

**THE
MEANING OF THE QUR'AN**

Vol. I

S. ABUL A'LA MAUDUDI

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THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN

Vol. I

[Sūrah Al-Fātihah & Al-Baqarah]

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

By

S. ABUL A'LĀ MAUDŪDĪ



English Rendering by: Sh. MUHAMMAD AKBAR

Edited by: A. A. KAMAL, M.A.

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**PRONUNCIATION KEY
TO
ARABIC NAMES AND WORDS**

Vowels

		<i>Symbols</i>					
(ا)	as in	أ	a	sounds as	a	in	a-bet
		آ	ā	" "	a	"	art
(اِ)	as in	أِ	ai	" "	a	"	bat
(ي)	"	ي	i	" "	ee	"	bee
(يِ)	"	يِ	i	" "	i	"	it
(و)	"	و	u	" "	u	"	put
(وِ)	"	وِ	ū	" "	u	"	rule
(وِ)	"	وِ	au	sounds between the a in art and o in over but closer to the latter.			
		ع	'	at the top before a vowel indicates a semi-vowel made by articulating the same in the glottis.			
			'	at the top before a vowel indicates a semi-vowel.			

Consonants

د	d	indicates a consonant that sounds as <u>th</u> in then.
غ	gh	indicates a consonant made by articulating g in give in the glottis.
ه	h	
ح	h	indicates a consonant between voiced h and <u>kh</u>
خ	<u>kh</u>	indicates a consonant made by articulating voiced h in the glottis.
ج	j	as in jug.
ت	t	indicates a soft consonant (French t) made with the tongue tip touching the upper front teeth
ط	ʈ	may be pronounced as t.
س	s	
ش	<u>sh</u>	

(v)

ص	ṣ	may be pronounced as s.
ث	th	indicates a consonant made by articulating th in think.
ك	k	
ق	q	indicates a consonant made by articulating k in the glottis.
ي	y	indicates a consonant that sounds as y in yes.
ض	ḍ	may be pronounced as z in zebra.
ز	z	” ” ” ”
ذ	ḏ	” ” ” ”
ظ	dh	” ” ” ”
ب	b	
ر	r	
ل	l	
م	m	
ن	n	
ف	f	
و	w	

Note.—1. The double use of the same consonant indicates stress (ُ).

2. *Caution:* The above key is by no means a master key to Arabic names and words. There are very delicate differences in the apparently like sounds of some consonants but it is very difficult to distinguish these by means of any key. This key merely gives nearly correct pronunciations.

3. Words of frequent occurrence :

Qurān, Sūrah, Makkah, Al-Madīnah, Ka'abah.

N. B.

1. Figures on the margin of the Text denote the number of verses in the paragraphs, and figures at the end of and above words in the translation of the Text denote the number of the Explanatory Notes.
2. E.N. stands for Explanatory Note.

GLOSSARY

- عَصْر *'Asr* prayer is one of the five prescribed prayers and is offered in the late afternoon.
- ظُهْر *Dhuhr* is the early afternoon prayer.
- حَضْرَت *Ḥadrat* is a title of respect and reverence.
- حَج *Haj* is the obligatory pilgrimage to the Ka'abah (Makkah) in the prescribed days of Zul-Haj. It is obligatory on every Muslim, at least once in one's life-time, if one can afford expenses for it and is otherwise fit and free to make a journey to it.
- إِحْرَام *Iḥrām* is the seamless garment worn by the pilgrims to Makkah.
- إِمَام *Imām* is the one who leads the congregational prescribed prayers. It is also used as a title for a leader of anything.
- عِشَاء *'Ishā'* is the prescribed night prayer.
- كَعْبَةٌ *Ka'abah* is a cube-shaped room in the centre of Masjid-i-Ḥarām. It was built by Prophet Abraham and has always been the centre of God-worship.
- كَافِر *Kāfir* is one who is guilty of *kufr*.
- كُفْر *Kufr* has been used in the Qurān in different senses in different places. In some places it stands for total disbelief and in others for ingratitude or hypocrisy or for discarding of Islam from practical life etc. etc.
- مَسْجِدٌ حَرَامٌ *Masjid-i-Ḥarām* is the sacred mosque (the inviolable place of worship) at Makkah which has the Ka'abah in its centre.
- مُشْرِكٌ *Mushrik* is one who practises *shirk* in any form (please see *shirk*).
- قِبْلَةٌ *Qiblah* is the point (Masjid-i-Ḥarām) towards which the Muslims turn their faces at Ṣalāt from every corner of the Earth.
- صَلَاةٌ *Ṣalāt* is the obligatory prayer in the prescribed form which must be offered five times a day.

شُرْك *Shirk* has no equivalent in English and is idolatry, heathenism, polytheism, paganism etc., and more than these. One may be guilty of *shirk* even if one is not an idolater and even if one professed to believe in Allah. *Shirk* is to ascribe any of the exclusive characteristics or powers or rights of Allah to any other or to associate any other with Him in any way whatsoever.

سُورَةٌ *Sūrah* is a chapter of the Qurān.

تَوْحِيدٌ *Tauhīd* is the opposite of *shirk*. It is the doctrine that Allah is One Being in the sense that He is Unique in His Person, in His Attributes, in His Powers and in His Rights, and has no offspring, no compeer, no partner and no associate in any way and capacity whatsoever. He alone is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Sovereign, the Ruler and the sole Deity.

عُمْرَةٌ *Umrāh* is the voluntary pilgrimage to Ka'abah (Makkah). It is performed at any other time than during the days of *Haj*.

زَكَاةٌ *Zakāt* is the obligatory due from those Muslims whose annual savings, agricultural products etc., go beyond the limits prescribed by Islām. Its rate varies with different kinds of produce, different forms of wealth etc. Islām has laid down specific items on which it should be spent.

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

PREFACE

(Adapted)

“THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN” follows the interpretation of Maulānā Abul A‘alā Maudūdī as contained in the “TAFHĪMUL-QURĀN.” This work has been before the reading public for a decade or so and has elicited unqualified and universal praise because of the freshness of its approach and its clearness and force. It can be safely asserted that this work has contributed more towards understanding the Qurān than anything else in our time. For it has applied the Qurānic principles to the solution of the problems of the modern age, and demonstrated in a wonderful way how up-to-date the Qurān is and how surely it marches with the times.

It has, however, been felt that the people, who do not know Urdu or are not well-versed in it, cannot derive any benefit from the “TAFHĪMUL-QURĀN.” I have, therefore, with a deep sense of responsibility, undertaken the delicate and difficult task of rendering this work into English under the guidance of the Maulānā himself. I am fully conscious of my limitations and pray to Allah to help me in this work.

“THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN” aims to fulfil the growing desire of the educated people to grasp the true spirit of the Qurān and understand the real object of its revelation. It is hoped that this work will meet the demand that has been increasing day by day in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of the translators and commentators.

The main object of this work is to enable the English reader to understand clearly the meaning and the aim of the Qurān and to impress on his mind, as far as possible, the same effect that it intends to produce. In order to achieve this, (a) an interpretation has been attempted instead of a literal translation and (b) Explanatory Notes have been added wherever necessary.

A free explanatory translation has been adopted for two reasons: (1) A word for word translation of the Qurān has already been done by several worthy persons and that suffices to serve its purpose. (2) It cannot fulfil the object for which this work has been undertaken. As a matter of fact, literal translation often becomes a hindrance to the full understanding of the Qurān.

A literal translation of the Qurān suffers from many drawbacks. It is incapable of transferring the linguistic charm and sublime theme of the original Arabic Text into any other language : nor can it retain the continuity of the theme so as to induce one to read it as a coherent whole and derive the same benefit from it as from a closely connected book. That is why the reader who studies its literal translation fails to appreciate the fluency and the dynamic force of the Qurān, and a sceptic begins to doubt whether it is the same Book which challenged the world to produce the like of it.

A literal translation suffers from another defect; it does not and cannot take into consideration the fact that the Qurān was at first not a book but a living voice. Every student of the Qurān knows that in the first instance it was addressed to hearers and delivered by public recitals and was not published for readers in the form of pamphlets, tracts and booklets. And it is obvious that a literal translation cannot transfer the informal style of an oral address into the conventional style of a written work.

A few instances will illustrate this point. In an address an objection is often answered even without any reference to it, but in a written work, an objection is first cited and then answered. Moreover, in a written work, the background has to be explained in words : otherwise there appears to be a gap in it and it may even become unintelligible. Then in a written work, a parenthesis has sometimes to be used by way of explanation, but in an address such things are often left to the manner and suggestive action of the speaker, without showing any gap or incoherence in it. That is why even if an excellent speech is written down on paper, there appear to the casual reader many irrelevancies in it. This defect can only

be removed by the adoption of free translation, by changing the informal style of an oral address into the conventional style of a written work.

There is still another handicap in a literal translation. An English word is not always the exact equivalent of an Arabic word ; it is, therefore, difficult to transfer accurately into English every shade of meaning that is contained in the Arabic word of the Qurān. A free translation, however, can convey in English the meaning of an Arabic sentence as a whole.

Almost all the existing English translations of the Qurān suffer from the drawbacks of a literal translation. Besides these, they have two more defects: (a) Generally they follow the archaic English of the Bible, which makes the meaning of the Qurān unintelligible. (b) They isolate every verse, number it and show it as an independent whole and thus take away life and dynamic force out of it. It is obvious that even if an excellent discourse is dissected and written in separate enumerated sentences, it fails to produce the effect which would have been produced by keeping it as a continuous whole.

That is why a general impression has been created that the Qurān lacks continuity of subject and deals with miscellaneous topics in a haphazard manner without any interconnection between the verses. No existing English translation claims or attempts to show that there is unity of purpose in the whole of the Qurān; that all its topics revolve round the central theme and never deviate from it; that each Sūrah is a complete whole and all its verses are interconnected.

Naturally the non-Muslim translators cannot be expected to do full justice to the Holy Qurān, for they are generally inspired by hostile intentions or at best by tolerance because they regard the Qurān to be 'the product of (Prophet) Muhammad's (Allah's peace be upon him) own imagination or an inspired literature'; there are others whose chief aim is to reflect "rhythm, music and the exalted tone of the original." Doubtless the thrilling rhythms of the Qurān touch the very core of the heart. But that is not the real object of the Qurān; it is only a means to it. Though the Muslim trans-

lators approach the Book with reverence, they do not try to remove the difficulties which are a real hindrance to its right and full understanding. The Westernised Muslim translators wittingly or un-wittingly try to explain away those things which they consider to be irreconcilable with modern thought. There are others who approach the Qurān with the poet's or mystic's approach and help make the Qurān a mystery and enigma.

