

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 47
SURAH MUHAMMAD

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

047

SURAH MUHAMMAD

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Introduction and Summary

We have examined and followed the current arrangement of the Surahs according to subject matter and independently of chronology, and we have found that a logical thread runs through them. We have now finished more than five-sixth of the Quran. The remaining sixth consists of short Surahs, but these are again grouped according to subject matter.

We begin the first of such groups with a group of three Surahs (47 to 49), which deal with the organisation of the Muslim Ummah or community both for external defence and in internal

relations. The present Surah deals with the necessity of defence against external foes by courage and strenuous fighting, and dates from about the first year of the Hijrah, when the Muslims were under threat of extinction by invasion from Makkah.

Summary- Aggressive hostility to Faith and Truth should be fought firmly, and Allah will guide (47:1-19, C. 220).

Faint-heartedness condemned; those who strive and those who turn away will be sorted out (47:20-38 and C. 221).

C.220 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(47:1-19)

*No plots against Truth or Faith will succeed:
But those who follow both will be strengthened.*

*Be firm in the fight, and Allah will guide.
Rebellion against Allah is destruction; fidelity
Will cool the mind and feed the heart;
It will warm the affections and sweeten life.
Hypocrisy carries its own doom.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ (١)

1. Those who reject Allah and hinder (men) from the Path of Allah, their deeds will Allah render astray (From their mark).

C4817. Whatever they do will miss its mark, because Allah is the source of all energy and life. If the wicked try to persecute men or seduce them from the Truth, the result will be the opposite of what they intend.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآمَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ
وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ...

2. But those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, and believe in the (Revelation) sent down to Muhammad - for it is the Truth from their Lord,

...كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ (٢)

He will remove from them their ills and improve their **condition**.

C4818. Bal means state or condition, whether external, or of the heart and mind. Both meanings apply here.

The more the wicked rage, the better will be the position of the righteous, and Allah will make it easier and easier for the righteous to love and follow the Truth.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْبَاطِلَ وَأَنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبَعُوا الْحَقَّ
مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ...

3. This because those who reject Allah follow vanities, while those who believe follow the Truth from their Lord:

...كَذَلِكَ يَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ أَمْثَالَهُمْ (٣)

Thus does Allah set forth for men their lessons **by similitudes**.

C4819. We learn the greatest moral lessons by parables and similitudes from things that happen in the outer world.

If a man goes after a mirage or a thing that has no real existence, he can never reach his goal, while the man that follows the kindly Light from Allah that leads him on must be happier in mind, sounder in heart, and firmer in life, generally for every moment that he lives.

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبِ الرِّقَابِ ...

4. Therefore, when ye meet the Unbelievers (in fight), smite at their necks; at length,

C4820. When once the fight (Jihad) is entered upon, carry it out with the utmost vigour, and strike home your blows at the most vital points (smite at their necks), both literally and figuratively. You cannot wage war with kid gloves.

... حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَثَخَّنْتُمُوهُمْ فَسُدُّوا أَلْوَتَاقَ...

when ye have thoroughly subdued them, bind a bond firmly (on them):

C4821. In the first onset there must necessarily be great loss of life; "after the enemy's numbers are fairly thinned down,, prisoners may be taken". With this passage may be compared 8:67, and n. 1234.

... فَأِمَّا مَنًّا بَعْدُ وَإِمَّا فِدَاءً حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا...

thereafter (is the time for) either generosity or ransom: Until the war lays down its burdens.

C4822. When once the enemy is brought under control, generosity (i.e., the release of prisoners without ransom) or ransom is recommended.

... ذَلِكَ...

Thus (are ye commanded):

... وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَانْتَصَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَكِنْ لِيَبْلُوَ بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ...

but if it had been Allah's Will, He could certainly have exacted retribution from them (Himself); but (He lets you fight) in order to test you, some with others.

C4823. The Believers are tested in Faith by the extent to which they are willing to make sacrifices, even to the laying down of their lives; and the enemies are tested as to whether they would repent and let the righteous five in freedom and security.

... وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَنْ يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ (٤)

But those who are slain in the way of Allah, He will never let their deeds be lost.

C4824. There are two alternative readings,

- **qatalu**, "those who fight", and
- **qutilu**, "those who are slain".

The meaning under the first reading is wider, and includes that under the second.

I have translated on the basis of the second reading, which is in accordance with the text of the Royal Egyptian edition.

سَيَهْدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ (٥)

5. Soon will He **guide them** and improve their condition.

C4825. If we read "who are slain" in the last clause but one of verse 4, (see last note), "guide" would mean "guide them in their journey after death".

Improve their conditions: see n. 4818 above.

If after death, their minds and hearts will be more and more settled and rest, and their spiritual satisfaction greater.

وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَفَهَا لَهُمْ (٦)

6. And admit them to the **Garden** which He has announced for them.

C4826. "The Garden which He has made known to them": the state of bliss which is declared in Revelation to be destined for those who serve Allah.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُذَبِّبْ أَفْئَامَكُمْ (٧)

7. O ye who believe!

if ye will aid (the cause of) Allah, He will aid you, and plant your feet firmly.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَتَعْسًا لَهُمْ وَأَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ (٨)

8. But those who reject (Allah), for them is destruction, and (Allah) will render their deeds astray (from their mark).

C4827. See above, [471I](#) and n. 4817.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرَهُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ (٩)

9. That is because they hate the Revelation of Allah; so He has made **their deeds fruitless**.

C4828. Their deeds are "**fruitless**" in the sense that they are vain; they do not produce the results intended by their doers.

But they will not be exempt from producing the natural consequences of evil, viz., further degradation and misery for the soul.

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ...

10. Do they not travel through the earth, and see what was the End of those before them (who did evil)?

C4829. The end of evil is evil. All past history and tradition shows that. Will not men of every generation learn that lesson?

Allah helps His servants, but those who rebel against Allah have no one to help them.

...دَمَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ أَمْثَالَهَا (١٠)

Allah brought utter destruction on them, and similar (fates await) those who reject Allah.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ (١١)

11. That is because Allah is the Protector of those who believe, but those who reject Allah have no protector.

Section 2

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ

تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ...

12. Verily Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds, to Gardens beneath which rivers flow;

...وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَتَمَنَّوْنَ وَيَأْكُلُونَ كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى

لَهُمْ (١٢)

while those who reject Allah will enjoy (this world) and eat as cattle eat; and the Fire will be their abode.

C4830. An apt simile.

Beasts of the field eat their fill, but have no higher interests. Men who worship the world exclusively are no better: their pleasures and enjoyments rise no higher than those of the beasts of the field. They have no inkling of spiritual happiness.

On the contrary, as they were endowed with spiritual faculties which they misused, they will not escape the Fire of Punishment, the Penalty of Sin.

وَكَايْنٍ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكَ الَّتِي أَخْرَجْنَاكَ...

13. And how many cities, with more power than thy city which has **driven thee out**, have We destroyed (for their sins)?

C4831. A reference to Pagan Makkah, which drove out the holy Prophet because of his righteousness and because he preached Repentance.

The date of this Surah must therefore be after the Hijrah.

...أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ فَلَا نَاصِرَ لَهُمْ (١٣)

And there was none to aid them.

أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّنْ رَبِّهِ كَمَنْ زُوِيَ لَهُ سُوءُ عَمَلِهِ...

14. Is then one who is on a **clear (Path)** from his Lord, no better than one to whom the evil of his conduct seems pleasing,

C4832. Clear, or enlightened; a Path on which shines the Light of Allah.

...وَأَتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ (١٤)

and such as follow their own lusts?

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنهَارٌ مِّن مَّاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ ...

15. (Here is) a Parable of the Garden which the righteous are promised:

in it are

- rivers of water incorruptible:

C4833. In this description there are four kinds of drinks and all kinds of fruits; and the summing up of all delights in the "Forgiveness from their Lord".

