

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 59
SURAH AL-HASHR

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

059

SURAH AL-HASHR

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Introduction and Summary

This is the third of the series of ten short Madinah Surahs, dealing each with a specific point in the life of Ummah; see introduction to Surah 57. The special theme here is how treachery to the Ummah on the part of its enemies recoils on the enemies themselves, while it strengthen the bond between the different sections of the Ummah itself, and this illustrated by the story of the expulsion of the Jewish tribe of Banu Nadir in Rabi al Awal, 4 A.H.

This fixes the date of the Surah.

Summary- The expulsion of the treacherous Jews from the neighbourhood of Madinah was smoothly accomplished; their reliance on their fortified positions and on the faith of their allies in treachery proved futile. But the internal bonds in the Ummah were strengthened. Such is the wisdom of Allah, Lord of the Most Beautiful Names, (59:1-24, and C. 238).

C.238 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

*Allah's wisdom foils the treachery of men,
And makes the path smooth for Believers who strive
Even against odds. Against Allah's decrees
All resistance in vain. In property taken
From the enemy, let those in need have a share,
And those who sacrifice their all for the Cause
But those who lend a helping hand
In the hour of need do it for love
And crave no reward, nor feel the least
Envy or jealousy. They all rejoice
That the Brotherhood should thrive. Not so
The Hypocrites; they are false even among
Themselves. Perdition is the end
Of all evil. But the Good and Faithful
Will achieve felicity. Such is the power
Of Truth and Allah's Revelation. Allah!
There is no god but He!---the Good,
The Glorious, the Irresistible!
All Creation sings His praise---
The Exalted in Might, the Wise!*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

سَبِّحَ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ...

1. Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, let it declare the Praises and Glory of Allah:

C5368. This verse, introducing the Surah is identical with 57:1. introducing Surah 57.

The theme of both is the wonderful working of Allah's Plan and Providence. In the one case it referred to the conquest of Makkah and taught the lesson of humility.

In this case it refers to the dislodgment of the treacherous Banu Nadir from their nest of intrigue in the neighbourhood of Madinah practically without a blow.

See next note.

...وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (١)

for He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.

هُوَ الَّذِي اَخْرَجَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ لِأَوَّلِ الْحَشْرِ...

2. It is He who got out the Unbelievers among the People of the Book from their homes at the first gathering (of the forces).

C5369. This refers to the Jewish tribe of the Banu Nadir whose intrigues and treachery nearly undid the Muslim cause during the perilous days of the battle of Uhud in Shawwal, A.H. 3.

Four months after, in Rabi, 1. A.H. 4 steps were taken against them. They were asked to leave the strategic position which they occupied, about three miles south of Madinah, endangering the very existence of the Ummah in Madinah.

At first they demurred, relying on their fortresses and on their secret alliance with the Pagans of Makkah and the

Hypocrites of Madinah. But when the Muslim army was gathered to punish them and actually besieged them for some days, their allies stirred not a finger in their aid, and they were wise enough to leave.

Most of them joined their brethren in Syria, which they were permitted to do, after being disarmed. Some of them joined their brethren in Khaybar; see n. 3705 to 33:27.

The Banu Nadir richly deserved punishment, but their fives were spared, and they were allowed to carry away their goods and chattels.

... مَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا ...

Little did ye think that they would get out:

C5370. That is, without actual hostilities, and the shedding of precious Muslim blood.

... وَظَنُّوا أَنَّهُمْ مَانِعَتُهُمْ حُصُونُهُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ...

and they thought that their fortresses would defend them from Allah!

... فَأَتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَمْ يَحْتَسِبُوا وَقَذَفَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ ...

but the (wrath of) Allah came to them from quarters from which they little expected (it), and cast terror into their hearts,

C5371. They had played a double game. Originally they were sworn allies of the Madinah Muslims under the holy Prophet, but they secretly intrigued with the Makkah Pagans under Abu Sufyan and the Madinah Hypocrites. They even tried treacherously to take the life of the Prophet while he was on a visit to them, breaking both the laws of hospitality and their own sworn alliance.

They thought the Pagan Quraish of Makkah and the Hypocrites of Madinah would help them, but they did not help them. On the contrary the eleven days siege showed them their own helplessness. Their supplies were cut off; the exigencies of the siege necessitated the destruction of their outlying palm trees; and the unexpected turn in their fortunes disheartened them.