Now let us turn to the Explanatory Notes. Sometimes it is asked, "Why should any notes be added to a translation? Why not let the Qurān speak for itself?" Indeed the Qurān does eloquently speak for itself : it did not require any notes at the time of its revelation. The Holy Prophet was its living commentary : and the addressees were well acquainted with its style and the backgrounds of its discourses. But with the passage of time, it was felt that many things needed explanation for their fuller comprehension, and the scholars of the Qurān rose to the occasion in every age and fulfilled the need. That is why Explanatory Notes have been added to this interpretation. They explain the difficult passages and show the continuity of the theme and the interconnection between the verses and indicate the background wherever necessary. They also contain relevant quotations from the Traditions of the Holy Prophet, the Bible, the Talmud and books on Fiqah etc. etc. They also discuss the problems relating to the Islamic way of life but avoid unnecessary controversies. In short, these Notes help understand the Qurān by removing those difficulties which a modern reader encounters.

In order to avoid the common defects of the existing English translations, the following devices have been adopted in "THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN":

1. An attempt has been made to express the meaning of the Qurān in simple, clear and effective modern English. An explanatory translation into intelligible English has been adopted and appropriate words have been placed within brackets to fill up the gaps which necessarily occur in every translation. Full care, however, has been taken to remain faithful to the original.

2. Anticipated difficulties have been removed and likely

objections answered in the Introduction to each Sūrah.

3. The background of every Sūrah has been given in its introduction and the period, the circumstances and the occasion of its revelation have been specified, for every discourse had its own background and is so intimately connected with it that if it is isolated from it, its contents are liable to become unintelligible.

4. The meanings of the Text have been divided into coherent paragraphs.

5. Wherever there is no equivalent of an Arabic word in English, it has either been explained by a phrase or retained in the original.

6. A glossary of un-translated Arabic words and a key to the correct pronunciation of Arabic names and words have been added.

In this connection it is necessary to add a word of caution. There is a general tendency to regard the English translation of the Holy Qurān as "The Qurān". It is obviously a misnomer. No translation, however good it may be, can ever take the place of the original Qurān, which is its Arabic Text; for it is impossible to reproduce its matchless, enchanting and grand style, its highly emotive and fiery language and its forceful rhetoric. Therefore one must turn to the original Arabic Text for fuller appreciation and understanding. Only then will the reader himself experience how irresistibly he is being moved to ecstasy and his heart melted and stirred to noble action.

"THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN" merely attempts to help the reader to understand and appreciate the Arabic Text of the original Qurān and is not a substitute for it. I pray to Allah to help and guide me in the achievement of this object.

N.B.—It is intended to publish "The Meaning of the Qurān" in suitable instalments. The present work is the first of the series.

Suggestions for improvement will be welcomed.

Muradpur, Sialkot
West Pakistan

MUHAMMAD AKBAR

Second Edition

In this Edition some changes have been made in the light of the suggestions received since the publication of the First Edition. It is expected that these will help improve the Translation.

MUHAMMAD AKBAR MURADPURI

Acknowledgement

I acknowledge with gratitude my obligation to Mr. P. H. Harwood, M.A. (Oxon) who has very kindly examined thoroughly the manuscript and made valuable suggestions.

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I am very glad to say that two more scholars (who prefer to remain anonymous) have joined the Board of Translators. I am confident that their co-operation will prove very helpful in the performance of this onerous duty.

MUHAMMAD AKBAR MURADPURI

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

INTRODUCTION

I have two objects in view in writing this Introduction to the study of the Qurān.

First, I want to acquaint the reader with those things which will help him to understand the meaning of the Qurān. If he does not become conversant with them in the very beginning, they keep coming back into his mind over and over again, and often become a hindrance to his going deep into its meaning and spirit.

Second, I want to answer beforehand some of the questions which usually arise during the study of the Qurān. I have confined myself to those questions which arose in my own mind when I began my critical study of it or the ones which I came across afterwards. If there be any other questions besides these, God willing, I will answer them in the next edition.

Unique Book

Before the reader begins the study of the Qurān, he must bear in mind the fact that it is a unique Book, quite different from the books one usually reads. Unlike conventional books, the Qurān does not contain information, ideas and arguments about specific themes arranged in a literary order. That is why a stranger to the Qurān, on his first approach to it, is baffled when he does not find the enunciation of its theme or its division into chapters and sections or separate treatment of different topics and separate instructions for different aspects of life arranged in a serial order. On the contrary, there is something with which he has not been familiar before and which does not conform to his conception of a book. He finds that it deals with creeds, gives moral instructions, lays down laws, invites people to Islam, admonishes the disbelievers,

draws lessons from historical events, administers warnings, gives good tidings, all blended together in a beautiful manner. The same subject is repeated in different ways and one topic follows the other without any apparent connection. Sometimes a new topic crops up in the middle of another without any apparent reason. The speaker and the addressees, and the direction of the address change without any notice. There is no sign of chapters and divisions anywhere. Historical events are presented but not as in history books. The problems of Philosophy and Metaphysics are treated in a manner different from that of the textbooks on the subjects. Man and the Universe are mentioned in a language different from that of the natural sciences. Likewise it follows its own method of solving cultural, political, social and economic problems and deals with the principles and injunctions of law in a manner quite different from that of the sociologists, lawyers and jurists. Morality is taught in a way that has no parallel in the whole literature on the subject.

That is why the unwary reader is baffled and puzzled when he finds all these things contrary to his pre-conceived conception of a book. He begins to feel that the Qurān is a book without any order or interconnection between its verses or continuity of its subject, or that it deals with miscellaneous topics in an incoherent manner, or that it had been given the form of a continuous book though it was not a book in the commonly accepted sense of the word. As a result of this, its opponents raise strange objections against the Qurān, and its modern followers adopt strange devices to ward off doubts and objections. They either resort to escapism or put forward strange interpretations to ease their minds. Sometimes they try to create artificial connections between the verses to explain away the apparent incoherencies, and, as a last resort, they even accept the theory that the Qurān deals with miscellaneous topics without any order or coherence. Consequently, verses are isolated from their context and confusion is produced in the meanings.

This happens when the reader does not take into consideration the fact that the Qurān is a unique book. It does not, like other books, enunciate at the very beginning the

subject it deals with and the object it intends to achieve. Its style and method of explaining things are also quite different from those of other books one commonly reads and it does not follow any bookish order. Above all, it is not a book on "religion" in the sense this word is generally understood. That is why when a reader approaches the Qurān with the common notions of a book, he is rather puzzled by its style and manner of presentation. He finds that at many places the background has not been mentioned and the circumstances under which a particular passage was revealed have not been stated. As a result of these things, the ordinary reader is unable to benefit fully from the most precious treasures contained in the Qurān, though occasionally he may succeed in discovering a few gems here and there. Only those people become victims of such doubts as are not acquainted with these distinctive features of the Qurān. They seem to find miscellaneous topics scattered all over its pages and feel difficulties about its meanings. Nay, even those verses, which are absolutely clear, appear to them to be quite irrelevant in the contexts they occur.

The reader may be saved from all these difficulties, if he is warned beforehand that *the Book he is going to study is the only book of its kind in the whole world: that its literary style is quite different from that of all other books: that its theme is unique and that his preconceived notions of a book cannot help him understand the Qurān.* Nay, these may even become a hindrance. He should, therefore, first of all free his mind from preconceived notions and get acquainted with the distinctive features of this Book. Then and then alone can he understand it.

In order to understand the Qurān thoroughly, it is essential to know the nature of this Book, its central idea and its aim and object. The reader should also be well acquainted with its style, the terms it uses and the method it adopts to explain things. He should also keep in view the background and circumstances under which a certain passage was revealed.

Divine Guidance

First of all, the reader should understand the real nature of the Qurān. Whether one believes it to be a revealed book

or not, one will have to consider, as a starting point, the claim that is put forward by itself and its bearer, Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), that this is the Divine Guidance.

The Lord of the Universe, its Creator, Master and Sovereign created Man and bestowed upon him the faculties of learning, speaking, understanding and discerning right from wrong and good from evil. He granted him freedom of choice, freedom of will, freedom of action and gave him authority to acquire and make use of the things around him. In short, He granted him a kind of autonomy and appointed him as His Vicegerent on the Earth and instructed him to live in accordance with His Guidance.

At the time, when the Lord of the Universe appointed Man as His Vicegerent, He warned him very clearly and precisely, leaving no doubt in his mind as to the kind of relations he should have with Him, as if to say, "I am your Master and Sovereign and that of the whole universe; therefore you should worship Me and none else. You are neither independent in My Kingdom nor the subject of anyone else, to whom you might owe obedience or worship. You are being sent to the Earth with certain powers for a fixed term of time for your test. After that you will have to return to Me. Then I will judge the deeds you did in the world and decide whether you have come out successful or failed in the test. Therefore the right course for you is to accept Me voluntarily as Sovereign and worship Me alone and act in the world according to the Guidance I shall send you, and live on the Earth with the conviction and understanding that it is merely the place of your trial. Your real object in earthly life should be to come out successful in the final judgement. Therefore any other course different from and opposed to the Divine Guidance, will be wrong. If you adopt the first course (and you have full liberty and freedom to adopt it), you will achieve peace and tranquillity in this world and win the home of eternal bliss and joy (Paradise) in the next world, to which you shall have to return. And if you follow any other course (and you are quite free to do this also, if you so choose), you shall incur My disfavour in this world and eternal sorrow and affliction in the Hereafter,

where you shall be thrown into the abyss of Hell”.

After such a warning, the Owner of the Universe sent Adam and Eve (Allah's peace be upon them) the first human beings, to the Earth and gave them the guidance according to which they and their descendants were to live in this world. Thus the first two human beings were not created in ignorance and darkness but were given very clear and bright Light and the Law they were to follow. This was Islam (submission to Allah). Before they left this world, they themselves practised and taught the same way to their children and children's children and exhorted them to live as Muslims (obedient servants of Allah). But in the succeeding centuries, by and by, people swerved from this straight way of life (Islam) and adopted different crooked ways. They not only lost the Guidance owing to their negligence but also tampered with it because of their wickedness. They attributed to others the qualities and powers of Allah and associated others to rank with Him as gods and ascribed His rights to others. They invented different kinds of religions (ways of life) by mixing up all sorts of superstitions, wrong theories and false philosophies with the Guidance that was given by Allah. They discarded the right, just and moral principles taught by Allah or corrupted them and made such laws of life as suited their prejudices and lusts, and filled Allah's Earth with chaos and iniquity.