The four kinds of drinks are:

- delicious, cool, pure water, not like earthly water, for it never suffers corruption;

وَأَنهَارٌ مِّن لَّبَنٍ لَّم يَتَغَيَّر طَعْمُهُ ...

- rivers of milk of which the taste never changes;

- milk which never turns Sour, whose taste is like that of fresh warm milk drawn from the udder;

... وَأَنهَارٌ مِّن حَمْرٍ لَّدَةِ النَّسَارِيِّينَ ...

- rivers of wine, a joy to those who drink;

- wine, not like any wine on earth, for it leaves no headaches behind, and causes no intoxication, which is a kind of madness or poison, but is ever a joy to drink; and

... وَأَنهَارٌ مِّن عَسَلٍ مُّصَفًّى ...

- and rivers of honey pure and clear.

- honey, pure and clear, with no admixture of wax or any foreign substance.

These drinks, will cool the spirit, feed the heart, warm the affections, and sweeten life. (R).

... وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ ...

- In it there are for them all kinds of fruits,

C4834. See n. 4671 to 43:73. [Eds.]

... وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ...

and Grace from their Lord.

C4835. Grace from their Lord: that is the covering up or blotting out of sin and all that was sad or unsatisfactory in the lower life;

the pure Light from the Countenance of Allah Most High: 92:20.

...كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ (١٥)

(Can those in such Bliss) be compared to such as shall dwell for ever in the Fire, and be given, to drink, boiling water, so that it cuts up their bowels (to pieces)?

C4836. Cf. 37:66-67, and n. 4074.

Just as the Bliss of the Blessed will penetrate their being through and through, so the agony of the condemned ones will penetrate their being through and through.

“**Bowels**” besides meaning their inmost being, also suggests the seat of their feelings and affection.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ...

16. And among them are men who listen to thee,

...حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ مَاذَا قَالَ آنِفًا...

but in the end, when they go out from **thee**, they say to those who have received Knowledge:

"What is it he said just then?"

C4837. Cf. 10:42, and n. 1434; also 6:25, 36, and n. 857.

The case here referred to is that of the Hypocrites who came to the assemblies of Islam in Madinah and pretended to listen to the Prophet's teaching and preaching. But their heart and mind were not in learning righteousness, but in carping at things they saw and heard.

When they got out, they knew nothing of the teaching, but on the contrary asked foolish and ignorant questions, such as might raise doubts.

...أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ (١٦)

Such are men whose hearts Allah has sealed, and who follow their own lusts.

وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَآتَاهُمْ تَقْوَاهُمْ (١٧)

17. But to those who **receive Guidance**, He increases (the light of) Guidance, and bestows on them their Piety and Restraint (from evil).

C4838. Spiritual advancement is progressive: each step makes the next ones easier and more complete.

فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً...

18. Do they then only **wait** for the Hour, that it should come on them of a sudden?

C4839. Cf. 43:66, and n. 4665.

...فَقَدْ جَاءَ أَشْرَاطُهَا...

But already have come some **tokens** thereof,

C4840. The sands of time are always running, and when a wrong is done, the time for its punishment is approaching every moment. No one should therefore wait.

The time for repentance is Now at any given time. When the punishment comes, it is too late for repentance, and all admonition would be useless.

Looking to the particular time when this Surah was revealed, viz., about a year after the Hijrah, already there were Signs that the plans of the Pagans to crush Islam were crumbling to pieces. The Hijrah showed how much good-will there was in Madinah for the holy Prophet of Allah, and how many people from Makkah adhered to him, The battle of Badr showed that they could hold their own against odds of three to one.

...فَأَنى لَهُمْ إِذا جَاءَهُمْ ذِكْرَهُمْ (١٨)

and when it (actually) is on them, how can they benefit then by their admonition?

...فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لا إِلَهَ إِلا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ...

19. Know, therefore, that
there is no god but Allah,
and ask forgiveness for the **fault**, and for the men and women who believe:

C4841. Cf. 40:55, and n. 4428.

...وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُنْقَلَبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ (١٩)

for Allah knows how **ye** move about and how **ye** dwell in your homes.

C4842. The time and manner of our conducting ourselves at home and when we move about on our business are all material to the judgment of our conduct, and for every nuance in our moral and spiritual progress, we must seek Allah's help and guidance.

C.221 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(47:20-38)

*Those eager for service want the call for service;
But the hypocrites blanch at such call.
If it were not obeyed, and evil should get
The upper hand, will it not stalk arrogant
Over the land, and trample under foot
All claims of right and kinship? Fight it,
And fail not in the test of your mettle. Be hold
And establish the Flag of Righteousness
In the highest places. Thus comes Peace,
For which due sacrifice must be made.*

Section 3

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَتْ سُورَةٌ...

20. Those who believe say, "Why is not a Surah sent down (for us)?"

C4843. The men of faith and loyalty are eager and anxious to get a command to serve the Cause even if it be at the sacrifice of their lives. Not so the Hypocrites, "those in whose hearts is a disease". They are mortally afraid as mentioned below.

...فَإِذَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةٌ مُحْكَمَةٌ وَذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ...

But when a Surah of basic or **categorical** meaning is revealed, and fighting is mentioned therein,

C4844. Cf. 37:7, and n. 347.

The defence of truth and righteousness at all sacrifice, when a definite and categorical command issues from the ruler of an Islamic state is a fundamental condition of enlistment in the cause of Allah.

It is true that Punishment and Judgment belong to Allah alone; but our mettle and fidelity have to be tested, (see [verse 4 above](#)), and Allah uses human agency in human affairs. (R).

...رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ نَظَرَ الْمَغْشِيِّ

عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ...

thou wilt see those in whose hearts is a **disease** looking at thee with a look of one in swoon at the approach of death:

C4845. Cf. 2:10.

The **disease** is hypocrisy, disloyalty to the Cause, want of courage and of the spirit of self-sacrifice, want of true understanding.

...فَأُولَىٰ لَهُمْ (٢٠)

but more fitting for them --

طَاعَةٌ وَقَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ فَإِذَا عَزَمَ الْأَمْرُ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا

لَهُمْ (٢١)

21. Were it to obey and say what is just,

and when a **matter** is resolved on, it were best for them if they were true to Allah.

C4846. The resolution is not taken except under guidance from Allah. Those, therefore, who fail to implement it by their own effort and sacrifice, are not true to Allah.

And such disloyalty or cowardice is not even good for them from a worldly point of view. With what face can they meet their friends after their disgraceful conduct?

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطُّوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ (٢٢)

22. Then, is it to be expected of you, if ye will do no mischief in the land, and break your ties of kith and kin?

C4847. It is no use to say, as the Quraish said, that it is not seemly to fight against kith and kin. From one point of view the stand against sin brings "not peace, but a sword". It is a case of either subduing evil or being subdued by evil. If evil gets the upper hand, it is not likely to respect ties of kith and kin. It did not in the case of the holy Prophet and his adherents, and had to be suppressed, to bring about the conditions necessary for peace.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَارَهُمْ (٢٣)

23. Such are the men whom Allah has **cursed** for He has made them deaf and blinded their sight.

C4848. Cursed: i.e., deprived of His Grace: left them straying, because they deliberately rejected His guidance. The result is that what they hear is as if they had not heard, and what they see is as if they had not seen.

They have no desire to understand Allah's Will or Allah's Revelation;-

or is it that they have themselves locked and bolted their hearts and minds, so that nothing can penetrate them?

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا (٢٤)

24. Do they not then earnestly seek to understand the Qur'án, or are their hearts locked up by them?

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدُّوا عَلَى أَدْبَارِهِمْ مِّن بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ...

25. **Those who turn back as apostates** after Guidance was clearly shown to them,

C4849. Such men are entirely in the hands of Satan. They follow his suggestions, and their hopes are built on his deceptions.

...الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ لَهُمْ وَأَمْلَىٰ لَهُمْ (٢٥)

the Evil One has instigated them and buoyed them up with false hopes.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرَهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ ...

26. This, because they said to those who hate what Allah has revealed,

C4850. They have become so impervious to facts and truths, because, without the courage to oppose Allah's Cause openly, they secretly intrigue with Allah's enemies, and say that they will follow them part of the way, and by remaining partly in the other camp, they will be far more useful as spies and half-hearted doubters than by going over altogether. If they think that this game will be successful, they are mistaken.

... سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأُمْرِ...

"We will obey you in part of (this) matter;"

... وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِسْرَارَهُمْ (٢٦)

but Allah knows their (inner) secrets.

All the inner secrets and motives of their hearts are known to Allah. Cf. 59:11.

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ...

27. But **how** (will it be) when the angels take their souls at death,

C4851. It is all very well for them to practice hypocrisy in this life. How will they feel at death, when they find that the angels know all, and touch the very spots they had taken such care to conceal?

... يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهُهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ (٢٧)

and smite their faces and their backs?

C4852. Their faces and their backs:

there is a subtle metaphor.

- The face is what looks to the front, the side you present to the outer world; the back is what is not shown, what is hidden from the world. The hypocrites will be hit at both points.
- Or, the face is what they boast of, what they are proud of; the back is the skeleton in the cupboard, the things they dare not utter, but which yet haunt them. The hypocrites are hit on every side. Cf. 8:50.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اتَّبَعُوا مَا أَسْخَطَ اللَّهَ وَكَرَهُوا رِضْوَانَهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ (٢٨)

28. This because they followed that which called forth the Wrath of Allah, and they hated Allah's good pleasure; so He made their deeds of no effect.

Section 4

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ أَنْ لَنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْغَانَهُمْ (٢٩)

29. Or do those in **whose** hearts is a disease, think that Allah will not bring to light all their rancor?

C4853. Cf. [verse 20 above](#), and [n. 4845](#).

Being diseased at the very core of their being, they do not understand the simplest facts of spiritual life.

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَاكُمْ فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ ...

30. Had We so willed, We could have shown them up to thee, and thou shouldst have known **them by their marks**:

C4854. Evil is not always necessarily branded in this life with a distinguishing mark or brand. But the discerning ones know. Evil is betrayed by its speech and behaviour.

... وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ ...

but surely thou wilt know them by the tone of their speech!

... وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ (٣٠)

And Allah knows All that ye do.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّى نَعْلَمَ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّابِرِينَ ...

31. And We shall **try** you until We test those among you who strive their utmost and persevere in patience;

C4855. Cf. 34:21, and n. 3821.

The test and trial is for our own psychological development, to help in the exercise of such choice as has been given to us in our free- will.

Cf. also 3:154, and n. 467.

... وَنَبْلُوَ أَخْبَارَكُمْ (٣١)

and We shall try your reported (mettle).

C4856. Akhbar: the things reported of you; reputation for courage and constancy, which has to be brought to the test of facts and experience.

In an epigram of Tacitus we are told of a Roman Emperor that he would have been considered in every way to have been worthy of being a ruler if only he had never ruled! So in life people may think us courageous, true, noble, and self-sacrificing; and we may consider ourselves as possessing all such virtues; but it is actual experience that will bring them to the test.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَشَاقُوا الرَّسُولَ...
...إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَشَاقُوا الرَّسُولَ...

32. Those who reject Allah, hinder (men) from the Path of Allah, and resist the Messenger,

...مِن بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ لَن يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا...

after Guidance has been clearly shown to **them**, will not injure Allah in the least,

C4857. Cf. [verse 25 above](#), and [verse 34 below](#):

- in verse 25 was shown the source of the evil. viz., yielding to the deceptions of Satan;
- in this verse are shown the proximate consequences of such yielding to evil, viz., failure of all we do;
- and in verse 34 below are shown the eternal consequences, viz., our deprivation of Allah's Grace and Mercy.

...وَسَيُحِبُّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ (٣٢)

but He will make their deeds of no effect.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَلَا تُبْطِلُوا

أَعْمَالَكُمْ (٣٣)

33. O ye who believe!

obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and make not vain your deeds!

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ...

34. Those who reject Allah,

C4858. See [last note](#).

... وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ (٣٤)

and hinder (men) from the Path of Allah, then die rejecting Allah, Allah will not forgive them.

فَلَا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلْمِ...

35. Be not weary and faint-hearted crying for peace.

وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ وَاللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ وَلَنْ يَتْرِكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ (٣٥)

When ye should be Uppermost: for Allah is with you, and will never put you in loss for your (good) deeds.

C4859. To those who are trying to root out evil, and have authority to do so, the question is not of peace or conflict, but of whether Good or Evil is to prevail. They must remember that Good must ultimately prevail, and Allah's help is with those who, as far as men can, are trying to further the universal Plan.

Cf. [n. 4847 to verse 22 above.](#)

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهْوٌ...

36. The life of this world is but play and amusement:

C4860. Cf. 6:32, and n. 855; and 29:64, and n. 3497 .

Amusement and play are not bad things in themselves. As preparations for the more serious life, they have their value. But if we concentrate on them, and neglect the business of life, we cannot prosper. So we must use our life in this world as a preparation for the next life.

...وَأِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا يُؤْتِكُمْ أَجْرَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْأَلْكُمْ أَمْوَالَكُمْ (٣٦)

and if ye believe land guard against evil, He will grant you your recompense, and will not ask you (to give up) your possessions.

C4861. Complete self-sacrifice, if voluntarily offered, has a meaning:

it means that the persons devotion is exclusively and completely for the Cause. But no law or rule can demand it. And a mere offer to kill yourself has no meaning. You should be ready to take risks to your life in fighting for the Cause, but you should aim at life, not death.

If you live, you should be ready to place your substance and your acquisitions at the disposal of the Cause. But it is not reasonable to pauperise yourself and become a hanger- on for the Cause.

Moreover, the inborn tendency to self-preservation in an average man would lead to concealment and niggardliness if all were asked for the Cause, by Law, and there would further be a feeling of bitterness and rebellion.

إِن يَسْأَلِكُمْوَهَا فَيُحْفِكُمْ تَبْخُلُوا ...

37. If He were to ask you for all of them, and press you, ye would covetously withhold,

C4862. Cf. 3:180.

... وَيُخْرِجُ أَضْعَانَكُمْ (٣٧)

and He would bring out all your ill-feeling.

C4863. Cf. above, verse 29.

Rancour or ill-feeling, or any desire but that of devotion, should never be given a handle in a wise Law.

هَآأَنْتُمْ هُوَآَاءَ تُدْعَوْنَ لِتَنْفُقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ ٱللّٰهِ...

38. Behold, ye are **those** invited to spend (of your substance) in the way of Allah:

C4864. Here the case of the special devotee and of the average man with his human foibles are distinguished.

Stinginess is not a virtue: it hurts more the finer-nature of the individual practicing it that it hurts the Cause.

Allah is free of all wants and independent of any need that we can meet. His Cause is similarly independent of human aid. But it uses human agency for our own human advancement. The need to be able to serve Allah's cause is ours. We are the needy beggars who should claim the privilege before the Lord of Bounties unbounded. (R).

...فَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يَبْخُلُ وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخُلُ عَن نَّفْسِهِ...

but among you are some that are niggardly.

But any who are niggardly are so at the expense of their own souls.

...وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ...

But Allah is free of all wants, and it is ye that are needy.

... وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَالَكُمْ (٣٨)

If ye turn back (from the Path), He will substitute in your stead another people;

then they would not be like you!

C4865. If we desert the Cause, the Cause will not fail. Better men than we will uphold the flag. But we should fall, and others will take our place, who are not so timid, half- hearted, or stingy. In Wordsworth's words, "High Heaven rejects the lore of nicely calculated less or more."