Their hearts were stack with terror and they capitulated.
But they laid waste their homes before they left:

see next note.

... يُخْرِبُونَ بُيُوتَهُمْ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَيْدِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ...

so that they destroyed their dwellings by their own hands and the hands of the Believers.

C5372. Their lives were spared, and they were allowed ten days in which to remove themselves, their families, and such goods as they could carry. In order to leave no habitations for the Muslims they demolished their own houses and laid waste their property, to complete the destruction which the operations of war had already caused at the hands of the besieging force of the Muslims.

... فَاعْتَبِرُوا يَا أُولِيَ الْبُصْصَارِ (٢)

Take warning, then, o ye with eyes (to see)!

وَلَوْ أَن كُنْتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجَلَاءَ لَعَذَّبَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا ...

3. And had it not been that Allah has decreed banishment for them, He would certainly have punished them in this world:

C5373. Banishment was a comparatively mild punishment for them, but the Providence of Allah had decreed that a chance should be given to them even though they were a treacherous foe.

Within two years, their brethren the Banu Qurayzah showed that they had not profited by their example, and had to be dealt with in another way:

see 33:26 and notes.

...وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابُ النَّارِ (٣)

and in the Hereafter they shall (certainly) have the Punishment of the Fire.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ...

4. That is because they resisted Allah and His Messenger:

...وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ اللَّهَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (٤)

and if anyone resists Allah, verily Allah is severe in Punishment.

C5374. The punishment of the Banu Nadir was because in breaking their plighted word with the Messenger and in actively resisting Allah's Message and supporting the enemies of that Message, they rebelled against him. For such treason and rebellion the punishment is severe, and yet in this case it was seasoned with Mercy.

مَا قَطَعْتُمْ مِّن لِّيْنَةٍ أَوْ تَرَكْتُمُوهَا قَائِمَةً عَلَىٰ أُصُولِهَا فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ...

5. Whether ye cut down (o ye Muslims!) the tender palm-trees, or ye left them standing on their roots, **it was** by leave of Allah,

C5375. The unnecessary cutting down of fruit trees or destruction of crops, or any wanton destruction whatever in war, is forbidden by the law and practice of Islam. But some destruction may be necessary for putting pressure on the enemy, and to that extent it is allowed. But as far as possible, consistently with that objective of military operations, such trees should not be cut down.

Both these principles are in accordance with the Divine Will, and were followed by the Muslims in their expedition.

...وَلِيُخْزِيَ الْفَاسِقِينَ (٥)

and in order that He might cover with shame the rebellious transgressors.

C5376. The arrogance of the Banu Nadir had to be humbled, and their power for mischief destroyed.

وَمَا آفَاءَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ مِنْهُمْ فَمَا أَوْجَفْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ خَيْلٍ وَلَا رِكَابٍ ...

6. What Allah has bestowed on His Messenger (and taken away) from them -- for this ye made no expedition with either cavalry or camelry:

C5377. Neither cavalry nor troops mounted on camels were employed in the siege. In fact the enemy surrendered at the first onset.

See 59:2, and n. 5369 above.

...وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَلِّطُ رُسُلَهُ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ...

but Allah gives power to His messengers over any He pleases:

...وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٦)

and Allah has power over all things.

C5378. Allah accomplishes His purpose in various ways, according to His wise Will and Plan. In some cases a fight is necessary. In some cases the godly attain their objective and overawe the forces of evil without actual fighting.

مَا آفَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ ...

7. What Allah has bestowed on His Messenger...

C5379. The Jews had originally come from outside Arabia, and seized on the land near Madinah. They refused to adapt themselves to the people of Arabia, and were in fact a thorn in the side of the genuine Arabs of Madinah. Their dispossession is therefore a restoration of the land to its original people.

But the word "**Fai**" is here understood in a technical sense, as meaning property abandoned by the enemy or taken from him without a formal war. In that sense it is distinguished from "**Anfal**", or spoils, taken after actual fighting, about which see 8:1 and 41.

... مِنْ أَهْلِ الْبَلَدِ ...

(and taken away) from the people of the townships,

C5380. "The people of the townships":

the townships were the Jewish settlements round Madinah, of the Banu Nadir, and possibly of other tribes.

Cf. the -townships- mentioned in [59:14](#) below.