Though this was a sad state of affairs, Allah did not will to force these corrupt people to follow the Right Way because this would have been against the limited freedom of action which had been granted to man by Him; nor did He will to destroy them forthwith as soon as rebellion broke out against Him, because this would not have been in keeping with the rules of life laid down for trial in this world. Instead of this, Allah took upon Himself, from the very beginning of man's life on the Earth, to send His Guidance to him during his term of life, leaving him free to follow or not to follow it. Accordingly, He made arrangements for the Guidance of mankind and appointed His Messengers from among the people themselves and bestowed upon them the knowledge of the Truth and the Right Way of life. They were charged with the mission to

invite people to the Right Way from which they had strayed. The Messengers themselves believed in Allah and acted in accordance with the Guidance they received from Him. They were raised from different nations in different countries and thousands of them were sent during thousands of years. They all had one and the same religion which was based on the Unity of God and accountability in the Hereafter. They all taught the same way of life that was taught to the first Man at the very start of his life in this world. They all followed the same Guidance, that is, those fundamental and eternal principles of morality and culture which were prescribed for the first Man from the very first day of his life. They all had the one and the same mission, that is, to invite all human beings to the same Guidance, and to organise them into one community. All those people who accepted their invitation became one community, which was in duty bound to follow the Divine Guidance and to do its best and utmost to establish it and to guard against any transgressions.

During their respective terms, these Messengers fulfilled their mission admirably well. But it is a pity that the majority of the people were not inclined to accept their invitation and even those who joined their community gradually became corrupt. So much so that some of these communities totally lost that Guidance and others tampered with the Commandments of Allah and mixed them up with false things.

Then the Lord of the Universe sent Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) as His last Messenger to fulfil the same mission for which Messengers had been sent before him. He extended his invitation to all human beings, including the corrupt followers of the previous Messengers and asked them to follow the Right Way. He organised all those who accepted the Divine Guidance into one community, which in its turn, was required to re-establish its collective way of life based on the Guidance and to exert its utmost to reform the world, which had gone astray. *The Qurān which was revealed to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is the Book which contains that Invitation and that Divine Guidance.*

Central Theme

Now that we have come to know the nature of the Qurān,

it has become easier to determine the subject it deals with, its central theme and its aim and object.

The SUBJECT it deals with is MAN : it discusses those aspects of his life that lead either to his real success or failure.

The CENTRAL THEME that runs throughout the Qurān is the exposition of the Reality and the invitation to the Right Way based on it. It declares that Reality is the same that was revealed by Allah Himself to Adam at the time of his appointment as vicegerent, and to all the Messengers after him, and the Right Way is the same that was taught by all the Messengers. It also points out that all theories contradictory to this Reality, invented by people about God, the Universe, Man and his relations with God and the rest of His creation, are all wrong and that all the ways of life based on them are erroneous and lead to ruinous consequences.

The AIM and OBJECT of the revelations is to invite Man to that Right Way and to present clearly the Guidance which he has lost because of his negligence or has perverted by his wickedness.

If the reader keeps these three basic things in mind, he will find that in this Book there is no incongruity in the style, no gap in the continuity of the subject and no lack of inter-connection between its various topics. As a matter of fact, this Book is not irrelevant anywhere with regard to its Subject, its Central Theme and its Aim. From its very beginning to its end, the different topics it deals with are so intimately connected with its Central Theme that they may be likened to the beautiful gems of the same necklace, despite their different colours and sizes. The Qurān keeps the same object in view, whether it is relating the story of the creation of the Earth or of the Heavens or of Man or is referring to the manifestations in the Universe or stating events from human history. As the aim of the Qurān is to guide Man and not to teach Nature Study or History or Philosophy or any other science or art, it does not concern itself with these latter subjects. The only thing with which it is concerned is to expound the Reality, to remove misunderstandings and misconceptions about it, to impress the Truth upon the minds, to warn them of the consequences of wrong attitudes and to invite humanity to the Right Way.

The same is true of the criticism of the creeds; of the moral systems, of the deeds of men and communities and of its discussions of the problems of Metaphysics etc. That is why it states or discusses or cites a thing only to the extent relevant to its aims and objects and leaves out unnecessary and irrelevant details and turns over and over again to its Central Theme and to its invitation round which every other topic revolves. When the Qurān is studied in this light, no doubt is left that the whole of it is a closely reasoned argument and there is continuity of subject throughout the Book.

Background

One cannot understand fully many of the topics discussed in the Qurān unless one is acquainted with the background of their revelation. One should know the social, historical or other antecedents or conditions which help explain any particular topic. For, the Qurān was not revealed as a complete book at one and the same time; nor did Allah hand over a written copy of it to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) at the very beginning of his mission and command him to publish it and invite people to adopt a particular way of life. Moreover, it is not a literary work of the common conventional type that develops its central theme in a logical order; nor does it conform to the style of such a work. The Qurān adopts its own style to suit the guidance of the Islamic Movement that was started by Allah's Messenger under His direct command. Accordingly, Allah revealed the Qurān piecemeal to meet the requirements of the Movement in its different stages.

Makki Surahs

When the Holy Prophet was commanded to start his mission at Makkah, Allah sent down such instructions as the Messenger needed for his own training for the great work that was entrusted to him. The Qurān imparted also the basic knowledge of the Reality and gave brief answer to the common misunderstandings that misled people to adopt wrong ways of life and invited them to accept the basic principles of morality and adopt the right attitude that alone leads to the success and welfare of humanity.

These early messages consisted of short and concise

sentences and were couched in a very fluent and effective language to suit the taste of the people to whom they were first addressed. Their excellent literary style was so appealing that it touched their very hearts. They were so charming that they attracted the attention of the hearers, who began to repeat them because of their beauty and elegance. Though universal truths were enunciated in these messages, they were given a local colour and were supported by arguments, examples and illustrations from the environment with which its first addressees were quite familiar. In order to impress the addressees effectively, these early addresses were confined to their own history, their traditions, their monuments, their beliefs, their morality and their evil ways.

This early stage of the Movement lasted for four years or so with the result that a few good people accepted its message and formed the nucleus of the future Muslim Community. But the large majority of the Quraish began to oppose it because, in their ignorance, they thought that it hit hard at their vested interests and lusts and the old traditions of their forefathers. The message of the Qurān, however, went on spreading beyond the boundaries of Makkah and reached other clans.

Then the Movement entered its second stage which continued for nine years or so and a fierce struggle began with the old order. Not only the Quraish but also the majority of its upholders also rose up to kill this Movement employing all sorts of weapons or at least to suppress it. They made false propaganda and levelled accusations and raised frivolous objections against it. They spread suspicions and doubts in order to alienate the common people from it. They hindered strangers from listening to the Holy Prophet and inflicted all sorts of cruelties on those who accepted Islam. They boycotted the Muslims socially and economically in order to intimidate and coerce them. Their persecution became so unbearable that some of them had to leave their homes twice for Abyssinia, and at last all of them had to migrate to Al-Madīnah. But in spite of persecution and hindrances, the Movement went on spreading. There was hardly a family or a household left in Makkah from which

one person or the other had not accepted Islam. Naturally this produced bitterness in the hearts of the opponents of Islam. The persecution became all the more bitter when they saw that their own brothers, nephews, sons, daughters, sisters etc., had accepted Islam and become its faithful and strong supporters and were ready to defend it even with their lives.

The Movement also got impetus from the fact that it was drawing into its fold the best from among their people who became the embodiments of virtue after accepting Islam. The world, therefore, could not help feeling the moral superiority of the Movement that was so thoroughly transforming the characters of its followers.

All through this long and bitter struggle, Allah continued to reveal, according to the requirements of the occasion, inspiring addresses which highly influenced the thoughts and conduct of the hearers. On the one hand, these addresses instructed the Muslims in their primary duties, infused into them the spirit of loyalty and devotion to bind them together as members of the Muslim Community and taught the ways of piety; high morality and purity of character and trained them to be true missionaries of Islam. On the other hand, these messages consoled, comforted and encouraged the Muslims with promises of success in this world and of eternal bliss in the Hereafter. They urged them also to exert their utmost in the way of Allah with fortitude, endurance and courage. The Muslims were so imbued with the spirit of sacrifice for this noble cause that they were ready to bear every kind of affliction and fight against the bitterest opposition. At the same time, these addresses administered warnings to those people who were opposing the Movement and those who were indifferent to it. Examples were cited from the history of the neighbouring peoples as proofs thereof. Their attention was also drawn to the ruins of the habitations by which they used to pass during their journeys : these were held out as object lessons. They were asked to observe the phenomena of Nature they saw day and night on the earth and in the heavens as a proof of the Unity of God and of the inevitable Hereafter.

The early addresses exposed the blasphemy of the idolaters and their association of partners with Allah and their worship of the old traditions so vividly as to convince all fair-minded persons of their error. They refuted their misconception that they were independent of God and not accountable to Him in the Hereafter with such clear reasoning as to leave no doubt in their hearts and minds. Every doubt was dispelled and every objection answered and every intricacy and complication, in which they were entangled and in which they were involving others, was unfolded and unravelled. In short, these addresses proved clearly and conclusively that the old ways were based on ignorance and were utterly void of sense. Side by side with this, the disbelievers were admonished for their immorality, their wrong ways of life and customs of ignorance and their opposition to the Truth and their persecution of the Believers. These early addresses also put forward those basic principles of culture and morality which have always been universally accepted and which have always formed the basis of the enlightened Divine civilization.

Several changes took place during the Makkī stage of the Movement. It spread wider and wider, day by day, and the opposition to it became stronger and stronger in the same proportion. By and by, it came into contact with the people of different creeds and different ways of life and this gave rise to new problems. The discourses, therefore, began to deal with various new topics as well. This explains the difference of their style from those of the earlier ones.

This is the background of the sūrahs which were revealed during the thirteen years of Makkī life.

Madani Surahs

After facing opposition for thirteen years in Makkah, the Islamic Movement found a new centre in Al-Madīnah where it became possible to collect all its followers from the various parts of Arabia and to unify and strengthen them. Accordingly, the Holy Prophet and the majority of the Muslims migrated to Al-Madīnah.

Then the Movement entered its third stage under totally changed conditions. Now that the Muslim Community had

succeeded in founding a regular state, an armed encounter ensued with the exponents of the old order of ignorance. Besides this, the Jews and the Christians came into conflict with it, even though they also professed to be the followers of Prophets. It had also to deal with different kinds of hypocrite 'Muslims' who had somehow or other entered its fold. But in spite of all those obstacles, the Movement succeeded in subduing the whole of Arabia after a hard struggle of ten years and was in a position to extend its universal message of reform to the outer world.

