



الْبَقْرَةَ Al-Baqarah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

Name

Al-Baqarah (the Cow) has been so named from the story of the cow occurring in this Surah (Ayats 67-73). It has not, however, been used as a title to indicate the subject of the Surah. It will, therefore, be as wrong to translate the name *Al-Baqarah* into “The Cow” or “The Heifer” as to translate any English names into their equivalents in other languages or vice versa. This would imply that the Surah dealt with the subject of “The Cow”. Many more Surahs of the Quran have been named in a similar way because no comprehensive words exist in Arabic (in spite of its richness) to denote the wide scope of the subjects discussed in them. As a matter of fact, all human languages suffer from the same limitation.

Sequence

Though it is a Madani Surah, it follows naturally a Makki Surah *Al-Fatihah*, which ended with the prayer: “Show us the straight path.” It begins with the answer to that prayer, “This is the Book (that)...is a guidance.”

The greater part of *Al-Baqarah* was revealed during the

first two years of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life at Al-Madinah. The smaller part which was revealed at a later period has been included in this Surah because its contents are closely related to those dealt with in this Surah. For instance, the verses prohibiting interest were revealed during the last period of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life but have been inserted in this Surah. For the same reason, the last verses (284-286) of this Surah which were revealed at Makkah before the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Al-Madinah have also been included in it.

Historical Background

In order to understand the meaning of this Surah, we should know its historical background:

1. At Makkah the Quran generally addressed the mushrik Quraish who were ignorant of Islam, but at Al-Madinah it was also concerned with the Jews who were acquainted with the creed of the Unity of Allah, prophethood, revelation, the Hereafter and Angels. They also professed to believe in the law which was revealed by Allah to their prophet Moses (peace be upon him), and in principle, their way was the same (Islam) that was being taught by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). But they had strayed away from it during the centuries of degeneration and had adopted many un-Islamic creeds, rites and customs of which there was no mention and for which there was no sanction in the Torah. Not only this: they had tampered with the Torah by inserting their own explanations and interpretations into its text. They had distorted even that

part of the word of God which had remained intact in their Scriptures, and they taken out of it the real spirit of true religion, and were now clinging to a lifeless frame of rituals. Consequently their beliefs, their morals and their conduct had gone to the lowest depths of degeneration. The pity is that they were not only satisfied with their condition but loved to cling to it. Besides this, they had no intention or inclination to accept any kind of reform. So they became bitter enemies of those who came to teach them the right way and did their best to defeat every such effort. Though they were originally Muslims, they had swerved from the real Islam and made innovations and alterations in it and had fallen victims to hair splitting and sectarianism. They had forgotten and forsaken Allah and begun to serve mammon. So much so that they had even given up their original name "Muslim" and adopted the name "Jew" instead, and made religion the sole monopoly of the children of Israel.

This was their religious condition when the Prophet (peace be upon him) went to Al-Madinah and invited the Jews to the true religion. That is why more than one third of this Surah has been addressed to the children of Israel. A critical review of their history, their moral degeneration and their religious perversions has been made. Side by side, with this, the high standard of morality and the fundamental principles of the pure religion have been put forward in order to bring out clearly the nature of the degeneration of the community of a prophet when it goes astray. This was to draw clear lines of demarcation between

real piety and formalism, and the essentials and non-essentials of the true religion.

2. At Makkah Islam was mainly concerned with the propagation of its fundamental principles and the moral training of its followers. But after the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Al-Madinah, where Muslims had come to settle from all over Arabia and where a tiny Islamic state had been set up with the help of the Ansar (local supporters), naturally the Quran had to turn its attention to the social, cultural, economic, political and legal problems as well. This accounts for the difference between the themes of the Surahs revealed at Makkah and those at Al-Madinah. Accordingly about half of this Surah deals with those principles and regulations which are essential for the integration and solidarity of a community and for the solution of its problems.

3. After the migration to Al-Madinah, the struggle between Islam and un-Islam had also entered a new phase. Before this the believers, who propagated Islam among their own clans and tribes, had to face its opponents at their own risk. But the conditions had changed at Al-Madinah, where Muslims from all parts of Arabia had come and settled as one community, and had established an independent city state. Here it became a struggle for the survival of the community itself, for the whole of non-Muslim Arabia was bent upon and united in crushing it totally. Hence the following instructions, upon which depended not only its success but its very survival, were revealed in this Surah:

- a. The Community should work with the utmost zeal to propagate its ideology and win over to its side the greatest possible number of people;
- b. It should so expose its opponents as to leave no room for doubt in the mind of any sensible person that they were adhering to an absolutely wrong position;
- c. It should infuse in its members (the majority of whom were homeless and indigent and surrounded on all sides by enemies) that courage and fortitude which is so indispensable to their very existence in the adverse circumstances in which they were struggling and to prepare them to face these boldly;
- d. It should also keep them ready and prepared to meet any armed menace, which might come from any side to suppress and crush their ideology, and to oppose it without minding the overwhelming numerical strength and the material resources of its enemies;
- e. It should also create in them that courage which is needed for the eradication of evil ways and for the establishment of the Islamic way instead.

That is why Allah has revealed in this Surah such instructions as may help achieve all the above mentioned objects.

4. During this period, a new type of Muslims called “*munafiqin*” (hypocrites) had begun to appear. Though signs of duplicity had been noticed during the last days at Makkah, they took a different shape at Al-Madinah. At Makkah there were some people who professed Islam to be true but were not prepared to abide by the consequences of

this profession and to sacrifice their worldly interests and relations and bear the afflictions which inevitably follow the acceptance of this creed. But at Al-Madinah different kinds of *munafiqin* (hypocrites) began to appear. There were some who had entered the Islamic fold merely to harm it from within. There were others who were surrounded by Muslims and, therefore, had become Muslims to safeguard their worldly interests. They, therefore, continued to have relations with the enemies so that if the latter became successful, their interests should remain secure. There were still others who had no strong conviction of the truth of Islam but had embraced it along with their clans. Lastly, there were those who were intellectually convinced of the truth of Islam but did not have enough moral courage to give up their former traditions, superstitions and personal ambitions and live up to the Islamic moral standards and make sacrifice in its way.

At the time of the revelation of *Al-Baqarah*, all sorts of hypocrites had begun to appear. Allah has, therefore, briefly pointed out their characteristics here. Afterwards when their evil characteristics and mischievous deeds became manifest, Allah sent detailed instructions about them.

Theme: Guidance

This Surah is an invitation to the divine guidance and all the stories, incidents etc. revolve around this central theme. As this Surah has particularly been addressed to the Jews, many historical events have been cited from their own

traditions to admonish and advise them that their own good lies in accepting the guidance revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him). They should, therefore, be the first to accept it because it was basically the same message that was revealed to Prophet Moses (peace be upon him).

Topics and their Interconnection

Ayats 1-20. These introductory verses declare the Quran to be the Book of guidance: enunciate the articles of the faith (belief) in Allah, prophethood and life-after-death; divide mankind into three main groups with regard to its acceptance or rejection, believers, disbelievers and hypocrites.

Ayats 21-29. Allah invites mankind to accept the guidance voluntarily and to submit to Him, the Lord and the Creator of the universe, and to believe in the Quran, His guidance, and in the life-after-death.

Ayats 30-39. The story of the appointment of Adam as Allah's vicegerent on earth, of his life in the garden, of his falling a prey to the temptations of Satan, of his repentance and its acceptance, has been related to show to mankind (Adam's offspring) that the only right thing for them is to accept and follow the guidance. This story also shows that the guidance of Islam is the same that was given to Adam and that it is the original religion of mankind.

Ayats 40-120. In this portion invitation to the guidance has particularly been extended to the children of Israel and their past and present attitude has been criticized to show that the cause of their degradation was their deviation from the guidance.

Ayats 121-141. The Jews have been exhorted to follow Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who had come with the same guidance and who was a descendant and follower of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) whom they highly honored as their ancestor, and professed to follow as a prophet. The story of building of the Kaabah by him has been mentioned because it was going to be made the qiblah of the Muslim community.

Ayats 142-152. In this portion, the declaration of the change of qiblah from the Temple (Jerusalem) to the Kaabah (Makkah) has been made as a symbol of the change of leadership from the children of Israel to the Muslim community, which has also been fore-warned to guard against those transgressions against the guidance that had led to the deposition of the Jews.

Ayats 153-251. In this portion practical measures have been prescribed to enable the Muslims to discharge the heavy responsibilities of the leadership that had been entrusted to them for the promulgation of guidance. Salat, fasting, Zakat, Hajj and Jihad have been prescribed for the moral training of the *ummat* (Muslim community). The believers have been exhorted to obey authority, to be just, to fulfill pledges, to observe treaties, to spend wealth etc. in the Way of Allah. Laws, rules and regulations have been laid down for their organization, cohesion and conduct of daily life and for the solution of social, economic, political and international problems. On the other hand, drinking, gambling, lending money on interest etc. have been prohibited to keep the *ummat* safe from disintegration. In

between these, the basic articles of the faith have been reiterated at suitable places, for these alone can enable and support one to stick to the guidance.

Ayats 252-260. These verses serve as an introduction to the prohibition of lending money on interest. The true conception of Allah, revelation, and life-after-death have been emphasized to keep alive the sense of accountability. The stories of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and of the one who woke up after a sleep of hundred years have been related to show that Allah is All-Powerful and is able to raise the dead and call them to account. The believers, therefore, should keep this fact in view and refrain from taking interest on money.

Ayats 261-283. The earlier theme has been resumed and the believers have been exhorted to spend in the Way of Allah in order to please Him alone. In contrast to this, they have been warned against the evils of lending money on interest. Instructions have also been given for the honest conduct of day-to-day business transactions.

Ayats 284-286. The basic articles of the faith have been recapitulated here at the end of the Surah, just as they were enunciated at its beginning. Then the Surah ends with a prayer which the Muslim community needed very much at that time when they were encountering untold hardships in the propagation of the guidance.

1. Alif. Lam. Mim.*¹



*¹ Letters of the Arabic alphabet like Alif, Lam, Mim, called the *muqattaat*, which are prefixed to a number of the

Surahs of the Quran, were in common use in the Arabic literature of the period when the Quran was revealed. The poets and rhetoricians made use of this style. Instances of this can even be found in the pre-Islamic prose and poetry which has survived. As their significance was appreciated by all concerned, none objected to or questioned their use, because it was no enigma to them. Even the bitterest opponents of the Quran, who never missed an opportunity, did not raise any objection against their use. But as their use was abandoned with the passage of time, it became difficult for the commentators to determine their exact meaning and significance. An ordinary reader, however, need not worry about their meanings because they make no difference as far as the guidance of the Quran is concerned.

2. This is the Book about which there is no doubt,^{*2} a guidance for those who fear (Allah).^{*3}

ذَٰلِكَ ٱلْكِتَٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ ۚ فِيهِ
هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢﴾

^{*2} Its simple meaning is: “No doubt, this is the Book of Allah”, but it may also imply that this is the Book which contains nothing doubtful. It is not like the common books on metaphysics and religion which are based on mere speculation and guess work. Therefore even their authors cannot be free from doubts concerning their own theories, in spite of their assertion that they are convinced of them. In contrast to them, this Book is based on the truth: its Author is He who possesses full knowledge of the reality. Therefore, there is indeed no room for doubt about its contents.

***3** That is, though there is nothing but guidance in this Book, there are a few pre-requisites for benefiting from it. The first pre-requisite is that one should be inclined to avoid vice, and should seek and practice virtue. But there is no guidance in the Quran for the people who do not bother to consider whether what they are doing is right or wrong, who follow the ways of the world, or their own whims and lusts, or move aimlessly in the ways of life.

3. Those who believe in the unseen,^{*4} and establish prayer,^{*5} and spend out of what We have provided for them.^{*6}

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ



***4** The second condition for obtaining guidance from the Quran is that one must believe in the unseen, those realities which cannot be perceived by the senses and which do not come within human experience and observation, e.g. the essence and attributes of Allah, Angels, Revelation, Heaven, Hell, etc. These things must be taken on trust from the experts (Prophets) just as we do in many cases in the physical world. Therefore, only such a person, who believes in the unseen, can benefit from the guidance of the Quran. As for the one who believes only in those things which can be seen, tasted and smelled, or can be measured and weighed, cannot get any guidance from this Book.

***5** The third condition to benefit from the Quran is that one should be willing and ready to put into practice the teachings of the Quran. As the Salat (prayer) is the first

and foremost obligatory duty enjoined by the Quran. It is the practical proof and permanent test of the sincerity of one's faith. Therefore, after a person's profession of Islam, the moment he hears the call to the prayer (which sounds regularly five times a day from every mosque in the Muslim world), he should join the congregation for the Salat, because this determines whether he is sincere in his profession or not. If he does not attend to the call and does not join the congregation, it is an indication that he is not sincere in his profession. It must also be noted that *iqama-tus-salat* (the establishment of prayer) is the comprehensive term. It means that Salat should be performed in congregation and that permanent arrangements should be made for it in every habitation; otherwise Salat will not be considered to have been established, even if every inhabitant of a place offers the Salat individually.

*6 The fourth condition to benefit from the Quran is that one should be willing to part with one's money according to the instructions of the Book in order to render the rights of Allah and man and should make monetary sacrifices for the cause of Islam which he has accepted.

4. And those who believe in that which has been revealed to you (Muhammad) and that which was revealed before you,^{*7} and they are certain of the Hereafter.^{*8}

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ
وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ
هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

*7 The fifth condition is that one should believe in the truth of all those Books which Allah sent down by revelation to

the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Prophets (peace be upon them) before him at different times in different countries. Those who do not believe in any kind of guidance from Allah, cannot at all benefit from the guidance of the Quran. Likewise those who profess to believe in the necessity of guidance from Allah but do not turn to revelation and the prophets for it, or who dub their own theories as divine light, cannot obtain any guidance from it. Moreover, guidance is also denied to those who believe only in that revealed Book or Books in which their forefathers believed and reject all other guidance received from the same source. Apart from all such people, the Quran guides only those who believe that they stand in need of divine guidance as well as admit that it does not come to every man individually, but reaches humanity only through the prophets and revealed Books. Then those who want guidance should not be slaves to any racial or national prejudices but should be seekers after truth and should submit to it wherever and in whatever form they find it.

***8** This is the sixth and last condition. Hereafter is a comprehensive word which applies to the collection of many beliefs, which are as follows: (a) Man has not been created irresponsible in the world but he is answerable to Allah for all his deeds here; (b) The present world order is not everlasting, but has to come to an end at a time only known to Allah; (c) After the present order has been brought to an end, Allah will create a new world, when He will bring back to life all human beings, born from the beginning of creation till resurrection, simultaneously and

will call them to account for their deeds, and then will reward them justly according to what they had done in the world; (d) Those, who will be judged as good by Allah, will go to Paradise, and those who will be judged as bad will be cast into Hell; (e) The criterion of success or failure is not the prosperity or adversity of this worldly life, but successful in actual fact will be he who comes out successful in Allah's final judgment, and a failure for him who is a failure there. Those who do not believe, in the life-after-death with the above implications, cannot benefit from the Quran because the one who entertains even the slightest doubt about these, not to speak of rejecting them, can never follow the way of life which the Quran prescribes.

5. Those are on guidance from their Lord. And those, they are the successful.

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ
وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

6. Certainly, those who disbelieve,^{*9} it is the same to them whether you (O Muhammad) warn them, or do not warn them, they will not believe.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ

*9 That is, they refused to believe and fulfill all or any of the above mentioned six conditions.

7. Allah has set a seal upon their hearts, and upon their hearing, and on their eyes there is a

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ
سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ

covering.*¹⁰ And for them is a great punishment.

غَشَوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ



*10 It does not mean that Allah had sealed up their hearts, so they refused to believe. But it means that when they rejected the above mentioned prerequisites of belief and chose and adopted for themselves a way contrary to the one presented by the Quran, Allah sealed up their hearts and ears. The Quran simply states a law of nature: if one takes a biased view of something and deliberately nourishes prejudices against it in his mind, he can neither see any virtue in it, nor hear anything in its favor, nor open his heart to consider it dispassionately. This is the law of nature and, as it is Allah's law, the act of sealing up of the hearts and the ears and the covering of the eyes has been attributed to Him.

8. And among mankind there are some who say: "We believe in Allah and in the Last Day," while they are not believers.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَيَوْمَ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ



9. They deceive Allah and those who believe, and they do not deceive except themselves, and they do not perceive (it).^{*11}

يُخَدِّعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخَدِّعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ



*11 They deceive themselves by imagining that their

duplicity will safeguard their interests but obviously their policy will prove harmful in this world as well as in the next. A hypocrite might succeed in deceiving some people for some time but he cannot deceive all people for all times. When such a person is exposed, he loses all honor once and for all. As to the Hereafter, mere lip service will carry no weight there because it is deeds alone that matter there.

10. In their hearts is a disease, then Allah increased their disease.*12 And for them is a painful punishment because they used to lie.

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ
مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا
كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

*12 “A disease”: the disease of hypocrisy; and “Allah increased their disease” means that He does not punish the hypocrites for their hypocrisy immediately, but gives them respite so that when their duplicity appears to succeed apparently they become more and more convinced of its efficiency and they go on becoming more and more hypocritical in their attitude and conduct.

11. And when it is said to them: “Do not cause corruption on the earth,” they say: “We are only reformers.”

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي
الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾

12. Beware, it is indeed they who are the corruptors, but they do not perceive (it).

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن
لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

13. And when it is said to them: “Believe as the people have believed,”^{*13} they say: “Should we believe as the foolish have believed.”^{*14} Beware, it is they who are the foolish, but they do not know (it).

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا كَمَا ءَامَنَ
النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا ءَامَنَ
السُّفَهَاءُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ
وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

***13** That is, “Just as the other people of your nation have accepted Islam truly and sincerely, so should you also accept it truly and honestly, if you profess to accept it”.

***14** They regarded as fools the people who had accepted Islam sincerely and exposed themselves to troubles, hardships, and dangers. In their opinion it was nothing but foolishness to earn the hostility of the whole country merely for the sake of truth and righteousness. They considered it wisdom not to bother about the right and the wrong at all but to look only after one’s own interests.

14. And when they meet those who believe, they say: “We believe,” and when they are alone with their evil ones,^{*15} they say: “Indeed we are with you, we were only mocking.”

وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامِنُوا قَالُوا
ءَامِنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيْطَانِهِمْ
قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
مُسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

***15** Shayatin, plural of Shaitan, is an insurgent, haughty and devilish person, or an evil genius. This word is used both for the men and the jinn. Though it has mostly been used in the Quran for the jinn devils, in some places it has

also been applied to human devils, and from the context it can easily be judged where it refers to human and where to jinn devils. Here it refers to the Arab chiefs who were in the forefront in their opposition to Islam.

15. Allah (Himself) mocks at them, and He prolongs them in their transgression, (while) they wander blindly.

اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

16. It is those who purchased error for guidance, so their transaction has brought no profit, nor were they guided.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَنَحَتْ تُجْرَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

17. Their example is as the example of him who kindled a fire, then when it lighted all around him, Allah took away their light and left them in darkness, (so) they could not see.^{*16}

مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلْمَةٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

*16 The parable means that when a person, Muhammad (peace be upon him), spread the light of truth that discriminated right from wrong and virtue from vice, those who used their faculties properly began to distinguish between these things. But the hypocrites, who were blinded by self-interest, could not see the right path even with the help of this light. "Allah took away their light", should not

cause one the misunderstanding that the responsibility of not seeing the truth did not lie on them. Allah deprives of the sight only him who is not himself a seeker after truth, who chooses error for himself instead of guidance, who shuts his eyes to the truth. When they themselves turned away from the light of truth and chose to wander only in the darkness of falsehood, Allah also let them go astray.

18. Deaf, dumb, blind,^{*17} so they will not return (to right path).

صُمُّ بَكْمٌ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ



*17 “Deaf” to hear the truth, “dumb” to speak the truth and “blind” to see the truth.

19. Or like a rainstorm from the sky, wherein is darkness, and thunder, and lightning. They thrust their fingers in their ears against the thunderclaps, for fear of death. And Allah is encompassing the disbelievers.^{*18}

أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصْبِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِّنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ



*18 By thrusting their fingers into their ears, they delude themselves for a while that they have escaped destruction. But they cannot, in fact, save themselves because Allah, with all His powers, is encircling them on all sides.

20. The lightning almost snatches away their sight.

يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ تَخْطَفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ

whenever it lights up (the way) for them, they walk therein. And when darkness comes upon them, they stand still.*¹⁹ And if Allah willed, He could have taken away their hearing,*²⁰ and their sight. Certainly, Allah has power over all things.

كَلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا
أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ
إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ



***19** The first parable depicts those hypocrites who in their inmost hearts did not believe in Islam at all, but had become Muslims for the sake of self-interest or expediency. The second parable gives a description of those hypocrites who were suffering from doubt, suspicion and lack of faith. Though they were not entirely unbelievers, they practiced Islam only to the extent which might not involve them in trouble. In this parable rainfall stands for Islam which came as a blessing to humanity; pitch darkness, thunder and lightning stand for the impending obstacles, the threatening dangers and the glaring difficulties which were being experienced on account of the strong resistance from the opponents of Islam. When the situation eased a little, they began to move onward on the path of Islam, but when the clouds of difficulties began to appear, or when they were given such commands as were against their self-interest or their superstitious beliefs and prejudices, they again stood still in sheer perplexity.

***20** That is, Allah could, if He so willed, totally deprive these hypocrites also of the power to see the truth just as He

deprived the hypocrites described in the first parable. But Allah does not do so because it is His will to give them respite to see the truth and hear the truth to the extent they want to see and hear it. That is why He left them with only as much power as they made use of in seeing and hearing the truth.

21. O mankind,^{*21}
 worship your Lord, who
 created you and those
 before you, so that you
 may become righteous.^{*22}

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ
 الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

***21** Though the Quran invites all human beings to its message, to benefit or not to benefit from it depends on whether the people are really willing and inclined to benefit from it and on Allah's grace accordingly. Therefore, in the preceding verses distinction has been made between the people to show as to which of them can benefit from the guidance of this Book and which cannot. Now, the actual message for which the Quran was revealed is presented before all mankind.

***22** From errors of judgment and action in the world and from the punishment of God in the Hereafter.

22. He who made the earth
 a resting place for you,
 and the sky a canopy, and
 He sent down water (rain)
 from the sky, then brought
 forth thereby of the fruits

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا
 وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
 مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ

as provision for you. So do not attribute equals to Allah, while you know (it).^{*23}

رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أُندَادًا
وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ



***23** That is, when you yourselves admit and acknowledge that all this has been done only by Allah, then you should serve and worship Him alone. “So do not attribute equals to Allah” means to hold others besides Allah as worthy of some kind of service and worship. As will be explained by the Quran below, there are certain kinds of worship which should exclusively be performed for the sake of Allah; associating others with these is the shirk for the eradication of which the Quran was sent down.

23. And if you are in doubt about that which We sent down (the Quran) to Our servant (Muhammad), then produce a Surah the like thereof,^{*24} and call your witnesses besides Allah if you are truthful.

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّمَّا نَزَّلْنَا
عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِّنْ
مِّثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِّنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ



***24** This challenge had been given several times in the Quran at Makkah. It was meant to convince the opponents that the Quran is divine word and could not be produced by human mind. Now it was reiterated at Al-Madinah. See Yunus: Ayats 38-39, Hud: Ayats 13-14, Bani-Israel: Ayat 88, At-Tur: Ayats 33-34.

24. So if you do not, and you can never do (it), then fear the Fire, that whose fuel is people and stones, prepared for the disbelievers.*25

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا
فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا
النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ



*25 The allusion means: You alone will not become fuel for Hell, but the idols of stone which you worship as deities in the world, will also be there with you to show that they had no share whatever in Godhead.

25. And give good tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds, that for them are Gardens underneath which rivers flow. Whenever they are provided there from with a provision of fruit, they will say: "This is what we were provided with before,"*26 and they will be given this in resemblance. And for them will be therein pure companions.*27 And they will abide therein forever.

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ
رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَبِهًا
وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



*26 It will be a pleasant surprise for the dwellers of

Paradise to have fruits just like the ones with which they were familiar on the earth. Of course, they will be much more delicious. For instance, they will be like mangoes, pomegranates, oranges, etc., in shape and color and the dwellers of Paradise will at once recognize them as such but they will be infinitely more delicious than the mangoes, pomegranates and oranges of the world.

*27 The word *azwaj* (sing. *zauj*) as used in the original is used both for the husband and for the wife: the wife is *zauj* for the husband, and the husband is *zauj* for the wife. In Paradise the spouses will be joined on the basis of piety. For instance, if a certain man lived a pious life in this world, but his wife did not, their marriage will be dissolved in the Hereafter, and the pious man will be united with another pious woman whose marriage had similarly been dissolved and so on. But if both the husband and the wife led pious lives here, they will continue to live as husband and wife forever in Paradise.

26. Certainly, Allah disdains not to describe the example of that of a mosquito, or of that even more insignificant than this.*28 So as for those who believe, they know that this is the truth from their Lord. And as for those who disbelieve, they say: “What did Allah intend by this as an example.”*29 He misleads

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ
مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةً فَمَا فَوْقَهَا
فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ
أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ
اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ

many thereby, and He guides many thereby.^{*30} And He misleads not thereby except those who are disobedient.

كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا
يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

***28** Here an objection has been answered without making a mention of it. The objection was that if the Quran had been the Book of Allah, it would not have adduced illustrations from such insignificant things as gnats, spiders, ants, bees, etc.

***29** Those people who do not want to understand the reality and do not seek the truth, get entangled in the words of such similitude, draw wrong conclusions and go astray from the truth on account of their own perversion. On the contrary, the seekers of the truth, who are possessed of insight, ponder over the wisdom contained in them and are convinced that these sublime things can only be from Allah.

***30** “Fasiq”: disobedient, the one who transgresses the bounds set by Allah.

27. Those who break the covenant of Allah after ratifying it,^{*31} and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined,^{*32} and they cause corruption on the earth.^{*33} It is those who are the losers.

الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ
اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوَصَلَ
وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ
أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

***31** The edicts or instructions issued by a sovereign to his subjects are called *ahd* according to the Arabic idiom, because they are obligatory on them. In this verse the word *ahd* has been used in the same sense. Allah's *ahd* is His standing command to mankind to submit to Him, to obey Him and worship Him alone. The ratification of the same refers to the covenant to which the whole of mankind agreed at the creation of Adam: it was that they would submit to Allah. (See Al-Aaraf: Ayat 172).

***32** That is, these people break off the relations which Allah has enjoined to be established, and upon the establishment and strength of which depends man's individual and collective well being. This concise sentence is so vast in meaning that it covers the whole of the moral world, ranging from relations between two persons to international relations. "Breaking off relations" not only implies violation of human relations but it also implies abuse of relations in any way, because the result will be the same if and when these relations are not observed rightly and properly. The Quran, therefore, abhors not only their violation but also their abuse as it causes chaos, conflict, and disorder in the world.

***33** In these sentences the full definition of *fasiq* has been given: he is one who breaks off or violates relations between man and Allah or between man and man, and thus produces chaos on the earth.

28. How can you disbelieve in Allah when you were dead, and He gave you life.

كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ
أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ

Then He will give you death, then (again) He will bring you to life, then to Him you will be returned.

ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ



29. He it is who created for you all that is on the earth. Then turned He to the heaven, and made them seven heavens.*³⁴ And He is the All knower of every thing.*³⁵

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَىٰ
السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ
وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



***34** It is not easy to determine the significance of the seven heavens. In every age man has been formulating different theories about the heaven and the expanse of space surrounding the earth and beyond it according to his observations and speculations, which have been always changing. Hence it will not be correct to link anyone of these with the seven heavens referred to in the Quran. It may either mean that God has divided the whole universe beyond the earth into seven permanent spheres, or that the part of the universe in which the earth lies consists of seven spheres.

***35** Here, the people have been warned of two things. First, that they cannot, and should not, adopt an attitude of disbelief and rebellion against Allah, who knows everything and from whom nothing that one does remains hidden. Second, that the God who knows everything is, in fact, the source of true knowledge. Anyone who turns away from

Him, will surely go astray into the darkness of ignorance. When none beside Him is the source of knowledge, and none beside Him can provide the light by which one may walk one's way of life, what is then the good of turning away from Him.

30. And^{*36} when your Lord said to the angels:^{*37} "Indeed, I will make a vicegerent^{*38} upon the earth." They said: "Will you place upon it one who will cause corruption therein, and will shed blood,^{*39} while we glorify Your praise and sanctify You."^{*40} He said: "Surely, I know that which you do not know."^{*41}

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً^ط قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

***36** In the foregoing verses, man has been asked to submit to Allah because He is his Creator and Sustainer and has power over his life and death, and because He is the Master and Ruler of the universe in which he lives. In these verses, he has been exhorted to submit to Him because he is His vicegerent on the earth. As such, he is not only bound to serve Him but also to obey and act according to the guidance sent down by Him. For, if he did not do so and yielded to the temptations of Satan, his eternal enemy, he would be guilty of the worst crime of rebellion against Allah and meet with evil consequences. Incidentally, the

Quran here throws light on the truth about man and his correct position in the universe and presents the chapter of human history, which man could not have ascertained in any other way. The important results that this chapter yields, are far more precious than the results which man tries to obtain by excavating miscellaneous bones from the earth and joining them together by speculation and conjecture.

***37** *Malak*: literally means a messenger, which is translated *farishta* (angel). Angels are not mere abstract powers without personality; they are beings with personalities and are so to speak the agents of Allah, who employs them for the administration of His Kingdom. Ignorant people mistook them for associates in Godhead; others thought they were related to God and started to worship them as deities.

***38** *Khalifah*: one who exercises the delegated powers on behalf of another as his vicegerent. *Khalifah* thus is not the master, but deputy of the Master; his powers are not his own but delegated to him by the real Master. He has therefore no right to have his own will but he is there to fulfill the will of the delegating authority. It would be dishonesty and treason, if he assumed sovereign powers, or used them according to his own whim, or if he acknowledged another as his sovereign and submitted to his will.

***39** This was not an objection but a query raised by the angels, for the angels dare not object to any scheme of Allah. From the word *Khalifah* they had understood that

the one, who was about to be created, was going to be entrusted with some powers, but they could not understand how an autonomous creature could fit in this totalitarian system of the universe. They also could not understand how that part of the universe, in which someone was entrusted with autonomy, could be free from disorder.

***40** By this, the angels did not mean to say that they should be entrusted with the vicegerency because they deserved it. They simply meant to say, “We are carrying out orders obediently, faithfully and earnestly and are keeping the whole universe clean and in order, and sing hymns of Your praise and sanctify You as Your humble servants. Therefore, we are unable to understand what need then is there for a vicegerent.” The word *tasbih* has a double meaning: it means to sanctify as well as to work earnestly and do one’s utmost. Similarly *taqdis* also means both to sanctify and to purify.

***41** This was the reply to the second doubt of the angels: You cannot understand the need and wisdom of the appointment of a vicegerent as I do. Your services do not suffice for the purpose that I have in view. I want something more than the services you have mentioned. That is why I am going to create a being on the earth and endow him with some powers.

31. And He taught Adam the names,^{*42} all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said: “Inform Me of the

وَعَلَّمَ ءَادَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ
عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ
أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَٰؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ

names of these, if you are truthful.”

صَدِيقِينَ

***42** Nomenclature is the means by which human mind grasps the knowledge of things. Hence, the whole information of man, in fact, consists of assigning names for things. Thus, teaching Adam the names of all things was meant to impart their knowledge to him.

32. They said: “Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except that which You have taught us.^{*43} Indeed, it is You, All Knower, the All Wise.”

قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا
مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ
الْحَكِيمُ

***43** It appears that the knowledge of each angel and of each species of angels is confined only to his or its own special sphere. For example, the angels who deal with the air, know everything about the air but nothing about water. The same is true about the angels who are responsible for other spheres. In contrast to them, man has been granted comprehensive knowledge. He may not know as much about these things as the angels in charge of a special sphere do but the comprehensiveness of knowledge that man has been granted has not been granted to the angels.

33. He said: “O Adam, inform them of their names.” Then when he had informed them of their names,^{*44} He said: “Did I not say to you that I know

قَالَ يَتَعَادُمْ أَنْبِئَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ
فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ
أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنَّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ

the unseen of the heavens and the earth. And I know that which you reveal and that which you have concealed.”

السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا
تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

***44** This demonstration was the answer to the first doubt of the angels. Thus Allah, so to say, informed them: I am not giving Adam only authority but also knowledge. The chaos that you apprehended from his appointment is only one aspect of the matter. It has its good aspect also, which is more weighty and valuable than the evil aspect, and a wise man does not give up a greater good because of a lesser evil.

34. And when We said to the angels: “Prostrate before Adam,” so they prostrated,^{*45} except Iblis.^{*46} He refused, and was arrogant, and he became of the disbelievers.^{*47}

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ
فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى
وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ

***45** This was symbolic of the submission and subjugation to man of all the angels appointed to manage the earth and that part of the universe which is connected with it in any way. As man was being appointed vicegerent in this part by Allah’s command, it was ordained that all the angels, who worked in it must, as far and as long as Allah willed, cooperate with him in their respective spheres whether he wanted to use the powers given to him rightly or wrongly. This implied: You must help him in whatever he wants to

do, irrespective of whether it is right or wrong. If he wants to commit theft or offer the prayer, or intends to do another good or evil, you must cooperate with him in both cases as long as We allow him to act according to his will and choice. This may be illustrated by the example of a government officer. He is obeyed within his jurisdiction by every official but no sooner is he deposed by the government than those very officials, who carried out his orders promptly cease to obey him. They even handcuff him and take him to prison, if the government so orders. The command given to the angels to bow down before Adam was in the same nature. Possibly the word *sajdah* (bowing down) here is symbolic of only submission, but this also is possible that the angels were ordered to perform some such act actually to signify their subordination, and this seems to be more correct.

***46** Iblis, dejected and desperate. As a term it is the name of the Jinn who disobeyed Allah and refused to bow down to Adam as a symbol of subordination to him and his offspring and asked Allah to grant him the opportunity of tempting mankind up to the last day. He is also called *ash-Shaitan* (Satan). He is not merely an abstract power of evil but is a being with his own personality like that of man. He was not an angel as is commonly understood but was one of the jinn who form a distinct species of their own separate from the angels. (See Al-Kahf: Ayat 50).

***47** From the words of the text it so appears that probably Iblis was not alone in refusing to bow down before Adam, but a group of the jinn also was bent upon disobedience.

Iblis has been particularly mentioned because he was their chief who led the rebellion. But this verse can also be translated as: He was of the disbelievers. In this case, it would mean that there already existed a group of rebellious and disobedient jinn and Iblis belonged to it. The word *shayatin* in the Quran has generally been used for these jinn and their species, and wherever there is no basis for taking *shayatin* to imply men, this same jinn satans are implied.