The reference cannot be to the Wadi-ul-Qura (Valley of Towns), now Madain Salih, which was subjugated after Khaybar and Fadak in A.H. 7, unless this verse is later than the rest of the Surah.

... فَلِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ...

belongs to Allah, to His Messenger and to kindred and orphans, the needy and the wayfarer;

C5381. "Belongs to Allah": i.e., to Allah's Cause; and the beneficiaries are further detailed.

No shares are fixed; they depend upon circumstances, and are left to the Judgement of the Leader.

Compare a similar list of those entitled to Charity, in [2:177](#), but the two lists refer to different circumstances and have different beneficiaries in addition to the portion common to both.

... كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ ...

in order that it may not (Merely) make a circuit between the wealth among you.

... وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا ...

So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you.

C5381a. alternately these words may be translated: "So take what the Messenger gives you, and refrains from what he prohibits you". [Eds.]

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (٧)

And fear Allah; for Allah is strict in Punishment.

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَمْوَالِهِمْ ...

8. (Some part is due) to the indigent **Muhajirs**, those who were expelled from their homes and their property,

C5382. The **Muhajir** are those who forsook their homes and property in Makkah in order to assist the holy Prophet in his migration to Madinah (Hijrah). Their devotion and sincerity were proved beyond doubt by their self-denial, and they were now to be rewarded.

...يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا وَيَنْصُرُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ...

while seeking Grace from Allah and (His) Good pleasure, and aiding Allah and His Messenger:

...أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ (٨)

such are indeed the sincere ones -

وَالَّذِينَ تَبَوَّأُوا الدَّارَ وَالْإِيمَانَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ...

9. But those who, before them, had homes (in Madinah) and had adopted the Faith,

C5383. This refers to the Ansar (the Helpers), the people of Madinah who accepted Islam when it was persecuted in Makkah, and who invited the holy Prophet to join them and become their Leader in Madinah.

The Hijrah was possible because of their goodwill and their generous hospitality. They entertained the Prophet and all the refugees (*Muhajirs*) who came with him. The most remarkable ties of full brotherhood were established between individual members of the one group and the other. Until the Ummah got its own resources, the Helpers regularly gave and the Refugees regularly received.

The Helpers counted it a privilege to entertain the Refugees, and even the poor vied with the rich in their spirit of self-sacrifice. When the confiscated land and property of the Banu Nadir was divided, and the major portion was assigned to the refugees, there was not the least jealousy on the part of the Helpers. They rejoiced in the good fortune of their brethren. And incidentally they were themselves relieved of anxiety and responsibility on their behalf.

... يُحِبُّونَ مَنْ هَاجَرَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَا يَجِدُونَ فِي صُدُورِهِمْ حَاجَةً مِّمَّا أُوتُوا...

show their affection to such as came to them for refuge, and entertain no desire, in their hearts for things given to the (latter),

... وَيُؤْتِرُونَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَوْ كَانَ بِهِمْ خَصَاصَةٌ ...

but give them preference over themselves, even though poverty was their (own lot).

... وَمَنْ يُوقَ شَحْحَ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (٩)

And those saved from the covetousness of their own souls, they are the ones that achieve prosperity.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاءُوا مِن بَعْدِهِمْ يَقُولُونَ ...

10. And those who came after them say:

C5384. Those that came after them:

the immediate meaning would refer to later arrivals in Madinah or later accessions to Islam, compared with the early Muhajirs.

But the general meaning would include all future comers into the House of Islam.

They pray, not only for themselves, but for all their brethren, and above all, they pray that their hearts may be purified of any desire or tendency to disparage the work or virtues of other Muslims or to feel any jealousy on account of their successes or good fortune.

... رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا وَلِإِخْوَانِنَا الَّذِينَ سَبَقُونَا بِالْإِيمَانِ ...

"Our Lord!

Forgive us, and our brethren who came before us into the Faith,

... وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِي قُلُوبِنَا غِلًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا رَبَّنَا ...

and leave not, in our hearts, rancor (or sense of injury) against those who have believed our Lord!

C5385. Cf. 7:43, and n. 1021.

... إِنَّكَ رَوْوْفٌ رَّحِيمٌ (١٠)

Thou art indeed Full of Kindness, Most Merciful."

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا يَقُولُونَ لِإِخْوَانِهِمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ

الْكِتَابِ...