As, by and by, several changes took place in this stage also, and every changed condition had its own special problems, so Allah revealed to the Holy Prophet the kind of discourses required for any particular occasion. That is why some of these were couched in the fiery rhetoric of a warner and the others in the form of the royal edicts of the law-giver. Some adopted the methods of a teacher, trainer and reformer and taught the principles and the methods of organising a community, of building up a state and of constructing a good civilisation for the conduct of different affairs of life. Others gave instructions for dealing with the hypocrites or the unbelievers, who had come under the protection of this Islamic State. Then in some of these discourses, the Muslims were taught the kind of relations they should have with the people of the Book and with the belligerent powers and with their own allies. In others they were taught, trained and organised to carry out their obligations as vicegerents of the Lord of the Universe. Some gave instructions for their guidance, and warned them of their weaknesses and exhorted them to sacrifice their lives and properties in the way of Allah. Others taught the moral lessons they needed in defeat and victory, adversity and prosperity, war and peace. In short, these trained them to carry on the missionary work for the propagation of Islam as the successors of the Holy Prophet. Then some discourses invited to Islam the people of the Book, the hypocrites, the unbelievers and the blasphemers, or rebuked them for their hard-heartedness or warned them of the doom in store for them or admonished them for neglecting lessons from the stories and events of the past, so as to leave no excuse for their sticking

to the wrong ways of life.

This is the background of the sūrahs that were revealed during the ten years at Al-Madīnah. It is obvious that their style had to be different from that of the Makkī Sūrahs.

Style

It must have become clear from the above that the revelation of the Qurān began simultaneously with the beginning of the Islamic Movement and continued for twenty-three years. The different portions of the Qurān were revealed according to the requirements of the various phases of the Movement. It is thus obvious that a book like this cannot have the kind of uniformity of style which is followed in formal books on religion and the like. It should also be kept in mind that the various portions of the Qurān, both long and short, were not meant to be published in the form of pamphlets at the time of their revelation but were to be delivered as addresses and promulgated as such. Hence they could not be in the style of a written work. Moreover, these addresses were necessarily of a different nature from that of the lectures of a professor; therefore their style would naturally be different from them also. The Holy Prophet was entrusted with a special mission and had to appeal both to the emotions and to the intellect; he had to deal with people of different mentalities and cope with different situations and various kinds of experiences during the course of his mission. Such a person has to do all that is required for extending a message and for leading a movement. He has to impress the different aspects of his message on people's minds in order to change the established world of ideas, and to appeal to the feelings and emotions in order to counteract the forces of his opponents. He has also to train and reform his followers and to imbue them with spirit and courage, and to refute the arguments of opponents and to expose their moral weaknesses and so on. That is why the style of the discourses that Allah sent down to His Messenger had to be what suited the requirements of a Movement. It is, therefore, wrong to seek the style of a formal book or that of college lectures in the discourses of the Qurān.

That also explains why the same things are repeated over

and over again in the Qurān. A mission and a movement naturally demand that only those things should be presented which are required at a particular stage and that nothing should be said about the requirements of the next stage. That is why the same things are repeated over and over again as long as the movement remains in the same stage, no matter whether it remains there for months or for years. Of course, these things have been differently worded and styled to avoid monotony, and couched in a beautiful and dignified language to make them effective and impressive. Moreover, it repeats at suitable places its basic creed and principles in order to keep the Movement strong at every stage. That is why those sūrahs which were revealed at a particular stage of the Movement generally deal with the same topics, though, of course, in different words and in various forms. Moreover, all the sūrahs of the Qurān contain references to the basic creed, *i.e.*, the Unity of Allah, His attributes, the Hereafter and accountability, punishment and reward, Prophethood, belief in the Book etc. . . . They all teach piety, fortitude, endurance, faith and trust in Allah and the like, just because these virtues could not be neglected at any stage of the Movement. If any of these bases had been weakened at any stage even in the least, the Islamic Movement could not have made any progress in its true spirit.

Order

A little thinking in the light of the difference between the Makkī and the Madanī sūrahs will also answer the question why the sūrahs of the Qurān were not arranged in the sequence in which they were revealed. This question is also important because it has been used by the enemies of Islam to create misunderstandings about the Qurān and make ridiculous conjectures about the present arrangement of the sūrahs. They are of the opinion that "Muhammad's (Allah's peace be upon him) followers published it, without any discernible order as to chronology or otherwise; merely, trying as would seem, to put the longest chapters first....."

Such conjectures as this are based on ignorance of the wisdom underlying the order of the Qurān. Though it was

to be the Book for all times, it had to be revealed piecemeal in twenty-three years according to the needs and requirements of the different stages through which the Islamic Movement was passing. It is obvious that the sequence of the revelations that suited the gradual evolution of the Movement could not in any way be suitable after the completion of the Qurān. Then another order, suited to the changed conditions, was needed. In the early stages of the Movement the Qurān addressed those people who were totally ignorant of Islam and, therefore, naturally it had first of all to teach them the basic articles of Faith. But after its completion the Qurān was primarily concerned with those who had accepted Islam and formed a community for carrying on the work entrusted to it by the Holy Prophet. Obviously, the order of the complete Book had to be different from its chronological order to suit the requirements of the Muslim Community for all times. Then the Qurān had, first of all, to acquaint the Muslims thoroughly with their duties concerning the regulation of their lives. It had also to prepare them for carrying its message to the outer world which was ignorant of Islam. It had also to warn them of the mischiefs and evils that appeared among the followers of the former Prophets so that they should be on their guard against them. Hence Al-Baqarah and similar Madanī sūrahs, and not Al-‘Alaq and similar Makkī sūrahs, had to be placed in the beginning of the Qurān.

In this connection, another thing should also be kept in view. It does not suit the purpose of the Qurān that all the sūrahs dealing with similar topics should be grouped together. In order to avoid one-sidedness at any stage of its study, it is essential that the Makkī sūrahs should intervene between the Madanī sūrahs and that the Madanī sūrahs should follow the Makkī sūrahs, and that the sūrahs revealed at the earliest stages of the Movement should come between those revealed in the later stages so that the entire picture of the complete Islam should always remain before the reader. That is the wisdom of the present order.

It should also be noted that the sūrahs of the Qurān were not arranged in the present order by his successors but by the Holy Prophet himself under the guidance of Allah. Whenever

a sūrah was revealed, he would send for one of his amanuenses and dictate it word for word and direct him to place it after such and such and before such and such a sūrah. Likewise in the case of a discourse or passage or verse that was not meant to be an independent sūrah by itself, he would direct him to the exact place where it was to be put in the sūrah of which it was to form a part. Then he used to recite the Qurān during the Ṣalāt (prescribed prayer) and on other occasions in the same order and direct his Companions to remember and recite it in the same order. Thus it is an established fact that the sūrahs of the Qurān were arranged in the present order on the same day that the Qurān was completed by the one to whom it was revealed under the guidance of the One who revealed it.

Compilation

Allah Who revealed the Qurān Himself made arrangements for its safety and security for ever.

No sooner was a passage of the Qurān revealed than it was recorded on leaves of date-palm, barks of trees, bones etc., at the dictation of the Holy Prophet and all these pieces were put in a bag. Besides this, some of his Companions themselves wrote these pieces for their own use. At the same time, the Muslims committed these passages to memory as they had to recite them during Ṣalāt which was obligatory from the very beginning of Islam.

Though many Companions had committed the whole of the Qurān to memory during the life-time of the Holy Prophet, it had not been compiled in book form. But immediately after his death, an event occurred that necessitated this work. A furious storm of apostasy broke out and many of the Companions, who went to war to suppress it, were killed. Among these martyrs were some of those who had committed the whole of the Qurān to memory. Then it occurred to Ḥadrat 'Umar that necessary steps should be taken to preserve the Qurān intact in its original form against any and every kind of danger and that it was not wise to depend exclusively upon those who had learnt it by heart. He, therefore, urged that it was essential to put the whole of it in

black and white in the form of an authenticated book. He tried to impress the necessity of this step on Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, who at first showed hesitation to do what the Holy Prophet had not done. But after some discussion, he agreed to it. Accordingly, he entrusted this work to Ḥaḍrat Zaid bin Thābit who also showed hesitation at first like Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and for the same reason, but at last he was convinced and he undertook this historic work.

And he was best qualified for this work. He had frequently acted as an amanuensis to the Holy Prophet and was one of those Companions who had learnt the Qurān directly from him. Moreover he also was present on the occasion when the Holy Prophet recited the whole of the completed Qurān to angel Gabriel. Arrangements were, therefore, made to collect and gather all the written pieces of the Qurān left by the Holy Prophet, and those in the possession of his Companions.* Then with the co-operation of those Companions who had committed the whole or any part of the Qurān to memory word for word, all the written pieces were compared with each other for verification. Ḥaḍrat Zaid would not take down anything in his manuscript unless all the three sources tallied with one another. Thus was compiled one correct, authenticated and complete copy. This authenticated copy of the whole Qurān was kept in the house of Ḥaḍrat Ḥaḍrah (Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's daughter, and one of the wives of the Holy Prophet) and it was proclaimed that anyone, who desired, might make a copy of it or compare with it the copy he already possessed.

As regards the sequence of the sūrahs, Zaid followed the same order that was followed by the Holy Prophet himself because he could not and would not have followed any other. He was so particular about following the Holy Prophet in everything he did, that, at first, he hesitated to undertake

*We learn from authentic traditions that some Companions of the Holy Prophet had put the Qurān or some pieces of the Qurān in black and white during his life-time and the names of 'Uthmān, 'Alī, 'Abdullah-bin-Masūd, 'Abdullah-bin-'Amr-bin-'Āṣ, Sālim, the freed slave of Ḥuḍayfah, Mu'az-bin-Jabal, Zaid-bin-Thābit, Ubayy-bin-Ka'ab, Abū Zaid Qais-bin-As-Sakn (Allah be pleased with them all) have been specifically mentioned.

the work of the compilation, just because this had not been done during the life-time of the Holy Prophet. It is, therefore, wrong to suppose that the sūrahs were arranged in the existing order after the death of the Holy Prophet. The very fact, that the Holy Prophet recited the whole of the Qurān twice before Gabriel during the last Ramaḍān* of his life, is a clear proof of the fact that he must have followed some order. And we have already cited a Tradition to the effect that Haḍrat Zaid attended the second of these two last recitals. Likewise those Companions, who had committed the whole of the Qurān to memory, must have done it in some order and that, too, could not have been any other but the one followed and taught by the Holy Prophet.

