, good or evil, away from their real purpose, because they are devoted to falsehood.

... لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي ...

he is sure to say, "This is due to my (merit):

...وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَلَئِن رُّجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ

لِلْحُسْنَىٰ...

I think not that the Hour (of Judgment) will (ever) be established; but if I am brought back to my Lord, I have (much) good (stored) in His sight!"

...فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ (٥٠)

But We will show the Unbelievers the truth of all that they did, and We shall give them the taste of a severe Penalty.

وإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَىٰ الْإِنْسَانَ ...

51. When We bestow favors on man,

C4523. The last verse and note dealt with men's distortion of the values of life. Here we come to men's ingratitude and hypocrisy.

If they receive good, they go farther away from Allah, instead of coming nearer to him. If they suffer ill, they call on Allah and offer prolonged prayers, but it is not sincere devotion and therefore worthless.

...أَعْرَضَ وَتَأَىٰ بَجَانِبِهِ...

he turns away, and gets himself remote on his side (instead of coming to Us);

C4524. Cf. 17:83.

...وإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فُدُو دُعَاءَ عَرِيضٍ (٥١)

and when Evil seizes him, (he comes) full of prolonged prayer!

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ...

52. Say:

"See ye if the (Revelation) is (really) from Allah, and yet do ye reject it?"

C4524a. An argument is now addressed, of a most searching nature.

Examine your own souls. See if you do not really find something unusual in Allah's Revelation!

If you do, and yet you reject it, what a terrible responsibility fastens itself on you?

Could anything be more foolish or more misguided than to reject a Message which is transforming the whole world?

...مَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ (٥٢)

Who is more astray than one who is in schism far (from any purpose)?"

سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ أَنَّ الْحَقَّ...

53. Soon will We show them Our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth.

C4524c. Allah's Truth always spreads, in its own good time, across to the uttermost ends of the earth, as it did in the case of Islam. But its intensive spread in the hearts and souls of people is even more remarkable than its extensive spread over large areas.

Men like the four Companions of the Prophet-and many more-became leaders of men and arbiters of the world's fate.

Madinah from being a focus of jarring tribes and factions that hated each other, became the seat of heroic actions and plans and the nursery of great and noble heroic deeds that resounded throughout the world.

It makes no difference what men may say or do. Allah's Truth must prevail, and He knows who obstruct and who help.

...أولم يكف برّبك أنه على كل شيء شهيدٌ (٥٣)

Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?

ألا إنهم في مريّةٍ من لقاء ربّهم...

54. Ah indeed! are they in doubt concerning the Meeting with their Lord?

C4525. Short-sighted people may like to think that there may be no Judgment. But Judgment is inevitable and cannot be escaped, for Allah "doth encompass all things."

...ألا إنه بكلّ شيءٍ محيطٌ (٥٤)

Ah indeed! it is He that doth encompass all things!