35. And We said: “O Adam, dwell, you and your wife in the Garden, and eat there from in abundance, from wherever you will. And do not go near this tree,^{*48} lest you become among the wrongdoers.”^{*49}

وَقُلْنَا يٰٓءَادَمُ اَسْكُنْ اَنْتَ
وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا
حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ
الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِيْنَ



***48** This shows that Adam and Eve were first kept in the Garden for a trial of their inclinations before they were to be sent to the earth, the place where they were appointed as vicegerent. A tree was chosen for this purpose and they were forbidden even to go near it. They were duly warned that if they violated the command, they would be considered guilty of iniquity in the sight of Allah. The discussion as to what tree it was and why they were forbidden to go near it, is unnecessary. They were not forbidden because there was something intrinsically evil in the tree itself by which Adam and Eve could be harmed. It

was chosen for the purpose of trial to see how far they remained constant on obedience to Allah's command as against the temptations of Satan. For this purpose it was enough to select a tree. That is why Allah has not mentioned the name and any characteristics of the tree. The Garden was a very suitable place for this trial because it was meant to show to man that Paradise alone was the fit place for Allah's vicegerent, but if he yielded to satanic temptations, he would deprive himself of it. The only way to regain it was to oppose the enemy successfully who was always on the look-out to mislead him.

The tree has not been named or pointed out specifically in the Quran because there was nothing intrinsically evil in the tree itself. It was merely chosen for the purpose of trial.

*49 The Arabic word *zalim* is very comprehensive in its meaning. *Zulm* is violation of a right or duty, and *zalim* is one who violates a right or duty. Anyone who disobeys Allah really violates three basic rights. First, he violates the rights of Allah Who is worthy of obedience. Second, he violates the rights of all those things and beings whom he employs in this disobedience, e.g. his own limbs and faculties, his fellow beings and those angels who contribute to the fulfillment of his will and all those things which he uses for the performance of the work of iniquity, for they have a right to be used only in accordance with the will of the real Master but it is an act of iniquity, if he abuses the powers he has over them. Lastly, he violates his own rights on himself, for his own self has a right that he should do his best to save it from destruction. He is also guilty of iniquity

against himself when he brings the wrath of Allah on himself by his disobedience. That is why the Quran, in many places has used the term *zulm* for sin and *zalim* for the sinner.

36. Then Satan made them slip from there, and caused them to be expelled from the state in which they had been. And We said: “Go down, one of you to the other as enemy.^{*50} And there shall be for you on earth a dwelling place and provision for a time.”

فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا
فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا
أهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ
وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ
إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

***50** That is, Satan shall be the adversary of man and man the adversary of Satan. The fact, that Satan tries his utmost to beguile man from the path of Allah to the path of destruction, is a clear proof that he is the arch enemy of man. On the other side, man’s humanity demands that he should fight Satan as his enemy. But it is a pity that man is so beguiled by the temptations of Satan that he begins to take him as his friend. This does not mean that their mutual enmity has really been changed into friendship. It only means that man has been beguiled by his opponent and caught in the snare which has been laid for him.

37. Then Adam received from his Lord words, and He accepted his repentance.^{*51} Indeed, He is

فَتَلَقَىٰ آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ
فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ

the One who forgives, Most
Merciful. *52



*51 When Adam felt sorry for his guilt and wanted to repent and return to Allah, he could not find appropriate words for asking Allah's pardon. Then Allah took pity upon him on account of his grief and helplessness and taught him the appropriate words. The Arabic word *taubah* means both "to turn back" and "to turn to". When applied to man, it means that he has turned back from rebellion to submission, and, when it is ascribed to Allah, it means that He has again turned with compassion to the penitent person.

*52 Here the Quran rejects the theory that the consequences of sin are inevitable and every man shall bear these anyhow. This is one of those self invented, misleading theories which have done great harm to humanity. As a result of this, one loses for ever all hope of reform, when once one is involved in sin. Even if he feels sorry for a past sin and wants to make amends for it and changes his life for the better, this theory confronts him with despair: there is no hope for you because you are doomed for ever: you must bear the consequences of what you have done in the past. In contrast to this, the Quran says, "It lies absolutely in Allah's power to reward a virtue or to punish a sin. If you are rewarded for a virtue, it is not on account of the natural result of your virtue, but it is through Allah's grace. He has full power to reward it or not. In the same way, if you are punished for a sin, it is not because of the inevitable consequences of the sin but because Allah has full power to

punish or pardon it. Of course, being All-Wise, He does not use these powers indiscriminately, but takes into consideration the intention of the doer. If He rewards a virtue, He does so when He sees that His servant performed the good deeds to please Him. And if He rejects an apparent virtue, He does so because He knows that it lacked sincerity. In the same way, He punishes the crime which is committed in a spirit of rebellion and is not followed by self reproach but by an evil desire to commit more crimes. He, however, exercises His grace, and forgives the sins for which His servant feels sorry and makes up his mind to change for the better. It is thus clear that the rejection of the theory of the inevitability of punishment for sin holds out new hopes of reform for sinners. Even the worst criminals and the staunchest unbelievers need not despair of forgiveness from Allah, provided that they confess their sins (of course, before their Lord and not before a priest), feel ashamed of their disobedience, give up their attitude of rebellion and adopt the attitude of submission instead.

38. We said: "Go down from here, all of you.^{*53} Then whenever there comes to you a guidance from Me, and whoever follows My guidance, then there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve."

قُلْنَا أَهْبَطُوا مِنهَا جَمِيعًا فَأَمَّا
يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَن تَبِعَ
هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
هُم يَحْزَنُونَ



***53** The repetition of this command after forgiveness is

very significant. In the preceding verse, it has been said that Adam repented and Allah accepted his repentance. Thus Adam was not only absolved from the sin of disobedience, but his future descendants also were made immune from its effect. There was, therefore, no need for Allah to crucify “His only son” for the atonement of the sin of Adam and of his offspring. On the contrary, Allah not only accepted his repentance but also appointed him as His Messenger to show guidance to his children. The repetition of the command, “Go down from here”, shows that the real purpose of Adam’s creation was to make him vicegerent on the earth. He was kept in the Garden merely for trial and training, (see E.N. 48). That is why he was not kept in the Garden after the acceptance of his repentance. He was sent to the earth not by way of punishment but as a matter of course.

39. “And those who disbelieve, and they deny Our revelations,^{*54} those are the companions of the Fire. They will abide therein forever.”^{*55}

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ



***54** *Ayaat* is plural of *ayat*, which literally means a sign or a symbol that points to something. The Quran has used this word in four different senses. At some places, it means merely a sign or symbol. At other places, the different phenomena of nature have been termed as *ayat* of Allah, because each phenomenon points to the reality which is hidden behind such curtains. Then the miracles which were

given to the Messengers have also been called *ayat* (signs) because these showed that they were the representatives of the Ruler of the universe. At some places the verses of the Book have been called *ayat* because they point not only to the truth and the right but also to the Great Author of the Book. It is not only the subject matter of the Book but also its words and mode of expression and its style that point to its Author. The meaning of the word *ayat* in a particular place becomes clear from the context in which it occurs.

***55** The law of Allah, contained in Ayats 38-39 about the guidance, has been in force ever since the creation of man and will remain so up to the last day. It has been called Allah's covenant in Ayat 27. It is meant to warn man not to invent a way of life for himself but to follow the guidance of his Lord, for he is His servant as well as vicegerent. And there are only two means of knowing this: either a man should receive direct revelation from Allah, or follow the one who has received revelation from Him. There is no third way of knowing Allah's Will. Therefore, every other way than these two is not only wrong but also rebellion which will lead ultimately to Hell. The story of the creation of man and the advent of mankind has been described in six other places in the Quran: Al-Aaraf: Ayats 11-25; Al-Hijr: Ayats 26-48; Bani-Israil: Ayats 60-65; Al-Kahf: Ayat 50; Ta-Ha: Ayats 116-123, Suad: Ayats 71-85. It will be useful to read the same story in the Old Testament (Genesis, Chapters 1 to 3). The comparison of the Quranic version with the Biblical one, will conclusively show that the Quran has remained intact in its pure, original and

unadulterated form just as it was revealed by Allah, while the Bible has been tampered with. It will also be interesting to contrast the conversation between Allah and the angels as has been given here in the Quran with that cited in the Talmud. The latter is not only void of spiritual values but is also ridiculous. According to it when the angels asked Allah why He was going to create man, He answered that He was doing that so that good people should be born on the earth. He did not mention the birth of bad people lest the angels should withhold their permission for the creation of man.

40. O Children of Israel, *56 remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and fulfill My covenant (with you), I shall fulfill (My obligations to) your covenant. And fear Me.

يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي
الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا
بِعَهْدِي أَوْفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ
فَارْهَبُونِ



*56 Israel means the servant of Allah. This was the title that Allah had bestowed upon Jacob, who was a son of Isaac, and a grandson of Abraham (peace be upon them all). His descendents are called children of Israel. Up to verse 39, it was an introductory discourse meant for all mankind. From verse 40 to verse 121 is a new discourse in which the children of Israel have been especially and particularly addressed. In some places it has also been directed towards the Christians and the mushriks of Arabia and in between towards the people who believed in the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In order to

understand the full significance of this address, the following should be kept in view. First, it aims to appeal to those few followers of the former prophets, who were still capable of reforming themselves to believe in the truth which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had brought and to cooperate with the mission which he had been appointed to perform. They are, therefore, told that the message of the Quran is the same as of the Scriptures of the former Prophets, and the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him) also was the same as theirs. It means to say: First this mission was entrusted to you so that you may put the Message into practice and then invite the world to accept it. But, not to speak of carrying out the mission, you discarded the guidance and went on degenerating. The past history of your community and its present moral and religious degeneration are a standing witness against you. Now Allah has sent another servant of His with the same Message and mission and there is nothing new or strange in this for you. You should not, therefore, oppose the truth knowingly. The best thing for you is to accept it and cooperate with those who are doing the same work that was once entrusted to you. Secondly, it aims to argue the Jews out of their wrong position and to expose their moral and religious degeneration thoroughly. Therefore, it proves conclusively that their attitude towards Islam was absolutely wrong; for they were opposing it, whereas they knew that its fundamentals were exactly the same as of their religion and that there was nothing in the teachings of the Quran that was different from or opposed to the teachings of the Torah

in principle. It also shows that they had utterly failed to follow the guidance which was given to them and fulfill the obligations of the leadership entrusted to them. As a proof thereof, such incidents have been cited as they could not deny. Moreover, this address unraveled the plots they were hatching, the doubts they were arousing, the crooked arguments they were advancing and the evil machinations they were contriving to defeat the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), though they knew it to be from Allah. This also exposed their piety, for it lacked sincerity and righteousness and was motivated by obduracy, prejudice and self-worship. It also proved beyond any shadow of doubt that they did not really want virtue to thrive. This produced the desired effect: it opened the eyes of the righteous element among the Jews and put an end to the spiritual and moral superiority they enjoyed against the common and polytheistic Arabs of Al-Madinah. Besides, when they themselves were once exposed, they were so dismayed that they dared not oppose Islam openly with the courage of conviction. Thirdly, in the preceding verses, mankind had been invited to accept the guidance of Allah. Now the example of the Israelites is being cited to show the consequences of discarding that guidance. The reason why the Israelites have been held out as an example is that they are the only community whose history during the last four thousand years has been a living object lesson for all the nations of the world. In its history one can see all the ups and downs which result from following the divine guidance or from discarding it. Fourthly, though the

appeal is addressed to the Jews, it is also meant to forewarn the Muslims against the pitfalls of degeneration into which the followers of the former Prophets had fallen. That is why, on the one hand, the moral weaknesses of the Jews, their wrong notions about religion, their wrong ways of thinking and living, have been pointed out, one by one. While, on the other, the demands of the true faith have been stated so that the Muslims are able to see the right way clearly and avoid wrong ways. The Prophet (peace be upon him) knew by divine inspiration that, by and by, the Muslims also would follow the same ways that had been pointed out in this discourse. Therefore, according to a tradition, he forewarned that they would discard the guidance and follow, step by step, the communities of the former prophets, that is, the Jews and the Christians, in their wrong ways. It is a pity that they have not paid any heed to this warning and adopted the same ways of degeneration.

41. And believe in that which I have sent down, confirming that which is with you, and do not be the first to disbelieve in it, and do not trade my verses for a small price,^{*57} and fear Me.

وَأَمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا
مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا أُولَٰ كَافِرِينَ
وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِعَايَتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
وَأِيَّيَ فَاتَّقُونِ

*57 “Small price”: worldly gains for the sake of which these people discarded the commandments and precepts of Allah. As a matter of fact, even the whole wealth of the world put

together is worthless, if it is gained in exchange for Allah's guidance.

42. And do not cover the truth with falsehood, nor conceal the truth while you know (it).

وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ
وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْمُونَ



43. And establish the prayer,^{*58} and give the poor due,^{*59} and bow with those who bow down (in worship).

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ
وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ



***58** In order to understand this verse, it should be kept in mind that the Arabs were generally illiterate and uneducated people. As against them, education was common among the Jews, who had among them great scholars renowned even beyond Arabia. That is why the Arabs were overawed by the scholarship of the Jews, more so because their scholars and rabbis made a great show of their learning and piety and reinforced it with the practice of charms and amulets. The people of Al-Madinah in particular were overawed by the learning of the Jews, for they were surrounded by big Jewish tribes and came in contact with them day and night. As a result, they were immensely influenced by them just as illiterate people usually are influenced by the neighbors who are more educated, more civilized and more religious in character. Such were the conditions when the Prophet (peace be upon him) presented himself as a Prophet and began to invite the

people to Islam; naturally the illiterate Arabs turned to the Jews for guidance in this matter, and said: “You are the followers of a Prophet and possess a Book, so tell us what you think of this man and his teachings, who claims to be a Prophet.” This question was repeatedly asked of the Jews by the people of Makkah, and when the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Al-Madinah, here also many people visited the Jewish scholars again and again to ask them the same question. But their scholars never gave them the right answer. For they could not say that the doctrine of *tauhid* that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was preaching was wrong, nor that the knowledge which he imparted about the prophets, scriptures, angels, and the Hereafter was wrong, nor that there was something wrong about the moral principles that he taught. They were neither ready to admit in plain words the righteousness of the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him); nor had they the courage to refute it openly; nor were they willing to profess the truth candidly. Instead, they devised a subtle strategy to oppose it: they created one suspicion or the other about the Prophet (peace be upon him), his followers and his mission; they would concoct allegations against him and his followers and make false propaganda against them or raise frivolous objections so as to involve them in useless discussions. That is why they have been warned not to conceal the truth by covering it with falsehood, nor suppress it by spreading suspicions and by raising silly objections, nor mix it up with falsehood.

***59** The Salat and the Zakat have always formed the

essential elements of the revealed religion (Islam). Like all other Prophets, the Israelite Prophets also had strictly enjoined these, but by and by the Jews became wholly neglectful of them. They gave up the performance of Salat in congregation and the majority of the people did not even offer it individually. Instead of paying Zakat, they started charging interest on money.

44. Do you enjoin the righteousness upon mankind and you forget yourselves, while you recite the Scripture. Will you then not understand.

﴿ أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ
أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴾

45. And seek help through patience and prayer.*60 And truly, it is hard except for those who humbly submit (to Allah).*61

﴿ وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ
وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴾

*60 That is, “If you face some difficulties in following the righteous way, *sabr* and Salat will help remove the difficulties and strengthen you to walk the way easily.” Lexically, *sabr* means to check and tie, but in usage it stands for patience, perseverance, endurance and fortitude. The Quran uses this word to express that fortitude, that moral strength, that firmness of purpose and decision, that determination, moral discipline and self-control which enable a person to proceed with patience and courage in the face of afflictions, privations and temptations on the way he

chooses in accordance with the dictates of his conscience. What the Quran means to stress is that the Muslims should develop this moral quality in themselves and should observe the Salat regularly to reinforce it from without.

*61 Salat is a hard task, only for the one who is disobedient to Allah and does not believe in the Hereafter. But it is a joyful duty for the one who is willingly and happily obedient to Allah and who believes that one day he will meet Him. It is expected that this will lead him on the paths of virtue and piety.

46. Those who are certain that they will meet their Lord, and that to Him they will return.

الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ
وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَاجِعُونَ

47. O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you over the worlds (people).^{*62}

يَبْنَىٰ إِسْرَائِيلَ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي
الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي
فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ الْعَالَمِينَ

*62 It refers to the period when the Israelites were the only people in the world who possessed the knowledge of the truth from Allah and were, therefore, made leaders of the people of the world and were required to invite all other nations to His submission and to guide them on the right way.

48. And fear a Day (when) a soul will not avail to (another) soul at

وَأَتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ
نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا

all, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will compensation be taken from it, nor will they be helped.*63

شَفَعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ
وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ



*63 In this verse the Israelites have been warned to guard against their wrong notion about the Hereafter, for this was the main cause of their degeneration. They were under the delusion that they would win salvation just because they were the descendants of great Prophets and had relations with great saints and pious and righteous people. That is why they neglected the religion and involved themselves in sin. Here they are being disillusioned and warned that they will not escape the consequences of their evil deeds by virtue of their relation with some holy person or his intercession in their behalf. That is why immediately after reminding them of the favor (Ayat 47) they have been warned that they shall be punished like the guilty people who lived in this world without belief in the Hereafter.

49. And when*64 We saved you from Pharaoh's people,*65 who were afflicting you with dreadful torment, slaughtering your sons, and keeping your women alive. And in that was a great trial from your Lord.*66

وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ
يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ
يُذَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ
نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَٰلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ



*64 The events recalled here were well known to all and

sundry among the Jews. Therefore, only brief references have been made to these historical events to show that they had remained ungrateful and had persisted in evil deeds in spite of the continuous favors showered upon them by Allah.

*65 “*Aal-i-Firaun*” includes both the people of Pharaoh's own family and the people belonging to the ruling class of Egypt.

*66 It was a trial of their character. They were made to pass through the fire of the test to see whether they were pure gold or a base metal. Moreover, they were put to the test to see whether they would be grateful to Allah after their miraculous escape.

50. And when We parted the sea for you, then We saved you and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you were looking on.

وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمْ الْبَحْرَ
فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا
فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

51. And when We did appoint for Moses forty nights.^{*67} Then you took the calf in his absence,^{*68} and you were wrong doers.

وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً
ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ

*67 When after their escape from Egypt the Israelites entered the Sinai Peninsula, Allah invited the Prophet Moses to Mount Tur for forty days and forty nights to give him laws, instructions and commands for the guidance of the people who had recently been liberated from slavery.

(For details, see Exodus, 24-31). It should, however, be noted that the Tur, referred to here, is not the modern port of Tur on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez.

***68** Cow-worship was very common in Canan, Egypt and the neighboring countries. When the Israelites degenerated and became slaves of the Copts after the death of the Prophet Joseph (peace be upon him), they learned this evil practice from their rulers along with other evils.

52. Then We forgave you, even after that, so that you might be grateful.

ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53. And when We gave Moses the Scripture, and the criterion^{*69} that you might be guided.

وَإِذْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

***69** *Furqan*: A criterion for distinguishing truth from falsehood. Here it stands for the knowledge and understanding of religion which enables a person to discern between right and wrong, truth and falsehood.

54. And when Moses said to his people: “O my people, indeed, you have wronged yourselves by your taking the calf (for worship), so turn in repentance to your Creator, and kill (the guilty among) yourselves.^{*70} That will be better for you with your

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يٰقَوْمِ
إِنَّكُمْ أَنْظَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ
بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجَلِ فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ
بَارِيكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِيكُمْ فَتَابَ

Creator.” Then He accepted your repentance. Certainly, He accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.

عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ
الرَّحِيمُ

***70** That is, those who made the calf a deity and worshipped it.

55. And when you said: “O Moses, we will never believe you until we see Allah plainly.” So the thunderbolt seized you while you were looking on.

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَمُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ
حَتَّىٰ نَرَىٰ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ
الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ

56. Then We raised you up after your death, so that you might be grateful. ^{*71}

ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُم مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

***71** When Moses went up to Mount Tur for forty days and forty nights, he was also told to bring with him seventy of the chiefs of Israel. Then Allah bestowed upon him the Book and criterion and gave him the stone tablets with instructions and commandments inscribed on them for the guidance of the people, and he presented these to the chiefs. The Quran says that at that time some wicked people from among them began to say: “How can we believe, on a mere statement of yours, that Allah has had a talk with you?” At this Allah became angry with them and punished them. But the Bible says, “And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink”. (Exodus, 24: 1011). Strange though it may appear, the same Bible also tells us that Moses said, “I beseech thee, skew me thy glory. And He said, “Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me, and live.”

57. And We caused the clouds to overshadow you, and We sent down on you^{*72} the manna and the quails,^{*73} (saying): “Eat of the good things with which We have provided you.” And they wronged Us not, but they did wrong to themselves.

وَضَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّٰ وَالسَّلْوٰى كُلُوا مِنْ
طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا
وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ

*72 That is, We sheltered you with clouds when you entered the Sinai Peninsula and had no place of shelter from the heat of the sun. One should remember that the Israelites had emigrated in large numbers from Egypt and had no place in the Sinai Peninsula to hide their heads, not to speak of houses and tents. Had Allah not kept the sky cloudy for a long time, they would have perished by the scorching heat of the desert sun.

*73 Manna and salva were the natural relief provisions supplied by Allah to feed the Israelites in the wilderness. Manna fell on the ground like dew-drops and salva flew in thousands like quails. There was such a plenty of these provisions that a whole nation lived on them for forty years and was never confronted with starvation or famine. In

modern times even a well developed and resourceful country finds it extremely difficult to make adequate food arrangements for a few hundred thousand emigrants if they happen to enter it suddenly and unexpectedly.

58. And when We said: “Enter into this township,^{*74} then eat therein wherever you will to your heart’s content, and enter the gate in prostration, and say: ‘Forgive us,’^{*75} We will forgive you your sins, and We will increase for those who do good.”

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا أَدْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ
فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا
وَأَدْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا
حِطَّةً نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتِكُمْ
وَسَنَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ



***74** The identity of the town has not so far been determined. As this incident took place when the Israelites were still wandering in the Sinai Peninsula, most probably it was situated somewhere there. But it is also possible that it might have been Shittim which was situated on the eastern bank of the Jordan, opposite to Jericho. According to the Bible, the Israelites conquered this city during the last years of Moses and committed debaucheries. Consequently, Allah inflicted a terrible punishment on them in the form of an epidemic which killed twenty-four thousand of them.

***75** They were told not to enter the town like cruel and ruthless tyrants but to go in meekly and with humility like God-fearing people, just as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did at the conquest of Makkah. *Hittatun* can

have two meanings: You should enter the town:

- (1) Begging Allah's forgiveness for sins, and;
- (2) Granting general amnesty and refraining from plundering and murdering the inhabitants.

59. Then those who did wrong changed (the words) to a saying other than that which had been said to them, so We sent down upon those who wronged a plague from the heaven because they were disobeying.

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ
الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

60. And when Moses asked for water for his people, so We said: "Strike with your stick the rock." Then there gushed forth from it twelve springs.*76 Each (tribe of) people knew their drinking place. Eat and drink from the provision of Allah, and do not make mischief in the earth, spreading corruption.

وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ
لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ
الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَا
عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ
أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرَبَهُمْ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا
مِن رِّزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِي
الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾

*76 That rock can still be seen in the Sinai Peninsula with the twelve holes of the springs. Twelve springs were caused to flow for the Israelites in order to avoid water disputes

among their twelve clans.

61. And when you said: “O Moses, we can never endure upon one (kind of) food. So call upon your Lord for us, that He bring forth for us of that which the earth grows, of its herbs, and its cucumbers, and its corn, and its lentils, and its onions.” He said: “Would you exchange that which is lower for that which is better.*77 Go down to a settled country, then indeed, you will have that which you have asked for.” And humiliation was covered on them, and misery, and they drew on themselves the wrath from Allah. That was because they used to disbelieve in the signs of Allah,*78 and killed the prophets without right.*79 That was because they disobeyed and used to transgress the bounds (of Allah).

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ
طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ
يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ
بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا
وَبَصَلِهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ
الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ
خَيْرٌ أَهْبَطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ
مَا سَأَلْتُمْ^ق وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءُوا
بِغَضِبِ اللَّهِ^ق ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ
كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِعَايَةِ اللَّهِ
وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ^ق
ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا
يَعْتَدُونَ

***77** It does not mean: “You are asking, instead of manna and salva which you get gratis, things for which you will have to till and cultivate the land.” But it means: “You are neglecting that grand purpose the purification of your hearts and the preparation for the leadership of the world for which you are being made to travel in the desert: instead of this, you are after the gratification of your taste and palate and cannot forego those things even for some time.”

***78** They rejected the revelations in different ways: (a) They refused to accept anything as revealed, if it went against their own ideas or desires; (b) they brazen-facedly violated the clear injunctions of Allah, knowing fully that they were discarding His commandments; and (c) they distorted and twisted the meaning of revelations in order to suit their desires and lusts.

***79** The history of the Israelites abounds in instances of the persecution of their own Prophets. We cite here a few from the Bible:

(1) After the death of the Prophet Solomon, the kingdom of the Israelites was split into two states: the kingdom of Judah with its capital at Jerusalem; and the kingdom of Israel with its capital at Samaria. As the two were often at war with each other, the things came to such a pass that the kingdom of Judah asked for help from the Aramaic kingdom of Damascus against their own brethren. At this the Prophet Hanani by God’s command severely rebuked Asa king of Judah for relying on the king of Syria instead of relying on “the Eternal your God.” But Asa instead of

heeding the warning sent the Prophet of God to the prison house. (2 Chronicles, 16: 1-10).

(2) When the Prophet Elijah rebuked the Israelites for serving and worshipping Baal, and asked them to serve and worship One God alone, they became his mortal enemies. King Ahab of Samaria threatened to kill him because his idolatrous wife incited him against the Prophet Elijah. In terror he ran for his life to the mountains in the Sinai Peninsula. During the period of affliction, he said, "I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thy altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even 1 only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away". (1 Kings, 19: 1-10).

(3) King Ahab sent another Prophet, Micaiah, to prison for speaking out the truth. "And the king of Israel said, take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon, the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; and say, "Thus saith the king, put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace." (1 Kings, 22: 26-27).

(4) When the people of Judah began to worship idols openly and to do what was evil in the sight of Allah, the Prophet Zecharia raised his voice against these evils, saying: "Why transgress ye the commandments of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper because ye have forsaken the Lord, he hath also forsaken you. And they conspired against him, and stoned him at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the Lord." (2 Chronicles, 24: 20-21).

(5) When the Israelite state of Samaria was destroyed by the Assyrians, and the Jewish state at Jerusalem was threatened with imminent danger, the Prophet Jeremiah began to bewail and warn his people of their degeneration and its evil consequences. He lamented and cried, "Mend your ways otherwise you will meet with a far worse doom than Samaria." In answer to this the Jews cursed him, beat him and imprisoned him. They accused him of treachery against the nation and shouted, "You are deserting to the Chaldeans." He was arrested and flogged and confined in the dungeon cells. Then they put him into an underground cistern, lowering him down with ropes so that he should sink in the mud and die on the spot from starvation. (Jeremiah, 15: 10, 18: 20-23; 20:1-18 and Chapters 36 to 40).

(6) About the Prophet Amos, it is written that when he rebuked the Israelite state of Samaria for its evil and immoral doings and warned them of their evil acts, "These are the people who have preferred the worldly life to the life in the Hereafter. Therefore their torment shall not be lightened, nor shall help be given to them (from any quarter)." He was served with the notice: "O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah and prophesy there." (Amos, 7: 10-13).

(7) When John the Baptist raised his voice against the immoralities which were being openly practiced in the court of Herod, king of Judah, he was arrested and bound in prison. Then at the request of Herodias, his wife, who had a grudge against him, he sent one of the guards to

bring his head. The man went and beheaded him in the prison and brought his head on a dish to be presented to her. Thus, the Prophet of God was killed without any cause. (ark, 6: 17-29).

(8) The last victim of the evil designs of the high priests and the elders of the Jews was Jesus Christ, who took them to task for their sins and hypocrisies and advised them to lead a righteous life. For this crime of his, they plotted against him: bought Judas, one of his twelve disciples, and sent a large mob with swords and cudgels to seize him and take him away to the house of the high priest. After binding him, they led him off, and handed him over to Pontius Pilate, the Roman Governor. They tried to procure false evidence against him in order to have him put to death. They had become so hard-hearted that they asked Pilate to release Barabbas, a murderer, as a boon at the festival but to “crucify him”. In this verse, the Quran briefly refers to this most shameful chapter of the history of the Israelites and declares that they fully deserved the curses and condemnation of Allah. They chose their worst offenders against law and morality and made them their chiefs and leaders, and sent their most pious and righteous men to the gallows.

62. Certainly, those who believe (in the Quran), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans, whoever believed in Allah and the Last Day and did

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ
هَادُوا وَالنَّصْرَى وَالصَّبِئِينَ
مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

righteous deeds, shall then have their reward with their Lord, and there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.*80

وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

*80 The context in which this verse occurs shows that the Quran is not laying down here the details of the creed and righteous deeds, which one should believe and practice in order to earn salvation. These things have been described in their proper places. Here, the object is to refute the self-delusion of the Jews that salvation was their sole monopoly. They were suffering from the delusion that they had some special relationship with God; therefore whoever belonged to their race, would go straight to Heaven, irrespective of his creed and deeds, and all other people were born to become fuel of Hell. To remove this misunderstanding of theirs Allah declares that salvation does not depend upon one's connection with any group but on one's right beliefs and good deeds. Whoever goes before Allah with these provisions will find his reward with Him, for Allah's judgment will be based on one's real worth and not on the census registers.

63. And when We took your covenant and We raised above you the Mount,*81 (saying): "Hold that which We have given to you firmly, and remember that which is

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا
فَوْقَكُمْ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا
ءَاتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ

therein, so that you may become righteous.”

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

*81 The way this incident has been described at different places in the Quran, shows that it was at that time a well known incident among the Israelites, but now it is difficult to understand and know what actually happened. One may, however, understand that at the time of making the covenant at the foot of the mountain a dreadful situation was created and it so appeared that the mountain was going to fall upon them. A similar scene has been depicted in Surah Al-Aaraf: Ayat 171. (See E.N. 132 of Al-Aaraf). Although its description in the Bible is a little different from that of the Talmud, it depicts the scene very vividly: “And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.” (Exodus, 19: 18). “And all the people saw the thundering, and the lightning, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” (Exodus, 20 :18-19).

64. Then you turned away after that. So if it had not been for the grace of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have been among the losers.

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ

65. And indeed, you knew those who transgressed in the Sabbath amongst you.^{*82} So We said to them: “Be you apes,^{*83} despised.”

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ



***82 Sabbath:** Saturday. The Israelites were enjoined to keep the Sabbath as “a sign between me and you throughout your generations” for a perpetual covenant. “Six days thy work be done; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death.” (Exodus, 31: 12-17). But when the Israelites became corrupt morally and religiously, they began to desecrate it openly and began to do business without hesitation on the Sabbath.

***83** This incident has been described in detail in Al-Aaraf. There is a difference of opinion as to what actually happened. Some are of the opinion that they were physically transformed into apes, while others hold the view that from that time onward they began to behave like apes. The words of the Quran, however, indicate that it was not a moral but a physical metamorphosis. In my opinion their bodies were transformed into those of apes, but their human minds were left intact in order to subject them to extreme torture.

66. Then We made this an example for those who were present, and those who

فَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

succeeded them, and an admonition for the righteous.



67. And when Moses said to his people: “Indeed, Allah commands you that you slaughter a cow. They said: “Do you take us in ridicule.” He said: “I seek refuge in Allah, that I should be among the ignorant.”

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقْرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوعًا قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ



68. They said: “Call upon your Lord for us that He may make clear to us what (cow) it is.” He (Moses) said: “Verily, He (Allah) says, it is a cow neither old nor virgin, (but) median between that. So do what you are commanded.”

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَّا فَارِضٌ وَلَا بَكْرٌ عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ



69. They said: “Call upon your Lord for us that He may make clear to us what its color is.” He (Moses) said: “Verily, He (Allah) says, it is a yellow cow, bright in its color, pleasing to the beholders.”

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ صَفْرَاءٌ فَاقِعٌ لَوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ النَّظْرِينَ



70. They said: “Call upon your Lord for us that He may make clear to us what (cow) it is. In fact, cows are much alike to us. And surely, if Allah wills, we will be guided.”

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشَبَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

71. He (Moses) said: “Verily, He (Allah) says, it is a cow, neither yoked to plow the land, nor to irrigate the crops. Whole, without blemish on it.”

قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَّا ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَّا شِيَةَ فِيهَا ﴿٧١﴾
قَالُوا أَلَكُنَّ جِئْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ﴿٧١﴾
فَذَنبُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

They said: “Now you have come with the truth.”

So they slaughtered it, though they almost did not do (it).^{*84}

***84** The Israelites were commanded to sacrifice a cow in order to rid them of the sanctity and worship of cow which they had adopted from the pagan nations around them. It was a test of their faith: if they really believed in Allah as their only Deity and did not make anyone or anything else the object of their worship, they should break the idol of their former worship with their own hands. But this proved to be a very hard test. They tried to evade and avoid the sacrifice because their belief in One God had not become firm as yet. They went on asking one detail after

the other in order to put it off, but the more questions they asked the more they were driven into a tight corner. So much so that at last they were specifically told to sacrifice that very golden colored cow, which was being specially chosen for worship at that time. The Bible also mentions this incident, but does not tell how the Israelites tried to put it off by asking a number of unnecessary questions.

72. And when you killed a man, then disputed over it. And Allah was (bound) to bring forth that which you were hiding.

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادَّارَأْتُمْ فِيهَا
وَاللَّهُ مَخْرُجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ



73. So We said: “Strike him (the slain man) with a part of it (the cow).” Thus Allah brings to life the dead, and He shows you His signs so that you may understand.*85

فَقُلْنَا أَضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ
يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ
آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ



*85 The wording of the Quran clearly shows that the murdered man came to life for a little while and told the name of his murderer. However, there is some ambiguity concerning the method applied for discovering the murderer, that is, the striking of the dead body of the murdered man with a piece of the sacrificed cow. A method similar to this described in Deut. 21: 1-9, confirms the interpretation put forward by the ancient scholars, that is, the dead body was struck with a piece of the flesh of the

sacrificed cow and it came to life. In this way, a sign of Allah was shown and at the same time it was demonstrated that the object of their worship was so powerless that its slaughter did not cause any harm. On the contrary, its slaughter proved useful.

74. Then after that your hearts became hardened, so they being like rocks, or even worse in hardness. And indeed, of the rocks are that, out of which rivers gush forth. And indeed, of them (rocks) are that, which split open so the water comes out from them. And indeed, of them (rocks) are that, which fall down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ
ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ
قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا
يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا
لَمَا يَشَقُّ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ
وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ
اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا
تَعْمَلُونَ



75. Do you have any hope that they would believe^{*86} in you, and indeed there was a faction among them who used to listen to the word of Allah (Torah), then they used to change it, even after what they had understood it, while they were knowing.^{*87}

﴿ أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ
وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ
كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تَحَرَّفُونَهُ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾



***86** Here the addressees are the new converts of Al-Madinah, who had embraced Islam only recently. They had become interested in the Prophet (peace be upon him) because they had often heard from the neighboring Jews about prophethood, revelation, angels, divine law etc. They had also heard from them that they were expecting a new Prophet whose followers would prevail over the whole world. That is why the people of Al-Madinah turned to the Prophet (peace be upon him) when they heard of him and entered into the fold of Islam in large numbers. Naturally, they expected that the Jews, who possessed revealed Scriptures and who themselves had foretold the coming of a Prophet, would be the first to welcome Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet and would be in the forefront of his supporters. When, contrary to their expectations, the Jews did not come forward, the new Muslims themselves went to them and invited them to accept Islam, but they failed to persuade them. The hypocrites and the opponents of Islam used this rejection as an argument against Islam itself. They argued like this: there must be something suspicious about it: had Muhammad (peace be upon him) really been a Prophet, these pious and learned followers of the earlier Scriptures, would not have rejected him knowingly, and ruined their Hereafter. In order to counteract the mischief caused by this fallacy, the past history of the Jews has been related to show that nothing better could be expected of them. This also cautioned the simple Muslims against cherishing any hope that the Jews of their city would in a body welcome Muhammad (peace

be upon him) as the Prophet about whom prophecies have been made in their own Books. They have been warned that they should not entertain such expectations from the people whose history has been so and so. This was necessary because they were liable to become disheartened because of the rejection of Islam by them. As to the Jews, they had become so degenerate and hard hearted that they were not moved even by those verses which melted the hearts of the pagans who formerly used to kill their own daughters. Not only this, these hard hearted Jews made fun of those very verses also. Therefore, the zealous Muslims were warned that they should understand the real condition of the Jews, who had corrupted the truth to suit their own desires and then had the audacity to have their hopes centered on the religion which they had themselves perverted. It was wrong to entertain any vain hopes that such people would accept the truth as soon as it was presented before them.