Imām Mālik says, "The Qurān was compiled in the way the Companions heard it from the Holy Prophet." Moreover, at several places, the Qurān speaks of itself as a Book. For example, in Sūrah Muzzammil, an early Makkī revelation, Allah says to the Holy Prophet, ".....recite the Qurān in order....." LXXIII : 4. This also shows that the Qurān was meant to be a book from the beginning of the revelation and a book must follow some order.

Difference of Dialects

Though Arabic was the common language of the whole of Arabia, there existed some variations in the dialects of different parts and tribes.

For obvious reasons the Qurān was revealed in the dialect of the Quraish of Makkah. However, the Arabs living in different parts of the country were, at first allowed, for the sake of facility, to recite it according to the dialect of their own clan or district but this did not produce any difference in its meanings. But when Islam spread beyond the boundaries of Arabia and the Arabs came into contact with the non-Arab Muslims, the Arabic language gradually began to be influenced by its new environment. Then it was feared that

*Traditions say that the Holy Prophet used to recite the Qurān before angel Gabriel once during every Ramaḍān but he recited the whole of the complete Qurān twice during the Ramaḍān occurring in the year of his death. Zaid attended the second recitation.

the different dialects of the Qurān might give rise to various kinds of mischief and might cause disputes among persons having different dialects. They might even begin to accuse one another of tampering with the Qurān. Moreover, there was the danger that the pure and beautiful Arabic of the Qurān might be altered or changed by those Arabs who came in contact with non-Arabs. Therefore, Caliph 'Uthmān, in consultation with other Companions of the Holy Prophet, decided that the authenticated copies of the Qurān compiled by the order of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, should alone be used in the whole of the Muslim world, and the use of all other copies in any other dialect or idiom should be prohibited. As a precautionary measure, he had all the other existing copies burnt to ward off any possibility of future confusion and misunderstanding. For instance, some of the Companions had noted down explanatory words and comments on the margins of their copies and it was feared that these might get mixed up with the original text of the Qurān. Though such a possibility did not exist at that time, it was an act of most prudent foresight to make the Qurān safe and secure against any possible alteration in the future by burning all other copies.

The Qurān, which is now in use all over the world, is the exact copy of the Qurān which was compiled by the order of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and copies of which were officially sent by Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān to different places. Even today many very old copies are found in big libraries in different parts of the world and if anyone has any doubt as to whether the Qurān has remained absolutely safe and secure against every kind of change and alteration, he can compare any copy of the Qurān with any of these copies and reassure himself. Moreover, if one gets a copy of the Qurān from a bookseller, say, of Algeria in Africa in the West and compares it with a copy obtained from a bookseller, say, of Java in the East, one will find both the copies to be identical with each other and also with the copies of the Qurān made during the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān. If even then anyone has any doubt left in his mind, he is advised to take any copy of the Qurān from anywhere in the world and ask anyone, out of the millions who know the Qurān by heart, to recite it word for word from

the beginning to the end. He will find that the recitation conforms word for word to the written text. This is a clear and irrefutable proof of the fact that the Qurān which is in use today is the same Qurān which was presented to the world by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). A sceptic might entertain a doubt about its revelation from Allah, but none can have any doubt whatsoever regarding its authenticity and immunity and purity from any and every kind of addition or omission or alteration, for there is nothing so authentic in the whole human history as this fact about the Qurān that it is the same Qurān that was presented by the Holy Prophet to the world.

Now let us consider the case of the variant readings of the Qurān, for their existence has created the misunderstanding that it has not remained intact. The following facts will help us to understand their nature and extent :—

1. The Arabic script adopted by the amanuenses of the Holy Prophet during his life-time had neither dots nor vowel points. The same was the case with the copy of the Qurān compiled by Ḥaḍrat Zaid during the time of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and also with its copies circulated by Ḥaḍrat 'Uṭhṡmān.

2. Though the correctness of the Quranic text was ensured in the written form, the work of its propagation was done orally because of the general illiteracy and scarcity of paper. Little difficulty was, however, felt by the literate Arabs in deciphering this script. There were thousands of such persons who had learnt the whole of the Qurān by heart from the Holy Prophet himself and his Companions. They followed and taught the same reading that they had learnt from the Holy Prophet and his Companions.

3. Ḥaḍrat 'Uṭhṡmān not only sent an authenticated copy of the Qurān to the different centres of Islam, but also sent a Qāri* along with it in order to preserve that correct reading which was taught by the Holy Prophet himself.

4. With the passage of time it was felt that there should be vowel points to preserve the correct reading of the Qurān. Accordingly, at the instance of Zaid, the Governor of Baṡrah

*Qāri is one who is well-versed in the correct reading of the Qurān.

(45 to 53 A.H.) dots were assigned for vowel points. Then during the reign of Abdul-Malik (65-85 A.H.) Hajjāj-bin-Yusuf appointed scholars to assign new symbols for vowel points and dots to distinguish between the similar letters. The same practice continues to the present time.

From the above historical facts, it must have become clear that the reading of the Qurān (with a few minor variations) is the same as practised and taught by the Holy Prophet. All the scholars and *Qurra** of the Qurān have been unanimous in asserting that only that reading will be authentic which (a) conforms to the script of the copy circulated by Ḥaḍrat Uṭh̄mān and (b) complies with the lexicon of Arabic, its usages, idioms and grammar, and above all, (c) is traceable by genuine and continuous links to the Holy Prophet himself. That is why there are only a few variations in its reading and those are not contradictory in their meanings but enlarge their scope and make them more comprehensive. Thus there is absolutely no doubt that the Holy Prophet himself practised those various readings in the instances which exist today, and they make the meanings more comprehensive.

For example, let us take the two authentic readings of (a) verse 3 of Al-Fātiḥah and (b) verse 6 of Al-Mā'idah. One reading of I : 3, that is, "مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ" means the "Master of the Day of Judgement" and the other reading "مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ" means, "the Sovereign of the Day of Judgement." It is obvious that these two readings make the meaning of the verse all the more clear. (c) One reading of V : 6, that is, "فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ . . . وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ" means ". . . wash your faces . . . and (wash) your feet" as is done at the time of performing ablution with naked feet. The second reading, that is, "فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ . . . وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلِكُمْ" means ". . . wash your faces and wipe your heads and (wipe) your feet" with wet hands. The second reading allows one

*Qurra is the plural of Qari.

to wipe one's feet with wet hands, provided that one had washed one's feet and put on thick socks after the performance of the previous ablution. This concession holds good for 24 hours at home and for 72 hours during a journey. It is obvious from the two instances that in the variant readings, there is absolutely no contradiction in essence. On the other hand, they make the meanings all the more comprehensive. And the same is true of all the other variant readings.

Universality

Everyone knows that the Qurān claims to provide guidance for the whole of mankind, but when he reads it, he finds that it is mainly addressed to the Arabs, who lived at the time of its revelation. Though at times it also addresses other people and mankind in general, it mainly discusses those things which appealed to the taste of the Arabs and were linked with their environment, history and customs. This naturally gives rise to the question : Why does the Qurān contain so many local and national elements of the period in which it was revealed, when it was meant for the guidance of the whole of mankind? Those, who do not understand the wisdom of this, begin to argue like this : the Qurān was really meant for the reform of the Arabs of that period but later on, somehow or other, the claim was made that it was a guidance for the whole of mankind and for all ages.

If one does not raise this objection merely for the sake of objection but really wants to understand the matter, I would advise him to read the Qurān and mark the parts which give rise to this doubt. He should then point out any tenet, idea or principle therein that might have been meant particularly for the Arabs of that period only. He should lay his finger on any moral principle, practical rule or regulation that is not of universal application and was meant only for the Arabs of that period, time and place. The mere fact, that the Qurān refutes the blasphemous creeds and condemns the evil customs of a particular people, living at a particular time and place and bases arguments for the Unity of God on the material gathered from their environment, is not a sufficient proof to establish the allegation that its invitation and appeal was

local and temporary. We should examine the question closely and decide whether what it says regarding the blasphemous people of Arabia is or is not equally true of every period and every place, and whether we can or cannot apply the same arguments with equal force to refute the blasphemy of every time and every place, and whether we can or cannot use everywhere, with minor changes, the same arguments that the Qurān puts forward for the Unity of God. If the answer to these questions is in the affirmative, then there is no reason why such a universal revelation should be dubbed as local or temporary, simply because it was addressed to a particular community and during a particular period. There is no philosophy, no way of life and no religion in the world which expounds, from the beginning to the end, everything in the abstract without making any reference to particular cases or concrete examples, for it is simply impossible to build a pattern of life merely in the abstract. Even if we suppose, for the sake of argument, that it were possible to do so, most surely such a system will always remain merely a theory on paper and will never take a practical shape.

Moreover, it is neither necessary nor useful to start from the very outset on international lines any ideological movement that is meant to be ultimately international. The only right method of beginning this will be to start the movement in the country of its origin and present with full force its theories and fundamental principles which are to form the basis of the required system of life. Then its exponents should impress these things on the minds of their own people who have a common language, common habits and common customs. They should first of all put these principles into practice in their own country and prove their worth by evolving a happy and successful system of life. This will naturally attract other nations, and their intelligent people will themselves come forward to understand the movement and start it in their own countries. Thus a certain ideological system does not become national simply because it was at first presented to a particular nation and its arguments were addressed to a particular people. As a matter of fact, what distinguishes a national from an international and a temporary from a per-

manent system is this : a national system aims either to establish its own superiority or its special claim over other nations or presents principles and theories which, by their very nature, cannot be applied to other nations. On the other hand, an international system grants equal status and equal rights to all human beings and puts forward principles of universal application. Moreover, the principles of a temporary system become impracticable with the passage of time while the principle of a permanent system are applicable to all times. If one studies the Qurān in the light of the above, one will come to the conclusion that its teachings are of universal application.