11. Hast thou not observed the Hypocrites say to their misbelieving brethren among the People of the Book? --

C5386. The Jews of the Banu Nadir had been assured by the Hypocrites of Madinah of their support to their cause. They had thought that their defection from the Prophet's Cause would so weaken that cause that they would save their friends. But they never intended to undertake any act involving self-sacrifice. on their part; if they had helped their Jewish friends, it was not likely that they would have succeeded; and if they had actually gone to the fight; they had neither valour nor fervour to support them, and they would have fled ignominiously before the discipline, earnestness, and Faith of the men of Islam.

... لَئِن أُخْرِجْتُمْ لَنَخْرُجَنَّ مَعَكُمْ وَلَا نُطِيعُ فِيكُمْ أَحَدًا أَبَدًا ...

"If ye are expelled, We too will go out with you, and we will never hearken to anyone in your affair;

... وَإِن قُوتِلْتُمْ لَنَنْصُرَنَّكُمْ ...

and if ye are attacked (in fight) we will help you."

... وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ (١١)

But Allah is witness that they are indeed liars.

C5387. For this actually happened. They never stirred a finger for the Jews, and they never intended to do so. And Allah knows all their motives and secrets:

cf. 47:26, n. 4850.

لَئِن أُخْرِجُوا لَّا يَخْرُجُونَ مَعَهُمْ وَلَئِن قُوتِلُوا لَّا يَنْصُرُونَهُمْ ...

12. If they are expelled, never will they go out with them;
and if they are attacked (in fight), they will never help them;

... وَلَئِن تَصَرُّوهُمْ لِيُوَلِّنَ الْأُذُنَ لَكُمْ لَّا يُنصَرُونَ (١٢)

and if they do help them, they will turn their backs; so they will receive no help.

C5388. All hopes founded on iniquity and treachery are vain and illusory. There may be honour among thieves. But there is no honour as between dishonest intriguers, and they are not likely to get any real help from any quarter.

لَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ رَهْبَةً فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ...

13. Of a truth ye are stronger (than they) because of the terror in their hearts, (sent) by Allah.

C5389. As construed here, the meaning is: "Ye Muslims, even if ye are weak numerically, or they may have other seeming advantages, ye are really stronger than they are, because they have a wholesome fear in their minds, and Allah sends such fear into the hearts of wrongdoers!"

An alternate construction would yield the meaning:

Being Unbelievers they fear you more than they fear Allah, because your valour they see, but in Allah they do not believe.

... ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ (١٣)

This is because they are men devoid of understanding.

لَّا يُفَاتِلُونَكُمْ جَمِيعًا إِلَّا فِي قُرَىٰ مُّحَصَّنَةٍ أَوْ مِنْ وَرَاءِ جُدُرٍ ...

14. They will not fight you (even) together, except in fortified townships, or from behind walls.

C5390. They have not sufficient self-confidence or élan to sustain them in a fight except under material advantages or defences. Even if they join forces, they have not sufficient trust in each other to expose themselves to open fighting.

... بِأَسْهُمٍ بَيْنَهُمْ شَدِيدٌ تَحْسِبُهُمْ جَمِيعًا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ شَتَّىٰ ...

Strong is their fighting (spirit) amongst themselves:

thou wouldst think they were united, but their hearts are divided:

C5391. 'It may be that they have a strong fighting spirit among themselves, but they have no Cause to fight for and no common objective to achieve.

The Makkan Pagans want to keep their own unjust autocracy; the Madinah Hypocrites wish for their own domination in Madinah; and the Jews want their racial superiority established over the Arabs, of whose growing union and power they are jealous.'

Their pretended alliance could not stand the strain of either a defeat or a victory. If they had been wise, they would have accepted the Cause of Unity, Faith, and Truth.

... ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْقِلُونَ (٤١)

that is because they are a people devoid of wisdom.

كَمَثَلِ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ قَرِيبًا ...

15. Like those who lately preceded them,

C5392. The immediate reference was probably to the Jewish goldsmith tribe of the Qaynuqa, who were also settled in a fortified township near Madinah. They were also punished and banished for their treachery, about a month after the battle of Badr, in which the Makkan Pagans had suffered a signal defeat, in Shawwal, A.H. 2. The Nadir evidently did not take that lesson to heart.

The general meaning is that we must learn to be on our guard against the consequences of treachery and sin. No fortuitous alliances with other men of iniquity will save us.

... ذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (١٥)

they have tasted the evil result of their conduct, and (in the Hereafter there is) for them a grievous Penalty --

كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ ...

16. (Their allies deceived them), like the Evil One, when he says to man, "Deny Allah;"

... فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ (١٦)

but when (man) denies Allah, (the Evil One) says,

"I am free of thee: I do fear Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!"

C5393. An apt simile.

Evil tempts man in all sort of ways, and presents seductive promises and alliances to delude him into the belief that he will be saved from the consequences. Satan says, "**Deny Allah**": which means not merely denial in words, but denial in acts, disobedience of Allah's Law, deviation from the path of rectitude.

When the sinner gets well into the mire, Satan says cynically: "How can I help you against Allah? Don't you see I am afraid of Him? All our alliances and understandings were moonshine. You must bear the consequences of your own folly."

فَكَانَ عَاقِبَتُهُمَا أَنَّهُمَا فِي النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا...

17. The end of both will be that they will go into the Fire, dwelling therein for ever.

... وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ (١٧)

Such is the reward of wrongdoers.

Section 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ...

18. O ye who believe! Fear Allah,

C5394. The "fear of Allah" is akin to love; for it means the fear of offending Him or doing anything wrong that will forfeit His Good Pleasure. This is Taqwa, which implies self restraint, guarding ourselves from all sin, wrong, and injustice, and the positive doing of good.

See 2:2, and n.26.

... وَلنتنظرُ نفسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ لِغَدٍ ...

and let every soul look to what (provision) he has sent forth for the morrow.

C5395. The positive side of Taqwa, or "fear of Allah" (see last note) is here emphasised.

It is not merely a feeling or an emotion: it is an act, a doing of things which become a preparation and provision for the Hereafter,-the next life, which may be described as "the morrow" in relation to the present Life, which is "to-day".

... وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (١٨)

Yea, fear Allah: for Allah is well-acquainted with (all) they ye do.

C5395a. The repetition emphasises both sides of Taqwa: "let your soul fear to do wrong and let it do every act of righteousness; for Allah observes both your inner motives and your acts, and in His scheme of things everything will have its due consequences."

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَأَنْسَاهُمْ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ...

19. And be ye not like those who forget Allah; and He made them forget their own souls!

C5396. To forget Allah is to forget the only Eternal Reality.

As we are only reflected realities, how can we understand or do justice to or remember ourselves, when we forget the very source of our being? (R).

... أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (١٩)

such are the rebellious transgressors!

لَا يَسْتَوِي أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ وَأَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ ...

20. Not equal are the Companions of the Fire and the Companions of the Garden:

... أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ (٢٠)

it is the Companions of the Garden that will achieve Felicity.

C5397. The others, the Companions of the Fire, will find their lives wasted and nullified. Their capacities will be rendered inert and their wishes will end in futility.

لَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ عَلَى جَبَلٍ ...

21. Had We sent down this Qur'án on a mountain

C5398. There are two ideas associated in men's minds with a mountain:

- one is its height,
- and the other that it is rocky, stony, hard, Now comes the metaphor.

The Revelation of Allah is so sublime that even the highest mountains humble themselves before it. The Revelation is so powerful and convincing that even the hard rock splits asunder under it.

Will man then be so arrogant as to consider himself superior to it, or so hard-hearted as not to be affected by its powerful Message?

The answer is

"No" for unspoilt man;

"Yes" for man when degraded by sin to be the vilest of creatures.

... لَرَأَيْتَهُ خَاشِعًا مُتَصَدَّعًا مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ ...

.. verily, thou would have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of Allah,

C5399. Cf. 7:143, and n. 1103, where, in the story of Moses, the Mount became as dust "when the Lord manifested His Glory".

Also cf. 33:72, and n. 3778, where the mountains are mentioned as an emblem of stability, but as refusing to accept the Trust (*Amanat*) because they felt themselves to be too humble to be equal to such a tremendous Trust. (R).

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (٢١)

such are the similitudes which We propound to men, that they may reflect.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ...

22. Allah is He, than whom there is no other god --

C5400. Here follows a passage of great sublimity, summing up the attributes of Allah.

In this verse, we have the general attributes, which give us the fundamental basis on which we can form some idea of Allah. We start with the proposition that there is nothing else like Him. We think of His Unity; all the varying and conflicting forces in Creation are controlled by Him and look to Him, and we can never get a true idea of Him unless we understand the meaning of Unity.