*87 “Faction among them”: their rabbis and jurists. “Word of Allah”: the Torah, Psalms and other Books which they had received through their Prophets. The Jewish scholars not only twisted, distorted and misinterpreted the revealed Scriptures, and read into them the meaning they wanted to read, but they also tampered with the actual words of the text.

76. And when they (Jews) meet with those who believe, they say: “We believed.” And when they are alone, with one another, they say: “Do

وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَالُوا
ءَامِنًا وَإِذَا خَلَا بِبَعْضِهِمْ إِلَى
بَعْضٍ قَالُوا أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ

you tell them of what Allah has disclosed to you, that they (Muslims) may argue with you about it before your Lord.*88 Have you then no understanding.”

اللَّهُ عَلَيكُمْ لِيَحَاجُّوكُمْ بِهِ
عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

*88 When they met secretly, they warned each other not to disclose to the Muslims those passages of the Torah and other Scriptures which contained prophecies about the Prophet (peace be upon him). They also warned each other not to inform the Muslims about those verses and teachings of their holy Books which, they feared, would expose to objection their own present condition and attitude for they were afraid that the Muslims would present these as arguments against them on the Day of Judgment. This is an instance of the kind of belief they held about Allah's knowledge. They were under the delusion that if they succeeded in hiding the truth and their corruption of the Scriptures in this world, there would be no possibility of bringing a case against them in the next world. That is why in the parenthetical clause that follows they have been asked whether they really believed Allah to be unaware of the affairs of the people.

77. Do they not know that Allah knows that which they conceal, and that which they proclaim.

أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
يُسْرُونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

78. And among them are illiterates, who do not know

وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

the Scripture, except wishful thinking. And they do nothing but conjecture.*89

الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
يُظُنُّونَ



*89 This refers to the common people of the Jews, who were totally ignorant of the teachings of their own Scriptures. They had neither any knowledge of the fundamentals of religion, nor of the regulations concerning morality and rules of everyday life, nor of the principles leading to ultimate success or failure. And the pity is that they had formed their own notions about religion without this knowledge and were living on false hopes.

79. Then woe be to those who write the Scripture with their own hands, then they say, "This is from Allah," that they may sell it for a small price.*90 Then woe be to them for that which their hands have written, and woe be to them for that which they earn.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ
بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ
عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا
فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا
يَكْسِبُونَ



*90 This refers to what their learned people did. They not only perverted their Scriptures to suit their desires and vanities, but also blended with the text of the Bible their own interpretations, their national history, their superstitions, their self made theories, philosophies and laws. Then they presented all this mixture before the people

as if it were actually from God. Every historical fiction, every interpretation, every man made creed, and every bye law that had somehow entered into the Holy Book, became the word of God, and it was absolutely obligatory for every Jew to believe in all these things and, if one did not, he was declared to be a renegade or a heretic.

80. And they say: “Never will the Fire touch us, except for a certain number of days.^{*91} Say (O Muhammad): “Have you taken a covenant with Allah, so that Allah will not break His covenant. Or do you say about Allah that which you do not know.”

وَقَالُوا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا
مَّعْدُودَةً قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
عَهْدًا فَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ ۗ أَمْ
تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ



***91** There was a general belief among the common Jews and their religious leaders that they would not be sent to Hell in spite of their wrong beliefs and evil deeds just because they were Jews. They thought that even if any punishment was imposed on them, it would be for a few days only after which they would be sent to Paradise.

81. Nay, but whoever has earned evil, and his sin has surrounded him. Then such are the companions of the Fire. They will abide therein forever.

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ
بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ ۗ فَأُولَٰئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ



82. And those who believe and do righteous deeds, such are the companions of the Garden. They will abide therein forever.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

83. And when We took a covenant from the Children of Israel, (saying): “Do not worship (any) except Allah, and be good to parents, and the kindred, and the orphans, and the needy, and speak good to mankind, and establish prayer, and give the poor due. Then you turned away, except a few among you, while you are backsliders.”

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ
لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ
إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ
وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ
حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا
الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ

84. And when We took your covenant, (saying): “Do not shed your blood, nor expel yourselves (each other) from your homes.” Then you acknowledged, and you are a witness (to it).

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا
تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ
أَنفُسَكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ
وَأَنتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ

85. Then, you are those who kill yourselves (each other), and expel a faction of you (your people) from their homes, supporting (one another) against them by sin and transgression. And if they come to you as captives, you would ransom them, although it was forbidden to you their expulsion. Then do you believe in part of the Scripture, and disbelieve you in part.*92 Then what is the recompense of those who do so among you, except disgrace in the life of the world, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ
 أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقًا مِّنْكُمْ
 مِّن دِيَارِهِمْ تَظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ
 بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِن يَأْتُوكُمْ
 أُسْرَىٰ تَفْدُوهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحْرَمٌ
 عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ أَفْئُوتٌ مِّنُونَ
 بَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ
 بَعْضٌ مَّا جَزَاءُ مَن يَفْعَلُ
 ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي
 الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
 يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا
 اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ



*92 As a concrete example of this may be cited the strange conduct of the different clans of the Jews, who lived in the neighborhood of Al-Madinah. Before the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him), they had entered into alliances with the neighboring Arab clans, Aus and Khazraj. When one Arab clan went to war with the other clan, their respective Jewish allies also went to war against

each other. Thus Jews waged war upon Jews, whereas this was clearly against the teachings of their Scriptures which they knowingly violated. But when the Jews of one clan fell into the hands of the other clan as prisoners of war, they would redeem them after taking ransom for them. When they were questioned about this inhuman trade of their own brethren, they tried to justify it, saying that it was allowed by the Scriptures. It is strange that they forgot the same Scriptures which they brazen facedly violated by going to war against each other. Thus on the one hand, they accepted that part of the Scriptures which allowed ransom for prisoners and, on the other hand, rejected that part which prohibited war against their own brethren in faith.

86. Such are those who have bought the life of the world (in exchange) for the Hereafter. So the punishment will not be lightened from them, nor will they be helped.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ
الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ ۗ فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ
عَنَّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ



87. And certainly, We gave Moses the Scripture, and followed up with a succession of messengers after him. And We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear signs, and We supported him with the Holy spirit.^{*93} Is it that, whenever

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ
وَءَاتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۗ أَفَكُلَّمَا

there came to you a messenger with that which you yourselves did not desire, you were arrogant. Then a group you disbelieved, and (another) group you killed.

جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى
أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِيقًا
كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ



***93** *Ruh-ul-Qudus* (Holy Spirit) may refer to revelation or to angel Gabriel who brought it to the Prophets or to the Holy soul of Jesus Christ (peace be upon him) which Allah had created pure. “Clear signs” refer to his miracles and to his wonderful personal qualities and his miraculous birth, which were to every lover of truth a clear proof of the fact that he was a true Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah.

88. And they say: “Our hearts are covered over.”^{*94} Nay, but Allah has cursed them for their disbelief. So little is that which they believe.

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ
اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ



***94** By this they meant to say, “We are so staunch in our faith that we are not going to be influenced by anything that you might say to the contrary.” All those are slaves of irrational prejudices, delude themselves like this. They regard such an obstinate attitude as a sign of their firm faith and, therefore, a virtue. In fact, there can be no greater vice than to stick to one’s own traditional creeds and beliefs even though there are strong arguments against them.

89. And when there came to them a Book (the Quran) from Allah, confirming that which is with them, though before that they used to ask for a victory over those who disbelieved. Then when there came to them that which they recognized (to be the truth), they disbelieved in it.*95 So the curse of Allah is upon the disbelievers.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ
 مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا مِنْ
 قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا
 كَفَرُوا بِهِ ۗ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى
 الْكَافِرِينَ



***95** Before the advent of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the Jews were looking forward with great longings to a prophet about whom there were many prophecies in their own Scriptures. They used to pray: “May he come soon so that we should triumph over the disbelievers and regain our lost glory”. The people of Al-Madinah themselves bore witness that the Jews lived in this expectation. It had become a bye word with them to proclaim: “Let the pagans tyrannize over us as much as they like. When that Prophet comes, we will settle accounts with them.” Accordingly, when the people of Al-Madinah learnt that Muhammad (peace be upon him) had declared himself to be a Prophet, they recalled these things and thought that he might be the very Prophet about whom they had heard so much from the Jews. So they said to one another, “Let us go and accept him lest the Jews should forestall us.” That was the reason why the Muslims of Al-Madinah could not

understand the attitude of the Jews who, instead of accepting him as the Prophet for whom they had been so anxiously waiting, had become his greatest opponents. As to the fact that they did recognize the Prophet (peace be upon him), many proofs were furnished at that very time. The most authentic evidence is that of Safiyyah (one of the wives of the Prophet, may Allah be pleased with her), who was the daughter of one learned Jew and the niece of another. She says, "When the Prophet (peace be upon him) migrated to Al-Madinah, my father and uncle went to see him. When they returned home, I heard the following conversation between them: Uncle: Is he really the same Prophet about whom there occur prophecies in our Books? Father: By God, he is the same. Uncle: Are you quite sure of it? Father: Yes. Uncle: Then what is your intention? Father: I will oppose him as long as I live and will not let his mission succeed.

90. How evil is that for which they have sold their own selves,^{*96} that they would disbelieve in that which Allah has revealed (the Quran), grudging that Allah would send down of His favor upon whom He wills from among His servants.^{*97} So they have drawn on themselves wrath upon wrath. And for the

بِئْسَمَا اشْتَرَوْا بِهِۦٓ اَنْفُسَهُمْ اَنْ
يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ بَغْيًا اَنْ
يُنزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖٓ عَلٰٓى مَنْ
يَشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖٓ فَبَآءُ وَّ بِغَضَبِ
عَلٰٓى غَضَبٍ ۚ وَلِلْكَافِرِيْنَ
عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ



disbelievers there is a humiliating punishment.

***96** The verse may also mean: “What a miserable thing it is for which they have sold off their future life and salvation in the Hereafter.”

***97** They wished that the Prophet (peace be upon him) should have been one of their own race; therefore, they refused to accept him when he was raised among a race which they considered to be inferior to theirs. This meant that Allah ought to have consulted them before appointing His Messenger, and when Allah did not do so, and in His bounty appointed one He chose by Himself, they were offended.

91. And when it is said to them: “Believe in that which Allah has revealed,” they say: “We believe in that which was revealed to us.” And they disbelieve in that which came after it, though it is the truth confirming that which is with them. Say (O Muhammad): “Then why did you kill the prophets of Allah before, if you are believers.”

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ قَالُوا نُوْمِنُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا
وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ
الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ قُلْ
فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

92. And certainly, Moses came to you with clear signs, then you took the calf (for worship) after he

﴿٩٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَى
بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ

was away, and you were wrongdoers.

مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ



93. And when We took your covenant, and We raised the Mount above you, (saying): “Hold to that which We have given you firmly, and hear (Our Word).” They said: “We hear and we disobey.” And was made to absorb in their hearts (the worship of) the calf because of their disbelief. Say: “Evil is that which your faith enjoins on you, if you are believers.”

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَسْمِعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بَسْمًا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ



94. Say: “If the home of the Hereafter with Allah is exclusively for you, instead of (other) people, then wish for death, if you are truthful.”*98

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أَلْدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ



***98** This was a retort which implied that if they really were sure and enamored of the Hereafter, they would not dread death, but would prefer it to the life in this world. They,

however, were (and are) so much given to this worldliness that they were terrified by the very thought of death and the Hereafter.

95. And never will they wish for it, ever, because of that which their own hands have sent forth. And Allah is All Aware of the wrongdoers.

وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ
أَيْدِيهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

96. And you will surely find them the most greedy of mankind for life,^{*99} and (even) more than those who associate partners (to Allah). Everyone of them wishes if he could be given life of a thousand years. But it would not remove him in the least from the punishment, even (grant) of a life. And Allah is All Seer of what they do.

وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ
عَلَىٰ حَيَوٰةٍ ۖ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ
أَشْرَكُوا ۗ يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ
أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُزَحِّزِهِ
مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ۚ أَنْ يُعَمَّرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

*99 The literal translation of the word *ala hayat-in* is any kind of life. It means that they wished to live without giving any consideration to the kind of life they led. It did not matter whether that was a life of honor and grace, or a life of dishonor and disgrace.

97. Say: “Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel,^{*100} for indeed he brought it (Quran) down to your heart by

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ
فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ ۖ عَلَىٰ قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ

Allah's permission,^{*101} confirming that which was (revealed) before it,^{*102} and a guidance and glad tidings^{*103} for the believers."

مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

***100** The Jews not only reviled Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the believers, but also spoke abusively of Gabriel, the chosen divine messenger. They said. "He is our enemy: He is not an angel of blessings but of affliction."

***101** As Gabriel revealed the Quran to Muhammad (peace be upon him) by Allah's command, so by abusing Gabriel they actually abused Allah.

***102** That is, "You abuse Gabriel for no other reason than that he has brought down the Quran, whereas the Quran confirms the teachings of the Torah; so, in a way, you abuse the Torah as well.

***103** In the preceding verses, the Jews have been warned of the consequences of their attitude towards the Quran and the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In this part of the verse, they have been admonished to consider the matter from another point of view. As the Quran shows the way to right guidance and brings good tidings to the believers, it is sheer folly to oppose it and reject it. Thus, they harm none but themselves by depriving themselves of the true success which follows its acceptance.

98. "Whoever is an enemy to Allah, and His angels, and His messengers, and Gabriel, and Michael, then

مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ
وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ

indeed, Allah is an enemy to the disbelievers.”

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

99. And indeed We have sent down to you manifest verses, and none disbelieve in them except those who are disobedient.

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ
وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ

100. Is it (not true) that every time they took a covenant, a party of them threw it away. But most of them do not believe.

أَوْ كَلَّمَا عَاهَدُوا عَهْدًا نَبَذَهُ
فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

101. And when there came to them a messenger from Allah, confirming that which was with them, a party of those who had been given the Scripture, threw the Scripture of Allah behind their backs as if they did not know.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ
اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ
مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ
كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

102. And they follow that which the devils had recited during the kingdom of Solomon. ^{*104} And Solomon did not disbelieve, but the devils disbelieved, teaching

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَى
مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ ۗ وَمَا كَفَرَ
سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَٰكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ

people magic, and that which was sent down to the two angels in Babylon, Harut and Marut. And they (the two angels) did not teach (it) to anyone, till they had said: "We are only a trial, so do not disbelieve (in the guidance of Allah)."^{*105} Then from these two (angles) they learned that by which they could cause separation between man and his wife.^{*106} And they could not harm through it any one, except by Allah's permission. And they learned that which harmed them, and did not benefit them. And surely they knew that whoever purchased it (magic), will not have in the Hereafter any share. And surely evil is that for which they have sold themselves, if they only knew.

كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ
وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَابِلَ
هَرُوتَ وَمَرُوتَ ۚ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ
مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ ۗ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ
مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ
الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ ۚ وَمَا هُمْ
بِضَارِينَ بِهِ مِنَ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ
اللَّهِ ۗ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا
يَنْفَعُهُمْ ۚ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ
اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ
خَلْقٍ وَلَبِئْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ
أَنْفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا
يَعْلَمُونَ

***104** *Shayatin* may refer both to the devils from among the jinn or to the devils from among human beings. Here it

refers to both. When the Jews fell to the lowest depths of degeneration, morally and materially, and lost all the noble qualities because of their captivity, ignorance, poverty, homeless wanderings, etc. they turned to magic, sorcery, enchantment, witchcraft and other black arts and occult sciences. They began to adopt methods through which they could attain all their ends without putting in any kind of labor and toil. Then the devils began to beguile them by ascribing the origin of the occult sciences to Solomon and proclaimed that Solomon owed his wonderful kingdom and his extraordinary powers to the occult sciences which they were teaching the people. Jews at once succumbed and welcomed these as a great boon: so much so that even their rabbis began to practice magical arts. Consequently they lost all their interest in the Scriptures and would not listen to those who invited them to Allah's guidance. Here the Quran refutes not only the false accusation of sorcery against Solomon, but also the other charges leveled against him in the Bible (Kings, Chapter 11). According to it, Solomon was a lover of women and his wives seduced him to follow foreign gods, and he did what was evil in the eyes of the Eternal and put up shrines and idols of their gods. The Quran refutes these charges, so as to say, Solomon was never involved in any practices of disbelief, and only that one who was a disbeliever could be guilty of love of women, worship of gods and idols, and what was evil in the eyes of the Eternal.

*105 The incident referred to in this verse has been interpreted in different ways, but what I have been able to

understand is this: It appears that when the Istraelites were captives in Babylon, Allah sent two angels in human guise to test them. Just as the angels were sent to the people of the Prophet Lot (peace be upon him) as handsome boys, so they were sent to the Israelites as saints and religious guides. For this purpose, they might have set up an institution to teach magic and might also be warning everyone who came to learn these things, saying: We are holding out these temptations merely for your trial. You should not, therefore, ruin your Hereafter by seeking this science. But in spite of this warning, the people came to them in large numbers for talismans, charms and amulets. There is nothing strange in the coming of angels in human guise. Being agents of divine kingdom, they are endowed with extraordinary powers to perform their respective duties. As to the question why they taught magic to the people, we can understand this by an illustration. It is like the case of the police who sometimes arrange to hand over signed currency notes to corrupt officials as bribes in order to catch them red handed. Just as there is nothing wrong in this, so there is nothing wrong in what the angels did for the trial of the degenerate Jews.

***106** The greatest demand on this occult science was for an amulet or a device to help separate a wife from her husband in order to entice her. This shows how depraved they had become. Their greatest enjoyment was to make love with other people's wives and to separate them from their husbands. This was the worst form of depravity because it struck at the root of family life which is the very

foundation of society. If the relations between husband and wife are sound, the whole society will be sound and solid. But if they are bad, the whole society will become rotten. Thus they were the worst offenders because they cut at the root of those relations on which depended their own solidarity and that of their society. A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that Satan sends his agents to the four corners of the world. When they come back to him to report, they relate the deeds they have performed. One says that he has created such and such dispute, and the other says that he has spread chaos and so on, but Satan goes on commenting, “You have done nothing.” Then comes another who says; “I have caused division between a man and his wife.” Satan hugs him and says, “You have indeed done a great deed.” In the light of this tradition, it becomes clear why the two angels were sent to the Israelites with the charm that caused division between man and wife; that was, in fact, the very standard which could measure accurately their moral degradation.

103. And if they had believed and feared (Allah), then the reward from Allah would have been better, if they only knew.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوبَةٌ
مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّوْ كَانُوا
يَعْلَمُونَ

104. O those who believe, ^{*107} do not say (to the Prophet): “Raina (word of insult but sounding as ‘listen

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا
تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُولُوا أَنْظِرْنَا

to us’),” but say “Look upon us,” and listen.*108 And for the disbelievers there is a painful punishment.

وَأَسْمَعُوا
وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

*107 From this verse onward, the believers have been warned to be on their guard against the different kinds of mischief which the Jews were fomenting against Islam and the Islamic community. Besides this, doubts and suspicions which were being disseminated by them in the minds and hearts of the Muslims have been removed and those special problems which came up for discussion between the Muslims and the Jews have been dealt with. Here it should also be kept in view that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to live at Al-Madinah, and Islam began to spread in the country around it, the Jews tried to involve the Muslims in various kinds of religious disputes and theological controversies. They also tried to affect the simple and sincere Muslims with the same disease from which they themselves were suffering, that is, the malady of hair splitting and asking frivolous and irrelevant questions. For this purpose, they attended even the meetings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and resorted to cunning and subtle talk, which showed how depraved they had become.

*108 Whenever the Jews came to attend the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) assembly, they showed every kind of outward respect to him but surreptitiously tried their best to insult and slight him. They would use ambiguous words derisively or twist them into an insult by a slight

mispronunciation. For instance, if they wanted to invite his attention to any particular thing they would say “Raina” which means “Just pay attention, please,” but it has other meanings also. In Hebrew there was a word of similar sound which meant, “Listen, may you become deaf,” and in Arabic itself it also meant, “a proud and ignorant person.” Besides this, in colloquial speech it meant, “If you listen to us, we will listen to you.” Then with a little twist of the tongue it could be turned into “Raiyana” which means “Our shepherd”. In order to guard against the use of such ambiguous words as sounded complimentary but might be abused by wicked people. The believers were advised to say, “unzurna” means “kindly pay attention to us,” which could serve the same purpose without having any secondary bad sense like “raina”. They were also advised to listen attentively to the Prophet (peace be upon him) so that there should be no need of inviting his attention.

105. Neither wish those who disbelieve among the people of the Scripture, nor those who associate others (with Allah), that there should be sent down to you any good from your Lord. And Allah selects for His mercy whom He wills. And Allah is the owner of great bounty.

مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ
الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

106. We do not abrogate any verse, or cause it to be forgotten, ^{*109} (but) We bring better than it, or similar to it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things.

﴿ مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا ۗ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴾



***109** This is the answer to an objection which the Jews raised to create doubts in the minds of the Muslims. They argued like this: The Quran says that the former Scriptures had been sent down by Allah and that it also has been sent down by Him. If it is so, why does the Quran then give such commands as differ from those contained in the former Books? How can the same Allah give different commands at different times? Besides, they said, the Quran asserts that the Jews and the Christians have forgotten a part of the teachings sent down to them. How is it possible that the teachings of Allah could be obliterated from memory? They did not raise these objections for the sake of arriving at the truth but for the sake of creating mischief. Allah answers their objections thus: “I am the Sovereign and My powers are unlimited. I can repeal any order of Mine or allow it to be forgotten, but I substitute for it something that serves the same purpose better or at least equally well.”

107. Do you not know that it is Allah to whom belongs the dominion

﴿ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ ﴾

of the heavens and the earth. And you do not have, other than Allah, any protector, nor helper.

مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا
نَصِيرٍ

108. Or do you intend that you ask your messenger (Muhammad) as Moses was asked before.^{*110} And whoever exchanges faith for disbelief, then indeed, he has strayed from a right way.

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا
رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سَأَلَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ
قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ
بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ
السَّبِيلِ

***110** The Jews were addicted to hair splitting. They put subtle and unnecessary questions to the Muslims and would incite them to inquire about the same from the Prophet (peace be upon him). As they intended merely to create mischief, Allah warned the Muslims not to follow their example. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also advised the believers not to indulge in the pastime of making fine distinctions and asking unnecessary questions because such things had ruined the communities that went before them. They should do what they were asked to do and refrain from what they were prohibited. They should not waste their powers and energies in useless pursuits but attend to important matters.

109. Many of the people of the Scripture wish if

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ

they could turn you back as disbelievers after your belief. Out of envy from their own selves, after what has become manifest to them of the truth. So forgive and overlook,^{*111} until Allah brings His command. Indeed, Allah has power over all things.

لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ
كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ أَنفُسِهِمْ
مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ
فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ
اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

***111** That is, their enmity and jealousy should not incite you to lose your balance of mind and involve you in arguments, discussions and disputes with them. You should not lose your dignity and waste your precious time in such useless pursuits but should go on doing the right and wait patiently for Allah's judgment. You should remember Allah and do good deeds because these are the things that will avail you before Allah and not those things and the like.

110. And establish prayer, and give the poor due. And whatever you send forth before (you) for yourselves of good, you will find it with Allah. Indeed, Allah is All Seer of what you do.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا
الزَّكَاةَ ۚ وَمَا تَقَدَّمُوا
لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ
اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
بَصِيرٌ

111. And they say: “None shall enter paradise except he be a Jew or a Christian.” That is their own wishful thinking.^{*112} Say: “Bring your proof if you are truthful.”

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرِيًّا تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ



***112** It means, in fact these are merely their own wishes, but they assert these as if they were actually going to happen.

112. Nay, but whoever submits his face (self) to Allah, and he is a doer of good, then for him is his reward with his Lord. And no fear shall be upon them, nor shall they grieve.

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ



113. And the Jews say: “The Christians are not upon any thing (true faith).” And the Christians say: “The Jews are not upon any thing (true faith).” And they (both) read the Scripture.^{*113} Thus speak those (pagans) who do not know, same as their words. So Allah will judge

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتْ النَّصْرِيُّ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ النَّصْرِيُّ لَيْسَتْ الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ

between them on the Day of Resurrection about that in which they used to differ.

فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

***113** It refers to the idolaters of Arabia, who were ignorant of the Scriptures, and sanctuary for mankind and enjoined the people to dedicate to worship the place where Abraham (peace be upon him) used to stand for prayer.

114. And who is more unjust than the one who forbids, in the places of worship of Allah, that His name should be mentioned therein, and strives for their ruin. Those, it was not for them that they should enter them (places of worship) except in fear.^{*114} For them in this world is disgrace, and for them in the Hereafter is a great punishment.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسْجِدَ
اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَى
فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَئِكَ مَا كَانَ
لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا
خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ

عَظِيمٌ

***114** That is, the places of worship should not be in the hands of such transgressors, who become their trustees, but under the management of those who possess power and fear Allah. This arrangement will prevent the wicked people from doing any mischief there for fear of retribution. It also implied that the disbelievers of Makkah had quite unjustly prevented their own brethren (who had

embraced Islam) from entering the Kabah which they themselves called the House of Allah.

115. And to Allah belong the east and the west. So wherever you turn, there is the Face of Allah.*115 Indeed, Allah is All Encompassing, All Knowing.*116

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۚ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهُ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

***115** That is, Allah is not confined to any one direction, east or west, but is Master of all directions and places. If a particular direction is fixed for worship, it does not mean that Allah resides in that direction only. There is, therefore, no need to enter into disputes as to why a certain direction and place has been fixed instead of the other or why faces were at first turned towards a particular direction but now are being turned towards a different direction and a different place.

***116** Allah is neither limited, nor narrow minded, nor short sighted, nor indigent, as they suppose He is. On the contrary, His Kingdom is boundless and so are His vision and generosity. He also knows which of His servants remembers Him and also where and when and with what intention.

116. And they say: “Allah has taken unto Himself a son.” Be He glorified. But to Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. All surrender with obedience

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا ۚ سُبْحٰنَهُ ۗ بَل لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۗ كُلُّ لَّهُ قٰنِطُوْنَ

to Him.

117. The Originator of the heavens and the earth. And when He decrees a matter, He only says to it: "Be." And it is.

بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ
كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿١١٧﴾

118. And those who have no knowledge say: "Why does not Allah speak to us, or (why not) comes to us some sign."*¹¹⁷ So said those before them, similar to their words. Their hearts are alike.*¹¹⁸ We have indeed made clear the signs for the people who believe with certainty.*¹¹⁹

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا
يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ
كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِن
قَبْلِهِم مِّثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَبَهتْ
قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ
يُوقِنُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

***117** They demanded that either Allah Himself should come before them and say, "This is my Book and these are my instructions for you to follow." Or, He should show such a sign to them as would conclusively demonstrate that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was really a messenger of Allah and that what he presented was revealed to him by Allah.

***118** That is, the objections and demands of those who are opposing the truth today are not new. These are exactly the same as have always been put forward by those who go astray from the right way, as all the wicked people of all

ages think alike and follow the same line of argument.

***119** The demand that Allah Himself should speak to them was so absurd that it needed no reply. As to the other demand that Allah should show them a sign, Allah answers that He has shown many clear signs but those who are not inclined to believe cannot see them.

119. Certainly, We have sent you (O Muhammad) with the truth, as a bringer of good tidings, and a warner.*120 And you will not be asked about the companions of Hell fire.

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا
وَنَذِيرًا وَلَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ
الْجَحِيمِ



***120** Not to speak of the other signs, the most conspicuous sign was the personality of Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself. They knew everything about his life before prophethood; the conditions of his country and nation and the circumstances and environment under which he was brought up and how he spent the first forty years of his life before his appointment as a prophet.

120. And the Jews will never be pleased with you, nor the Christians, until you follow their religion.*121 Say: “Indeed, the guidance of Allah, it is the (only) guidance.” And if you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of the

وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا
النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ
إِنَّ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ
وَلَئِنْ أَتَبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ
الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ

knowledge, (then) you would not have against Allah any protector, nor a helper.

مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٢٠﴾

***121** That is, the reason why these people are displeased with you is not that they are sincere seekers after truth and that you have failed to make it as clear to them as it should have been. On the contrary, they are offended with you just because you have made the truth so clear that no loophole has been left for them to make religion a concern for the gratification of their desires and lusts. Therefore leave them alone and do not try to reconcile them because it is not possible to please them unless you also adopt the same attitude towards religion as they have adopted. They would have been very happy with you, if you had acted hypocritically like them and made God worship a cloak for self worship. It is impossible to please them unless you follow their example in your beliefs and practices.


121. Those to whom We have given the Book, they recite it with its true recital. Those (are the ones who) believe in it.^{*122} And whoever disbelieves in it, then such are those who are the losers.

الَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ
حَقًّا تِلَاوَتِهِ ءَأُولَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِهِ ؕ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ ءَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

***122** The reference is to the pious among the people of the Book, who study the Quran honestly and sincerely and accept as true what is true according to the Book of Allah.

122. O Children of Israel, ^{*123} remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and that I preferred you over the worlds (people).

يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي
الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي
فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ



***123** From here begins a new discourse. In order to understand it, the following should be kept in mind:

(1) After Noah, Abraham (peace be upon them) was the first prophet who was appointed by God to spread the universal message of Islam (submission to One God). He began his mission in his own country, Iraq, and invited the people to Islam (submission to One God). Then he visited Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Arabia with the same mission. Afterwards he appointed his deputies in different places. He deputed Lot (peace be upon them), his nephew, to Trans-Jordan, Isaac (peace be upon them), his son, to Syria and Palestine, and Ismail (peace be upon them), the elder son, to Arabia. Then he was commanded by Allah to build at Makkah the house of worship which is called the Kabah and to make it the centre of his mission.

(2) From the two sons of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) sprang two nations Ismailites and Israelites. The former were the descendants of Ishmael (peace be upon him) who settled in Arabia. The Quraish and some other Arab clans were his direct descendants but even those Arab clans which were not his descendants claimed to be Ismailites because they were more or less influenced by his mission. The latter, the Israelites, were the descendants of

Jacob, son of Isaac. Jospheh, Moses, David, Solomon, John, Jesus (peace be upon them all) and many other prophets rose from among them. They were called Israelites after Israel, the second name of Jacob (peace be upon him). Some other people who accepted their religion also merged into them. All the Prophets of Israel, including Jesus (peace be upon him), preached Islam (submission to One God), but when the Israelites became degenerate and lost their religion (Islam), they invented Judaism and later Christianity.

(3) Abraham (peace be upon him) was appointed to invite the world to surrender to One God and to reform the people in accordance with God's guidance. He himself surrendered and acted upon the knowledge he received from God and exerted his utmost to propagate that knowledge and to persuade all the people to submit to the Sovereign of the universe. Therefore he was made the leader of the world. Afterwards, this leadership, with all its responsibilities, was transferred to the Israelites, the descendants of Isaac and Jacob (peace be upon them). This was the special favor which the Israelites were asked, over and over again, to remember. Accordingly, during the time of Solomon (peace be upon him), the Holy Temple at Jerusalem became the centre and the qiblah (the place towards which face was to be turned during prayer) of all the worshippers of God, as long as the Israelites remained the leaders of this mission.

(4) In the foregoing address (Ayats 40-121), Allah has charged the Israelites with their sins of omission and

commission during their leadership. Therefore the Quran points out their moral condition and tells them plainly, “You have proved yourselves quite unworthy of the favor shown to you. You have not only neglected to perform the obligations of leadership but have also discarded the guidance of Allah from your own lives. Now the things have come to such a pass that you have become a community utterly unfit for leadership.”

(5) Now they are being told that leadership is not the privilege of the descendants of Abraham as such, for none has any exclusive claim to it by the mere accident of birth. It was bestowed only upon those who submitted to Allah and followed His guidance like Abraham (peace be upon him). As they have swerved from that way, and proved utterly unworthy of leadership, they are deposed from it.

(6) It also implied that the non-Israelite followers of the Prophet Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them), who were proud of their relationship with Abraham (peace be upon him) had also swerved from the way of Abraham (peace be upon him). Similarly, the idolaters of Arabia, who were also proud of their relationship with Abraham and Ismail (peace be upon them) have been told that they too were utterly unworthy of leadership, for they, too, had swerved from the way of Abraham and Ismail (peace be upon them).

(7) Now that the Israelites had been deposed from leadership, the argument proceeds to show why Muhammad (peace be upon him) was raised as a Prophet from among the descendants of Ismail, in answer to the

prayer of Abraham and Ismail. It is, because he followed the same way as was followed by Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets (peace be upon them) before him. He and his followers believed in all the prophets sent by Allah, and invited the world to the same way that was shown by the former prophets. Therefore the followers of this Prophet alone were worthy of that leadership.

(8) With the transfer of leadership, it was essential to change its centre as well. As long as the Israelites were the leaders, the Holy Temple at Jerusalem was the centre and qiblah of all the followers of the truth. That was why the Holy Prophet (peace be upon them) and his followers also used to turn their faces at first towards it at prayer. But when the Israelites were deposed from leadership, the Holy Temple automatically ceased to be the qiblah. It was therefore, declared that the Kabah at Makkah, where Muhammad (peace be upon him) started his mission, is to be the qiblah in future. As it also was the centre of Abraham's (peace be upon him) mission, neither the Israelites nor the Arabs could object to it because both acknowledged Abraham (peace be upon him) as their Prophet and ancestor. Thus there was no reason left for them to raise any objection against making the Kabah the centre of the divine mission. But the fact is that obdurate people will continue arguing against the truth even after knowing it to be the truth.

(9) After declaring the Muslims to be the leaders, with the Kabah as their centre, Allah gives instructions (Ayats 153-286) for their guidance to enable them to carry out their

obligations as leaders of the world.

123. And fear a Day (of Judgment) when no soul will avail (another) soul at all, nor will compensation be accepted from it, nor will intercession benefit it, nor will they be helped.