Complete Code

Another thing that causes mental confusion is the oft-repeated assertion that the Qurān is a complete code of life. But when one reads it, one does not find detailed rules and regulations regarding social, cultural, political and economic problems etc. . . One is, therefore, baffled to see that it does not contain any detailed regulations even about Ṣalāt and Zakāt which are such important obligatory duties that the Qurān itself lays great emphasis on them over and over again. That is why a casual reader cannot understand how this Book can be called a complete code. This confusion is caused because the objector loses sight of the fact that Allah did not only send down the Book but also appointed His Messenger to demonstrate its teachings by putting them into actual practice. To illustrate this, we may take the case of the construction of a building. If only a plan of the proposed building is laid down and no engineer is appointed to supervise and direct its construction, then every detail must be supplied. But if an engineer is also appointed along with the plan to construct the building on the spot, obviously there is no need for a detailed plan. In that case only a sketch with its essential features will be quite enough. It would, therefore, be wrong to find fault with such a plan as being incomplete. As Allah sent His Messenger along with the Qurān, only general principles and absolutely essential instructions were needed and not their details. Hence the main function of the Qurān is to present clearly the intellectual and moral bases of the Islamic Way and reinforce them with arguments and appeals

to the heart. As far as the practical side of the building of the Islamic Way of life is concerned, it only defines the limits and bounds of every aspect of life without giving detailed rules and regulations. Moreover it fixes sign-posts for guidance at certain important places to show how those parts are to be constructed in accordance with Allah's will. The actual work of building the Islamic Way of life, in accordance with the instructions contained in the Book, was entrusted to the Holy Prophet, who was specially sent to set up the pattern of life for the individual, for the society and for the Islamic State to be constructed practically according to the principles of the Qurān. Thus the Qurān is a complete code in the sense that is to be taken along with the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet.

Another question which troubles the minds is that of divergencies in the interpretation of the Qurān. People say that 'on the one hand, Qurān condemns very severely those people who create differences in the Book of Allah and cause division in their religion; on the other hand, so many different interpretations of the injunctions of the Qurān have been made that there is hardly to be found any Command with an agreed interpretation. And it is not the people of the later periods alone who differ with one another but even the great scholars of the early period, including the Companions of the Holy Prophet and their followers, did not all agree in every detail in regard to Commands and Prohibitions. Do all these people then deserve the condemnation pronounced in the Qurān for making different interpretations? If this is not so, then what kind of differences of opinion have been condemned in the Qurān?'

The problem is very vast and extensive and this is not the place for its detailed discussion. Suffice it to say here that *the Qurān is not against healthy difference of opinion in the interpretation of its injunctions, provided that (a) there is agreement on the basic principles of Islam among those who differ and (b) they remain united within the fold of the Muslim Community. The Qurān deprecates that kind of divergence which starts with self-worship and crookedness and leads to disputes and sectarianism. As the two kinds of differences are neither alike in their nature nor in their results, they should not be placed in one and the same*

category. The first kind of divergence is essential for progress and is the very soul of life and every community of intelligent and thinking people must encourage it. Its existence is a sign of life and only that community can afford to repress it which desires to have only blockheads in it. The second kind of divergence, as everyone knows, disintegrates the community which nourishes it : therefore its appearance in a community is not a sign of health but a symptom of disease and it can never produce good results.

These two kinds of divergencies of opinion may further be illustrated by the following :—

Supposing there are two scholars or two judges, who agree, on principle, that Allah and His Messenger alone are entitled to obedience and that the Qurān and the Sunnah are the final authority to determine all laws and regulations. They may then differ in the details or in the decision of a case, provided that neither of them makes his opinion as the criterion of Islam or un-Islam nor declares the other to be outside its fold on account of such a difference of opinion. They may put forward their own arguments in support of their opinions and leave the decision to the public or to the highest court, if it is some judicial matter, or to the legislative body of the community, if it concerns them. Then either one of the two different opinions will prevail or both will be accepted. But it should be noted particularly that no difference can be allowed in the basic principles of Islam nor in such matters as may lead to the formation of a new community. For instance, it would be wrong that a scholar or a jurist or a saint or a leader should form an opinion about some matter (which Allah and His Messenger do not consider to be basic) and declare it to be a basic principle of Islam and then denounce all those who differ from him to be outside its fold, and then on this basis, proceed to form a community of his own followers saying, "This is the real Muslim Community and all outside it are doomed to Hell. Therefore, if you are a Muslim, come and join it, otherwise you are not one". It is this kind of difference of opinion which the Qurān condemns. As regards the first kind of difference, several instances of it occurred during the time of the Holy Prophet himself. He

not only permitted it but also spoke well of it, for it was a healthy sign, which showed that intelligent people of the Community were busy thinking and making research. This also showed that the intelligent people of the Community were taking interest in Islam and its teachings and were trying to find solutions for the problems of life within Islam and not outside it. It also provided a proof of the golden rule that while the Community should remain united on principles, it should, at the same time, grant freedom of research to its thinkers within due limits so that the doors of progress should remain open.

Suggestions for Study

Finally, here are a few suggestions for the study of the Qurān :

As different people turn to the Qurān with different aims and objects, it is not possible to offer any general advice about the method of its study so as to fulfil the requirements of all. I am, however, interested only in those people who want to understand it and seek guidance from it for the solution of human problems. I will, therefore, offer some suggestions which may help satisfy their needs and remove their difficulties.

The one pre-requisite for understanding the Qurān is to study it with an open and detached mind. Whether one believes it to be a revealed book or not, one should, as far as possible, free one's mind of bias in favour of or against it and get rid of all pre-conceived opinions and then approach it with the sole desire of understanding it. Those people who study it with preconceived notions of their own, read only their own ideas between its lines and cannot, therefore, grasp what the Qurān wants to convey. It is obvious that this method of study can never be fruitful even with other books but it is utterly fruitless when applied to the study of the Qurān.

There is another thing which must be kept in view. If one wants to have merely a cursory acquaintance with the contents of the Qurān, then perhaps it might suffice for him to read it once. But, if one wishes to have a deep knowledge of it, one will have to go through it several times and each time from a different point of view. Those, who desire to make a thorough study of the Qurān, should read it at least

twice with the sole purpose of understanding, as a whole, the system of life it presents. One should also try to find out its fundamentals and the way of life it aims to build on them. During this preliminary study, if some questions occur in his mind, the reader should note them down and patiently continue his study, for he is likely to find their answers somewhere in the Qurān itself. If he finds answers to his questions, he should note them down along with the questions. But if he does not find an answer to any question in his first reading, he should patiently make the second reading. I can say it in the light of my own experience that in the second reading hardly any question remains un-answered.

After getting a general insight into the Qurān in this way, one should begin its detailed study and take down notes of the different aspects of its teachings. For instance, one should note down what pattern of life, it approves and what it disapproves. One should note down the qualities of a good man and those of a bad man, side by side, in order to bring both the patterns clearly before his mind simultaneously. Similarly, one should note down, side by side, those things which lead to the success and salvation of man and those which lead to his failure and ruin. In the same way, he should put down, under different headings, the teachings and instruction of the Qurān about creed, morality, duties, obligations, civilization, culture, economics, politics, law, social system, peace, war and other human problems. These notes should be consolidated to form a complete sketch of each aspect of the teachings and then fitted together to form a complete system of life.

Then, if one desires to know the Qurānic solution of a certain human problem he should first make study of the relevant literature, both ancient and modern, and note down the basic issues. He should also make use of the research so far made into the problem and note down the points at issue. He should then study the Qurān with a view to finding out the answers to those issues. I can say from my own personal experience that when one studies the Qurān with a view to making research into any problem, one will find an answer to it even in those verses which one had skipped over without ever imagining that it lay hidden therein.

It is suggested that each paragraph of "THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN" may be made the unit of study. At first it should be studied from the original Arabic Text with the help of some literal translation and then with the help of "THE MEANING of the QURĀN." It is expected that the meanings of the Qurān will surely become clear by the grace of God.

But in spite of all these devices, one cannot grasp the inspiring spirit of the Qurān, unless one begins to put its message into practice, for the Qurān is neither a book of abstract ideas and theories which may be studied in an easy chair nor is it a book of religious enigmas which may be unravelled in monasteries and universities. It is a Book that has been sent down to invite people to start a movement and to lead its followers and direct their activities towards the achievement of its mission. One has, therefore, to go to the battlefield of life to understand its real meaning. That was why a quiet and amiable person like Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) had to come out of his seclusion and start the Islamic Movement and fight against the rebellious world. It was the Qurān that urged him to declare war against every kind of falsehood and engage in conflict with the leaders of disbelief without any consideration of the consequences. Then it attracted good souls from every home and gathered them under the banner of its leader in order to fight against the upholders of the old order who organised themselves into a gang to oppose them. During this long and bitter struggle between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, which continued for twenty-three years or so, the Qurān went on guiding the Movement in every phase and at every stage, until it succeeded in establishing the Islamic Way of life in its perfection.

It is thus obvious that one cannot possibly grasp the truths contained in the Qurān by the mere recitation of its words. For this purpose one must take active part in the conflict between belief and un-belief, Islam and un-Islam, truth and falsehood. One can understand it only if one takes up its Message, invites the world to accept it and moves on and on in accordance with its Guidance. Thus alone will one experience and understand all that which happened during the revelation of the Qurān. One will meet with the same con-

ditions that were experienced at Makkah, Ṭā'if and Ḥabash and pass through the same kind of fire that had to be passed through at Badr, Uḥd, Ḥunain, Tabūk etc. One will meet with Abū Jahls and Abū Lahabs and come across hypocrites, the double-faced, the "Jews", in short, every type of people mentioned in the Qurān. Incidentally, this is a wonderful experience of its own kind and worth the trial.

While passing through any one of these stages of this experience, one will find some verses and some sūrahs of the Qurān, which will themselves tell that they were revealed at such and such a stage and brought such and such instructions for the guidance of the Movement. In this way the Qurān will lay bare its spirit even though one might not be able to understand all the lexical meanings of its words and solve all the intricacies of grammar and rhetoric. The same formula applies to its Commandments, its moral teachings, its instructions about economics and culture and its laws regarding different aspects of human life. These things can never be understood unless they are put into practice. It is thus obvious that those individuals and communities who discard it from practical life, cannot understand its meaning and imbibe its spirit by mere lip-service to it.

This is from me and true knowledge is with Allah; I have full trust in Him and turn to Him for true guidance.

As I do not intend to discuss in the Introduction all the problems which might arise during the study of the Qurān, I have purposely left untouched those questions that might arise during the study of some verses or sūrahs, for I want to deal with them in "THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN" at their proper places. I have taken up only those questions and problems which pertain to the general study of the Qurān as a whole. The reader is, therefore, requested to defer giving his final judgement on such questions till he has read the whole of "The MEANING." Then, if he finds that some questions have not been answered at all or have not been dealt with fully, he should let me know about it for future consideration.