His knowledge extends to everything seen and unseen, present and future, near and far, in being and not in being: in fact these contrasts, which apply to our knowledge, do not apply to Him.

His Grace and His Mercy are unbounded: see 1:1, and n. 19; and unless we realise these, we can have no true conception of our position in the working of His Will and Plan. (R).

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ (٢٢)

Who knows (all things) both secret and open;
He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

هُوَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ...

23. Allah is He, than whom there is no other god --

C5401. This phrase is repeated from the last verse in order to lead us to the contemplation of some other attributes of Allah, after we have realized those which form our fundamental conceptions of Allah.

See the preceding and the following note.

... الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ السَّلَامِ الْمُؤْمِنِ الْمُهَيْمِنِ ...

- the sovereign,
- the Holy One,
- the Source of Peace (and Perfection).

- The Guardian of Faith,
- the Preserver of Safety,

C5402. How can a translator reproduce the sublimity and the comprehensiveness of the magnificent Arabic words, which mean so much in a single symbol?

1. **"The Sovereign"** in our human language implies the one undisputed authority which is entitled to give commands and to receive obedience, and which in fact receives obedience; the power which enforces law and justice.
2. Human authority may be misused, but in the title **"the Holy One"**, we postulate a Being free from all stain or evil, and replete with the highest Purity.
3. **"Salam"** has not only the idea of Peace as opposed to Conflict, but wholeness as opposed to defects: hence our paraphrase "Source of Peace and Perfection".
4. **Ma-min**, one who entertains Faith, who gives Faith to others, who is never false to the Faith that others place in him: hence our paraphrase "Guardian of Faith:.
5. **"Preserver of Safety"**; guarding all from danger, corruption, loss, etc.; the word is used for the Quran in 5:48.

These are the attributes of kindness and benevolence: in the next note are described the attributes of power.

... العَزِيزُ الْجَبَّارُ الْمُتَكَبِّرُ ...

- the Exalted in Might,
- the Irresistible,
- the Supreme:

C5403. See last note.

6. Allah is not only good, but He can carry out His Will.
7. And if anything resists or opposes Him, His Will prevails.

8. For He is Supreme, above all things and creatures.

Thus we come back to the Unity with which we began in verse 22.

... سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (٢٣)

Glory to Allah! (high is He) **above the partners** they attribute to Him.

C5404. Such being Allah's attributes of Goodness and Power, how foolish is it of men to worship anything else but Him?

Who can approach His glory and goodness?

هُوَ اللَّهُ الْخَالِقُ ...

24. He is Allah,

- the Creator,

C5405. Allah's attributes of Goodness and Power having been referred to, we are now told of His creative energy, of which three aspects are here mentioned, as explained in the following note. The point is emphasised that He does not merely create and leave alone; He goes on fashioning, evolving new forms and colours, and sustaining all the energies and capacities which He has put into His Creation, according to various laws which He has established.

... الْبَارِئُ الْمُصَوِّرُ

- the Evolver,

- the Bestower of Forms (or colors).

C5406. The act or acts of creation have various aspects, and the various words used in this connection are summarized in n. 120 to 2:117, as supplemented by n. 916 to 6:94 and n. 923 to 6:98.

Khalaqa is the general term for creation, and the Author of all Creation is **Khaliq**.

Baraa implies a process of evolving from previously created matter or state; the Author of this process is **Bariu**, the Originator.

Sawwara implies giving definite form or colour, so as to make a thing exactly suited to a given end or object: hence the title **Musawwir**, Fashioner for this shows the completion of the visible stage of creation.

.. لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَى...

To Him belong the Most Beautiful Names:

C5407. Cf. 7:180, n. 1154; and 17:110, n. 2322.

... يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...

Whatever is in the heavens and on earth, doth declare His Praises and Glory:

C5408. Thus the argument of the Sura is rounded off on the same note as was struck at the beginning 59:1.

The first verse and the last verse of the Surah are the same, except as regards the tense of the verb **sabbaha**.

In the first verse it is the optative form of the preterite **sabbaha**: everything declares the Glory of Allah! After the illustrations given, the declaratory form of the aorist is appropriate, **yusabbihu**: "everything doth declare the Glory of Allah'.

... وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (٢٤)

and He is the exalted in Might, the Wise.