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ
نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ
وَلَا تَنْفَعُهَا شَفَعَةٌ وَلَا هُمْ
يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

124. And when Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain words (commands),^{*124} so he fulfilled them. He (Allah) said: “Surely, I have appointed you a leader for mankind.” He said: “And of my descendants.” He (Allah) said: “My covenant does not reach the wrongdoers.”^{*125}

﴿١٢٤﴾ وَإِذِ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ
بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي
جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ
ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

***124** At different places, the Quran has described in details the hard test to which Abraham (peace be upon him) was put before he was made the leader and guide of mankind. When he passed successfully through all those trials and proved himself fit and capable of performing this great responsibility, he was exalted to this high position. Ever since the truth was revealed to him, his whole life was a series of sacrifices in its cause. He sacrificed everything which is valued in life, and encountered every kind of

danger in the way of truth.

***125** That is, this promise shall apply only to those of your descendants who will be good and capable, and not to those who will be transgressors. Thus, obviously, the misguided children of Israel and the idolatrous children of Ishmael were not entitled to this promise.

125. And when We made the House (Kaaba) a place of return for mankind, and a safety. (Saying): “And take, from the place where Abraham stood, as a place of prayer.” And We commanded to Abraham and Ishmael that: “Purify My house for those who go around, and those who stay therein and those who bow down (and) prostrate.”^{*126}

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ
وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَن طَهِّرَا
بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ
وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ



***126** The purification of the House was not only to be from rubbish but also from all kinds of false worship so that the name of Allah alone should be glorified in it. The real purification of Allah’s House is that no other name than His should be mentioned in it. For the worship of anyone else or the invoking of any other name for help really polluted the House. This verse charges, in a subtle manner, the Quraish with the crime of keeping idols in the Kabah and worshipping them instead of Allah. It implies that these idolaters who were proud of being the heirs of Abraham

and Ismail (peace be upon them) were not discharging the obligations of that heritage. Hence they, like the Israelites, have forfeited all rights to the promise of Allah made to Abraham (peace be upon him). It refers to the idolaters of Arabia, who were ignorant of the Scriptures, and sanctuary for mankind and enjoined the people to dedicate to worship the place where Abraham (peace be upon him) used to stand for prayer.

126. And when Abraham said: “My Lord, make this a secure city, and provide its people with fruits, those among them who believe in Allah and the Last Day.” He (Allah) said: “And whoever disbelieves, so I shall give him enjoyment for a little while,^{*127} then I shall force him to the punishment of the Fire. And (it is) an evil destination.”

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ
هَذَا بَلَدًا ءَامِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ
مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ
فَأُمْتِعْهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَى
عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَيُسَّ الْمَصِيرُ

***127** When Abraham (peace be upon him) prayed to Allah to provide his descendants with the necessities of life, he excluded from his prayer the would be transgressors, because Allah had excluded them from His promise of leadership. Allah, however, removed his misunderstanding immediately, saying, “There is a great difference between the two things. While the righteous leadership will be bestowed upon the true believers only, the necessities of life

will be given to both the believers and the unbelievers.” It also implies that the possession of wealth is not the standard to judge whether Allah is pleased with one or not. If one is given abundance of wealth, it does not necessarily mean that Allah is pleased with him and considers him to be worthy of leadership as well.

127. And when Abraham was raising the foundations of the House, and Ishmael. (Saying): “Our Lord, accept (this) from us. Indeed, You are the All Hearer, the All Knower.”

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ
الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ
مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ



128. “Our Lord, and make us submissive to You, and from our offspring, a nation submissive to You. And show us our rituals (of pilgrimage), and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the one who accepts repentance, the Most Merciful.”

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِن
ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا
مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ



129. “Our Lord, and raise in them a messenger from among them, who shall recite to them Your verses, and shall teach them the Book and wisdom and purify

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ
يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ

them.*128 Indeed, You are
the All Mighty, the All
Wise.”*129

أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ
١٢٩

*128 “Purify them”, purify their beliefs, ideas, deeds, habits, customs, culture, politics, in short, every aspect of life.

*129 As Allah has full powers and perfect wisdom, He granted this prayer of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and made Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) His Messenger.

130. And who would be averse to the religion of Abraham, except him who befools himself. And We had indeed chosen him in the world. And indeed, in the Hereafter, he will be among the righteous.

وَمَنْ يَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا
مَنْ سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ
أَصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ
١٣٠

131. When his Lord said to him: “Submit.”*130 He said: “I have submitted myself to the Lord of the Worlds.”

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ
أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
١٣١

*130 The word used in the text is *aslim*, that is, become a Muslim, or adopt the attitude of Islam (surrender to the will of God). Thus a Muslim is one who surrenders himself completely to God and obeys Him; who acknowledges God alone as His Lord, Master, Sovereign, Ruler, Lawgiver and God of worship; and who adopts the way of life prescribed by Him. Islam is the religious system based on this creed

and attitude. This was the religion of all the Prophets who came to different countries and different nations.

132. And Abraham enjoined the same (submission to Allah) upon his sons, and Jacob, (saying):^{*131} “O my sons, indeed, Allah has chosen for you this religion,^{*132} so do not die except while you have submitted.”^{*133}

وَوَصَّىٰ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ
وَيَعْقُوبُ يَبْنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ
لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ
مُسْلِمُونَ



***131** Special mention of Jacob (peace be upon him) has been made because the Israelites were his direct descendants.

***132** The Arabic word *deen* has a much wider scope than the English word religion. It covers life in its entirety, and no aspect of individual or community life is outside its realm.

***133** Though Jacob’s (peace be upon him) death has been described in details in the Bible, no mention has been made of this last will of his. It, however, has been given in details in the Talmud and its substance is more or less the same as that contained in the Quran: At the time when Jacob (peace be upon him) quitted this world, he summoned his sons and said to them, “Serve the Lord your God, and He will deliver you from all trouble, even as He delivered your fathers. Teach your children to love God, and observe His commandments, for God will guard those who do justly and walk in righteousness through all his ways.” The sons

of Jacob (peace be upon him) responded, “All that you have commanded us, our father, we will do. May God be with us.” And Jacob (peace be upon him) answered: “The Lord will be with you if you shall depart not from His Ways to the right hand or the left.” The same thing about the Prophet Jacob’s (peace be upon him) will has been cited in Midr. Rabbah, “Have you any doubts in your hearts concerning the Holy One, Blessed be He.” They said, “Hear O Israel, our Father. As there is no doubt in thy heart, so neither is there in ours. For the Lord is our God, and He is One.”

133. Or were you present when death approached Jacob, when he said to his sons: “What will you worship after me.” They said: “We shall worship your God, and the God of your fathers, Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, One God, and to Him we have submitted.”

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ
 يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتُ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا
 تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ
 إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
 وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا
 وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

134. That was a nation which has passed away. For them is that which they earned, and for you is what you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do. *134

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا
 كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا
 تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

***134** That is, though you are their descendants, you have no real connection with them; nor have you any right to claim relationship with them, when you have swerved from their way. Allah will not ask you what your forefathers did but He will ask you what you yourselves did. What we call our actions and deeds are, according to the Quran, our earnings, because every action and every deed either produces a good result or a bad consequence. If it is good, Allah will be pleased with us and give us its due reward. If it is bad, He will inflict due punishment upon us. The Quran refers to actions and deeds as earnings in order to focus attention on the serious results produced by them.

135. And they say: “Be Jews or Christians, you will be guided.” Say: “Nay, (we follow) the religion of Abraham, the firm in faith, and he was not of those who associate partners (with Allah).”^{*135}

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ
 نَصْرَىٰ تَهْتَدُوا ۗ قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۗ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
 الْمُشْرِكِينَ



***135** In order to understand the true significance of this answer, two things should be kept in mind:
 (1) Judaism and Christianity were born long after the death of Abraham (peace be upon him). Judaism, with its special rituals, peculiar regulations, etc., took its birth and name some four hundred years before Christ. As to Christianity, it took its name and adopted its special creed and form long after the recall of Jesus (peace be upon him). Thus it is clear that their claim that one must become a Jew

or a Christian in order to obtain guidance was historically untenable. For in that case, Abraham, Jesus and all the other Prophets (peace be upon them) and all the good people who had passed away long before the birth of Judaism and Christianity could not be counted among the rightly guided persons for the simple reason that these religions did not exist at the time they lived. Thus, it was obvious that the Jews and Christians could not say that these Prophets were not rightly guided, nor could they claim that they followed Judaism or Christianity. As a corollary to this, true guidance did not, even according to them, consist of the particular features which divided them into two distinct religions, but it was that eternal universal way which has been shown by all the Messengers of Allah and which has always been followed by the good people of all ages.

(2) It also meant to warn the Jews and the Christians that both practiced shirk and had, therefore, swerved from the way of Abraham (peace be upon him), who did not associate any other object with Allah in his worship, his reverence, his submission and his obedience to Him. They could not deny this because their own Scriptures bore testimony to it.

136. Say (O Muslims):
“We believe in Allah and that which has been sent down to us, and that which was sent down to Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and

قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا
وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ

Jacob, and the tribes, and that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and that which was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any one of them,^{*136} and to Him we have submitted.”

وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا
 أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا
 نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ
 مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

***136** “We make no distinction between any one of them”, means that we believe in all the Prophets of Allah and reject none. It is obvious that all the Prophets who came from Allah brought the same truth and invited the people to the same guidance and the right way. Hence anyone who follows the truth must accept all the Prophets. Those who accept one Prophet and reject the other really reject even the one whom they profess to accept. Had they followed the universal Guidance taught by Moses, Jesus and other Prophets (peace be upon them), they could not have rejected any other Prophet, i.e. Muhammad (peace be upon him). As a matter of fact, they were not following the teachings of any Prophet, but merely professing to accept their own Prophets just because their fathers did so. Thus their real religion was prejudice, race worship and blind imitation of their forefathers.

137. So if they believe in the same that which you believe in, then indeed they are (rightly) guided. And if they

فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ
 فَقَدْ أَهْتَدُوا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا

turn away, then they are only in schism. So Allah will be sufficient for you against them. And He is the All Hearer, the All Knower.

هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ
اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ



138. (Take) color (religion) of Allah,^{*137} and whose color (religion) can be better than Allah's. And we are His worshippers.

صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنْ
اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَابِدُونَ



***137** It may also mean, “We took Allah’s color.” Before the advent of Christianity, it was a custom among the Jews to give a bath to those who accepted Judaism. It meant to imply that all the sins of the baptized person were washed away and he had received a new color of life. This same custom was later on adopted by the Christians and it was termed Baptism, which is a ceremonial immersion in water or an application of water as an initiatory rite or sacrament of the Christian church. It is applied not only to the new converts but also to all new born babies. The Quran says that there is nothing substantial in this ceremonial coloring, since it is not necessary for salvation. For this purpose one should take color from Allah by adopting His way and submitting to His law.

139. Say (O Muhammad): “Do you argue with us about Allah, and He is our Lord and your Lord.^{*138} And for

قُلْ أَتَحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا
وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَا أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ

us are our deeds, and for you are your deeds. And we are sincere to Him.”*139

أَعْمَلِكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مَخْلُصُونَ



*138 That is, what we only say is that Allah is Lord of all of us, and we should all submit to Him. Why should you then have any dispute with us concerning Allah? Is it a thing concerning which you should have any dispute with us? As a matter of fact, it is we who have a cause of dispute and not you, for it is you (and not us) who associate other objects of worship with Allah. The original Arabic words may also mean: “Are you having a dispute with us for the sake of Allah?” It would then mean: “If you really are having a dispute with us for the sake of Allah and not for the sake of prejudice or worldly interests, it can be settled amicably.”

*139 That is, you are responsible for your deeds and we are for ours. If you have associated other partners with Allah in His Godhead and if you worship and obey them, you are free to do so but you yourselves will bear its consequences. As to the dispute between us, it can be ended if you allow us the same freedom of worship that we allow you. When we do not dispute with you about your associating other gods with Allah, you should at least concede us the right to worship the One Allah without associating any partner with Him, Whom we have chosen for exclusive worship and submission.

140. Or do you say that Abraham, and

أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes were Jews or Christians. Say: “Do you know more, or (does) Allah.*140 And who is more unjust than one who conceals a testimony which he has from Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.”*141

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ
وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا
هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلْ ءَأَنْتُمْ
أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن
كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ



*140 This question was addressed to the common people of the Jews and Christians, who in their ignorance sincerely believed that all these great Prophets were Jews or Christians.

*141 This question was addressed to their scholars, who were not ignorant of the fact that Judaism and Christianity with their special rituals, etc., were the products of a later age. In spite of this they were under the delusion that the truth was confined to their own sects, and they kept their common people under the delusion that salvation depended on those beliefs, ways and regulations, which had been invented, long after the Prophets, by their own rabbis and priests, spiritual leaders and interpreters. Whenever they were confronted with the question: “To which of these sects of yours did Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and other Prophets (peace be upon them) belong?”, they would never answer

this directly. For they could not claim that those Prophets belonged to their particular sect as they knew that history proved that claim to be absurd. But, in spite of this established fact, they could not admit it in clear words that the Prophets were neither Jews nor Christians, because this would have automatically refuted their claims.

141. That was a nation which has passed away. For them is that which they earned, and for you is that which you earn. And you will not be asked of what they used to do.

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا
كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا
تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ



142. The foolish among the people will say: “What has turned them away from their qiblah which they used to face.”*142 Say: “To Allah belong the east and the west. He guides whom He wills to a straight path.”*143

❖ سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ
مَا وَلَّيْنَاهُمْ عَنْ قِبَلَتِهِمْ الَّتِي كَانُوا
عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ
يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ



*142 After the Hijrah the Prophet (peace be upon him) continued to turn his face in the prayers towards the Temple (at Jerusalem) for about 16 or 17 months; then he was commanded to turn his face towards the Kabah (at Makkah). This change of the qiblah (direction for prayers)

with its implications has been described in details in the succeeding verses.

***143** Those foolish people who did not have the sense to appreciate the true significance of this change began to raise different kinds of objections in order to create doubts in the minds of the believers. Being narrow minded, they thought that Allah was confined to a particular point or direction and the change of qiblah meant turning away from Him. This absurd objection has been removed by the declaration that the east, the west, and all the other directions belong to Allah. The fact that the qiblah lies in a certain direction does not mean that Allah is confined to that direction only. Those people who are blessed with guidance cannot entertain such narrow ideas.

143. And thus We have made you a middle nation, that you may be witnesses against mankind, and the messenger may be a witness against you.^{*144} And We did not make the qiblah which you used to face, except that We might know him who follows the messenger, from him who would turn back on his heels.^{*145} And indeed, it is difficult except for those whom Allah has guided. And Allah would never

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا
لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ
عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ
الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى
عَقْبَيْهِ ۚ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا
عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ

cause your faith to be wasted. Indeed, Allah, towards people, is Kind, Most Merciful.

اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

*144 This is the declaration of the leadership of the Muslim community. It refers both to the guidance of Allah which was sent through Muhammad (peace be upon him) and to the change of the qiblah. It was by following the guidance that the Muslims achieved those excellences which led to their appointment as the community of the Golden Mean, and it was the change of the qiblah from the Temple to the Kabah that was an indication that the Israelites had been deposed from the leadership and the Muslims had been appointed to it. Therefore the change of the qiblah from the Temple to the Kabah was not merely a change of direction as the foolish people took it to be, but it was really the formal declaration of the change of leadership from the Israelites to the followers of Muhammad (peace be upon him).

The word *ummat wasat* is so comprehensive in meaning that no English word can correctly convey its full sense. It is a righteous and noble community which does not go beyond proper limits, but follows the middle course and deals out justice evenly to the nations of the world as an impartial judge, and bases all its relations with other nations on truth and justice.

The meaning of, We have appointed you as *ummat wasat* so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you, is: On the

Judgment Day, when all mankind will be called to account together, the Messenger, as Our authorized representative, will give evidence in regard to you to prove that he had imparted to you, by word and by deed, without any reservation, the whole teaching of sound thought, righteous deed and justice given by Us. Then you, being representatives of the Messenger, in your turn, will be required to give evidence to prove that you had done your utmost to impart, by word and deed, to mankind whatever the Messenger had imparted to you just as you had received it from the Messenger.

Thus, a person or group's being appointed by God a witness by itself amounts to its being exalted to the office of leadership and religious guide in the world. Though it is a position of honor, it carries very onerous responsibilities with it. It requires that the Muslim community should become a living witness of piety, truth and justice before the world just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) bore witness before it, and its words and deeds should suffice to demonstrate to the world the meaning of truth, justice and piety. It also implies that it is a great responsibility for which the Muslim community is accountable. Just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) was responsible for conveying the guidance of Allah, so the Muslims are responsible for conveying it to the people of the world. If they fail to prove in the court of Allah that they have discharged this responsibility to the best of their ability, they will be condemned there. And they along with their evil geniuses and accomplices shall be accountable for all the evils which

prevailed during their term of leadership, if they had shown any relaxation in the performance of their obligation as witnesses of the truth. On the Day of Judgment, Allah will surely ask, “What did you do to prevent it when you saw the epidemic of sin, tyranny and impiety breaking out in the world?”

***145** The change of the qiblah also served to separate the believers from the slaves of prejudice and racialism. On the one side, there were the Arabs who were not ready to give up their own Kabah and to adopt the Temple at Jerusalem as the qiblah. They were tried first. It was a hard test but the sincere believers passed successfully through this and the worshippers of the idol of nationalism failed. Now when the qiblah was changed from Jerusalem to the Kabah, those Jews and Christians who had embraced Islam were put to the test. It was very difficult for them to accept any other qiblah than the one of their forefathers. Thus the worshippers of race, who turned back from Islam were separated from the worshippers of Allah and finally the worshippers of Allah only remained with the Prophet (peace be upon him).

144. We have certainly seen the turning of your face (O Muhammad) toward heaven. So, We shall surely turn you to a qiblah that you will be pleased with. So turn your face toward Al Masjid al Haram, and

قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي
السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا
فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا

wherever you (O Muslims) may be, so turn your faces toward it.*146 And indeed, those who have been given the Scripture know that it is the truth from their Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what they do.

وَجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِلٍ
عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ



*146 This is the commandment for the change of the qiblah, which was enjoined in Rajab or Shaban, A.H. 2. When this was revealed, according to Ibn Saad, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was leading the Zuhr (early afternoon) prayer in the house of Bishr bin Bara bin Maarur where he had gone in response to an invitation. This verse was revealed when he had gone through half of the prayer. He at once turned his face towards the Kabah during the prayer and those who were saying their prayers, following his lead did the same. Afterwards, it was announced publicly in Al-Madinah and its suburbs that the qiblah had been changed. Bara bin Azib says that at one place this announcement was heard at a time when the people had bent down in the prayer. But when they heard the commandment, they turned about in the same posture towards the Kabah. Anas bin Malik says that the people of Bani Salamah heard of the change of the qiblah next morning at a time when they had already gone through half of the prayer. As soon as they heard the announcement: Beware, the qiblah has been changed to the Kabah, the whole congregation turned about towards the Kabah.

In this connection, it should also be kept in mind that the Holy Temple at Jerusalem is to the north of Al-Madinah and the Kabah at Makkah to the south of it. The Imam (who led the prayer) must have walked to the rear of the congregation, who had to turn about and also to move about a little in order to adjust the rows. All these things have been related in detail in the traditions.

Moreover, it is quite clear from “We have certainly seen the turning of your face (O Muhammad) toward heaven” and “So, We shall surely turn you to a qiblah that you will be pleased with”, that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to pray for, and was expecting this change. For he himself was feeling that the term of the leadership of the Israelites had come to an end and consequently Jerusalem had also ceased to be the centre. Therefore Kabah which had been set up by the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) should be the qiblah.

AlMasjid AlHaram means the “Inviolable place of worship and reverence”. It refers to that place of worship at Makkah which has the Kabah in its centre.

The commandment “So turn your faces toward it (the Kabah)” does not mean that one should turn one’s face exactly to the point of the Kabah from every part of the globe. Obviously it is very difficult for everyone to do so at all times from all places of the globe. That is why the Quran directs us to turn our faces towards the Kabah and not to the point of the Kabah : We should do our best to find out the exact direction of the Kabah: then if we are satisfied that a certain direction is most probably the correct

direction, we should turn our faces towards it. But when it is not possible to ascertain the exact direction (for example, in a boat or a train, etc.) one should turn ones face to the probable right direction, and if during the prayer the correct direction is found out, one should turn one's face towards it at once.

145. And even if you were to bring to those who have been given the Scripture every sign, they would not follow your qiblah. Nor would you be a follower of their qiblah. Nor are some of them followers of the qiblah of others. And if you were to follow their desires after that which has come to you of the knowledge, indeed, you would then be among the wrongdoers.*147

وَلَيْنَ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا
أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتِهِمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ
بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَيْنَ آتَبَعْتَ
أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ
مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذَا لَمِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ



*147 That is, you cannot convince by argument those who are disputing with you about the wisdom of the change of the qiblah because they are not disposed to listen to any reasoning on account of their deep prejudices and obduracy: nor can you end this dispute by adopting the qiblah of anyone of them; for all of them have different qiblahs, and, as a Prophet of Allah, you cannot make compromises on the principle of give and take. Therefore the only thing you have to do is to adhere to Our

commandments strictly and firmly. If you turn away from these, you will be transgressing the limits of prophethood and showing ingratitude towards the favor of leadership with which We have blessed you.

146. Those to whom We have given the Scripture recognize this as they recognize their sons.*148 And indeed, a party of them conceal the truth and they know (it).

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ
كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ
أَبْنَاءَهُمْ
وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا
مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ
الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ
يَعْلَمُونَ



*148 This Arabic idiom “recognize this as they recognize their sons” is employed when one knows something with certainty and has absolutely no doubt about its identity. The metaphor has been derived from the fact that none can make any mistake in recognizing one’s own children. Here it has been used to show that the learned people of the Jews and Christians knew it as a fact that the Kabah was built by the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), just as they knew their own children. They also knew that the Holy Temple at Jerusalem was built by the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) some 1,300 years after the Kabah was built by the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). The Kabah, therefore, had priority and superiority over the Temple and the Jews and the Christians should have no difficulty in recognizing and acknowledging it as the qiblah in the light of the above historical facts.

147. (This is) the truth from your Lord, so do not be of those who doubt.

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ
الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

148. And to each there is a direction, he turns to it, so hasten towards what is good.*149 Wherever you may be, Allah will bring you all together. Indeed, Allah has power over all things.

وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٌ هُوَ مُوَلِّئُهَا
فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ۚ أَيْنَ مَا
تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا ۚ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾

*149 There is a subtle gap between the first sentence and the second, which has been left for the reader to fill. Everyone who wants to offer his prayer must turn his face to one or the other direction. But the real thing that matters is not the direction of the face at prayer but those virtues which are to be gained by offering the prayer. Hence the thing that really matters is the spirit and real purpose of the prayer and not any particular direction or place.

149. And from wherever you go out (for prayer, O Muhammad) turn your face toward Al Masjid al Haram. And indeed, it is the truth from your Lord. And Allah is not unaware of what you do.

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ
وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ
بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

150. And from wherever you go out (for prayer, O Muhammad) turn your face toward AlMasjid al Haram. And wherever you may be (O Muslims), turn your faces toward it, so that people may not have an argument against you,^{*150} except for those who do wrong among them. So do not fear them, and fear Me. And that I may complete My favor^{*151} upon you, and that you may be guided.^{*152}

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ
وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا
وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ
لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا
تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَم
نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ



***150** That is, We have reiterated this commandment lest anyone of you should turn his face to any other direction in the prayer and give to opponents cause to say, “These people of the *ummat wasat* claim that they are witnesses of the truth but their behavior falsifies it. While they profess that the commandment about the change of the qiblah has come from their Lord, they do not act upon it”.

***151** The blessing refers to the blessing of leadership which Allah had wrested from the children of Israel and invested in the Muslims. This is the greatest reward which is given to any community when it adopts and follows the righteous way and is entrusted by Allah with the work of guiding the

world on the path of virtue. Here Allah tells the Muslims, “The change of qiblah is symbolic of the change of leadership. You should, therefore, observe this commandment strictly, lest leadership should be wrested from you on account of your disobedience or ingratitude. This favor will be conferred on you in perfection, if you obey the commandment.”

*152 That is, you should expect this blessing if you submit to this commandment about the change of the qiblah. This promise is very encouraging for a servant of Allah. The assurance gives him great consolation that he should expect such a great reward from his King, if he obeys His commandments with all his heart and soul.

151. Just as We have sent among you a messenger from yourselves, reciting to you Our verses, and purifying you, and teaching you the Book and wisdom, and teaching you that which you did not know.

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا
مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا
وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ
تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

152. So remember Me, I will remember you. And give thanks to Me, and do not be ungrateful.

فَاذْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوا لِي
وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾

153. O those who believe, *153 seek help through

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا

patience and prayer.
Indeed, Allah is with those
who are patient. *154

بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الصَّابِرِينَ



*153 After their appointment to leadership, the believers from hereon are given such instructions and directions as are essential for training and enabling them to discharge the duties of that position of responsibility. They are first of all warned that leadership is not a bed of roses but a bed of thorns. They will be confronted with difficulties, hardships, and trials at the very outset and will have to undergo untold sufferings and losses. But if they went through all those ordeals with patience and proceeded on in the way of Allah, they would be blessed with countless blessings and rewards by Him.

*154 That is, patience and prayer will generate in you the power which is required to bear that burden of responsibility with which you have been entrusted. Patience will give you that strength and courage under the afflictions, privations and temptations which you are bound to encounter and that moral strength and endurance which will surely be needed in Allah's way, which is full of dangers. The prayer will train you in discipline and other moral qualities which are essential for the right type of leadership.

154. And do not say of those who are killed in the Way of Allah: "They are dead." Nay, they are

وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ أَمْوَاتٌ وَلَكِنْ لَا

living, but you do not
perceive.*155

تَشْعُرُونَ
١٥٤

***155** It is forbidden to refer to those who are martyred for Allah's sake as dead because the very word death and its thought are very discouraging, and kill the spirit of self-sacrifice and the urge to fight in the Way of Allah. Instead, the Muslims are told to believe that those who fall martyrs in the Way of Allah in fact enjoy eternal life. And this is a reality which revitalizes and keeps alive the spirit of courage and valor.

155. And certainly We shall test you with something of fear, and hunger, and loss of wealth, and lives, and fruits. And give glad tidings to those who are patient.

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ
وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالْثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ
الصَّابِرِينَ
١٥٥

156. Those who, when a calamity befalls them, say: "Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return."*156

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا
إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ
١٥٦

***156** These words are to be uttered merely with the tongue, but we should believe sincerely from the core of our hearts that "Indeed, we belong to Allah." Thus, if anything is sacrificed in the Way of Allah, if is spent rightly because it has gone to His service to Whom it really belonged. "Indeed, to Him we will return": We shall not live here

forever but shall have to leave this world one day. Thus, sooner or later we must die and go to Allah. It is, therefore, far better to fight in His Way and lay down our lives for His sake than to pass our lives in self seeking and self worship and then die of some disease or accident.

157. Those are, upon whom are blessings from their Lord, and mercy. And it is those who are rightly guided.

أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

158. Indeed, As Safa and Al Marwah are among the symbols of Allah. So whoever is on pilgrimage to the House (of Allah) or Umrah,^{*157} it is then no sin for him that he goes between them,^{*158} And whoever does good voluntarily, then indeed, Allah is Appreciative, All Knower.^{*159}

﴿ إِنَّ الصَّافَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ
اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتِ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ
بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٨﴾

***157** Hajj is pilgrimage to the Kabah during the fixed days of the month of *Dhul-Hijjah* and *Umrah* is the voluntary visit to the Kabah in other than the Hajj days. Directions about Hajj and Umrah are being given at this place because the Kabah had recently been made the qiblah and naturally questions and problems connected with it had arisen.

***158** The running between *Safa* and *Marwah* (the two hills)

near the Kabah was one of the rituals taught by Allah to Abraham in connection with Hajj. But afterwards when the people began to associate false gods with Allah, they built temples on Safa and Marwah and dedicated these to two idols, Asaf and Nailah, and went round them in reverence to them. When the Arabs embraced Islam, a question arose whether running between Safa and Marwah was one of the original rituals of Hajj or whether this had been invented by the worshippers of false gods and whether they would not be guilty of practicing shirk by running between the two hills.

Besides this, a tradition related by Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) says that the people of Al-Madinah had an old aversion to running between Safa and Marwah even before they accepted Islam for they were devotees of Manat and did not worship Asaf and Nailah. Therefore, now when the Kabah was made the qiblah, Allah removed their misunderstanding concerning the running between Safa and Marwah and told them that this ritual had really been connected with Hajj ever since the time of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and was not the invention of the ignorant people after him.

***159** That is, it is far better to run between the two hills with a willing heart to please Allah than as a mere compliance with a command from Him.

159. Indeed, those who conceal what We have sent down of clear proofs and the guidance, after what We

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ
الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَهْدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا

had made it clear for the people in the Scripture. They are those cursed by Allah and cursed by those who curse.*160

بَيْنَهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ أُوتِيكَ
يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّاعِنُونَ



*160 The greatest crime of the Jewish scholars was that they had made the teachings of their Scriptures the monopoly of their rabbis and professional scribes. Not to speak of imparting these to the gentiles, they did not teach them even to the common Jews. As a result, the Jews began to practice non-religious things because of their ignorance. Even then, their rabbis did not do anything to reform and educate them. Instead of this, they went on, directly or indirectly, certifying every non-religious practice as legal merely for the sake of winning and retaining popularity. The Muslims are being forewarned that as leaders of the world they should propagate and spread the guidance given to them and should not keep it back from the common people as the Jewish rabbis and scribes did.

160. Except those who repent and correct themselves, and make manifest (the truth). Then those, I will accept their repentance. And I am the One who accepts repentance, the Merciful.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُوا
فَأُولَئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا
التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ



161. Certainly, those who disbelieve,*161 and die

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ

while they are disbelievers, it is they on whom is the curse of Allah, and of angels, and of mankind, all together.

كُفَّارٌ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ



***161** The literal meaning of the word *kufur* is to conceal. By and by it came to be used for the concealment of the truth and then for its rejection, as the antonym of *iman*. *Iman* means to believe, to accept and to admit, and *kufur* means to disbelieve, to reject and to oppose. According to the Quran, one shall be guilty of *kufur*.

- (1) If one does not believe in Allah at all or refuses to accept Him as the supreme authority or as one's Master and that of the entire universe, or as the only God of worship, or
- (2) If one professes to acknowledge Allah but refuses to accept His commandments and guidance as the sole source of the knowledge of truth and of law, or
- (3) If one accepts on principle the guidance of Allah, but refuses to accept the authority of the Messengers whom Allah has sent with His commandments and guidance, or
- 4) If one accepts a particular Messenger (or Messengers) and rejects others according to one's whim or prejudices, or
- (5) If one discards the whole or any part of the Islamic creed, or its code of life, or the teachings of the Messenger, or
- (6) If one accepts all these things in theory but discards the commandments of God deliberately in practice and persists

in this conduct and leads a life of rebellion instead of submission.

All the above modes of thought and action are rebellion against Allah and are *kufr* according to the Quran. Besides the above usages, the Quran sometimes uses the word *kufr* in the sense of ingratitude as an antonym of *shukr*. *Shukr* means that one should be grateful only to Him who has bestowed the blessing, should appreciate His favor, should use and spend the blessing only according to His will, and should submit to Him completely and faithfully like a loyal servant. On the contrary, *kufr* or ingratitude is that one should either refuse to acknowledge the favor of one's benefactor, and should regard it as a result of one's own ability, or as a favor, and result of the influence of another one, or should depreciate the blessing bestowed by Him and waste it, or should use the blessing against His will, or should adopt an attitude of rebellion against him in spite of His favors and blessings. Such an attitude of *kufr* is generally described as ingratitude, disloyalty, rebellion and treason.

162. Abiding forever therein. The punishment will not be lightened from them, nor will they be reprieved.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ
الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

163. And your God is one God. There is no deity except Him, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

وَاللَّهُمَّ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

164. Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships which sail through the sea with that which benefits mankind, and that which Allah sends down of rain from the sky, giving life thereby to the earth after its death, and dispersing therein every (kind of) of moving creatures, and (in) the changing of the winds, and the clouds held between the sky and the earth are sure signs (of Allah's Sovereignty) for people of understanding.*162

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَأَخْتِلَافِ أَلْيَلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ
الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ
النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ
السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ
الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ
كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ
وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ
السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ
يَعْقِلُونَ



***162** Anyone who does not look around like an animal but makes an intelligent observation of the great system of the universe that is working day and night before his very eyes, and is not blinded by prejudice or obduracy, can see many a sign pointing to the reality. He will certainly see that it is being ruled only by the All-Powerful, All-Wise Sovereign. He can also understand that Allah alone is the God of the whole universe and that there is absolutely no room for any kind of interference or partnership, for no one else has any quality or power or authority to entitle him to the claim of

Godhead.

165. And among mankind are those who take other than Allah as equals (to Him).^{*163} They love them as they (should) love Allah. And those who believe are stronger in love for Allah.^{*164} And if only they, who have wronged could see, when they will see the punishment, that all power belongs to Allah, and that Allah is severe in punishment.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ
دُونِ اللَّهِ أُنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ
اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ
وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ
الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ



***163** “Who take other than Allah as equals to Him”: they ascribe some of the exclusive qualities and powers of Allah to others and render all or some of His exclusive rights to false gods. For instance, though Allah alone has control over all the forces of nature and has the power to fulfill all the needs of His creatures and to hear their prayers and requests, and although He alone knows all that is open or hidden, yet they invoke others for help or attribute all or some of these powers and qualities to others than Allah and thus set up compeers to rank with Him.

Again it is the exclusive right of Allah that His subjects should acknowledge Him as the supreme authority, bow down their heads before Him and fear Him alone in open and secret. But as they render all or some rights to others

than Allah, they set up compeers with Him. In fact, Allah alone is entitled to prescribe what is lawful and what is unlawful, what is clean and what is unclean. He alone has the authority to define the rights and duties of His subjects, lay down commands and prohibitions for them, etc. Therefore those who arrogate to themselves any of these rights shall be guilty of shirk. Again, He alone deserves to be acknowledged as the Sovereign and, as His subjects, the people should consider His commandments to be final and turn to Him for guidance; therefore those who ascribe any of these rights to others than Allah, set up compeers with Him; likewise those institutions or persons who claim to possess any of these qualities or rights or assume to themselves any of these qualities or rights or demand that others should accede these to them, set themselves as compeers with Allah, whether or not they put forward formal claims to Godhead.

*164 Belief in Allah demands that one should prefer His will to one's own will or to that of others, and cherish His love so dearly as to be ready to sacrifice all other affections for its sake.

166. When those who have been followed would disassociate themselves from those who followed (them). And they would see the punishment. And all the ties (of relationship) would be cut off from them.

إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ
الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ
وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ

167. And those who followed will say: “If indeed another return (to worldly life) was (possible) for us, we would disassociate from them as they have disassociated from us.”*165 Thus will Allah show them their deeds as regrets for them. And they will never get out from the Fire.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّا
كَرَّهْنَا فَنَتَّبِعُوا مَنَّمَا
كَذَلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ أَعْمَلَهُمْ
حَسْرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا هُمْ
بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ



*165 This helpless end of the ring-leaders and those who misguide others, and their followers has been specially mentioned here to warn the Muslims to be very careful in selecting and electing their leaders and guides. The former communities went astray because they followed wrong leaders and evil guides. The Muslims should, therefore, learn a lesson from their end and discriminate between leaders and misleaders and should not follow the latter.