Abul A'alā Maudūdī

I

Al-Fātihah

I

AL-FĀTIḤAH ^{الْفَاتِحَة}

Introduction

Name. This Sūrah is named AL-FĀTIḤAH because of its subject-matter. Fātiḥah is that which opens a subject or a book or any other thing. In other words, Al-Fātiḥah is a sort of preface.

Period of Revelation. It is one of the very earliest Revelations to the Holy Prophet. As a matter of fact, we learn from authentic Traditions that it was the first complete Sūrah which was revealed to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). Before this, only a few miscellaneous verses were revealed which form parts of 'ALAQ, MUZ-ZAMMIL, MUD-DATH-THIR etc.

Theme. This Sūrah is in fact a prayer which Allah has taught to all those who want to make a study of His Book. It has been placed at the very beginning of the Book to teach this lesson to the reader : if you sincerely want to benefit from the Qurān, you should offer this prayer to the Lord of the Universe.

This preface is meant to create a strong desire in the heart of the reader to seek guidance from the Lord of the Universe, Who alone can grant it. Thus AL-FĀTIḤAH indirectly teaches that the best thing for a man is to pray for guidance to the straight path, to study the Qurān with the mental attitude of a seeker-after-truth and to recognise the fact that the Lord of the Universe is the source of all knowledge. He should, therefore, begin the study of the Qurān with a prayer to him for guidance.

From its theme, it becomes clear that the real relation between AL-FĀTIḤAH and the Qurān is not that of an introduction to a book but that of a prayer and its answer. AL-FĀTIḤAH is the prayer from the servant and the Qurān is the answer from the Master to his prayer. The servant prays to Allah to show him guidance and the Master places the whole of the Qurān before him in answer to his prayer, as if to say, "This is the Guidance you begged from Me".



الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ۝
 إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ۝ اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ۝ صِرَاطَ
 الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ۝

I

AL-FĀTIHAH ٱلْفَاتِحَةُ

Verses : 7

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.¹

1-3 Praise is only for Allah,² the Lord of the Universe,³ the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful,⁴ the Master of the Day of Judgement.⁵

4-7 Thee alone we worship⁶ and to Thee alone we pray for help.⁷ Show us the straight way,⁸ the way of those whom Thou hast blessed⁹; who have not incurred Thy wrath, nor gone astray.¹⁰

1. Islamic culture requires a man to commence everything with the name of Allah. If this is done consciously and sincerely, it will surely produce three good results. First, it will keep him away from evil, because the very name of Allah will impel him to consider whether he is justified in associating His name with a wrong deed or an evil intention. Secondly, the very mention of the name of Allah will create in him the right attitude of mind and direct him to the right direction. Thirdly, he will receive Allah's help and blessing and will be protected from the temptations of Satan, for Allah turns to a man, when he turns to Him.

2. It has been stated in the Introduction to this Sūrah that AL-FĀTIHAH is a prayer. It begins with the praise of Allah to Whom it is addressed in order to teach us the right way of making a supplication. We should not put forward our request bluntly and abruptly without an appropriate introduction. The right way is to acknowledge the excellences and the favours and the high position of the One to Whom we address our prayer. That is why we begin our prayer with the praise of Allah, for He is the perfection of all excellences and is also our Benefactor. We pay homage to Allah to show that we

sincerely acknowledge His excellences and also are grateful to Him for His countless favours.

It should also be noted that not only "Praise is for Allah" but also "Praise is only for Allah". This distinction is very important because it cuts at the root of the worship of any of His creation. As none of them is worthy of praise, none is worthy of worship. No man, no angel, no prophet, no so-called god, no star, no idol, in short, none of His creation inherently possesses any good quality. If one has any, it is given by Allah. Hence the Creator of these qualities alone deserves devotion, worship, gratitude, and none of His creation.

3. The Arabic word "*Rab*" which has been translated into 'Lord' stands for (a) Master and Owner, (b) Sustainer, Provider and Guardian, (v) Sovereign, Ruler, Administrator and Organiser. Allah is the Lord of the Universe in all these senses.

4. Although the Arabic word "*Rahmān*" itself is in the superlative form and denotes the attributes of beneficence and mercy in the highest degree, even this word fails to express the boundless extent of these attributes of Allah. Hence another word "*Rahīm*" of the same root has been added to make up for the deficiency.

5. After saying that Allah is Beneficent and Merciful, it has immediately been added that He is the Master of the Day of Judgement so that the qualities of mercy and kindness might not mislead anyone into forgetting that on that Day He will gather together all human beings from the first to the last and require each and every one to give an account of all one's acts to Him. A Muslim should, therefore, always keep in view the fact that Allah is not only Merciful, but He is also Just. He has, however, full authority to pardon or punish anyone He pleases, for He has complete power over everything. Therefore we should have full conviction that it lies absolutely in His power to make our end happy or sorrowful.

6. The Arabic word "*ibādat*" is used in three senses : (a) worship and devotion, (b) submission and obedience, (c) subjection and servitude. Here it implies all the three, that is, "We are Thy worshippers, Thy subjects and Thy slaves" and "We keep these relations with Thee and Thee alone" and "We make none else the object of our worship in all the three senses".

7. It means, "We ask for Thy help because we know that Thou art the Lord of the whole Universe and Thou hast all powers and Thou art the Master of every thing. Therefore we turn to Thee for help for the fulfilment of our needs and requirements."

8. That is, "Show us that way which may lead us aright in every walk of life and keep us absolutely free from errors and evil consequences and bring us success in the end".

This is the request which the servant of Allah makes to Him when he begins the study of the Qurān. He prays to Him to guide him in every walk of life and save him from the labyrinths of doubt and

uncertainty, which result from the lack of true knowledge. The servant also requests the Master to sow him the right and the straight way of life from among the many by-paths and crooked ways.

9. The "straight way" for which we are praying is "the way which has always been followed by the people favoured by Thee and which has always brought Thy favours and blessings".

10. This is to show that the "favoured people" are not those who go astray and incur the wrath of Allah, though apparently they might be enjoying the transitory good things of life. The really favoured people are those who receive blessings on account of their righteous living. From this it also becomes clear that by "favours" are meant those real and permanent rewards, which result from righteous living and from winning the pleasure of Allah, and not those transitory good things of life which have been enjoyed even by the tyrants and worshippers of mammon and which are being enjoyed even today by all sorts of evil-doers who have gone astray from the straight way.

II

Al-Baqarah

II

AL-BAQARAH البَقَرَةُ

Introduction

Name. Why the name AL-BAQARAH?

AL-BAQARAH (the Cow) has been so named from the story of the Cow occurring in this Sūrah (vv. 67-73). It has not, however, been used as a title to indicate the subject of the Sūrah. It will, therefore, be as wrong to translate the name Al-Baqarah into "The Cow" or "The Heifer" as to translate any English name, say Baker, Rice, Wolf etc., into their equivalents in other languages or *vice versa*, because this would imply that the Sūrah dealt with the subject of "The Cow". Many more Sūrahs of the Qurān have been named in the same way because no comprehensive words exist in Arabic (in spite of its richness) to denote the wide scope of the subject discussed in them. As a matter of fact all human languages suffer from the same limitation.

Sequence. Though it is a *Madanī* Sūrah, it follows naturally a *Makkī* Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah, which ended with the prayer : "Show us the straight way". It begins with the answer to that prayer, "This is the Book (that) . . . is guidance . . ."

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

Historical Background. In order to understand the meaning of this Sūrah, we should know its historical background :

1. At Makkah the Qurān generally addressed the *mushrik* Quraish who were ignorant of Islam, but at Al-Madīnah 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 (Allah's peace be upon him), and in principle, their way was the same (Islam) that was being taught by Prophet Muhammad (Allah's 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 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 worst 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 Holy Prophet went to Al-Madīnah and invited the Jews to the true religion. That is why more than one-third of this Sūrah 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 and 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 Holy Prophet to Al-Madīnah, 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 Anṣār (local supporters), naturally the Qurān 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 sūrahs revealed at Makkah and those at Al-Madīnah. Accordingly about half of this Sūrah 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-Madīnah, 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-Madīnah, 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 Sūrah :—

- (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 tooth and nail 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 Sūrah such instructions as may help achieve all the above mentioned objects.

4. During this period, a new type of "Muslims," *munāfiqīn* (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-Madīnah. 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-Madīnah different kinds of *munāfiqīn* (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 sacrifices 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.

SUMMARY

Theme : Guidance

This Sūrah is an invitation to the Divine Guidance and all the stories, incidents etc., revolve round this central theme. As this Sūrah 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 Holy Prophet. They should, therefore, be the first to accept it because it was basically the same that was revealed to Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon him).

Topics and their Interconnections

1
20 These introductory verses declare the Qurān 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.

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 Qurān, His Guidance, and in the Life-after-death.

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.

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 criticised to show that the cause of their degradation was their deviation from the Guidance.

121
141 The Jews have been exhorted to follow Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) who had come

with the same Guidance and who was a descendant and follower of Prophet Abraham whom they highly honoured as their ancestor, and professed to follow as a prophet. The story of the building of the Ka'abah by him has been mentioned because it was going to be made the *qiblah* of the Muslim Community.

In this portion, the declaration of the change of *qiblah* from the Temple (Jerusalem) to the Ka'abah (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.

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 the Guidance. *Ṣalāt*, Fast, *Zakāt*, *Haj* and *Jihād* have been prescribed for the moral training of the *Ummat*. The Believers have been exhorted to obey authority, to be just, to fulfil pledges, to observe treaties, to spend wealth etc., in the way of Allah. Laws, rules and regulations have been laid down for their organisation, cohesion and conduct of day-to-day 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.

These verses serve as an introduction to the prohibition of lending money on interest. The true conception of Allah, Revelation and Life-after-death has been emphasised to keep alive the sense of accountability. The stories of Prophet Abraham (Allah's 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.

142
152

153
251

252
260

261
283 The theme of 153-251 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.

284
286 The basic articles of the Faith have been recapitulated here at the end of the Sūrah, just as they were enunciated at its beginning. Then the Sūrah 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.



الَّذِينَ هُدَىٰ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ لَسْتَ تَجِدُ فِيهِ عَذَابًا يُعَذِّبُ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ ۚ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ ۚ

II

AL-BAQARAH سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

Verses : 286

Revealed at Al-Madīnah

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Alif. Lām. Mīm.¹ This is the Book of Allah : there is no doubt² about it. It is guidance to God-fearing people,³ who believe in the unseen,⁴ establish Ṣalāt⁵ and expend (in Our way) out of what We have bestowed on them;⁶ who believe in the Book We have sent down to you and in the Books sent down before you,⁷ and firmly believe in the Hereafter.⁸

1-4

1. Letters of the Arabic alphabet like Alif, Lām, Mīm, which are pre-fixed to a number of sūrahs of the Qurān, were in common use in the Arabic literature of the period when the Qurān was revealed. The poets and rhetoricians made use of this style, and 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 about their use, because it was no enigma to them. Even the bitterest opponents of the Qurān, 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 Qurān is concerned.