168. O mankind, eat of that which is lawful (and) good on the earth, and do not follow the footsteps of the devil.*166 Indeed, he is an open enemy to you.

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوا مِمَّا فِي
الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ
عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ



*166 They have been told to break all those restrictions which superstition and ignorance had imposed upon articles of food and drink.

169. He only commands you to evil and indecency, and that you should say against Allah that which you do not know.*167

إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ
وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا
تَعْلَمُونَ

***167** That is, Satan makes people believe that these superstitious customs and restrictions upon food and drink are a part of religion and have been enjoined by Allah, although there is no authority to show that they are from Him.

170. And when it is said to them: “Follow that which Allah has sent down,” they say: “Nay, we will follow that upon which we found our fathers.”*168 Even though their fathers were (such as who) did not understand anything, nor were they guided.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا
عَلَيْهِ ءِآبَاءَنَا ؕ أَوْلَوْ كَانِ
ءِآبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا
يَهْتَدُونَ

***168** The only authority they have for their superstitious practices is that these have been the customs of their forefathers, and the foolish followers consider this a good authority.

171. And the example of those who disbelieve, is as the example of him who shouts to that (flock of sheep)

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ
الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا

which hears nothing except a call and a cry.*169 (They are) deaf, dumb, blind, so they do not understand.

دُعَاءٌ وَنِدَاءٌ صُمُّ بِكُمْ عُمَى
فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ



*169 This parable has two aspects:

(1) That these people are like those herds of cattle which merely hear the call and cry of the drovers and move about at the sound of their call without understanding the meaning of their words.

(2) That preaching before them is like preaching to the cattle which only hear the sounds but do not comprehend the meaning and the implication of the words that are spoken to them. The words used are comprehensive and cover both the aspects.

172. O those who believe, eat of the good things which We have provided you, and be grateful to Allah if it is (indeed) Him you worship.*170

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُلُوا
مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا
لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُونَ



*170 The Believers are enjoined to break all sorts of unnecessary, improper and unlawful restrictions imposed by the pundits, the priests, the rabbis, the clergies, the forefathers, etc.

For if they really believe in Allah, as they profess, they should abstain from eating only what Allah has forbidden and eat, without any hesitation, only what Allah has

declared lawful.

According to a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him), “One who offers the Salat in the way we offer, turns his face towards the qiblah to which we turn our face, and eats what we have slaughtered, is a Muslim.” Therefore if one has any scruples regarding the eating of those things which Allah has declared lawful, he has not as yet become a true Muslim, even if he offers the Salat, turning his face towards the Kabah. He should give up the prejudices and superstitions of ignorance if he really and sincerely has become a Muslim. For the very observance of old traditions and customs is a proof that he is still imbued with the poison of ignorance.

173. He has forbidden to you only carrion, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that which has been immolated to other than Allah.*¹⁷¹ So whoever is forced by necessity, without willful disobedience, nor transgressing, then it is no sin for him. Truly, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.*¹⁷²

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ
وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهِلَّ
بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ أَضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ
بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



***171** This applies both to the flesh of the animal which is slaughtered in the name of any other than Allah and to the food which is offered as a vow to any other than Allah. As a matter of fact, everything whether animal, corn, or another

eatable, actually belongs to Allah and is given by Him. Therefore it should be offered as charity, or as vow, only in His name as a mark of gratitude to Him. If it is offered in any other name, it means that one regards it also, instead of Allah, or along with Allah, as supreme and the bestower of favors and blessings.

*172 In this verse, permission for the use of an unclean thing has been given on three conditions:

(1) It must be really a case of extremity. For instance, if one is dying of hunger or thirst or if one's life is in danger because of some disease and there is nothing available except an unclean thing, one is permitted to take it.

(2) One should not cherish any desire in one's heart to break the law of Allah.

(3) One should not take even a bit more than what is absolutely necessary. For example, if in a certain case, a few bits or drops of an unclean thing can save life, then nothing more than this absolute minimum should be taken.

174. Certainly, those who conceal what Allah has sent down of the Book, and purchase therewith a small gain, those, they eat into their bellies nothing but fire.*173

And Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them.*174 And for

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ
اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْتَرُونَ
بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَئِكَ مَا
يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ
وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

them will be a painful punishment.



***173** These were their learned people, who, in spite of possessing the knowledge of the divine Book, kept it back from the common people, and were responsible for all the superstitions, false customs and unnecessary restrictions which were prevalent among them and which gave birth to new codes of law. Besides this, they were also guilty of another crime. They did not utter a word against the evil practices which began to spread as a result of that ignorance which had been deliberately created among them. Not only this: the majority of them considered this sorry condition to be advantageous to themselves and so let the commandments of Allah remain hidden from the people.

***174** Here the false claims and misrepresentations of the so called spiritual leaders and saints have been refuted. By every possible device they try to impress upon the common people that they are very pious and holy. And the common people also believe them to be so. They presume that their followers believe that they will secure pardon for them by their intercession with Allah on their behalf. Allah warns that He will neither speak to these spiritual leaders nor consider them pious and holy, not to speak of granting them the authority of intercession.

175. Those are the ones who purchased error for the guidance, and punishment for the forgiveness. So how

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ
بِالْهُدَى وَالْعَذَابَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ

patient are they (in the pursuit) to the Fire.

176. That is because Allah has sent down the Book (the Quran) with the truth. And indeed, those who disputed over the Book are far away in dissension.

177. Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east and the west.*175 But righteousness (is in him) who believes in Allah, and the Last Day, and the angels, and the Book, and the prophets. And gives wealth out of love for Him, to the relatives, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer, and to those who ask, and to set slaves free. And establishes prayer, and gives the poor due. And those who fulfill their promise when they make a promise. And (those who) are patient in tribulation and adversity,

فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ ﴿١٧٥﴾

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿١٧٦﴾

﴿ لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَءَاتَى الْمَالَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنَ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ ﴾

and at the time of battle. Those are the ones who are the truthful. And it is those who are the righteous.

وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ
الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُتَّقُونَ



***175** In order to show the futility of excessive emphasis on external religious forms, it has been pointed out, as an instance, that there is no real virtue in the mere act of turning faces to the east or to the west in prayer. For the mere performance of some religious rites or formalities or show of piety is not real virtue which may have any importance or value with Allah.

178. O those who believe, prescribed for you is legal retribution in (the matter of) those murdered.^{*176} The free for the free, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female.^{*177} So he who is forgiven by his brother something,^{*178} then there is a following up with fairness, and payment toward him in kindness.^{*179} This is an alleviation from your Lord and mercy. So whoever transgresses after that, then for him is a painful

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ
الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ الْحُرِّ بِالْحُرِّ
وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنثَىٰ بِالْأُنثَىٰ
فَمَنْ عَفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ
فَاتِّبَاعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ
بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ فَمَنْ أَعْتَدَىٰ
بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ



punishment.^{*180}

***176** The Arabic word *qisas* stands for the return of life for life in cases of murder. It does not, however, mean that the murderer should be killed in the same manner in which he committed the murder. It only means that his life should be taken as he took the life of the other.

***177** The principle of the equality of the value of human life has been prescribed here in order to meet the strictest claims of justice. The value of blood and consequently retribution for it are not to be determined by the rank of the slain or that of the murderer. It has, therefore, been clearly laid down that the murderer himself shall be made to pay for the blood.

Before the advent of Islam, they put a higher value on the blood of a member of their own clan and demanded the life of a man of the same rank from the clan of the murderer or the lives of scores or even hundreds from the tribe of the murderer according to the value put on the blood of the slain. On the other hand, if the murderer happened to belong to a higher rank than that of the slain, their judgment was that the life of the murderer should not be taken for the life of the slain. And this inequality in the evaluation of blood was not confined only to that age of ignorance. Even today the civilized nations are not ashamed of declaring openly that if one person of their nation is killed, they will take the lives of fifty men from the nation of the murderer. And they put these challenges into practice. We often hear that so many people belonging to the subject nation have been put to death to avenge the

murder of one person belonging to the ruling nation. But if the murderer belonged to a civilized ruling nation and the slain to an uncivilized subject nation, their judges would not pass the sentence of death on him. In order to guard against these unjust rules, Allah has ordained that the life of the murderer and the murderer alone should be taken for the life of the slain, irrespective of the rank or race of the murderer or that of the slain.

***178** The use of the word *brother* here contains a kind of recommendation. That is, though the murderer has injured you very grievously, he is after all your brother by the human relation. Therefore, if you restrain your rage against your erring brother and refrain from retaliation and remit the penalty of death, you will raise your standard of humanity.

This verse also shows that, according to the Islamic penal code, even murder is a compoundable offence. The heirs of the murdered person have the right to pardon the murderer, if they deem it proper. In that case the court cannot insist on taking his life. Of course, the murderer will have to pay the blood money if the rightful claimants demand it.

***179** The word *maaruf* has been used in many places in the Quran. It refers to those just and rational rules of conduct which are generally known and accepted by all fair-minded people. They are so clear and well known that everyone who is not blinded by self interest and prejudice will acknowledge them as right and just, and the Islamic law recognizes them in all those matters for which it has not

laid down any regulations. Such common laws and general usages are termed *maaruf*.

*180 For instance, it will be transgression if the heirs of the slain try to retaliate even after accepting the ransom, or if the murderer does not mean to pay the ransom gracefully, or otherwise reacts in an ungrateful manner.

179. And for you there is life in legal retribution, O (men) of understanding, *181 that you may become righteous.

وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَوةٌ يَأْتُوا
الْأَلْبَابَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

*181 This verse refutes the opinion of those people who go to the other extreme and advocate total abolition of capital punishment. If it is inhuman to insist on retaliation, it is equally inhuman to encourage murder by totally abolishing capital punishment, as has been done in some civilized countries. That is why Allah declares that there is life for society in the law of retribution. If a society does not pay due regard to the sanctity of life and tries to protect a murderer, it sets a premium on crime and puts in danger the lives of many innocent people.

180. It is prescribed for you, when death approaches any of you, if he leaves wealth, that he make a bequest to parents and near relatives according to what is reasonable. (This is) a duty upon the righteous. *182

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ
الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ
لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ

*182 This commandment about making a will for the

distribution of property was given at a time when the law of inheritance had not yet been prescribed. Its object was to safeguard the rights of the lawful heirs against injustice. Afterwards when Allah Himself prescribed a law for the distribution of inheritance (as laid down in Surah An-Nisa), the Prophet (peace be upon him) enjoined the following two rules in explanation of the commandments concerning the making of will and distribution of inheritance.

181. Then whoever changes it (the bequest) after what he has heard it, then its sin is only upon those who changed it. Indeed, Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا
إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

182. But he who fears from a testator some unjust or sinful clause, then makes peace between them (the parties), then there is no sin upon him. Certainly, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مُوصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ
إِثْمًا فَاصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَا إِثْمَ
عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

183. O those who believe, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, that you may become righteous.*183

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ
عَلَيْكُمْ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ

***183** Islam proceeded step by step and by degrees in the imposition of its obligatory duties. The same was done in the case of fasting. At first the Prophet (peace be upon him) advised the Muslims to observe fasts only for three days in a month but this was not obligatory. Then in the second year of the Hijrah, this command (Ayat 183) about fasting in the month of Ramadan was revealed. This, however, left an option for those who were able to fast but did not. They were required to feed one poor man as an expiation of one day's fasting (Ayat 184). Then later, the final commandment contained in the next verse (Ayat 185) modified this, and the concession for able-bodied people was withdrawn, but retained for a sick person or wayfarer and by analogy for a pregnant or a suckling woman and for those old people who were not able to fast.

In a lengthy statement quoted by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Muaaz bin Jabal says: "The Salat and the fasting took their present form gradually. At first the Muslims faced Jerusalem during the Salat but after some years they were commanded to turn their faces towards the Kabah in Makkah. Besides this, at first they used to inform one another about the time of each Salat but afterwards the same was proclaimed by means of Azan (the call for prayer). As to the fasting, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) migrated to Al-Madinah, he observed fasts for three days in a month and also on the tenth of Muharram. Then Allah made it obligatory to fast during the whole month of Ramadan but allowed the feeding of one person as an expiation for one who did not observe fasts, though he

could. Afterwards this concession of feeding one person for one day of fast was cancelled in the case of healthy persons and the one not on a journey.

Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and other scholars have also quoted traditions from Aishah, Abdullah bin Umar, and Abdullah bin Masud (may Allah be pleased with them) to the same effect. In support of the same, Ibn Jarir Tabari, a famous commentator of the Quran, has quoted traditions citing the authority in full from several companions and their followers. In one of these traditions, he quotes the following explanation of Muaz bin Jabal: As the Arabs were not used to of fasting, it was hard for them at first to observe fasts. They were, therefore, given the option to feed one poor person on the day they did not observe fast during the month of Ramadan. Afterwards, a commandment was revealed, cancelling this concession except in the case of a sick person or one on a journey. He quotes another tradition from Ibn Abbas to this effect. In the first commandment (Ayat 184), Allah had allowed expiation for fasts even for an able-bodied person who could fast but did not. In verse 185 which was revealed next year, the concession for an able-bodied person was cancelled but was retained for a sick person or a wayfarer.

184. (Fasting) a certain number of days. So whoever among you is sick, or on a journey, then an equal number of other days (should be made up). And for those

أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۚ فَمَنْ كَانَ
مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ
مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ

who can afford it there is a ransom, the feeding of a needy person. Then whoever does good of his own accord,^{*184} so it is better for him. And that you fast, it is better for you if only you knew.^{*185}

يُطِيقُونَهُ، فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ
فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ
وَأَنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ
كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ



***184** “Good of his own accord”, to feed more than one person for each fasting day, or to feed one as well as observe the fast.

***185** The first commandment about fasting contained in Ayats 183-184 was revealed in the second year of Hijrah before the battle of Badr. The subsequent verses were revealed a year later but were inserted here because they dealt with the same matter.

185. The month of Ramadan is that in which the Quran was revealed, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of guidance, and the criterion. So whoever of you witnesses (this) month, then he must fast (in) it. And whoever is sick or on a journey, then an equal number of other days (should be made up).^{*186}

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ
الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ
مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَنْ
شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَنْ
كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ
فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ

Allah intends for you ease, and He does not intend hardship for you, and (He wants) that you should complete the count, and that you should glorify Allah for having guided you, and that you may be grateful (to Him).^{*187}

بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ
الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ
وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا
هَدَانَكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ



***186** It has been left to the option of the individual to observe or not to observe fasts during a journey. Some of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) observed fasts and some did not when they were on a journey with him and neither raised any objection against the other. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself sometimes observed fasts on a journey and sometimes did not. Once he saw people gathered around a man who had fallen to the ground and asked what was the matter with him. He was told that he had become too weak to stand on account of observing fasts; he remarked that it was no virtue to observe fasts in such a condition.

During war time, The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to issue orders for postponing the fasts. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) has related that they did not observe fasts twice during the month of Ramadan when they went to war under the command of the Prophet (peace be upon him), on the occasion of the battle of Badr and at the conquest of Makkah. Ibn Umar says that on the eve of the conquest of Makkah, the Prophet (peace be upon him)

declared, “As we are going to fight our enemy you should postpone your fasts so that you may conserve your strength to fight.” There is no clear injunction from the Prophet (peace be upon him) for the prescription of a minimum standard of distance for postponing the fasts. His companions also differed in practice with regard to the standard. But it is obvious that the fast may be postponed for that distance which is commonly understood to be a journey and in which one begins to feel being on a journey. There is a difference of opinion as to whether the people of a city, which is attacked by an enemy, can postpone the fasting for the sake of Jihad, in spite of being the residents. Some scholars do not allow this. But Imam Ibn Taimiyyah has maintained with strong arguments that postponement of the fasting under such circumstances is permissible.

***187** Allah is so bountiful that He does not want to deprive His servants of the blessings of fasting. Therefore, He has not confined it to the month of Ramadan but has opened another way for its completion for those who fail to complete it during this month for genuine reasons. They should make up the deficiency by observing fast on other days in order to show their gratitude for the revelation of the Quran during the month of Ramadan.

It is clear from this verse that fasting in Ramadan has been prescribed not only as a form of worship and a training for piety, but also to show gratitude for the great blessing of the revelation of the Quran during the month of Ramadan. And the best way to show gratitude for a favor is to fulfill the object for which it was bestowed and to prepare oneself

for its completion as best as one can. The object for which Allah has bestowed the Quran upon us is to reveal His will so that we may fulfill it ourselves and persuade others to do the same. Fasting provides the best training for the fulfillment of this object and is both a devotion and a sign of gratitude for the favor shown in the form of the Quran.

186. And when My servants ask you about Me, then indeed I am near. I respond to the invocations of the suppliant when he calls upon Me. So let them respond to Me, ^{*188} and let them believe in Me, that they may be guided. ^{*189}

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ



***188** That is, although you cannot see Me nor perceive Me with your senses, yet you must never imagine that I am far from you. Nay, I am so near to every servant of Mine that he can invoke Me and place his request before Me wherever he is. So much so that I hear and answer even those requests which are not expressed in words but are made only in the innermost heart. As to the false and impotent gods you have created in your ignorance and folly, you have to travel to them, and even then they do not hear and answer you. But here am I, the sovereign, the absolute ruler of the boundless universe and possessor of all powers and authority, so near to hear and answer you that you need no recommendation of intercession for making any request anywhere at any time you like. Therefore, you

should free yourselves from the folly of running from door to door after false gods, and accept My invitation and turn to Me and trust in Me and submit to Me and become My servants.

***189** That is, they may learn this truth from you and adopt the right attitude, in which lies their own good.

187. It has been made lawful for you in the night of the fasting to go in unto your wives. They are as a garment for you, and you are as a garment for them. ***190** Allah knows that you were deceiving yourselves, so He has turned to you and forgave you. So now have intimate relations with them, ***191** and seek that which Allah has decreed for you. ***192** And eat and drink until, it becomes distinct to you the white thread from the black thread of the dawn. ***193** Then complete the fast till the nightfall. ***194** And do not have intimate relations with them (your wives) while you are in Itikaf (confining

أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ
الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ
لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ
أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ
أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا
عَنْكُمْ فَالْعَنَ بَشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَبْتَغُوا
مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا
وَأَشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ الْخَيْطُ
الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ
الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتَمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى
الَّيْلِ وَلَا تُبَشِّرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ
عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ تِلْكَ

yourselves) in the mosques.^{*195} These are the limits by Allah, so approach them not.^{*196} Thus does Allah make clear His verses to mankind that they may become righteous.

حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ



***190** That is, just as nothing can intervene between the clothes and the body and each fits into the other naturally, so is the relation between the husband and the wife: each is a means of comfort, protection and happiness for the other.

***191** Although, at first there was no clear injunction forbidding intercourse between husband and wife during the nights of Ramadan, yet the Muslims had a vague notion that it was not lawful to do so and it was with a guilty conscience that sometimes some of them went to bed with their wives. There was thus a danger of developing a criminal and sinful mental attitude. Therefore, Allah first warned them of their dishonest behavior towards their conscience and then made it lawful so that they might do it with a clear conscience.

***192** There was also a misunderstanding about the timings of eating and drinking during Ramadan. Some people were of the opinion that eating and drinking was prohibited after the Isha (night) prayer up to sunset of the next day. Others thought that one was permitted to eat and drink as long as one kept awake after the Isha prayer, but could not do so after one had fallen asleep; they were often put to great inconvenience on account of these notions of their own

creation. In this verse their misunderstandings were removed and the duration of the period of fasting was fixed from the dawn of the morning to the sunset, and eating and drinking and intercourse with wives were permitted from sunset to dawn. Besides, the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed that a meal should be taken before the dawn (of morning) as a preparation for fasting.

***193** Islam has set a standard of time for its practices which can be applied universally by people at every stage of civilization and in every part of the globe. That is why it does not fix the boundary lines of its religious practices by watches and clocks but by clear signs in the sky. This is a standard which can suit the people of every age and country, and can be set by watches between these prescribed bounds to suit their circumstances and convenience. But those people who do not understand its philosophy raise foolish objections. For example, they say that this standard cannot work near the Poles, because there the duration of the day and the night is of many months. They forget that even in the polar regions, the signs of morning and evening and midnight appear as regularly as in other places and the inhabitants regulate the timings of work, play, sleep, etc. in accordance with the appearance of these signs. When there were no watches and clocks, the inhabitants of the Arctic Circle fixed their timings by these signs. Thus when these signs can help them to fix the timings in other matters of life, they can also serve them to fix the timings of the prayer and of the commencement and end of the fasting.

***194** “Then complete the fast till nightfall” means: “Your fast ends where the boundary of the night begins.” It is obvious that the boundary line of the night begins at sunset: therefore the fast should be broken at the time of sunset for which we should look at the eastern horizon. If we see the darkness of the night rising up there, it is a signal for the breaking of the fast. In the same way, the rising of the white streak of the morning in the eastern horizon is a signal for the beginning of the fast.

It must be clearly understood that in the Islamic code of law there are no hard and fast limits, exact to the second or minute, for the duration of the fast. There is great latitude in both the limits. Differences of a minute or a second either way do not make the fast defective. The fast becomes complete as soon as the darkness of night begins to rise in the east. It should, therefore, be broken at sunset. In the same way, when the dawn of the morning appears in the eastern horizon, the boundary line begins for observing the fast and eating and drinking, should be stopped. But here, too, there is an allowance for one to finish ones meal even though the dawn of the morning might have appeared, if one could not wake up in time for it. There is a tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to this effect: “If one, while taking his meals, hears the call for the morning prayer (or the sound of the siren as in our age) for beginning the fast, one should not withdraw one’s hand immediately from food, but should finish the meal.” Likewise, one is enjoined to break the fast without delay as soon as the dark line of the night appears in the east.

***195** *Itikaf* is a special voluntary practice of devotion during the last ten days of the month of Ramadan. One confines oneself to a mosque and devotes one's whole time to prayer and meditation in addition to the prescribed obligatory religious duties. One is required to abstain from all worldly pursuits, desires, lusts, etc., and is not to leave the mosque except to attend to the call of nature etc.

***196** The wordings of the commandment about the extreme limits is very significant. It not only prohibits one from transgressing them but also warns one not even to go near them. It is very dangerous to roam about on the boundary lines of the forbidden territory for one is liable to enter into it by mistake. Going near them has, therefore, been prohibited. The Prophet (peace be upon him) emphasized the same point, saying, "Every king has some reserved land and Allah's reserved land is bounded by those limits which prescribe the lawful and the unlawful, the right and the wrong. The animal which grazes near the last bounds of the reserved land might one day enter into it. It is a pity that in spite of this clear warning, many people, who are ignorant of the spirit of Islamic law, persist in going to the extreme limits and many learned people try to find excuses for them from the same Islamic code of law that warns the Muslims not to go near the boundary line. That is why many people get involved in vice and stray from the straight path. Obviously, it is not an easy thing to demarcate these fine boundary lines and to control oneself from transgressing them, when one is roaming near them.

188. And do not devour your property among each other unjustly, and (do not) offer it (as bribery) to the rulers, that you may devour a portion of the property of the people in sin, and you know (it).^{*197}

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ
بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى
الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ
أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُونَ



***197** This verse has two aspects: One should not try to seize the property of another by bribing the judges, and one should not go to the court of law to seize the property of another through specious arguments. It is just possible that the judge might decide, on the basis of available evidence, in favor of the transgressor, but it does not mean that the property has thereby really become lawful for him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned such people, saying, “After all I am a human being. It is just possible that in a case brought before me, one better versed in the art of talking than his opponent might persuade me to decide the case in his favor. But let it be understood that anything gained in this way from a brother will, in fact, mean the acquiring of a piece of Hell for himself in spite of my decree in his favor.”

189. They ask you, (O Muhammad) about the new moons. Say: “These are signs for marking times

﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ
هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ

for mankind, and the pilgrimage.”*198 And it is not righteousness that you go to the houses from their backs, but the righteousness is (in) him who fears (Allah). And go to houses from their doors, and fear Allah, that you may be successful.*199

وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ
مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ
اتَّقَىٰ ۖ وَاتُّوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ
أَبْوَابِهَا ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ



*198 The phases of the moon have attracted the attention of mankind in every age, and different kinds of rites and superstitions have been connected with these in every country. The Arabs also had some superstitions connected with these. They took omens from them for journeys, marriage ceremonies, business, etc. and performed some superstitious practices. For they believed that the phases and the eclipse of the moon affected their fortunes. Therefore they questioned the Prophet (peace be upon him) concerning this. Allah answered their question and informed them that the phases of the moon were nothing but natural calendar in the sky to indicate dates of the month to the people simultaneously throughout the world. Hajj has been specially mentioned in this connection because of its religious, cultural and economic importance to the Arabs. Four months of the year were fixed for Hajj and Umrah during which war was suspended and the routes were made safe, and business flourished on account of peace.

*199 This was one of their superstitious customs. As soon as

they put on the *Ihram*, the ceremonial dress for Hajj, they would not enter their houses by the front doors, but would enter them by jumping over the walls or through windows in the rear of their houses. In this verse, Allah has not only refuted this superstitious custom but also warned that virtue has nothing to do with the superstitious rites and customs which were being practiced merely in blind imitation of their forefathers, for they did not affect the fortune of man in any way.

190. And fight in the Way of Allah those who fight you,^{*200} and do not transgress the limits. Indeed, Allah does not love the transgressors.^{*201}

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ



***200** That is, fight with those people who hinder you from the Way of Allah; who have become your enemies because you are trying to reform the way of life in accordance with the guidance of Allah; who are preventing you from the work of reform by force and persecution. Before this, when the Muslims were yet weak and scattered, they were commanded to propagate Islam and bear all tyrannies with fortitude. But when they had established a tiny state at Al-Madinah they were, for the first time, allowed to go to war against those who were opposing this reformative movement with force. The battle of Badr took place after this and a series of battles started with it.

***201** The Muslims were warned that the aim of their war should not be self interest, nor material gain, nor

retaliation. They should not, therefore, go to war against those who were neither opposing them nor hindering them from their work. Besides this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave detailed instructions for keeping the war humane. He asked the Muslims to refrain from barbaric methods in warfare and from doing any kind of harm or injury to children, women, old people and the wounded. He also prohibited the dishonoring of the dead bodies of the slain, the wanton destruction of harvests, trees, animals, etc. and all other forms of cruelty, barbarism and vandalism. The Muslims were allowed to use force only where it was absolutely indispensable and to the extent it was absolutely necessary.

191. And kill them wherever you overtake them, and expel them from wherever they have expelled you, and persecution is worse than killing.*202 And do not fight them at Al Masjid al Haram, until they fight you there. Then if they fight you, then kill them. Such is the recompense of the disbelievers.

وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ
 وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ
 أَخْرَجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنْ
 الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ
 الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ
 فِيهِ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ
 كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكٰفِرِينَ

*202 Persecution and suppression of opinion by violence, force or threat, is the exact translation of the Arabic word *fitnah*, as used in this verse. The verse implies that it is a

heinous offence to persecute a person or party by harassing and oppressive treatment for holding ideas and theories opposed to those in vogue at the time, and it is abominable to inflict on people injury and punishment for adhering to and propagating those ideas and theories with a view to reforming the ways of society. Though bloodshed is an evil thing, to oppress and harass others for adhering to their own faith and principles and to force them to give these up and adopt those of the oppressors is far worse. Therefore it is lawful and justifiable to use force against such people as a resort to brute force instead of argument.

192. But if they desist, then indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful. *203

فَإِنْ أَنْتَهُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



*203 That is, you should create in yourselves those qualities which are the attributes of Allah in whom you believe who forgives even the worst offenders and criminals and shows mercy to them. You also should try to mould yourselves after this model. Your war should not be to quench your thirst for revenge but for the cause of Allah. As long as they oppose the Way of Allah and continue their fight against you, you also should fight against them, but no sooner do they stop fighting and give up their hostile attitude, you should also stop fighting.

193. And fight them until there is no persecution, and the Way is for Allah. *204 Then if they desist, then (let

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أَنْتَهُوا فَلَا

there be) no hostility except
against the wrongdoers. *205

عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ

*204 Here the word *fitnah* has been used in a different sense from that in verse 191. The context clearly shows that here it denotes that condition of a society which is not safe and free for adoption of the Way of Allah. That is why the Muslims have been exhorted to continue the fight to change this state of affairs and to restore peace and freedom for the Way of Allah. It should also be noted that the Arabic word *deen* which has been translated here into way originally means submission and is technically used for the way of life which is built on the sovereignty of someone whose commands and regulations are to be followed. Therefore that condition of society in which there is the rule and sovereignty of man over man and in which it is not possible for anyone to follow the Way of Allah is *fitnah*. The aim of war in Islam is to abolish *fitnah* and establish Allah's Way so as to enable people to live as servants of Allah in accordance with the divine law.

*205 It does not mean that Islam incites the believers to go to war to force unbelievers at the point of sword to give up disbelief and polytheism and adopt the Way of Allah instead. War is to be waged only to make them give up *fitnah*. As a matter of fact, Islam allows freedom of belief to all non-Muslims. One may adopt any way of life that one chooses and may or may not worship anyone or anything. It exhorts the believers to preach and to persuade the unbelievers and the wrong doers by argument to give up their false faith and evil ways, but it does not allow the

unbelievers the right to enforce on God's earth any ungodly law and make the servants of Allah the servants of someone else. In order to remove such an unjust condition, Islam allows both preaching and fighting according to the requirements of the occasion. The believers, therefore, cannot rest content unless this *fitnah*, political domination and legal sovereignty of unbelievers, is eradicated and freedom for the Way of Allah is secured.

From the words, "Then if they desist" there should be no more hostility except against those who had been guilty of cruelty and brutality, it has been deduced that when the Islamic rule replaces ungodly rule, there should be a general amnesty save for those who had been extremely cruel and tyrannous in opposing the truth when in power. Although in this case also it behoves the believers to show forgiveness at the time of victory, yet they would be perfectly justified in punishing those who broke all limits in their blind opposition and persecution. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was an embodiment of mercy and clemency. He, himself, availed of this permission and sentenced to death Uqbah bin Abi Muait and Nadr bin Harith, two prisoners of war taken in the battle of Badr: Moreover, although a general amnesty was proclaimed after the conquest of Makkah, seventeen persons who were the worst offenders against Islam were made an exception and four of these were sentenced to death.

194. (Fighting in) the sacred month is for (the aggression committed in) the sacred

الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ

month.*206 And for (all) violations there is legal retribution. So whoever has transgressed against you, then you transgress against him in the same way that he has transgressed against you. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is with those who are righteous.

وَأَحْرَمْتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ
أَعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ
بِمِثْلِ مَا أَعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ
الْمُتَّقِينَ



*206 This verse answered the question that arose about fighting during the four sacred months of the lunar year, that is, Dhul-Qadah, Dhul-Hijjah and Muharram dedicated to Hajj, and Rajab to Umrah. These were called the prohibited months because ever since the time of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) war, murder, robbery and every sort of violation and infringement of law were forbidden during these months so that pilgrims might go to and return from the Kabah in peace and security. But by and by the Arabs began to violate their sanctity by a crooked device. They used to alter the usual order of the months to suit their convenience: If they wanted to attack for robbery, revenge, etc., they would violate a sacred month and then consecrate another month instead. The Muslims were, therefore, at a loss to know what to do if the unbelievers committed a breach of the sanctity of a sacred month by resorting to this vicious practice and attack them in that sacred month. This verse removed their difficulty by allowing them to

fight with them in a sacred month, if the disbelievers began hostilities in it. But they, on their part, should not transgress the limits in any case: and if the unbelievers observed the sanctity of the sacred months and desisted from war, the Muslims also should do the same. But if they violated the same and attacked the Muslims, they should also retaliate in the same prohibited month.

195. And spend in the cause of Allah, and do not throw (your selves) by your own hands into destruction.*207 And do good. Indeed, Allah loves those who do good.*208

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا
بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ



*207 To spend in the cause of Allah, is to make monetary sacrifices for the establishment of the way of life prescribed by Allah. The verse implies, if you behave selfishly and do not spend your wealth to establish the Way of Allah; you will bring yourselves to ruin in this world and to damnation in the Hereafter. In the world, Allah will set the unbelievers to dominate over you. And in the Hereafter, He will condemn you and hold you accountable for not spending the wealth given by Him in His Way.

*208 The word *ihsan* as used in the original is from *husn* which means to do a thing well. One kind of action is that a person should rest content with the mere performance of duty: this is obedience, which requires nothing more than the fear of Allah. The superior kind of deed, however, is that he should do it well: should put all his abilities and

resources into it: should exert his utmost to complete it with all his heart and mind and body. This is *ihsan* which is motivated by a deep love for and dedication to Allah.

196. And complete the pilgrimage and the Umrah for Allah. Then if you are prevented, then (offer) what can be obtained with ease,^{*209} of sacrificial animals. And do not shave your heads until the sacrificial animal has reached its place of slaughter.^{*210} So whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head, then (he must pay) a ransom of fasting, or charity, or sacrifice.^{*211} Then when you are in safety,^{*212} then whoever performs Umrah with the pilgrimage, (must offer) what can be obtained with ease, of the sacrificial animals. So whoever cannot find (it), then fasting of three days while on the pilgrimage, and of seven when you have returned. That is, ten in total.

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ
أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنْ
أَهْدَى وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ
حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ أَهْدَىٰ مَحَلَّهُ ۚ فَمَنْ
كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ
أَذَىٰ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّنْ
صِيَامٍ أَوْ
صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ ۚ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ
تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا
اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنْ أَهْدَىٰ ۚ فَمَنْ لَّمْ
يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ
وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ ۖ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ
كَامِلَةٌ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ لِمَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ
حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ

That is for him whose family is not present at Al Masjid al Haram.*213 And fear Allah, and know that Allah is severe in punishment.

وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ

شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

*209 That is, in case you are prevented in the way from proceeding on to the Kabah and are obliged to break your journey, you should make offering of whatever animal is available camel, cow, goat to Allah.

*210 There is a difference of opinion as to what is meant here by, “Until the sacrificial animal has reached its place of slaughter.” According to the Hanafi school of thought, it refers to the bounds of the Masjid Haram. If a person is prevented on the way, he should send the animal or the money to buy one to be sacrificed there on his behalf: According to Imam Malik and Imam Shafei, the sacrifice should be made at the very place where one has been prevented. One should not, have his head shaved or the hair cut until he has offered the animal for sacrifice.

*211 According to a tradition, the Prophet (peace be upon him) directed that in such a case, one should observe fast for three days or feed six indigent persons or sacrifice at least a goat.

*212 “Safety” here refers to the removal of the cause, whatever that might have been, including the hostility of an enemy, and whatever was mainly responsible for the prevention from Hajj at that time. Just as prevention includes all the causes which prevent one from performing Hajj, so safety includes the removal of all the causes of

prevention.

***213** Before the advent of Islam, the Arabs thought it was a great sin to perform both Hajj and Umrah during one and the same journey. According to their self made law, different journeys had to be undertaken for each. In this verse Allah removed the self imposed restriction except for those who lived within the appointed bounds of the Sanctuary, because it was not difficult for them to undertake different journeys for Hajj and Umrah. They had merely to put off the pilgrim's garment (ihram) and release themselves from the prescribed restriction and ceremonials after the performance of Umrah and then renew the same during the Hajj days.

In order to understand the references to the Hajj rites in the succeeding verses, it will be worthwhile to state these briefly. The pilgrims should put on the pilgrims' garment (ihram) as soon as they reach a *miqat*, one of the fixed points on all the roads to Makkah. After this they should abide by the code prescribed for Hajj. If on reaching Makkah, a pilgrim wished to perform Umrah, he might then put off, ihram and release himself from restrictions imposed by it up to the 7th of Dhul-Hijjah. On the 8th, he should again put on ihram at Makkah and go to Mina, a valley, about six miles from there. On the 9th he should proceed to the valley of Arafat, which is about five miles further from Mina and stay there up to the evening. Then he should return to Masharil-Haram (Muzdalifah) which is midway between Arafat and Mina, and pass the night between the 9th and the 10th there in prayer, meditation

and devotion. On the morning of the 10th, he should come back to Mina and offer sacrifice there. After this he should get his head shaved, put off the ihram and return to Makkah and perform *Tawwaf-i-Ziarat* (going around the Kabah). Then he should go to Mina and stay there for two or three days. The three days (from the 11th to the 13th of Dhul-Hijjah) are called the days of *Tashriq*.

197. The pilgrimage is (in) the well known months, so whoever has made obligatory (on himself) the pilgrimage in these (months), then there is no sexual relations,^{*214} nor disobedience,^{*215} nor disputing^{*216} during the pilgrimage. And whatever you do of good, Allah knows it. And take provision with you, but indeed, best provision is righteousness. And fear Me, O people of understanding.^{*217}

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَةٌ ۖ فَمَنْ
فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ
وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي
الْحَجِّ ۗ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ
الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ ۗ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِي
الْأَلْبَابِ

***214** While in the state of ihram, not only intercourse between husband and wife is prohibited but that sort of conversation too, which might excite sexual passions.
***215** Though all sorts of evil deeds are unlawful at all times, they become all the more grave when committed during the course of Hajj.
***216** One cannot even rebuke a servant.

***217** Before the advent of Islam, taking of provisions for the pilgrimage journey was considered to be a worldly act and it was expected that a pious man would go to the House of Allah without any worldly goods. Here it is declared that it is no virtue to go without provisions on pilgrimage to Makkah. Real virtue is that one should fear God, obey Him and keep one's life pure. If a pilgrim does not take any provisions with him, but commits evil deeds without any fear of Allah, he makes a profitless show of piety. In the sight of Allah and men, such a man will dishonor both himself and the pilgrimage he is performing. On the other hand, if a pilgrim has fear of Allah embedded in his heart and keeps his morals pure, he will gain honor with Allah and men, though he may have provided himself fully with provisions.

198. It is no sin upon you that you seek the bounty of your Lord (by trading during pilgrimage).^{*218} Then, when you depart from Arafat, so remember Allah at Al Mashar al Haram. And remember Him as He has guided you. And though you were, before that, among those who were astray.^{*219}

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا
 فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَفْضْتُمْ
 مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ
 عِندَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ
 وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَيْتُمْ وَإِنْ
 كُنْتُمْ مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ
 الضَّالِّينَ

***218** The Arabs had another wrong notion about Hajj.

They considered it a worldly thing to do any kind of business during the Hajj season. The Quran removes this misconception also and declares that if a pious man observes the law of Allah and then does some business to earn his livelihood, he really seeks the bounty of Allah. And there is nothing wrong in seeking the bounty of Allah along with seeking His pleasure.

***219** That is, you should give up all those ungodly customs of ignorance which you used to practice in pre-Islamic days along with the worship of Allah. Now worship Allah exclusively in accordance with the guidance He has revealed.

199. Then depart from where all the people depart, and ask forgiveness of Allah. ^{*220} Indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ
النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ



***220** Ever since the time of the Prophet Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them), the pilgrims used to go to Arafat from Makkah on the 9th of Dhul-Hijjah for the performance of Hajj and then returned from there to Muzdalifah on the morning of the 10th. But later when the Quraish established their own priesthood, they arrogantly asserted: It is below our dignity to go to Arafat along with the common Arabs because we live in the Sanctuary. Accordingly, they reserved this mark of distinction for themselves and would halt at Muzdalifah and let others proceed on to Arafat. Then this distinction was extended to

Bani Khuzaah and Bani Kinanah and the other tribes with whom the Quraish had marriage relations. Later, even the allies of the Quraish adopted this privilege of distinction and they too would stop short of Arafat. In this verse the same privilege of distinction and pride has been abolished. Addressing the Quraish, their relatives and allies in particular and the common Arabs in general it has been enjoined that they should accompany others to perform the essential ceremonials at Arafat, halt there and return along with them to Makkah, and should ask Allah's forgiveness for their breach of the Prophet Abraham's (peace be upon him) way, which they committed in the past on account of tribal pride and distinction.

200. Then when you have completed your (pilgrimage) rites, then remember Allah as you remember your forefathers, or with greater remembrance.^{*221} Then of mankind is he who says: "Our Lord, give us in this world," and he will not have any portion in the Hereafter.

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ
فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ
ءَابَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا
فَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا
ءَاتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ مِن خَلْقٍ

***221** After performing their Hajj, the Arabs used to hold meetings in Mina and brag about their own achievements and those of their forefathers. Here they were told to give up these customs of ignorance, and pass their time in

remembering and glorifying Allah instead of singing praises of their ancestors.

201. And of them is he who says: “Our Lord, give us in this world (what is) good, and in the Hereafter (what is) good, and save us from the punishment of the Fire.”

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي
الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ
حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾

202. Those, for them is a portion of what they have earned. And Allah is swift at reckoning.

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا
وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

203. And remember Allah during the appointed days. Then whoever hastens in two days, then there is no sin upon him, and whoever delays, then there is no sin upon him, ^{*222} for him who fears (Allah). And fear Allah, and know that to Him you will be gathered.

﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ
فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ
عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ
لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾

***222** That is, it does not matter whether you return from Mina to Makkah on the 12th or the 13th of Dhul-Hijjah during the *Tashriq* days. The real thing that matters is not the number of days you stayed at Mina but whether you spent those days in establishing your relation with Allah during those days or in merry making.

204. And of the people is he whose speech pleases you (O Muhammad) in worldly life, and he calls Allah to witness as to what is in his heart.^{*223} And he is the fiercest of opponents.^{*224}

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهَ
عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ
الْخِصَامِ



***223** This typical man of the world pretends to show that he is a sincere well wisher of the people. Time and again he assures the people, saying, Allah is my witness that I intend nothing but good. I am not working for self interest but for the sake of truth and right and for the welfare of the people. But all glib talk of this worldly wise man is hypocritical.

***224** “And he is the fiercest of opponents.” Because in his enmity, he does not hesitate to employ any kind of falsehood, dishonesty, treachery or any other crooked method, in spite of his smooth tongue, plausible talk and solemn oaths in the name of Allah.

205. And when he turns away (from you),^{*225} he strives in the land to cause corruption therein, and to destroy the crops and the cattle. And Allah does not love corruption.

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ
لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ
وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْفُسَادَ



***225** It may also mean, when he returns to everyday life

after this glib.

206. And when it is said to him: “Fear Allah,” arrogance takes him to sin, so sufficient for him is Hell. And indeed, it is an evil resting place.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ
الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ
وَلَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ



207. And of mankind is he who would sell himself, seeking the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is Kind to (His) slaves.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ
أَبْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
رءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ



208. O those who believe, enter into Islam completely,^{*226} and do not follow the footsteps of Satan. Certainly, he is an open enemy to you.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَدْخُلُوا
فِي السِّلْمِ كَآفَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا
خُطَوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ
لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ



***226** That is, come into the fold of Islam completely without any reservation. Your thoughts, your theories, your culture, your sciences, your manners, your dealings, your efforts etc. should in every aspect of life, be subordinated to Islam. You should not divide your life into different compartments so as to follow Islam in one and discard it in the other.

209. Then if you slide back after what has come to you as the clear proofs, then know that Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.*227

فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
جَاءَتْكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

***227** That is, He is All-Powerful and also knows how to punish the criminals.

210. Do they await but that Allah should come to them in the shadows of the clouds, and the angels, and the matter would be judged.*228 And to Allah all matters are returned (for judgment).

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ
فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ
وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَإِلَى
اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ

***228** Particular attention should be paid to these words for they enunciate a great universal truth. Allah has sent man to this world to undergo a test. He has revealed the Truth through His Messengers and given man the freedom to believe or not to believe in it, and after believing in it to submit or not to submit to it. He keeps the reality hidden from man and leaves it to him to judge it rationally in the light of the teachings of his Messengers, His Books and the signs shown by His Messengers. He never makes the reality so bare as to leave no alternative but to acknowledge it, for after that no question of a trial is left and success or failure in the test becomes meaningless. That is why Allah gives warning, as if to say, do not wait for that time when Allah

with His angels will come before you in His glory. At that time your doom shall be sealed and no more chance left for any test. Then belief and submission will have no value. Belief has a value only as long as the reality remains hidden from your senses and you recognize and acknowledge it by means of your own reasoning and then prove your moral courage by submitting to it without any coercion. When you see with your own eyes Allah on the throne of His glory and angels functioning on the earth and in the heavens and find yourself completely in His power, then belief and submission will have no value. At that time even confirmed sinners and obdurate unbelievers will not dare to disbelieve or disobey. But then it will be useless because the time for test will be over. When the curtain is raised and the reality is seen by everyone, then no more chance shall be given, nor shall there be any more test because that will be the time of the judgment.

211. Ask the Children of Israel how many of clear signs We have given them. And whoever changes the favor of Allah after what has come to him, then surely Allah is severe in punishment.*229

سَلَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمْ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ
مِّنْ ءَايَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ
اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ



*229 The Muslims have been told to enquire about it especially from the children of Israel because the latter were a living object lesson for the former who were now replacing them as leaders of the world. The children of

Israel had been favored with prophethood and divine Book and had been entrusted with leadership for the guidance of the world but they had deprived themselves of this blessing (leadership) for involving themselves in wretchedness in the lusts of this worldliness, duplicity and in the evil deeds of pseudo knowledge. Therefore the Muslims who were replacing them were forewarned to be on their guard against these evils and learn a lesson from their history.

212. Beautified for those who disbelieve is the life of this world, and they ridicule of those who believe. And those who fear (Allah) will be above them on the Day of Resurrection. And Allah gives provision to whom He wills without measure.

زَيْنَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا
وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ

213. Mankind were one community, then Allah sent (to them) prophets as bearers of glad tidings, and as warners, and sent down with them the Scripture with the truth, that it might judge between mankind in that wherein they differed. And none differed over it (the Scripture), except those

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ
اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ
وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ
لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا
اختلفوا فيه ۗ وَمَا اختلف فيه
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا

who were given it, after what had come to them as clear proofs, out of jealous animosity among themselves.*230 Then Allah guided those who believed concerning that in which they had differed, to the truth, by His permission. And Allah guides whom He wills to a straight path.

جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغِيًا بَيْنَهُمْ
فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَا
اٰخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِاِذْنِهِ
وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ اِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ



*230 Here the theory of evolution in religion has been refuted. The so called scholars say that man began his religious life in the darkness of polytheism: then by and by he began to worship God, but associated other gods with Him. This went on for a long time; at last he recognized and accepted the Oneness of God. But the Quran contradicts this and says that human life began in full divine light. When Allah created the first man, Adam, He revealed the truth to him and showed him the right way. Adam's descendants followed his way for a long time and all of them were members of one and the same community. Then they began to follow new ways and invented new religions. And they did so in spite of the fact that the truth had been shown to them just because they wanted to misappropriate to themselves more than their own due share and rights sanctioned by it. In order to prevent the misguided people, from this evil, Allah sent His Messengers to invite them to the original divine way. They were not

sent to found new religious communities after their own names, but to bring those who had swerved from the right path to the original religion of mankind and to the same one community which was formed in accordance with the guidance of Allah, at the time when man began his life on the earth.

214. Or do ^{*231} you think that you will enter Paradise, while such (trial) has not come to you as the like of (that which came to) those who passed away before you. They were afflicted with poverty and adversity, and they were shaken until the messenger and those who believed with him said: "When will be the help of Allah." Yes certainly, Allah's help is near.

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ
وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا
مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ
وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ
الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَهُ
مَتَى نَصْرُ اللَّهِ ؕ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ
قَرِيبٌ



***231** A whole story has been left out between this verse and the preceding one, for this verse itself points to it and because it had already been related in detail in the Surahs which were revealed before this at Makkah. In the preceding verse it was stated that the Messengers, were sent to remove those differences which had arisen in religion, but the story of their hardships and long persecutions was omitted because it had already been described in detail in the Makki revelations. Hence the believers are warned that the Messengers and their followers have always had to

struggle hard with the rebels against Allah in order to establish His Way, and that the true faith of Islam has never been a bed of roses. One has to exert one's utmost to establish it and to fight against all those evil forces that oppose its establishment, even at the sacrifice of one's life, if need be.

215. They ask you (O Muhammad), what should they spend. Say: "Whatever you spend of good (must be) for parents, and near kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer. And whatever you do of good, then indeed, Allah is Aware of it."

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا
 أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ
 وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ
 وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ
 خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ



216. Fighting has been ordained upon you, though it is hateful to you. But may be that you hate a thing and it is good for you. And it may be that you love a thing and it is bad for you. And Allah knows, but you do not know.

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ
 لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا
 وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ
 تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
 يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ



217. They ask you about the sacred month (and) fighting therein. Say: "Fighting therein is a great (sin). But

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ
 قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ

averting (people) from the Way of Allah, and disbelief in Him, and (preventing access to) AlMasjid alHaram, and expulsion of its people there from, is greater (evil) in the sight of Allah. And persecution is greater than killing.”*232 And they will not cease from fighting against you until they turn you back from your religion, if they can. And whoever of you reverts from his religion, and dies while he is a disbeliever, then those, their deeds have become worthless in this world and the Hereafter. And those are the companions of the Fire. They will abide therein forever.*233

وَصَدُّهُ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرًا
بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ
أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا
يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ
عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنْ أَسْتَطَعُوا
وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنِ دِينِهِ
فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ
حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



*232 The objection, which was raised in the form of a question about warfare in the sacred month, refers to an incident which took place in the month of Rajab in the second year of Hijra.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent a detachment of eight men to Nakhlah, a place midway between Makkah and Taaif. He told them to watch the movements of the Quraish and find out their future plans. Though he had not

given them permission to fight, they attacked a small trading caravan of the Quraish, killed one man and took the rest prisoners and brought them to Al-Madinah along with their goods.

As this incident took place at a time when it could not be said with certainty whether the month of Rajab had come to an end and the month of Shaban had commenced, it was doubtful whether the attack was made in Rajab, a prohibited month, or in Shaban. Nevertheless, the Quraish and their secret allies, the Jews, and the double faced Muslims of Al-Madinah, took it as a God given opportunity to make strong propaganda and raise serious objections against the believers. They ironically remarked, what a pious people they are. They do not hesitate to shed blood even in a prohibited month. Such objections have been answered in this verse which implies, no doubt, bloodshed is a very bad thing but their objection is not reasonable, coming as it does from the mouths of those people who themselves had carried on for thirteen years the most cruel form of persecution against hundreds of their own brethren for no other reason than that they believed in one Allah. They not only forced these brethren of their own to leave their beloved homes but also prevented them from paying a visit to the Kabah, although this sacred place was not the property of anyone. Their crime was all the more heinous because such a wicked antagonism had never existed during the previous two thousand years or so. Therefore those workers of iniquity, the list of whose crimes was so black, had no right to raise objections on the basis of a

trivial border incident. Moreover, this incident took place without the permission of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and was, therefore, nothing more than an irresponsible act on the part of a few members of the Islamic party.

It should also be kept in view that when this detachment came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the prisoners and the spoils, he said, I never gave you permission to fight. He also refused to accept the share due to the public treasury from the spoils. This clearly showed that it was an unlawful and unauthorized act. The common Muslims also took their men to task for this incident and there was not a single Muslim in the whole of Al-Madinah who approved of this act of theirs.

***233** Some simple minded Muslims regarded as genuine the above mentioned objection raised by the disbelievers and the Jews. They were under the wrong impression that this and the like were honest objections, and if they were removed, the objectors would be satisfied and there would be peace with them. In this verse, these Muslims have been warned not to cherish any such expectations about them because they did not raise these objections for clarification but to make propaganda against the Muslims. Their real objection against the Muslims was that they had accepted Islam and were inviting the world to it. There could, therefore, be no peace between them and the objectors as long as they stuck to their belief in Allah. Therefore the Muslims were told not to underrate the enemies of their faith. They should remember that the one who tries to turn them away from their faith is a worse enemy than the one

who tries to rob them of their wealth, for the latter tries to ruin only their life in this world, which is after all transitory, while the former tries to ruin their life in the Hereafter, which is eternal.

218. Certainly, those who have believed, and those who have emigrated and have fought in the Way of Allah,^{*234} those have hope of Allah's mercy. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



***234** The word Jihad means to exert one's utmost for the achievement of an object. It is not a synonym for holy war, but has a far wider meaning than this and covers every kind of effort. And the mujahid is one who is always after the achievement of his ideal, plans for it, propagates it with his tongue and pen and struggles for it with all his heart and body. In short, he spends all his efforts and resources for its achievement and fights against all those forces that oppose it; so much so that he does not hesitate to put even his very life in danger for his ideal. The struggle and fight to such a person will be technically Jihad. A Muslim, however, is required to do all this in the Way of Allah alone under certain moral restrictions for establishing the way prescribed by Him and for elevating His word above all. And there should be absolutely no other object than this before a Muslim in performing Jihad. It has thus become clear that the Jihad of a Muslim is not general war of

extermination against infidels.

219. They ask you (O Muhammad) about wine and gambling. Say: “In them is great sin, and (some) benefit for people. And the sin of them is greater than their benefit.”^{*235} And they ask you what they should spend. Say: “That which is beyond your needs.” Thus Allah makes clear to you (His) verses that you might give thought.

﴿ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ
وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ
وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ
مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا ۚ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا
يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ ۚ كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾

***235** This was the first instruction about alcoholic and intoxicating drinks and games of chance for stakes. At first a mere disapproval of these things was pronounced to serve as a preliminary to their final prohibition. The next step in this direction was that the Muslims were prohibited from offering the Prayers when they were drunk. Finally drinking, gambling and the like were made absolutely unlawful. (Refer to An-Nisa: Ayat 43, and Al-Maidah: Ayat 90).

220. In the world and the Hereafter. And they ask you about the orphans. Say: “Improvement for them is best.”^{*236} And if you mix your affairs with theirs, then (they

﴿ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۚ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ
عَنِ الْيَتَامَىٰ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ
خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ ۚ

are) your brothers. And Allah knows him who corrupts (orphan's property) from him who improves (it). And if Allah had willed, He could have put you into difficulties. Indeed, Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.”

وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ
الْمُصْلِحِ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

***236** Before the revelation of this verse, very strict warnings had been administered for the preservation of the rights of orphans. Warnings like, those who misappropriate the property of orphans fill their bellies with fire, had made the Muslims so fearful that the guardians of the orphans had made separate arrangements for their meals etc. But, in spite of all this, they feared lest any part of the property of the orphans should get mixed up with their property and they should incur the wrath of Allah. That is why they asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) to define for them the limits of their relations with orphans. They have been told to do sincerely what is best in their interest and at the same time warned that Allah knows everything.

221. And do not marry polytheistic women until they believe. And a believing slave woman is better than a woman who associates (with Allah), even though she pleases you. And do not marry polytheistic men until

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَةَ حَتَّىٰ
يُؤْمِنَ ۚ وَلَا امَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّن
مُّشْرِكَةٍ ۚ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ ۗ وَلَا
تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا

they believe. And a believing slave man is better than a man who associates (with Allah), even though he pleases you. They invite to the Fire,^{*237} and Allah invites to the Garden and forgiveness by His permission. And He makes clear His verses to the people that they may remember.

وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ
 وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ ؕ أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ
 إِلَى النَّارِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ
 وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ ۖ وَيُبَيِّنُ ؕ آيَاتِهِ
 لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ



***237** The reason why the believers have been prohibited from marrying musrhiq spouses is that, they invite you to the Fire. This means that such marriage might mislead the Muslim spouses to the ways of shirk, for the relations between husband and wife are not merely sexual but spiritual and cultural as well. It is possible that the Muslim spouse may influence the mushrik spouse and his or her family and their offspring in favor of the Islamic way of life. But it is equally possible that the mushrik spouse may imbue the Muslim spouse, his (or her) family or their offspring, with the spirit and ways of shirk. Most probably, as a result of such a marriage, a mixture of Islam and un-Islam will be bred in such a family. A non-Muslim might approve of this, but a Muslim cannot. One who sincerely believes in Islam can never take such a risk merely for the sake of the gratification of his lust. He would rather suppress his passions than do anything that might mislead him to disbelief, blasphemy and shirk or, at least mislead

his progeny.

222. And they ask you about menstruation. Say: “It is a hurt,^{*238} so keep away from women during menstruation, and do not approach them until they are cleansed. So when they have purified themselves,^{*239} then go to them from where Allah has ordained upon you.^{*240} Indeed, Allah loves those who turn to Him in repentance and He loves those who purify themselves.”

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ
هُوَ أَذًى فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي
الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى
يَطْهَرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ
مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ
الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ



***238** The Arabic word *adha* stands both for illness and for un-cleanliness. Menses are not only a state of impurity but also of disease. During the monthly period, women are medically nearer a state of illness than of health.

***239** The Quran uses indirect and covert hints and suggestions for the expression of such delicate matters. The instructions, they should be separated, and do not go near them, do not mean that the women should be made untouchables during their monthly periods, as they are made by the Jews, the Hindus and some other communities. The Prophet (peace be upon him) explained that this commandment meant only to prohibit intercourse with them during the menses. All other relations with them may

be continued as before.

***240** The Arabic word *amr* does not refer to any legal injunction but to the natural instinct that has been embedded in the nature of every human being and animal and is known to everyone.

223. Your women are a cultivation (for sowing seed) for you, so go to your place of cultivation however you will, ^{*241} and send (good) before you for your selves, ^{*242} and fear Allah, and know that you will meet Him. And give glad tidings to the believers.

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَاتُوا
حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا
لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّكُمْ مُلَاقُوهُ وَبَشِّرِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

***241** Allah has not created women merely for the enjoyment and entertainment of men. The relation between the two is as serious an affair as that of a farmer and his field. The farmer does not go to his field merely for recreation and enjoyment but for cultivation to get produce from it. In the same way, a man should go to his wife to produce children. Allah's law, however, is not concerned with the method of cultivation but with the demand that man should go to the field and not elsewhere and to his own field and for production.

***242** The Arabic words are comprehensive. They may imply: You should try to produce children for the continuation of your race, or you must take special pains to bring up and train them morally to be good men. Here both

the aspects are implied. That is why they have been warned, in the next sentence, that they shall be called to account by Allah for any deliberate disregard of these obligations.

224. And do not make Allah (His name) an excuse in your oaths, against your being righteous, and acting piously, and making peace among mankind.*243 And Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً
لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا
وَتُصَلِّحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

***243** We learn from authentic traditions that if anyone takes a thoughtless oath to do or not to do a thing and afterwards realizes that fairness demands its abrogation, he should abrogate it and expiate for it. The expiation for breaking an oath is the feeding of ten needy persons or clothing them or the liberation of a slave. If one cannot afford this, he must observe fast for three days. (See Al-Maidah: Ayat : 89).

225. Allah will not call you to account for that which is unintentional in your oaths.*244 But He will call you to account for that which your hearts have earned. And Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ
حَلِيمٌ

***244** There is neither expiation nor any punishment for

those oaths that one utters unawares as a byword.

226. For those who take an oath to keep away from their wives, the waiting is four months.^{*245} Then, if they return, then indeed, Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Merciful.^{*246}

لِّلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِن نِّسَائِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ
أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِن فَاءُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ



***245** Although it is true that relations between husband and wife do not always remain cordial, yet Allah's law does not allow that the strained relations should continue indefinitely. Therefore it lays down the maximum period of four months for a separation in which they legally remain husband and wife but practically live separate lives without any conjugal relations between them. Such a separation is termed *ila* in the Islamic code of law. During this period they must either make reconciliation between themselves or part for good so that they may be free to marry a suitable person of their liking.

From the words "Those who take an oath" the jurists belonging to the Hanafi and Shafie schools of thought conclude that this period of four months applies only to those cases of separation which are made on oath; if they remain separate for any length of time without an oath, this law would not apply to them. On the other hand, the jurists belonging to the Maliki school of thought are of the opinion that the maximum period of four months applies to all cases of separation. A saying of Imam Ahmad also supports this opinion.

Ali, Ibn Abbas, and Hasan Basri (may Allah be pleased with them) are of the opinion that this law applies only to that case of separation which is the result of strained relations, and does not apply to the case in which the husband and the wife agree to discontinue conjugal relations with mutual consent for some common good and at the same time keep cordial relations. There are other jurists who are of the opinion that the law of *ila* would apply to every case of separation made on oath irrespective of the fact whether their relations remain good or bad; hence it should not go beyond the prescribed term of four months.

*246 Some jurists interpret this to mean that if they break their oaths within four months and re-establish conjugal relations, there would be no expiation for this; Allah will forgive the breach of their oath without expiation. But the majority of jurists are of the opinion that expiation must be made in any case. Allah will forgive and show mercy, does not mean that the expiation will be remitted. It merely means that Allah will accept the expiation and forgive wrong done by each against the other during their separation.

227. And if they decide upon divorce,^{*247} then indeed, Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ



*247 According to the verdict of Caliph Uthman, Ibn Masud, Zaid bin Thabit and some other jurists (may Allah be pleased with them), they can reunite only within four

months. The expiry of this term itself is a proof that the husband has decided upon divorce. Hence after its expiry, divorce will automatically take place and the husband will forfeit the right of reunion during the waiting term. If, however, both of them agree, they can remarry. There is a verdict to the same effect from Umar, Ali, Ibn Abbas and Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) and the jurists of the Hanafi school have accepted the same.

Said bin Musayyib, Makh-ul, Zuhri and some others are of the opinion that after the expiry of four months, there shall be an automatic divorce but this will be a single revocable divorce and the husband will have the right to reunite within the term *iddat* and if he does not reunite within the term, they may remarry if they so desire.

As against this, Aishah, Abud-Darda and many other jurists of Al-Madinah (may Allah be pleased with them) are of the opinion that after the expiry of four months the case should be taken to a court so that the judge may order the husband either to reunite with his wife or divorce her. There is also a verdict of Umar, Ali and Ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) to this effect and the same has been accepted by Imam Malik and Imam Shafie also.

228. And divorced women shall wait, for themselves (from getting remarried) for three menstrual periods. And it is not lawful for them that they should conceal that which Allah has created in

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ
يَتَرْتَضْنَ
بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ
لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي
أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَنَّ بِاللَّهِ

their wombs, if they believe in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have more right to take ^{*248} them back in that (period), if they desire a reconciliation. ^{*249} And they (women) have (rights) similar to those over them according to what is equitable, and men have a degree above them. And Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْنَّ دَرَجَةٌ مَّا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

***248** That is, fear Allah and do not divorce your wives for frivolous and unjustifiable reasons, for He knows everything.

***249** Jurists differ in the interpretation of this verse. According to one section of them, divorce does not take place and the husband retains the right of reunion up to the time of the purification of the wife by a bath after the third monthly course. This is the opinion of Abu Bakr, Umar, Ali, Ibn Abbas, Abu Musa Ashari, Ibn Masud and some other companions of the first rank (may Allah be pleased with them), and the Hanafi jurists have accepted the same. On the contrary, the other section says that the husband forfeits the right of reunion as soon as the wife has a discharge of the third monthly course. This opinion is held by Aishah, Ibn Umar and Zaid bin Thabit (may Allah be pleased with them), and the Shafie and the Maliki jurists have adopted the same. It must, however, be clearly

understood that the husband retains the right of reunion only in the case when he has pronounced one divorce or two divorces, but he forfeits the right of reunion when he has pronounced three divorces.

229. Divorce is twice, then (a woman) must be kept on reasonable terms,^{*250} or be separated in kindness. And it is not lawful for you that you take anything back from that which you have given them (women),^{*251} except that both fear that they may not keep the limits (ordained by) Allah. Then if you fear that they may not keep the limits of Allah, then it is no sin for either of them in that by which she ransoms herself.^{*252} These are the limits by Allah, so do not transgress them. And whoever transgresses the limits of Allah, then it is those who are the wrongdoers.

الطَّلُقُ مَرَّتَانِ ^ط فَإِمْسَاكَ ^م
بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٍ بِإِحْسَانٍ ^ط
وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا
ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا
أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ^ط فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ
أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْهِمَا فِيهَا ^ط أَفْتَدَتْ بِهِ ^ط تِلْكَ
حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا ^ج وَمَنْ
يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
الظَّالِمُونَ

***250** This brief verse was meant to reform a serious social evil common in Arabia before the advent of Islam. A husband was allowed to pronounce divorce as often as he

pleased. Whenever his relations were strained with his wife, he would pronounce a divorce and then reunite as and when it suited him. As there was no limit to this, it was repeated over and over again. Thus the wife could neither have conjugal relations with him, nor was free to marry anyone else. This verse of the Quran shuts this door of cruelty. During his whole married life, a husband may use the right of divorce and reunion with one wife only twice. After that whenever he pronounces divorce for the third time, wife shall be separated from him permanently.

In order to check hasty action and leave the door open for reconciliation at many stages, the right method of pronouncing divorce as taught in the Quran and the traditions is that if and when it becomes inevitable, it should be pronounced only when she is not in her menses and even if a dispute arises during the monthly period, it is not right to pronounce divorce during that condition, but he should wait for her to cleanse herself and then may pronounce a single divorce, if he so likes. Then he should wait for the next monthly course and pronounce the second divorce if he so wishes after she is cleansed. Then he should wait for the next monthly course to pronounce the third and final divorce after she is cleansed. It is, however, better to wait and reconsider the matter after the first and second pronouncements, for in the case of one or two divorces, the husband retains the right to take her back as his wife before the expiry of the term, and even if the term has expired, the couple has a chance to remarry by mutual consent. But if divorce is pronounced for the third time in

the third period of purity, the husband forfeits the right to take her back nor can the couple remarry.

As for those ignorant people who pronounce all the three divorces in one and the same sitting, they commit a heinous sin against the law. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has very severely denounced this practice and Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) used to whip the husband who pronounced three divorces at one and the same sitting.

***251** The husband has no right to demand anything of the dower given to the wife in consideration for the marriage or ornaments, clothes etc., given to her as gifts. It is utterly against the moral principles of Islam to ask for the return of anything given to her as a present or gift. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has likened this disgraceful behavior to the licking up of his own vomit by the dog. It is indeed very shameful on the part of a husband to keep back or demand, after the divorce, what he himself gave to his wife. As a matter of fact Islam exhorts the husband who divorces his wife to give her something at her departure. (See Al-Baqarah: Ayat 241).

***252** When divorce is obtained by the wife from her husband by compensation, it is called *khula* in the Islamic law. If the husband and the wife agree between themselves on some terms regarding this, the same shall be enforced. But if the case goes to the court, it will first of all try to ascertain whether the wife really dislikes her husband so much that she cannot live with him any longer. Then if the court is satisfied that they cannot live together happily, it shall fix as compensation anything that it considers proper,

and the husband shall have to accept that and divorce his wife. The jurists are generally of the opinion that the compensation should not exceed the dower given by the husband.

In such a case, the husband forfeits the right of reunion after the divorce because it has been bought, so to speak, by the wife. Of course, it is lawful for them to remarry with mutual consent.

According to the majority of Muslims, the term for the wife in the case of *khula* is the same as that of divorce. But Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah, and others have related traditions to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prescribed only one monthly course as the term for the wife after the divorce, and Caliph Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) decided a case in accordance with this.

230. So if he has divorced her (for the third time), then she is not lawful to him afterward, until she marries a husband other than him. Then if he (the other husband) divorces her,^{*253} then it is no sin upon them both (woman and the former husband) that they reunite together, if they think that they may keep the limits of Allah. And these are the limits (ordained by) Allah,

فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدُ
حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ ۖ فَإِنْ
طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ
يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ يُقِيمَا
حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ
يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ

which He makes clear for the people who have knowledge.

***253** Authentic traditions warn against any pre-arranged scheme that a certain man should marry a certain divorced woman with the understanding that he would divorce her again to enable the former husband to remarry his divorced wife. This shall be an unlawful act and such a marriage shall be no marriage at all but adultery and the woman shall not become the lawful wife of the first husband by such a pre-arranged scheme. Ali, Ibn Masud Abu Hurairah and Uqbah bin-Amir, (may Allah be pleased with them) all relate the tradition to the effect that the Prophet (peace be upon him) cursed all the persons who indulge in such devices.

231. And when you have divorced women, and they have reached their term, then keep them on reasonable terms, or separate them on reasonable terms. And do not keep them (intending) to harm, that you transgress (the limits). And whoever does that, then he has indeed wronged himself. ^{*254} And do not take the verses of Allah in jest, and remember the favor of Allah upon you, and that

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ
فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ
سَرَحوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلَا
تُكْسِبُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِّتَعْتَدُوا وَمَنْ
يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ
وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوًا
وَأذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا
أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ الْكِتَابِ

which He has sent down to you of the Book (the Quran) and wisdom, by which He instructs you.*255 And fear Allah and know that Allah has knowledge of all things.

وَالْحِكْمَةَ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهَا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



*254 It is not right for a person to divorce his wife and then reunite with her before the expiry of the term simply to get another opportunity to torment and harass her. Therefore Allah has warned that if the husband sincerely intends to take his wife back, he should reunite with the intention of treating her well; otherwise the best thing would be to release her in a noble way.

*255 It means, do not forget the fact that Allah has appointed you to a position of the highest responsibility. He has given you the Book and taught you wisdom and entrusted you with the duty of guiding the world. You have been made the community of the golden mean, and the witnesses of virtue and truth. It does not, therefore, behoove you to play with the revelations by means of sophistry and take undue advantage of the letter of the law and lead wicked and unjust lives in your homes, when you are expected to show the right way to the world.

232. And when you have divorced women, and they have reached their term, then do not prevent them that they marry their husbands (former or new),

وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضُوا بَيْنَهُمْ

when they agree among themselves on reasonable terms.*256 This is instructed to him, who among you believes in Allah and the Last Day. That is more virtuous for you, and purer. And Allah knows, and you do not know.

بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ذَٰلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَن
كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

*256 That is, if both agree to remarry after the expiry of the term, the relatives of the divorced woman should not prevent her from remarrying her former husband, who had divorced her once or twice but had not become reunited with her during the prescribed term. It may also mean that the husband who had divorced his wife thrice should not prevent her from marrying another person after the expiry of the prescribed term. There is nothing meaner that one should prevent his divorced wife from marrying another man just because he himself has divorced her.

233. And (divorced) mothers shall nurse (breastfeed) their children two complete years, for whoever intends to complete the nursing.*257 And upon the father of the child is their (mothers') provision and their clothing on a reasonable basis. No soul should be burdened beyond

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ
حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَن أَرَادَ أَنْ يُتِمَّ
الرِّضَاعَةَ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ
رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ لَا
تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَا

its capacity. A mother should not be harmed because of her child, nor should he (be harmed) whose child it is because of his child. And on (father's) heir is (the duty) like that (of the father). And if they desire weaning through mutual consent of them both, and consultation, then it is no sin for them. And if you intend to have your children nursed (by other women),*258 then it is no sin for you, provided you pay what is due from you on reasonable basis. And fear Allah, and know that Allah is Seer of what you do.

تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ
لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ^ج وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ
ذَلِكَ^ط فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ
تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْهِمَا^ط وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ
تَسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُمْ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ^ط وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ



*257 This applies to all the cases in which the husband and the wife have separated in any manner divorce, khula or judicial separation, and the child is still a suckling.

*258 If the father dies, the responsibility of remunerating the mother or the wet nurse who suckles the infant lies on the guardian just as it lay on the father.

234. And those who die among you and leave behind wives, they (the wives) shall wait, keeping themselves

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذُرُونَ
أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ

(from remarrying), four months and ten (days).^{*259}

Then when they have reached their term, then there is no sin for you in that which they may do with themselves in honorable manner. And Allah is Well Acquainted of what you do.

أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي
أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ



***259** This prescribed term for waiting also applies to those widows who might not have had any intercourse with their husbands. The pregnant widow is, however, an exception. Her prescribed term is her delivery whether it takes place just after the death of the husband or several months after it.

They (the wives) shall wait, implies that they must not remarry during the term, nor adorn themselves in any manner during this period. traditions give clear instructions that widows should not wear ornaments and colored and showy dresses, nor adorn themselves with any kind of make up during the term. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to whether a widow should pass the term in the house of the deceased husband or not. Umar, Uthman Ibn Umar, Zaid bin Thabit, Ibn Masud, Umm Salamah, Saeed bin al-Musayyib, Ibrahim Nakhai, Muhammad bin Sirin, and the four Imams (may Allah be pleased with all of them) are of the opinion that she should reside in the house of the deceased husband. On the contrary, Aishah, Ibn Abbas, Ali, Jabir bin Abdullah, Ata,

Taus, Hasan Basri, Umar bin Abdul 'Aziz, and all the Zahiris (may Allah be pleased with all of them) are of the opinion that she is free to pass the period wherever she likes, and can also go on a journey.

235. And there is no sin for you in that to which you make indirect proposal of marriage to the women (during their waiting term), or keep it concealed within yourselves. Allah knows that you will be thinking of them. But do not promise them secretly, except that you speak honorable words. And do not resolve on the tie of marriage, until the prescribed term is reached. And know that Allah knows what is within yourselves, so fear Him. And know that Allah is Oft Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ
بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ
أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ
أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا
تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا
قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا وَلَا تَعْزَمُوا عُقْدَةَ
النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ
أَجَلَهُ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَأَعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

236. (It is) no sin for you if you divorce women while you have not touched them, or appointed for them an obligatory bridal gift. But provide them

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمْ
النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ
تَفَرَّضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ

(a compensation).^{*260} The wealthy according to his means, and the poor according to his means, a provision that is reasonable. A duty upon those who do good.

عَلَى الْمُوْسِعِ قَدْرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ
قَدْرُهُ مَتَعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا
عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ

***260** After all some harm is done to the woman when the marital relation is broken even under such a condition. Therefore some compensation, according to one's means, must be paid.

237. And if you divorce them before that you touched them, while you have already appointed for them an obligatory bridal gift, then (give) half of that which you appointed, unless that they (women) forego the right, or foregoes it he in whose hand is the marriage contract. And to forego is nearer to righteousness. And do not forget kindness among yourselves.^{*261} Indeed, Allah is All Seer of what you do.

وَإِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ
فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ
يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوَ الَّذِي
بِيَدِهِ عَقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ وَأَنْ
تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَلَا
تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

***261** That is mutual generosity in dealings is essential for the harmony and betterment of human relations. Social life

can never be happy if each and every person insists on his own legal rights.

238. Guard upon (obligatory) prayers,^{*262} and the middle prayer,^{*263} and stand in front of Allah devoutly obedient.

حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ
وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ
قَانِتِينَ



***262** After enunciating rules and regulations for ensuring social welfare and for leading a civilized life, Allah has impressed the importance of the Salat as a finishing touch because it alone can produce fear of Allah and feelings of virtue and piety and create the attitude of obedience to the divine law and keep one on the right path. None can remain firm in one's obedience to the law of Allah without Salat, for one is liable to swerve into one kind of disobedience or the other like the Jews.

***263** Interpreters differ in regard to the meaning of *salat-al-wusta* but the majority of them are of the opinion that it refers to one of the five prayers, and most of them have opined that it is the Asr prayer. There is, however, no definite saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in support of any of these interpretations. Those who are in favor of the Asr prayer infer their opinion from this tradition: In the battle of the clans, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was so engaged in repelling the invasion of the enemies that he got no time to offer the Asr prayer till sunset. Then he said, may Allah fill their graves with fire for depriving us of our *salat al-wusta*. From this they infer

that the *salat al-wusta* is meant the Asr prayer. But in my opinion what the Prophet (peace be upon him) meant by this was that they were responsible for the spiritual loss the Muslims had suffered by their inability to offer their Asr Prayer in time and with peace of mind. As the prayer whose loss the Prophet (peace be upon him) regretted happened to be the Asr prayer, the interpreters were led to conclude that the Asr prayer itself was the *salat al-wusta*. The Arabic word *wusta* means both middle and excellent. Thus, *salat al-wusta* implies both the middle prayer and also an excellent prayer which is said in time and with full attention to Allah, that is, a prayer which has all the excellent qualities of Salat. The subsequent sentence, “And stand in front of Allah devoutly obedient” itself supports the interpretation that it meant an excellent prayer offered to Allah, having all the excellent qualities of Salat, and not any one particular prayer out of the five prescribed prayers.

239. And if you fear (the enemy), then (pray) on foot or riding. Then when you are in safety, then remember Allah, as He has taught you that which you did not know.

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا
فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا
عَلَّمَكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا
تَعْلَمُونَ

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240. And those^{*264} who die among you, and leave behind wives. For their wives is a

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ
وَيَذُرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً

bequest, a provision for one year without turning (them) out (of their homes). But if they go out (of their own accord), then there is no sin for you in that which they do with themselves in honorable manner. And Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.

لَأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَتَعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ
إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي
أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَّعْرُوفٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

***264** At the end of the discourse, this has been added as an appendix and supplement.

241. And for divorced women is a provision that is reasonable, a duty upon those who are righteous.

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتِ مَتَعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ

242. Thus does Allah make clear to you His verses that you may understand.

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ
آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

243. Did you ^{*265} not see (reflect) at those who went out from their homes, and they were in thousands, fearing death. So Allah said to them: "Die." Then He raised them back to life. ^{*266} Indeed, Allah is full of bounty to mankind, but

۞ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ
دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ
الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ
أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ
عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ

most of mankind do not
give thanks.



النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ

***265** From here begins a new address. In it the Muslims have been exhorted to do Jihad, i.e., to exert their utmost in the Way of Allah and make monetary sacrifices for the cause. At the same time they have been warned to guard against those weaknesses that had led to the degeneration and downfall of the children of Israel. It will help understand this address if we keep in mind the occasion of its revelation. At that time the Muslims, who had been expelled from Makkah a year or so earlier and were living as refugees at Al-Madinah, were asking over and over again for permission to fight with the disbelievers who had been persecuting them relentlessly for years. But, when the permission they themselves had asked was given, some of them began to lose heart (Refer to Al-Baqarah: Ayat 216). That is why two important events from the history of the Israelites are being related to serve as a fore-warning to the Muslims and to stimulate their zeal and courage.

***266** This refers to the exodus of the children of Israel (for details see Al-Maidah: Ayats 20-26), when they had left Egypt in large numbers and were wandering as homeless in the deserts and wildernesses and were very anxious to find a home for themselves. But when inspired by Allah, the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) ordered them to fight against the Canaanites and expel them from Palestine and conquer that territory, they showed cowardice and refused to march forward. Consequently Allah left them to wander in the land for forty years so that their generation should

come to an end and a new one be brought up in the hardships of the desert. Then Allah gave them victory over the Canaanites. Probably “Die. Then He raised them back to life” refers to these two aspects of the exodus.

244. And fight in the cause of Allah, and know that Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُوا
أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

245. Who is he that would loan to Allah a goodly loan,^{*267} so that He may multiply it for him many times. And it is Allah who restricts and grants abundance. And unto Him you will be returned.

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا
حَسَنًا فَيُضْعِفُهُ لَهُ أضعَافًا
كثيرةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْصُطُ
وإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

***267** “Goodly loan” is that which is lent without any idea of personal gain or interest but is given with the sole intention to please Allah. Allah in His bounty credits the wealth thus spent in His Way as a loan on Himself. He promises that He will not only return the actual debt but increase it manifold, provided that it is a good loan in the real sense and is lent merely to please Him and for the sake of the objects He approves.

246. Did you not see (reflect) at the leaders of the Children of Israel after Moses, when they said to a

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ مِنْ بَنِي
إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ

prophet of theirs: “Appoint for us a king, we will fight in the cause of Allah.”*268 He said: “Would it perhaps be, if fighting was prescribed for you, that you would not fight.” They said: “And what is it with us that we should not fight in the cause of Allah, and indeed we have been driven out from our homes and our children.”

But when fighting was prescribed for them, they turned away, except a few of them. And Allah is aware of the wrongdoers.

قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّهِمْ أَتَبَعْتُمْ لَنَا مَلِكًا
نُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ
عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ
الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا
لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ
أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَائِنَا
فَلَمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
بِالظَّالِمِينَ



*268 This incident has been mentioned here to fore-warn the Muslims about the hardship and trials of Jihad.

About 1000 B.C. the Amalikites tyrannized over the Israelites and usurped many parts of Palestine from them. At that time the Prophet Samuel (peace be upon him), who was at the helm of the affairs of Israel, had grown very old. So the elders of Israel went to Prophet Samuel (peace be upon him) and said, “You are old. Now appoint a king for us to rule over us and march in front of us and fight in the Way of God.” They asked for a king to rule over them like all other nations. They made this demand because under

the evil influence of the irreligious foreign rulers, they had forgotten the very distinction between the divine rule and kingship. That is what displeased Samuel and incurred the wrath of the Lord. Here are given some details from Chapters 7, 8, 12 of I Samuel.

And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And it came to pass when Samuel was old, then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, and said unto him, behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, "Give us a king to judge us". And Samuel prayed unto the Lord. And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him of a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint them captains over thousands and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields and your vineyards, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyard, and give to his officers and

to his servants. And he will take your men servants, and your maid servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen yourselves; and the Lord will not hear you in that day. Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles. And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. (7:15, 8:4-22).

And Samuel said unto all Israel, Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice, and have made a king over you. And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you, ye said unto me, Nay; but a king shall reign over us: when the Lord your God was your king. Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired, and behold, the Lord hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the Lord and serve Him, and obey His voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the Lord your God: but if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord, then shall the hand of the Lord be against you, as it was against your fathers. Moreover, as for me God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be

consumed, both ye and your king. (12:12-23)

From the above quotations, it is quite clear that God and His Prophet did not approve of their demand for a king. As to the question, why has not God condemned in the Quran this demand of the elders of Israel for a king, the answer is obvious. The story has been related here only for the benefit of the Muslims so that they may learn a lesson from this. Therefore there was no occasion for the condemnation or approval of the institution of kingship, and it would have been irrelevant to discuss whether this demand was right or wrong. Here the only object in view is to state the cause of the downfall of the Israelites, their cowardice, self-worship and lack of discipline so that these might serve as a fore-warning to the Muslims and they should avoid the nourishment of such weaknesses amongst themselves.

247. And their prophet said to them: “Certainly, Allah has appointed for you Saul^{*269} as a king.” They said: “How can he have kingship over us and we are more deserving of the kingship than he is, and he has not been given any abundance in wealth.” He said: “Indeed, Allah has chosen him over you, and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and stature.

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ
بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا
قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ
عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ
وَلَمْ يُوْتِ سَعَةً مِّنَ الْمَالِ
قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَزَادَهُر بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ

And Allah bestows His Sovereignty on whom He wills. And Allah is All Encompassing, All Knower.”

وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

***269** The Bible says, now there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish. And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice young man and a goodly person: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people. And the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses. And when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out against them. And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, behold the man whom I spake to thee of this same shall reign over my people. And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlor and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden which were about thirty persons. Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head and said, the Lord hath appointed thee to be captain over his inheritance. And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen. (I Samuel, chapters 9, 10).

Saul was appointed to be leader of Israel at the command of God like Aaron. David and Christ (peace be upon them all), but the Quran or the traditions do not say explicitly whether he was appointed as a Prophet as well. His appointment as a king by God does not necessary mean that he was also made a Prophet.

248. And their prophet said to them: “Certainly, the sign of his kingship is that there shall come to you the ark in which is reassurance from your Lord, and a remnant of that left behind by the family of Moses, and the family of Aaron, the angels carrying it.^{*270} Indeed, in that shall be a sign for you if you are believers.”

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ
مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ
فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ
مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آءَالُ مُوسَىٰ وَآءَالُ
هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي
ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُم إِن كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ



***270** Though the Bible differs a little from the Quran about the details of the ark, yet we learn much from it.

The Israelites considered the ark to be very sacred, that is the ark of the covenant. They believed that by means of it, God may come among us and rescue us from the power of enemies. That is why its return gave them peace of mind and courage.

The ark contained the sacred relics of the house of Moses and Aaron (peace be upon them). These were the fragments of the tablets given to Moses on the Mount Sinai. Besides, there was the original copy of the Torah which was written under the guidance of Moses and given to the Levites. It also contained a bottle of manna so that the future generations of Israel should be grateful to Allah for the blessing which He had bestowed upon their forefathers in the desert. Probably it also contained the staff of Moses,

which was a great sign of Allah.

Probably the Quran refers to the incident mentioned in chapters 4, 5, 6, of I Samuel.

The ark of the Lord was captured by the Philistines in a battle in which the Israelites were routed. The Israelites were so disheartened that they cried, the glory is gone from Israel on account of the capture of the ark of God. The ark remained in the land of the Philistines for seven months but there was deadly panic in every town to which it was driven, for "God laid a heavy hand upon them there." So much so that they began to cry, "The ark of the God of Israel must not remain amongst us any longer for His hand is severer on us." Then they decided to send it back to Israel. They took two milch kine, and tied them to the cart. And the kine took the straight way to the way of Bethshemesh .

As the cart was driven without any driver, obviously it was being driven by the angels towards the children of Israel under the direction of God.

249. Then when Saul went out with the soldiers, he said: "Indeed, Allah will be testing you with a river. So whoever drinks from it, is then not of me. And whoever does not taste it, he is indeed of me, except him who takes (from it) in the hollow of his hand."

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ
قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ
فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ
لَمْ يَطْعَمَهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنْ
أَعْتَرَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا

Then they drank from it, except a few of them.*271

Then when he had crossed it (the river), he and those who believed with him, they said: "There is no power for us this day against Goliath and his soldiers."*272 Those who knew that they would meet Allah said: "How many a small company has overcome a large company by Allah's permission. And Allah is with those who are patient."

مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا
جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ
بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ ۗ قَالَ
الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلَاقُوا
اللَّهِ كَم مِّن فِئَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ
فِئَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ
الصَّابِرِينَ



*271 The river might have been the Jordan or some other stream or rivulet, which Saul had to cross with the army of Israel. As he knew there was very little discipline in his community, he applied this test to sift the competent from the incompetent, and the brave from the cowardly. It is obvious that those, who could not control their thirst for a little while, could not be trusted to keep discipline in the face of that enemy by whom they had previously been defeated.

As the same test was applied by Gideon before Saul. Critics of the Quran have come to the strange conclusion that Gideon and Saul are here (Ayat 249) confused. Of course, by this they wanted to show that the Quran was not a

revealed Book but was the invention of Muhammad (peace be upon him). This objection is absurd on the face of it. If two similar events had happened and only one of these is mentioned in the Bible, it does not prove that the other did not happen just because it was not mentioned in it. Moreover, it has never been claimed that the Bible contains the complete history of the Israelites with its full details. The very fact that the Talmud contains many incidents which are not mentioned in the Bible is a proof thereof.

*272 Probably these were the people who had shown lack of endurance by the riverside.

250. And when they went against Goliath and his soldiers, they said: “Our Lord, Bestow on us endurance, and make firm our foothold, and give us victory against the disbelieving people.”

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ
 قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا
 وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى
 الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾

251. So they defeated them by Allah’s permission, and David killed Goliath, and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom, and taught him of that which He willed. And if Allah had not repelled people, some of them by others, the

فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ
 دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ
 الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ
 مِمَّا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ
 النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ

earth^{*273} would have been corrupted.^{*274} But Allah is full of bounty to the worlds.

لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ
اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ



***273** According to the Bible, David was a youth at that time. Once he reached the army of Saul at the time when Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, was uttering his challenge: “I defy the force of Israel. Give me a man and let us have a fight.” Hearing these words the Israelites were dismayed and daunted, but David said to Saul, “Let not my Lord’s courage fail him: Your servant will go and fight the Philistines.” Saul would not agree but David persisted and was allowed to fight with him. When Goliath saw him, he despised him for his youth and said, come here and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. Then David answered, the Eternal will deliver you into my hands so that all the world may learn that Israel has a God, till all here present, learn that the Eternal does not save by sword and spear. The fight is in the Eternal’s hands, and He will put you in our power. Then David slew him and became very popular among the Israelites. Saul gave his own daughter to him in marriage and after him he became the king of Israel.

***274** In order to keep peace and order on the earth, Allah allows different groups, different nations and different parties to gain and retain power to a certain limit but when they transgress that limit, He replaces them by others and

breaks their power. If Allah had allowed any one party or nation to continue in power forever, Allah's earth would have been filled with utter confusion and disorder.

252. These are the verses of Allah which We recite to you (O Muhammad) with truth. And indeed, you are from among the messengers.

تِلْكَ ءَايَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ
الْمُرْسَلِينَ

253. Those messengers, We raised in ranks some of them above the others. Among them were some to whom Allah spoke, and He raised some of them in degrees. And We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs, and We supported him with the holy Spirit. And if Allah had so willed, those who succeeded them would not have fought (each other) after that the clear proofs had come to them. But they differed, then among them were some who believed, and among them were some who disbelieved. And if Allah had willed, they would not have fought. But

* تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ
عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ مِّن كَلِمِ اللَّهِ
وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ۚ وَءَاتَيْنَا
عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ
وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ
اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ
مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
وَلَكِنْ اٰخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ ءَامَنَ
وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا
أَقْتَلُوا وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا

Allah does what He intends. *275

يُرِيدُ
۲۰۳

*275 Naturally a question arises: Why does not then Allah will it? Why does He allow differences that sometimes result in wrangling, even fights? Is He helpless to stop these? Of course, He is All-Powerful and could have stopped these and none would have dared to swerve even the least from the guidance He sent through His Messengers. But it is not His will to force people to follow a particular, defined fixed way, because He has sent man on the earth for a trial. If He had taken away freedom of action from man, the trial would have become meaningless. He sent His Messengers to invite the people to the right way and convince them by arguments and signs. The Messengers were not sent to force people to believe and submit to Allah. Differences and fights took place because the people abused the limited freedom of will and freedom of action which was given to them by Allah and then invented ways of life different from that way which was sent down by Allah. Thus it is quite obvious that differences did not arise because Allah failed (though He willed) to force the people to choose the right way. Of course, Allah is able to do anything He wills.

254. O those who believe, spend of that which We have provided for you *276 before that a day comes in which there will be no bargaining, nor friendship, nor

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا
رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ
لَا بَيْعُ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفِيعَةٌ

intercession. And the
disbelievers, they are the ^{*277}
wrongdoers.

وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ
٢٥٤

***276** Believers have been exhorted to make monetary sacrifices for the achievement of the cause they believe in.

***277** Those who adopt the way of disbelief, may either refer to those who refuse to obey the commands of Allah and consider the hoarding of wealth to be dearer than the winning of His approval, or to those who do not believe in the Day about which warning has been given, salvation in the Hereafter through somebody's friendship or intercession.

255. Allah, there is no god except Him. ^{*278} The Ever Living, the Self Existent. Neither slumber overtakes Him, nor sleep. ^{*279} To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens, and whatever is on the earth. ^{*280} Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission. ^{*281} He knows that which is in front of them, and that which is behind them. And they do not encompass anything of His knowledge except for what He wills. ^{*282} His throne ^{*283} extends over the

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ
لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ
مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا
بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ
بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ
وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ

heavens and the earth. And He feels no fatigue in guarding them. And He is the Most High, the Supreme. *284

وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا
وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ



***278** Though ignorant people might make several gods and set up objects of worship, the fact remains that the whole of creation belongs to the Eternal, who has no partner whatsoever. He is the living Allah who sustains the whole universe. He alone is the Master of His kingdom. None else is a partner in His attributes, characteristics, powers and rights. Hence a lie is invented whenever any false god is set up beside Allah on the earth or in the heavens and a war is waged against the truth.

***279** This refutes the conception of Allah which is based on the assumption that He has weaknesses and limitations like imperfect human beings. For instance the Bible says, “And on the seventh day God ended His work which he had made: and He rested on the seventh day from all the work which He had made” (Genesis 2:2), and “Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine.’ (Psalms 78:65). Of course, Allah is absolutely free from such weaknesses.

***280** He is the Master and Owner of the earth and the heavens and each and every thing contained in them, and none else has any part or share in His ownership, His Authority, His kingdom, His sovereignty and His rule. Anyone or anything that can be conceived as god will surely be a part of the universe and every part of this universe is Allah’s property and cannot, therefore, be His partner or

rival.

***281** This refutes the wrong notion of those who are under the delusion that saints, angels, etc., wield great influence with Allah, and they will intercede with Him and force Him to pardon them. They are being warned that no creature of His can stand before Him and intercede for others, not to speak of forcing Allah to pardon them. No prophet, no angel, and no saint will dare utter a word without the permission of the Sovereign of the universe.

***282** According to the Quran, it is an unpardonable sin to associate any partner or set up any rival to rank with Allah or to assume for oneself His rights or characteristics in any way whatsoever. This is called shirk. In the preceding verse, the Quran strikes at the very root of shirk by declaring that Allah's Sovereignty is unlimited and His Power is absolute. In this verse the same thing is presented from another point of view, by posing the question: How can anyone interfere in the management of the universe when none possesses that knowledge which is a prerequisite for this? The knowledge of the angels and human beings is so imperfect that none of them can understand the system of the universe and, therefore, any interference in its management would invariably result in chaos. Not to speak of the management of the universe, people cannot even know in what lies their own good. It is thus obvious that they should have full confidence in the guidance of Allah who is the real source of all knowledge and who knows in what lies their own good.

***283** The word *kursi* (chair) has been used here figuratively

as a symbol of power and authority. Even in English the word chair is used for the seat of authority, and government.

*284 This verse is known as *Ayat al-Kursi*. It gives such a perfect knowledge of Allah that has no parallel elsewhere. That is why a tradition has declared it to be the best verse of the Quran.

Here a question arises: In what connection has Allah and His attributes been mentioned in this place? In order to answer this question, we should survey the address which begins from verse 243. First of all the believers have been exhorted to exert their utmost in the Way of Allah and make sacrifice of life and property for its establishment. They have also been warned to ward off those weaknesses in which the Israelites were involved. Then it has been impressed upon them that success does not depend merely upon numbers, provisions and armaments, but upon faith, fortitude, discipline and firm determination. Then the wisdom of war as a weapon with which Allah repels one group by another has been stated; that is, if only one group or one party had been allowed to continue in power, it would have made life difficult for its rivals and opponents. Then it has been shown that Allah is not powerless to remove differences from among the people but it is not His will to remove these forcibly. Therefore He sends His Messengers with the truth for this purpose, but leaves the people free to accept or reject it. Again as in the beginning of this discourse, the Muslims have been enjoined to spend their wealth in the Way of Allah. Then in this verse it has

been declared that in spite of the differences in the creeds and the religions of the people, the fact is that Allah sustains and controls the whole universe. Of course, it is not His will to force the people to believe in Him, but He only warns them through His Messengers that those, who will believe in Him and sacrifice their lives and properties in His Way in order to please Him, will be gainers and those, who will disbelieve, shall be losers.

256. There shall be no compulsion in the religion.*285 The right path has indeed become distinct from the wrong. So whoever disbelieves in false deities,*286 and believes in Allah, then certainly he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold with no break in it. And Allah is All Hearer, All Knower.

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ
الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ
بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِرْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ
اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا
أَنْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ



*285 The word *deen* implies the concept about Allah as stated in the *Ayat al-Kursi* above as well as the entire way of life built on it. The verse means that the creed of Islam and its way of life cannot be thrust upon anyone forcibly. As a matter of fact, this cannot be forced upon anyone.

*286 The word *taghut* literally applies to everyone who transgresses the limits. The Quran uses this word for one who rebels against Allah and claims himself to be the master and sovereign of His servants and forces them to

become his servants.

Man's rebellion against Allah has three degrees of criminality:

- (1) One is *fasiq* (disobedient) if one professes to be His subject but practically acts against His commandments;
- (2) One is *kafir* (disbeliever) if one becomes independent of Him or owes allegiance to someone else;
- (3) One is *taghut* if one rebels against Allah and exerts to make His subjects subservient to himself. Such a one may be Satan or a priest or a religious or a political leader or a king or a state. Therefore no one can be a true believer of Allah unless he disowns *taghut*.

257. Allah is the protector of those who believe. He brings them out from darkness^{*287} into light. And those who disbelieve, their supporters are false deities.^{*288} They take them out of light into darkness. Such are the companions of the Fire. They will abide therein forever.

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى
النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
أَوْلِيَآؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ
مِنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ
أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



***287** "Darkness" stands for the darkness of ignorance that causes one to go astray from the right way, and to spend all one's efforts and energies in wrong way. In contrast to this,

“light” stands for the light of the truth which enables one to see clearly the reality and perceive the real aim of life and follow consciously and deliberately the right way.

*288 Though *taghut* is singular in form, here it is plural in meaning, for the one who rejects Allah becomes a slave not of one but of several forms of *taghut*, One of these is Satan who goes on tempting him with many false and alluring temptations. Another is his own self that makes him a slave of passions and lusts and misleads him into crooked ways. Then there are others, his wife and children, his kith and kin, his clan and family, his friends and nation, his political and religious leaders and his government. All these are *taghut* for him and desire to make him a slave of their wishes and ambitions. And this slave of all these masters wastes his whole life in trying to accomplish the impossible feat of pleasing each and every one of them.

258. Have^{*289} you not seen (come to know) of him who had argued with Abraham^{*290} about his Lord, because Allah had given him kingship.^{*291} When Abraham said: “My Lord is the one who gives life and causes death,” he said: “I give life and cause death.” Abraham said: “Indeed, Allah brings up the sun from the east, so bring it

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ
فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ
إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي
يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي
وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ
فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ

up from the west. Thus was confounded he who disbelieved.*292 And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people.

الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ
الظَّالِمِينَ



*289 In the foregoing verse it was declared that Allah is the helper and protector of a believer and brings him out of darkness, and *taghut* is the helper of the unbelievers and misleads them into darkness. Now three events are cited as a proof thereof. The first is the instance of a person to whom the truth was presented with so clear arguments that he could not find any answer against them. But in spite of this, he did not accept it because he was misled by *taghut* and so he went on wandering in the darkness. The other two instances are of those who had full confidence in Allah, so Allah not only took them out of darkness into light but also made them eye witnesses of the unseen reality to enable them to give testimony concerning it.

*290 The person referred to is Nimrod who was the king of Iraq, the land of the birth of Abraham (peace be upon him). The Bible does not mention this dispute but the Talmud relates it in detail and its version is substantially the same as that of the Quran. It says that Abraham's father was the chief officer of king Nimrod and a great favorite with his royal master. His son Abraham (peace be upon him) was a lover of the Lord from his earliest childhood. When he grew up he began to preach openly the Oneness of God and condemn the association of any partner or rival with Him. In order to demonstrate this, he

broke the idols and his father hastened before king Nimrod and denounced Abraham (peace be upon him), saying, “He has acted so and so; let him be brought before thee for judgment.” Abraham (peace be upon him) was summoned before the king and the dispute mentioned here took place between them.

***291** The point at issue in the dispute was as to whom Abraham (peace be upon him) acknowledged as his Lord, Allah or Nimrod. The dispute arose because of the arrogance of Nimrod whom Allah had given kingdom. In order to understand the true nature of the dispute the following should be kept in view:

(1) It has always been a common characteristic of all the mushrik societies to accept Allah as the God of gods and the Lord of lords but, at the same time, to associate other gods and lords with Him, so as not to acknowledge Him exclusively as the Lord and God and worship Him as the Deity.

(2) They have always divided Godhead into two parts the supernatural Godhead and the sovereign Godhead. They assign to God the supernatural Godhead which controls every kind of cause that produces an effect: so they turn to Him for help in their needs and difficulties but in their ignorance they set up spirits, angels, jinns, stars and many others as partners with the Supreme God, and pray to them, worship them and present offerings to them at temples dedicated to them. As to the sovereign Godhead, which really belongs to God and entitles Him alone to prescribe the way of life and to demand obedience to His

commandments and to have absolute authority over all the affairs of the world, the mushrikin have in every age either totally usurped this rank of Godhead from God and handed it over to royal families, priests, guides, elders of society, etc. or divided it between these gods and God. That is why the royal families have often claimed the rank of Godhead in the second sense, and in order to strengthen their claim, have declared themselves to be descendants of gods in the first sense, and the priests have always strengthened and supported them, in their evil designs of becoming gods.

(3) Nimrod claimed to be a god possessing the rank of sovereign godhead. He did not deny the existence of God nor did he claim to be the creator of the heavens and the earth nor the sustainer and ruler of the universe. He only claimed to be the absolute lord and sovereign of Iraq and its inhabitants. His claim was that whatever he said was law and there was none over him to whom he might be held accountable: therefore any inhabitant of Iraq who did not acknowledge him exclusively as his lord was a rebel.

(4) The dispute referred to arose when Abraham (peace be upon him) declared, "I acknowledge the Lord of the universe exclusively as my Lord and God of worship and I disown categorically the lordship and godhead of everyone else." Obviously, the declaration of this creed not only struck at the root of the national religion and religious gods but at the national state and its central power, king Nimrod, who claimed to be the absolute lord of Iraq. That is why it was not tolerated and the Prophet Abraham

(peace be upon him) was brought before Nimrod for trial as a rebel.

***292** Although Abraham (peace be upon him) had made it quite clear in his very first sentence that there can be no other lord than Allah, yet Nimrod impudently tried to refute his argument. But after the second argument, Nimrod was so shocked that he could not find any further argument to continue the dispute, as he himself knew and acknowledged that the sun and the moon were under the command of that God whom Abraham (peace be upon him) acknowledged as Lord. He, however, would not accept this truth which had become quite clear even to him because to accept it meant the giving up of his claim to despotism. As the rebel within him was not ready for this, he would not come out from the darkness of self worship into the light of the truth, even though he was dumbfounded. If he had made Allah his patron instead of his own self, he would have found the right guidance from Abraham's preaching. The Talmud says that after this dispute the king sent him to prison, where he remained for ten days. Then the king and his council sentenced him to be burnt alive and cast him into the flaming furnace. This incident has been mentioned in the Quran in Surah Al-Anbiya (Ayats 51-74).

259. Or as the one who passed by a township, and that had fallen down upon its roofs.^{*293} He said: "How shall Allah bring it to life after its death."^{*294}

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّىٰ يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا

So Allah caused him to die for a hundred years, then He raised him back to life. He (Allah) said: “How long did you remain (dead).” He (the man) said: “I have remained a day or part of a day.” He (Allah) said: “Nay, you have remained (dead) for a hundred years. So look at your food and your drink, they have not become spoiled. And look at your donkey, and that We may make you a sign to mankind,^{*295} and look at the bones, how We bring them together, then clothe them with the flesh.” Then when it became clear to him, he said: “I know that Allah has power over all things.”

فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ
 قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ
 يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ
 لَبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى
 طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ
 وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ
 وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ
 وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ
 نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا
 فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ
 اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

***293** It is useless to form conjectures as to who the person and which the township was, for it is not only irrelevant but also impossible to know this. There is no mention of these things in the Quran or the authentic traditions either, and we have no other reliable source. The purpose for which the incident has been related here is that Allah brings into light those who make Him their patron. It is, however, clear

from his subsequent words that he must have been a Prophet.

*294 This question did not mean that he disbelieved in resurrection or he had any doubt about it. It simply meant that he, like other Prophets, wanted to see the reality with his own eyes.

*295 The resurrection of a person who had been dead for a hundred years was itself a living sign for the people of his age.

260. And when Abraham said: “My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead. He (Allah) said: “Do you not believe.” He said: “Yes, but (I ask) that my heart may be satisfied.”*296 He (Allah) said: “Then take four of the birds, and tame them with yourself, (cut them into pieces) then place on each hill a portion of them, then call them, they will come to you in haste, and know that Allah is All Mighty, All Wise.*297

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي
كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ قَالَ أُولَٰمَ
تُؤْمِنُ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ
قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ
فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ أَجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ
كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ
يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا ۚ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ



*296 That is, I want that peace of mind which is gained by actual experience.

*297 Some people have offered strange interpretations for the two above mentioned extraordinary events. But there is

no need to make far-fetched interpretations, for Allah is able to do everything He wills, as the person referred to in the first event declared this. Moreover, Allah's dealings with His Prophets are of an extraordinary nature; for an ordinary believer does not need to see actually the reality with his own eyes for the performance of his duties but it is essential for the mission of a Prophet that he should see with his own eyes those realities towards which he has to invite the people. The Prophets have to tell the people with full and firm conviction: "We have seen with our own eyes those realities about which your knowledge is based on mere guess-work. You are ignorant; but We possess knowledge; you are blind, but We possess sight." That is why the angels came to them in person so that they should see them with their own eyes. They were also shown the actual working of the system of the heavens and the earth, and Paradise and Hell and resurrection after death. Though the Prophets believed in all these things even before their appointment as Messengers, they were made witnesses of the realities after their appointment as a special favor and distinction of prophethood. (For further reference, see E.N.s 17, 18, 19, 34 of Surah Hud).

261. The example of those who spend their wealth^{*298} in the Way of Allah^{*299} is as the example of a grain (of corn), it grows seven ears, in each ear is a hundred grains. And Allah increases

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةٌ

manifold for whom He
wills. And Allah is All
Encompassing, All
Knower. *300

حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضْعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ



*298 In the address which began with verse 243, the believers were exhorted to make sacrifices of life and property for the success of the great and noble cause they believed in. After strengthening their faith in Allah, for whose cause they were required to make sacrifices, the same theme has been resumed from this verse, and instructions have been given for the development of that attitude which is essential for making such sacrifices. It is obvious that people cannot make monetary sacrifices for a moral cause unless their economic point of view is totally changed. The materialists, who live and die in order to amass wealth and weigh everything in the scales of profit and loss, can never be expected to spend anything for higher ends. Even when they seem to be spending for some noble cause, they do so after calculating how far it would benefit their tribe, their own person or their nation. Obviously with such a mental attitude, one cannot move even a step forward in the Way of Allah. In order to uplift the word of Allah, one has to spend one's life, energy and wealth, irrespective of any worldly gain or loss. This way requires a broad view, great courage, a big heart and, above all, a sincere desire to win Allah's approval. Moreover, it requires radical changes in the social system in order to eradicate the materialistic morality and create spiritual values instead. That is why from here on up to

verse 281, instructions have been given for the creation of that kind of moral attitude.

***299** All that wealth which is spent in accordance with the divine law and only for the achievement of Allah's approval is spent in the Way of Allah, even though it might have been spent for one's own needs or those of one's relatives or for the indigent or for public works or for the propagation of Islam or for Jihad.

***300** As Allah has limitless resources and knows everything, one must rest assured that the more sincere one is and the deeper feelings of devotion one has in spending the wealth in the Way of Allah, the greater will be the reward one will get from Him. One must have a firm conviction that Allah, who produces seven hundred grains from one grain, has most surely the power of developing the charity seven hundredfold.

After stating this fact, two attributes of Allah have been specially mentioned in this connection to show that the resources of Allah are boundless and He is able to reward deeds to the extent they deserve, and to show that He knows everything and is not unaware of what is spent and with what intention. Therefore there is absolutely no risk of losing one's due reward.

262. Those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, then do not follow what they have spent with reminders of generosity, nor (with) abuse. For them their

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا
أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذًى لَهُمْ

reward is with their Lord.
And there shall be no fear
upon them, nor shall they
grieve.*301

أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ



*301 There is neither any fear of losing their due reward nor shall there ever come a time when they will regret what they have spent.

263. A kind word and
forgiveness are better than
charity followed by hurt.
And Allah is Self
Sufficient, Forbearing.*302

قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ
صَّدَقَةٍ يَتَّبَعُهَا أَذَىٰ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ
حَلِيمٌ



*302 This implies two things. First, Allah does not stand in need of anybody's charity, for He is self-sufficient. Secondly, He likes those people who are generous, but does not like frivolous and narrow-minded people, for He Himself is generous, clement and forbearing. How, then Allah, who bestows on the people the necessities of life without stint, and forgives and pardons them over and over again in spite of their errors, would like those who mar the self-respect of a person by sending repeated reminders of their charity and making pointed references to it even though they themselves might have given only a small thing.

A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that on the Day of resurrection, Allah will neither speak a word nor even so much as look at a person who makes pointed references to the gift he gave to someone.

264. O those who believe, Do not render in vain your charities by reminders of your generosity and hurting, as him who spends his wealth to be seen by the people, and does not believe in Allah and the Last Day.^{*303} So his example is as the example of a smooth rock upon which is dust, then a heavy rain falls upon it, which leaves it bare.^{*304} They are not able upon anything of what they have earned. And Allah does not guide the ungrateful people.^{*305}

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا
صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى
كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ
وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ
تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ
صَلْدًا ۗ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ
مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي
الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ



***303** His hypocrisy itself clearly shows that he does not believe in Allah and the Hereafter. The very fact that he practices charity so as to be seen by men, shows that they are his gods (and not Allah), from whom he expects to get his reward. A hypocrite does neither expect any reward from God nor he believes that one day all deeds will be judged and rewarded.

***304** In this parable the rain is the charity. The hard barren rock on which the rain falls is the evil intention with which that charity is practiced. The thin layer of the earth is the seeming virtue which hides the evil intention. Though

rainfall makes the crop grow, it does actual harm, if it falls on a rock which has only a thin layer of soil on it, by washing away even that thin soil and leaving the rock bare. In the same way, though charity has the power of developing virtue, it fails to do so, if it is not practiced with good intentions. Without these things the wealth spent in charity is nothing more than the wealth wasted like the rainfall on the rock with a thin layer of soil.

***305** The word *kafir* here stands for the ungrateful person. Anyone who does not spend the wealth given to him by Allah in His Way and for His pleasure but spends it to gain approbation from people, is an ungrateful wretch because he forgets the favor of Allah. It is equally true of him who spends something in the Way of Allah but at the same time does harm to the recipient. When such a person himself does not want His approval, it is not Allah's will to show him the Way of His approval.

265. And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking the pleasure of Allah, and to strengthen their own selves, is as the example of a garden on a high ground. A heavy rain falls upon it, so it brings forth its fruit twice as much. And if the heavy rain does not fall upon it, then a drizzle (is sufficient). ***306** And Allah is

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
 ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا
 مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ
 أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا
 ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ
 فَطَلٌّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

All Seer of what you do.



***306** Heavy rainfall is that charity which is practiced with the best intentions and the deepest feelings of devotion. The light shower or drizzle is that charity which, though sincere, does not have that much depth and intensity of feelings behind it as in the former case.

266. Would any of you like that there is for him a garden of palm trees and grapevines, rivers flowing underneath it, all kinds of fruits for him in it, and he is afflicted by old age, and he has weak offspring, then it is struck by a whirlwind with fire in it, so that it is burnt.^{*307} Thus does Allah make clear (His) verses for you, that you may give thought.

أَيُّودٌ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ
لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ
تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ
فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ
وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضِعْفًا
فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ
فَأَحْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ



***307** That is, it is quite obvious that you do not like the earnings of your whole life to be consumed at that critical period of your old age when you need them very badly and when there is no more chance for you to earn anything afresh. Exactly the same shall be your condition when you enter into the life-after-death without any provision for it.

You shall then realize all of a sudden, like the old man of the parable, that the earnings of your whole life were left behind in the world and were as useless for you in the other world as the consumed garden to the old man. Besides this, you shall find yourself as helpless as the old man of the parable because in the life-after-death there would be no more chance for you to earn anything for the next world. If you do not practice charity etc. in this world in the way it has been enjoined, but spend your whole life and its energies for the interest of this world only. You will meet, at your death, with the same critical and helpless situation as the old man of the parable met. He lost his only garden, the earnings of his whole life and the support of his old age at that period of his life when he himself was unable to plant a new garden, and his children were unable to do anything because of their tender age.

267. O those who believe, spend from the good things which you have earned, and from that which We bring forth for you from the earth, and do not seek the bad (with intent) to spend from it (in charity), and you would not take it (for yourselves), except that you will disdain about it. And know that Allah is Free of all wants, Worthy of all

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ
 طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا
 أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا
 تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ
 وَلَسْتُمْ بِتَاخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ
 تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
 غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

Praise. *308

*308 It implies that Allah who does not stand in need of anything or anyone enjoins the people to spend the best things in His Way, not for Himself but for their own good. As He has all the praiseworthy attributes and all the excellent qualities. He does not approve of anyone who has a low character. He himself is so generous that He is always showering His blessings on His creatures; therefore He does not love the narrow-minded, mean people who pick out worthless things for charity.

268. Satan threatens you with poverty and orders you of lewdness. And Allah promises you forgiveness from Himself and bounty. And Allah is All Encompassing, All Knower.

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ
وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ
يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ
وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

269. He gives wisdom to whom He wills. And whoever has been given wisdom, then certainly he has been given abundant good. *309 And none remember except men of understanding.

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ
يُؤْتِ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا
كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو
الْأَلْبَابِ

*309 *Hikmat* which has been translated as wisdom, stands for the knowledge with the power of discerning what is true and right. Hence anyone who has wisdom will not

adopt the narrow ways of Satan but will follow the broad Way of Allah. According to the narrow-minded disciples of Satan, it is wisdom and cleverness to be parsimonious with their wealth and to be always on the look-out for acquiring more and more of it. On the contrary, those, who have been given true wisdom, consider this course to be very foolish. According to them wisdom is to spend one's wealth generously in good works after fulfilling one's own necessities of a moderate standard. It is just possible that the former may enjoy a more prosperous life here in this world but this is not the whole life. It is only a very small portion of the real life which continues after death. He, therefore, must be a big fool who gets enjoyment in this short life at the expense of happiness in the eternal life. The wise one is he who makes the best use of this short life and makes provision for the prosperity of the eternal life, even if he has been given small wealth here.

270. And whatever you spend of any spending, or make you a vow of vows, then indeed Allah knows it. And for the wrong doers there are not any helpers. ^{*310}

وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ
مِّنْ نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُ^ط وَمَا
لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ

***310** Allah is fully aware of the intentions and actions of everyone and knows whether one spends in the Way of Allah or in the way of Satan and whether one makes a vow to Allah or to someone else. Therefore those, who spend for His cause and make vows to Him, will surely get their rewards from Him. And those evil doers, who speed for the

cause of Satan and make vows to others, shall have no helper to protect them from His punishment.

Nadhar (a vow) is a solemn promise made by a person to perform some act, or make some offering or gift etc. not binding on him, in case some wish of his should be fulfilled. If that wish is lawful and is asked of Allah and the vow is made to Allah alone, such a vow must be fulfilled as a religious duty, for it is in obedience to Allah. But if the wish is unlawful or the vow is made to someone other than Allah, then the making of the vow is sinful and its fulfillment would merit condemnation.

271. If you disclose (your) almsgiving, it is good, and if you conceal it, and give it to the poor, then that is better for you.^{*311} And He will remove from you some of your misdeeds.^{*312} And Allah is well Informed of what you do.

إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ
وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ
فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَيُكَفِّرُ
عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

***311** It is better to practice the obligatory charity (Zakat) openly and every other kind of charity secretly. The same principle applies to all other religious practices. It is better to perform the obligatory duties openly and the voluntary ones secretly.

***312** It helps reform the character of a man if he performs good deeds secretly. It develops virtues in him and eradicates vices. As a result, one becomes such a favorite of

Allah, that Allah in view of one's virtue and sincerity, forgives any minor sins of commission or omission He wills.

272. Not (a responsibility) upon you (O Muhammad) to guide them, but Allah guides whom He wills. And whatever you spend of good, it is for yourselves. And you do not spend except seeking the pleasure of Allah. And whatever you spend of good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged.*313

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ
يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
فَلِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ
إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا
مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا
تُظْلَمُونَ



*313 In this verse a misunderstanding of the Muslims has been removed. At first they hesitated to give monetary help to their non-Muslim relatives and other non-Muslims. They thought that monetary help to Muslims alone was in the Way of Allah. Here they have been told that they have not been made responsible for thrusting guidance upon the unbelievers: their responsibility ends when they have conveyed the truth to them. It lies with Allah to bestow (or not to bestow) the light of perception. The Muslims, therefore, should not hesitate to fulfill the needs of the non-Muslims just because they have not accepted the guidance. If they fulfill the need of anyone to please Allah, He will give them their reward.

273. (Charity is) for the poor, those who have been restricted for the cause of Allah, they are not able to travel in the land (to earn their livelihood). The ignorant person would think of them wealthy because of their restraint. You shall know them by their mark (condition). They do not ask people with importunity. And whatever you spend of good, then indeed Allah knows of it.*314

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ تَحْسِبُهُمْ
الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعْفُفِ
تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ
النَّاسَ إِحْفَافًا وَمَا تَنْفِقُوا
مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ

***314** This refers to the people who devote themselves wholly to the service of Islam and are, therefore, unable to earn their livelihood. There was a regular band of such volunteers of Islam known as *As-hab as-suffah*. They numbered about 400 and were always at the beck and call of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who had imparted to them the knowledge of Islam and trained them for its service. They imparted their acquired knowledge to others and went on different missions and expeditions under the instruction of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Obviously, such people specially deserve help because they are full time workers of Islam and have no spare time to earn their livelihood.

274. Those who spend their wealth by night, and day, secretly, and publicly, so for them, their reward is with their Lord. And there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve.

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً
فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
يَحْزَنُونَ



275. Those who devour usury^{*315} will not stand (on the Day of Resurrection) except like the standing of him who is lead into insanity by Satan through (his) touch.^{*316} That is because they say: “Trade is only like usury.”^{*317} Whereas Allah has permitted trade and forbidden usury.^{*318} So to whom comes an admonition from his Lord, and he refrains (from usury), then he may keep (the profits of) that which is past. And his affair is with Allah.^{*319} And whoever returns (to usury), then such are the

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا
يُقِيمُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي
يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ
مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ
وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ
مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَانْتَهَى فَلَهُ
مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ
عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ



companions of the Fire.
They will abide therein
forever.

***315** The Arabic word *riba* literally means “increase in” or “addition to” anything. Technically it was applied to that additional sum which the creditor charged from the debtor at a fixed rate on the principal he lent, that is, interest. At the time of the revelation of the Quran, interest was charged in several ways. For instance, a person sold something and fixed a time-limit for the payment of its price, and if the buyer failed to pay it within the fixed period, he was allowed more time but had to pay an additional sum. Or a person lent a sum of money and asked the debtor to pay it back together with an agreed additional sum of money within a fixed period. Or a rate of interest was fixed for a specific period and if the principal along with the interest was not paid within that period, the rate of interest was enhanced for the extended period, and so on.

***316** The Quran likens the money-lender to a madman. Just as a madman loses his sense on account of his disordered intellect, so the money-lender is so mad for money-making that he divorces himself from commonsense. He is so senselessly foolish and impudent that he does not mind how his selfishness and greed are cutting at the very root of human love, brotherhood and fellow-feeling, and destroying the common good of mankind. He does not care at all that he is gaining prosperity at the expense of many. That is how he behaves like a madman in this world. In the next world he will rise

like a madman at the time of resurrection, for, in the Hereafter a person will rise in the same condition in which he dies here.

***317** They based their vice on a wrong theory and did not see the fundamental difference between profit and interest. They argued like this: When profit on capital is lawful in trade, why should the interest on money invested in loans be unlawful? And the Arab money-lenders were not alone in arguing like this; the bankers and money-lenders of today also put forward similar arguments for charging interest. They argue that a person, who lends a sum of money to another, could himself make profit from it and that the debtor actually does invest it in a profitable business. Why should not the creditor then get a portion of that profit from the debtor for his productive credit? However, what they forget is that there is no business in the whole world where there is a fixed and guaranteed profit without any risk. In trade, commerce, industry, agriculture etc. one has to spend both labor and capital and at the same time one has to face risks, without any guarantee of a fixed profit. Let us for the present leave aside the case of the debtor who borrows money for consumption and not for production, and also the issue of the rate of interest. Let us compare the case of the money-lender who lends money at a moderate rate of interest for profitable business with the case of those engaged in other kinds of business. They devote their entire time, labor, talent and invest their own capital, etc. and work day and night so that their business may become profitable by virtue of their own efforts. But

even then they are not guaranteed any fixed profit, and have to bear all the risks. On the contrary, the money-lender, who lends only his capital, goes on receiving a fixed amount of profit without any risk whatsoever. By what reasoning and on what principles of logic, justice and economics is it right for him to receive a fixed amount of profit? How can one be justified in lending on a fixed rate of interest to a factory a sum of money today for twenty years, when none can say what rise or fall in price may take place during these twenty years? And how is the subscriber to a war loan justified in charging interest at a fixed rate for a full century, and that too, from his own nation, whereas the whole nation has to face risks, bear losses and make sacrifices?

***318** The fundamental difference between profit and interest that produces different moral and economic results is this :

(I) The settlement of profit in trade between the buyer and the seller is made on equal terms. The buyer purchases the article he needs and the seller gets profit for the time, labor and brains he employs in providing that article to the buyer. In contrast, in the case of interest, the debtor cannot settle the transaction on equal terms with the creditor because of his weaker position. As far as the money lender is concerned, he gets that fixed sum of interest which he considers his profit. If the debtor spends the borrowed money in fulfilling his personal needs, the time factor definitely does not bring any profit at all. And if he invests that money in trade, commerce, industry, agriculture, etc.

then there are equal chances of profit or loss. Thus lending money at interest might bring a guaranteed and fixed profit to one party and loss to the other, or a guaranteed and fixed profit to one party and an uncertain and indefinite profit to the other.

(2) The trader charges his profit, however high it may be, once for all but the money-lender goes on charging interest over and over again and it goes on increasing with the passage of time. The profit which the debtor makes on the money of the creditor, however large it may be, has after all its own limits, but there is no limit to the interest the creditor may charge on his money. He may, as sometimes it actually happens, receive all the earnings of the debtor, nay, may even deprive him of all the means of livelihood or of the articles of his personal use and still might have the same amount of debt against him that was at the time of borrowing.

(3) The transaction in trade comes to an end as soon as the article and its price change hands. After this the buyer is not required to return anything to the seller. As regards the rent of furniture, house, land, etc. the lent thing is not itself spent up but is returned to the owner after the term. But in the case of the principal the debtor has to spend it first and then to reproduce it and return it to the creditor along with its interest. Thus the debtor runs a double risk; he has to reproduce the principal and also to produce its interest.

(4) One engaged in trade, industry, agriculture, etc. earns profit by spending time, labor and intelligence but the money-lender becomes the stronger partner in the earnings

of the debtor without any risk or labor on his part simply because he invests the money which is over and above his need. He is a partner only to the extent that he is entitled to a fixed guaranteed interest, irrespective of whether there is any profit at all or how much, or whether there is even a loss.

From the above it becomes clear that even from the economic point of view, trade helps construct society but interest leads to ruin. As for the moral point of view, interest, by its very nature, creates parsimony, selfishness, cruelty, hard-heartedness, money-worship, etc., and kills the spirit of fellow-feeling and cooperation. It is, therefore, ruinous for society both morally and economically. As to the question what should one do with the money for which one has no use, the answer is that one may invest it in commerce, industry, etc. on the basis of partnership and share profits and losses alike.

***319** This allowance applies only to the legal aspect of the interest which had been taken before the revelation of this verse about prohibition and does not mean that the income from that interest had also been made lawful. From the very wording of the verse, it is clear that the case will go to Allah for decision and that it has not been pardoned outright by Allah in order to avoid endless litigation on this account, it has been declared that no legal demand for its return should be made. But from the moral point of view, it remains unclean and one who has taken it must do his best to cleanse himself of it. He should abstain from spending it on himself and try his best to find out the people from

whom he received it and return it to them. In case he is unable to locate or find out anyone of those people, he should spend the unclean and unlawful wealth on social welfare. This is the only way in which he can save himself from the punishment of Allah who will decide his case on the Day of Judgment. As to the person who goes on enjoying this unlawful wealth, he may be liable to punishment even for his money-lending in the past.

276. Allah destroys usury and gives increase for charities.*³²⁰ And Allah does not like all disbelievers, sinners.*³²¹

يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُرْبِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ

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***320** This is true from the social, economic, moral and spiritual points of view. Though apparently interest enriches and charity impoverishes, it is really just the opposite of it. According to the law of Allah, interest is, in its very nature, a hindrance to the social, economic, moral and spiritual progress and charity (including a loan without interest) helps their development.

If we look at interest from the moral and spiritual points of view, we see clearly that it is based on greed, selfishness, parsimony, narrow-mindedness, hard-heartedness and the like and nurtures the same evils in the money-lender. On the other hand, charity is based on generosity, sympathy, broad-mindedness, and the like and develops the same high qualities. Can anyone deny that these qualities are far better than the former?

From the social point of view, even a little thinking will show that a society can never become strong and stable if its individual members base their mutual dealings on selfishness and if one is not willing to help the other without self-interest. If the rich people believe that the poor people exist merely to afford them an opportunity for exploitation, there will be a clash of interest which will result in the disintegration of society. If other factors also help this evil state of affairs, these will surely produce class struggle. On the other hand, if the individual members of a society base their dealings on mutual sympathy and treat each other with generosity, they will most surely strengthen it. If everyone tries to help the other in need, and if the “have” treat the “have not” with sympathy or at least with justice, mutual love and fellow-feeling will develop in society and it will become strong and stable. Obviously, its progress will be accelerated by mutual cooperation and fellow-feeling.

Now let us consider interest from the economic point of view. Loans are of two kinds. The consumptive loan is borrowed by the helpless needy persons for their personal needs and the economic loan is taken by businessmen for trade, commerce, industry, agriculture, etc. As to the first kind of loan, everyone knows that interest on it produces ruinous results. In every country the money-lenders and bankers are sucking the blood of the laborers, peasants and the common poor, and making their condition miserable. The interest charges render the payment of debt almost impossible for such people and they have to borrow one loan after the other to get out of this mess. Even after

paying interest equal to many times the original principal, the principal still remains as it was before. The major portion of the income of the debtor is taken away by the money-lender and the poor debtor finds himself unable to make ends meet. Naturally this kills the interest of the laborers in their work. When the fruit of their labor is taken away by others, they cannot put their whole heart into their work. More than that: when worry, anxiety, poor food, etc. spoil their health, they cannot afford even to buy the necessary medicine for want of money. Thus money-lending leads to the fattening and battenning of a few at the expenses of the blood-sucking of the majority and results in the general deterioration of the nation. The inefficiency caused in their way lowers the quality and standard of national production. In the end the blood suckers themselves fall a prey to their own iniquity. When the suppressed anger and hatred of the depressed people engendered by the selfishness of the cruel money-lenders, bursts out into a bloody revolution, it sweeps away their honor and lives along with their ill gotten wealth.

As to the fixed interest on economic loans, three out of the many evils are given below

(1) Those concerns that cannot pay an interest higher than or equal to the market rate cannot draw in capital howsoever useful they may be for the nation. All the available money flows into those channels of commerce and industry which can bring interest equal to or greater than the market rate of interest, howsoever harmful or ruinous they might be from the national point of view.

(2) There is no business commercial, industrial, agricultural that can guarantee a fixed and uniform rate of profit, say five, six or ten percent or more under all circumstances. Not to speak of such a guarantee, there cannot be any guarantee against loss in any business. Therefore, the business which borrows capital at a fixed rate of interest can never be free from risk or loss.

(3) As the money-lender himself is not directly a partner in the profit or the loss of the business but keeps in view only his guaranteed fixed interest, he is not interested in its welfare. His only concern is his own interest; therefore he very selfishly tries to withdraw and withhold his money whenever he has even the slightest fear of a slump in the market. In this way he creates panic by his selfishness and paves the way for a further crisis and when there is already a crisis, he accelerates it into a disaster.

The above mentioned three evils of interest are so obvious that they are well known to everyone who knows even the basics of economics. Can then anyone deny the truth of the natural law enunciated by Allah that interest does not increase but decreases the national economic wealth?

Now let us consider charity from the economic point of view. If the well-to-do people of a society spend money liberally in buying their own necessities of life and those of their dependents and distribute a part of their wealth among the needy to enable them to buy their necessities of life, or if they lend it to businessmen without interest, or invest it in business on the basis of partnership, or lend it without interest to their government for national service,

then obviously, commerce, industry, agriculture, etc. will thrive to a very high standard. The standard of national prosperity will rise higher and higher and the production of its wealth will become larger as compared with the country where interest is lawful. Thus it is clear that interest hinders the progress of a nation and charity helps its development.

***321** The money-lender is no doubt an ungrateful wretch. As a grateful servant of Allah, who gives him spare money, the least he ought to do is to lend it to his other servants without interest. And if, instead of this, he uses the bounty of Allah to exploit His other servants who are getting less than him, he becomes not only ungrateful but also cruel and wicked.

277. Indeed, those who believe, and do righteous deeds, and establish prayer, and give the poor due. For them, their reward is with their Lord. And there shall be no fear upon them, nor shall they grieve. ^{*322}

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَأَتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ



***322** In this passage Allah has presented two characters for contrast. One is the selfish worshipper of wealth, the Shylock, who, unmindful of Allah and His creatures, is engaged day and night in amassing and hoarding wealth. The other is the worshipper of Allah, the generous and sympathetic person who observes the rights of Allah and

His creatures; who earns wealth and spends it on himself and on others and in doing good works. Allah disapproves of the first type of people because they cannot build any good and stable society: nay, they even make themselves and others miserable in this world, and they shall meet with grief, sorrow and affliction in the Hereafter. In contrast to this, Allah approves of the second type of people for they help build a good and stable society and achieve real success. They have also peace of mind in this world and will be blessed with all kinds of heavenly pleasures in the Hereafter.

278. O those who believe, fear Allah, and give up what remains (due to you) from usury, if you are believers.

يَتَّيِّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن
كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ



279. So if you do not do (it), then be informed of war (against you) from Allah and His messenger.^{*323} And if you repent, then you may have your principal. Do no wrong, and you shall not be wronged.

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِن تُبْتُمْ
فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ لَا
تُظْلَمُونَ وَلَا تَظْلَمُونَ



***323** This verse was revealed after the conquest of Makkah, but was inserted here because it also deals with interest.

Even before its revelation, interest was regarded as a hateful thing though it had not yet been legally forbidden. But after its revelation, money-lending on interest became a criminal offence in the Islamic state. Those clans who carried on this business in Arabia, were duly warned to give it up for otherwise a war would be declared against them. When the Christians of Najran were granted autonomy within the Islamic state, it was specified in the treaty that if they continued their money-lending business, the treaty would come to an end and there would be a state of war between the parties.

From the concluding portion of this verse, Ibn Abbas, Hasan Basri, Ibn Sirin and Rubai-bin-Anas (may Allah be pleased with them) have concluded that the one who takes interest in the Islamic state should be warned to repent of it, and if he does not give it up, he should be put to death. But the other jurists are of the opinion that he should be put in prison and kept there until he undertakes to give up this business.

280. And if (the debtor) is in hardship, then (let there be) postponement until (the time of) ease. And that you remit (the debt) as charity, it is better for you, if you did know.*324

وَأِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

*324 This verse empowers an Islamic court of law to compel the creditors to give more time to the debtors for

the payment of debts, if they are in such straitened circumstances that they cannot pay back their debts. Under certain circumstances, the court is entitled to write off the debt altogether or a part of it. A tradition says that a man suffered loss in his business and came heavily under debt. When his case was taken to the Prophet (peace be upon him), he made an appeal to the people to help him out of it. Accordingly, the people made monetary contributions, but even then he could not clear all his debts. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) addressed the creditors and told them that they would have to be satisfied with whatever was collected for the payment of their debts. The jurists have explained that the house in which a man lives, his utensils, clothes and tools of trade can in no case be confiscated.

281. And fear a day in which you will be returned to Allah. Then every soul will be paid in full that which it has earned, and they will not be wronged.

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى
 اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا
 كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

282. O those who believe, when you contract a transaction of debt for a fixed term,^{*325} then write it down.^{*326} And let a scribe write (it) down between you in justice. And let not the scribe

يَتَأَيَّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا
 تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
 فَآكْتُبُوهُ ۚ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ
 كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْب

refuse to write, as Allah has taught him, so let him write.

كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ
اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ

***325** From this it is deduced that the term for a debt must be specified.

***326** This warns against a common practice: friends and relatives do not put debt agreements into formal writing, for such a thing, according to them, shows lack of trust. Allah admonishes that agreements concerning debt and business should be recorded and testified by witnesses in order to keep the affairs of the people clean. A tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that three kinds of the people cry out to Allah for help but are not answered: first, those who have ill tempered wives but do not divorce them; second, those who are entrusted with the property of orphans but return it to them before they attain maturity; third, those who lend money to others without any document or evidence.

And let him dictate who has the liability on him (the debtor). And let him fear Allah, his Lord, and not add or leave anything out of it. Then if he is, who has the liability on him, (the debtor) mentally deficient, or weak, or is not able to dictate it, then let his guardian

وَلْيَمْلِكِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ
اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسَ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا
فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ
سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ
أَنْ يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيَمْلِكْ وَلِيُّهُ

dictate in justice.

بِالْعَدْلِ

And bring to witness two witnesses from among your men,^{*327} then if there are not two men (available), then a man and two women, from those you agree for witnesses, so that if one of them (women) errs, then the other one of them can remind her.

وَأَسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِدَيْنِ مِنْ رَجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى^ج

***327 From among your men: from among the Muslims. Imam Abu Hanifah, holds the opinion that the non-Muslims also can be made the witnesses.**

And let the witnesses^{*328} not refuse whenever they are called (for evidence). And do not be weary to write (your contract) for its fixed term, (be it) small or large.

وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا^ج
وَلَا تَسْأَمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا
أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ^ج

***328 As the establishment of the truth of a case depends to a great degree on the reliability of witnesses, a very high standard of qualification is demanded of them. Only those persons who are known to lead respectable lives and bear good moral character and are honest should be made the witnesses.**

This is more just in the sight of Allah, and stronger as evidence, and nearer to that you prevent doubts among yourselves.

ذَالِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمٌ
لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا

Except that it be on the spot trade which you carry out among yourselves,^{*329} then there is no sin upon you if you do not write it. And take witnesses whenever you make a commercial contract.

إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً
تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ
جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهَدُوا
إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ

***329** Even in the case of those transactions which are carried out on the spot in everyday business, it is better to record them; nevertheless there is no harm if commercial transactions carried on daily between neighboring traders are not recorded.

And let no scribe be harmed, nor any witness.^{*330} And if you do (such harm), then indeed, it would be wickedness in you. And fear Allah. And it is Allah who teaches you. And Allah is well acquainted with all things.

وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ
تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فَسُوقٌ بِكُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ
وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ



***330** It implies two things. No one should be forced to

become a scribe or a witness against his will, and no one should harass the scribe or the witness just because he gives true evidence against the interests of a party.

283. And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then (transact) on a pledge with possession.^{*331} So if one of you entrusts another, then let him, who is entrusted, deliver his trust and let him fear Allah, his Lord. And do not conceal the testimony.^{*332} And he who conceals it, then indeed, his heart is sinful. And Allah is All Knower of what you do.

﴿ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهْنَ مَقْبُوضَةً فَإِنْ أَتَىٰ مِنْ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضٌ فليؤدِّ الَّذِي أُوتِيَ مِنْ أَمْنَتِهِ وَلِيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ إِثْمٌ قَلْبُهُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴾



***331** It does not mean that a pledge may be held on security only while on a journey. It has been specially mentioned in this connection because such a condition generally occurs on a journey. Moreover, inability to get a scribe is not an essential condition for holding something as a pledge. If a needy person cannot obtain a debt unless he delivers something as security for it, he is allowed to do so. The Quran deliberately omits the mention of this latter condition, because it intends to teach generosity to the believers. It is obviously below the dignity of a man of high character not to lend money to a needy person without having a pledge in hand. It is, however, understood that if

the pledge is productive, the creditor should keep a regular account of the produce and deduct it from the debt; otherwise any profit drawn from the pledged property would be interest. In this connection, one should also know that the only object in view of holding a pledge is the security of the repayment of the debt and it does not entitle the creditor in any way to make profit out of it. For instance, if a creditor himself lives in the house which he holds as a pledge for his debt or if he lets it to someone else, he in fact is guilty of taking interest, if he does not credit the rent of the house to the debtor, for there is no difference between taking direct interest on a debt or earning money from it or making use of the property delivered as a pledge. The creditor, however, may benefit from the milk of a pledged head of cattle, or may ride or carry burden on a horse, camel, etc. because that would be the compensation for the fodder given to them.

***332** Concealing of evidence applies both to the evasion of evidence and to the concealment of the true facts while giving evidence.

284. To Allah belongs whatever^{*333} is in the heavens, and whatever is on the earth.^{*334} And whether you make known what is within yourselves, or conceal it,^{*335} Allah will bring you to account for it. Then He will forgive whom He wills,

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ

and He will punish whom He wills. And Allah has power over all things.*336

كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ
٢٨٤

***333** In the concluding portion of the Surah, the basic creeds of Islam have been stated just as they were stated at its beginning. Therefore it will be useful to compare verses 284-285 with verses 1-4.

***334** This is the first article of faith. The acceptance of the fact that Allah is the Master of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, leaves no alternative for man but to submit to Him.

***335** In this sentence two more articles of faith have been stated. First, every person is individually responsible and accountable to Allah for his actions. Second, the Sovereign, to whom man is accountable for his actions, has full knowledge of what is hidden and what is open; He even knows those intentions and thoughts that are hidden in the hearts.

***336** It means that Allah is the absolute Sovereign and not a constitutional ruler. His powers are not bound by any law so as to force Him to act in accordance with it. He is the sole Master and has full authority to punish anyone or to forgive anyone He wills.

285. The Messenger has believed in that which has been sent down to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah, and His angels,

ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ
رَبِّهِ ۚ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ ءَامَنَ
بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ ۖ وَكُتُبِهِ ۖ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ

and His Books, and His messengers. (Saying): “We make no distinction between any of His messengers,” and they say: “We hear, and we obey.” (We seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord. And to You is the return.”*337

لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ
وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا
غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

280

*337 In this verse, the basic articles of faith have been restated briefly. Belief in Allah, His angels, His Books, and in all of His Messengers without exception and discrimination against any, and in the accountability to Him at the end of this life are the five basic articles of faith. After the acceptance of these, the attitude for a Muslim is to submit obediently to each and every commandment of Allah. At the same time, he should not become vain on account of his good acts but should pray to Allah to forgive and show forbearance to him.

286. Allah does not burden a person beyond his capacity.*338 For him (is reward of) what (good) he earned, and upon him (is punishment of) what (evil) he has earned. Our Lord, take us not to punish if we forget, or fall into error.*339 Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden as that You

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا
لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا
اَكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِن
نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا
تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا
حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِنَا

laid upon those before us.^{*340} Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no strength to bear.^{*341} And pardon us, and forgive us, and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people.^{*342}

رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا
بِهِ^ط وَأَعْفُ عَنَّا وَاعْفِرْ لَنَا
وَأَرْحَمْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا
عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ



***338** That is, Allah will not call to account anyone for not doing something which he could not possibly do: nor will He punish him because he did not abstain from a thing, when he could not possibly abstain from it. It must, however, be clearly understood that an individual himself is not his own judge to decide what he can do and what he cannot do. It is Allah, who will decide what a certain person could do and what he could not do.

***339** This is the other general principle of the law. Both the rewards and the punishments are really the results and consequences of the acts and deeds of every individual. One will get a reward only for the good deed one has himself done and not for the good acts of someone else. It must, however, be noted that if someone has done some good act which goes on producing good results long after his death, all those acts will also be put to his credit in his balance sheet as long as they last. In the same way, if someone has done some evil, which goes on producing evil results long after one's death, all those also will be put against one's

account as long as they last. But all these results, both good and bad, will be the consequences of one's own deeds. In short, a person shall be rewarded or punished only for that thing to which he himself contributed intentionally and actually. There is no transfer of accounts in the divine law of retribution.

***340** That is, O Lord, save and protect us from such trials, persecutions and obstacles as were encountered by those who went Your way before us. Although it is the law of Allah that those, who make up their minds to follow the way of truth, must undergo hard trials and suffer from cruel persecutions, a believer should pray to Allah to make the way easy for him and should face them with courage when he actually meets with them.

***341** That is, lay on us only that much burden of trouble and tribulations that we can bear, and put us only to those trials that we can endure, lest we should fail to bear them and swerve for the right path.

***342** In order to understand the true spirit of this prayer, it should be kept in view that these verses were revealed on the occasion of the Miraj (Ascension to Heaven) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) about a year before his migration to Al-Madinah. At that time the struggle between Islam and kufr had reached its climax and the persecution of the believers was at its worst. And this was not confined to Makkah alone: there was no place in the whole of Arabia where a Muslim was allowed to live in peace. It was to cope with these circumstances that the Muslims were taught to utter this prayer to Allah. It is self-evident that when the

Master Himself teaches the servant the way of begging from Him, the servant gets the conviction that his request will be granted. That is why this prayer filled the Muslims with extraordinary courage and brought peace of mind to them in the hour of their worst persecution. Moreover, this prayer taught them to keep their passions under control and within the limits contained in this prayer and not to allow them to turn into wrong channels. That is why it is free from any kind of bitterness against their enemies, and there is not any tinge in it of revenge or of worldliness. This was urgently needed at that time because the Muslims were undergoing greater hardships, and monetary losses, and suffering untold cruelties, and were pressed hard both physically and economically. Incidentally, the contrast between the high ideals contained in their prayer and the persecution which the believers were suffering at that time brings out clearly the high standard of the spiritual and moral training they were receiving even at that critical time. And that is the high standard of morality that has been laid down for every true believer to attain.