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 are not free from doubts concerning their own theories, in

spite of their assertion that they are positive about them. In contrast to them, this Book is based on the Truth because its Author, Allah, possesses full knowledge of the Reality. Therefore, there is indeed no room for doubt about its contents.

3. The first pre-requisite to benefit from the Qurān is that one should be a "*muttaqī*", that is, one who fears Allah, discriminates between good and evil and intends to be righteous. No doubt there is nothing but guidance in this Book, but it is obvious that one must approach the Qurān with the right mental attitude in order to benefit from it. First of all, one should be God-fearing, and truth-loving, should discriminate between good and evil and practise virtue. Conversely, there is no guidance in the Qurān for a man who does not bother about right or wrong, but follows the ways of the world or of his own lusts or moves aimlessly during the journey of life.

4. The second condition for obtaining guidance from the Qurān is that one must believe in the "un-seen"—those things which cannot be perceived by the senses and which do not come within human experience and observation. It is obvious that Allah, Angels, Revelation, Life-after-death, Paradise, Hell, etc., can neither be seen nor tasted nor smelt nor measured nor weighed : such things must be taken on trust from the experts (Prophets) just as we do in many cases in the physical world. Therefore, only that person, who believes in the "un-seen," can benefit from this Guidance but the one who believes only in those things which can be tested by the senses, cannot get guidance from this Book.

5. The third condition to benefit from the Qurān is that one should be willing and ready to put into practice the teachings of the Qurān. As *Ṣalāt* (Prayer) is the first and fore-most obligatory duty enjoined by the Qurān, 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 Prayer (which sounds regularly five times a day from every mosque in the Muslim world), he should join the congregation for *Ṣalāt*, because this determines whether he is sincere in his profession or not. If he does not attend to the call and join the congregation, it is an indication that he is not sincere in his profession.

It must also be noted that "*iqāma-tuṣ-Ṣalāt*" (the establishment of Prayer) is a very comprehensive term. It means that *Ṣalāt* should be performed in congregation and that permanent arrangements should be made for it in every habitation; otherwise *Ṣalāt* will not be considered as established, even if every inhabitant of a place offers *Ṣalāt* individually.

6. The fourth condition to benefit from the Qurān 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. This is an essential condition because a narrow-minded miser or a worship-

per of wealth, who loves money above everything else, can never be expected to make monetary sacrifices for the cause of Islam.

7. The fifth condition for obtaining guidance from the Qurān is to believe in Revelation. Those, who do not believe in any kind of guidance from Allah, cannot benefit from this Book. One must believe not only in the Qurān but also in the truth of all the Books which were revealed to the Messengers of Allah at different times in different countries. Likewise they cannot obtain guidance from it : who profess to believe in the necessity of guidance from Allah but do not turn to Revelation and Prophets for it : who dub their own theories as "Divine Light." Moreover, guidance is also denied to those who believe only in those revealed Books in which their forefathers believed and reject all other revealed Books. The Qurān guides only such people as believe that Divine Guidance is essential for right living and that it is not revealed to every one individually but only to the Messengers of Allah : that it can only be obtained from the Books revealed to them. Therefore those, who want guidance, should not be slaves to racial or national prejudices but should be ready and willing to accept the Truth and submit to it wherever and in whatever form they find it.

8. The sixth condition is belief in the Life-after-death with all its implications, which according to the Qurān, are (1) Man is responsible and answerable to Allah for all his actions and deeds. (2) This world is not ever-lasting, but will come to an end. (3) Allah alone knows the time when the other world will be created in the Hereafter and when all human beings, without exception, shall be brought back to life together to render an account of their actions to Allah, Who will reward each and everyone according to his deeds. (4) Those, who will be judged as good by Allah, will go to Paradise and those, who will be declared as bad, shall be sent to Hell. (5) Success or failure, therefore, should not be measured by the yard-stick of prosperity or poverty in this worldly life : this will be decided by Allah on the Day of Judgement. Only that one will be really successful, who comes out successful in Allah's judgement, and that one, who fails in it, will be really unsuccessful even though the former had been a 'failure' and the latter a 'success' in this world. Those, who do not believe in the Life-after-death with the above implications, cannot benefit from the Qurān because the one who has even the slightest doubt about these, not to speak of rejecting them, can never follow the way of life which the Qurān prescribes.

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ ۚ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنذَرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ
 قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾
 وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾
 يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۚ وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾
 فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ ۖ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۖ إِنَّمَا كَانَ
 يُضِلُّونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ
 مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ إِلَّا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَإِذَا
 قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا كَمَا آمَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا آمَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۗ أَلَا
 إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا
 آمِنَّا ۖ وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ شَيْطَانِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾
 اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ
 اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾
 مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا ۖ فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ
 بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَّهُمْ فِي ظُلْمٍ ۗ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ صُمُّ بَكْمٌ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَّا
 يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمٌ ۖ وَرَعْدٌ ۖ وَبَرْقٌ ۖ يَجْعَلُونَ
 أَصَابِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ حُدَارِ الْهَوْتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ
 بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطِفُ أَبْصَارَهُمْ ۗ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشْوًا
 فِيهِ ۖ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ

ع
 وقف لازم

Such people are on the right way from their Lord and 5
such are truly successful.

As for those who have rejected⁹ (these things), it is all 6-7
the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn
them : they are not going to believe. Allah has sealed up
their hearts and ears and a covering has fallen over their
eyes,¹⁰ and they have incurred the severest punishment.

Then there are some people who say, "We believe in 8-16
Allah and the Last Day", whereas they do not believe at all.
They thus try to deceive Allah and the Believers, but
they succeed in deceiving none except themselves and they
realise it not.¹¹ In their hearts is a disease which Allah has
increased all the more¹² and a painful doom is in store for
them for the lie they utter. Whenever it is said to them,
"Spread not disorder on the earth", their reply is, "We only
seek to put things aright". Beware! they do spread disorder
but they realise it not. And when it is said to them, "Believe
sincerely as the other people have believed",¹³ they reply,
"Should we believe as the fools have believed?"¹⁴ Beware!
they themselves are fools, but they know it not. When they
meet those who believe, they say, "We, too, are believers",
but when they privily meet their evil geniuses,¹⁵ they say,
"Indeed we are with you. We are only mocking at these
people". (Little do they realise that) Allah is mocking at
them. He gives them rope enough, and they wander on and
blindly in their mischief and rebellion. These are the people
who have bartered away Guidance for error, but this is a
profitless bargain they have made, and they are not at all on
the right way.

Their condition may be described in a parable : a man 17-20
kindled a fire and when it illuminated all around him, Allah
took away the light from their eyes and left them in utter
darkness, where they could not see anything.¹⁶ They are
deaf; they are dumb; they are blind;¹⁷ so they will not
return (to the right way). Or (still another parable may be
cited to depict their condition :) heavy rain is falling from
the sky, accompanied by pitch darkness, thunder and
lightning. (When they hear the thunderclap,) they thrust
their fingers into their ears for fear of death (but they

forget that) Allah is encircling the disbelievers on all sides.¹⁸ The lightning terrifies them as if it were going to snatch away their eye-sight from them. When they see light, they move on a little further and when it becomes dark for them, they stand still.¹⁹ If Allah had willed, He could have deprived them totally of their hearing²⁰ and their

[Contd. on p. 61

9. That is, "Those who refuse to fulfil all or anyone of the above-mentioned conditions".

10. It does not mean that their rejection of the Truth was due to some arbitrary decree of Allah and not because of their own fault; they refused to accept the Truth because Allah had sealed their hearts or they did not listen to it because Allah had sealed up their ears or they did not see the Truth because Allah had put a cover over their eyes. As a matter of fact, the sealing up of their hearts and ears was the result of their own persistent rejection of the Truth and not the cause of it. The Qurān 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 favour 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.

11. They delude themselves by imagining that their duplicity will safeguard their interests but obviously their policy proves harmful in this world and most surely shall be so in the next world. 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 honour once for all. As to the Hereafter, mere lip-service will carry no weight there because it is deeds alone that matter there.

12. Allah increases the disease of their duplicity on account of their misbehaviour. When their duplicity appears to succeed apparently for some time, they become convinced of its efficacy and effectiveness and practise it even more frequently and persistently than before.

13. That is, "If you profess to accept Islam, you should accept it truly and sincerely like the other people who have come within the fold of Islam honestly by accepting all its implications in their entirety."

14. They considered as fools the people who had accepted Islam sincerely and exposed themselves to troubles, hardships and dangers. According to their appraisal, it was nothing but folly to make the whole country their enemy merely for the sake of truth and righteousness. They considered it wisdom not to bother about the right and the wrong of a thing but only to look after their own self-interest.

15. *Shayāṭīn* is the plural of *Shayṭān*, which in Arabic means an insurgent, haughty, mischievous and devilish person and an evil

genius. It is used both for human beings and *jinns*. Though it has generally been used in the Qurān for the *jinn* devils, in some places it has also been applied to the human devils. It can be easily judged from the context whether it refers to *jinns* or to human beings. Here it refers to the Arab chiefs who were first and foremost in their opposition to Islam.

16. The parable means that when a person, Muhammad (Allah's 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 deprived them of eyesight” does not mean that the responsibility of not seeing the truth did not lie on them. It simply refers to the same law of Nature that has been stated in E.N. 10. When they themselves chose to wander in darkness, Allah also let them go astray.

17. They are deaf to hear the Truth, dumb to speak the Truth and blind to see the Truth.

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

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. This second parable gives a description of those hypocrites who were suffering from doubt, suspicion and lack of faith. Though they were not wholly unbelievers, they practised 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. Allah could, if He so willed, totally deprive these hypocrites of the power to see the Truth just as He deprived the hypocrites described in the first parable. But He 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.

وَابْصَارِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٣﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ
 الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ
 الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ
 الشَّرَابِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَإِنْ
 كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا
 شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ
 تَفْعَلُوا فَأْتُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾
 وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
 الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا
 مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأْتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ
 فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا بَعُوضَةٌ
 فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَا ذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ بِهِ
 كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ الَّذِينَ
 يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ
 يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ
 بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ
 تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ
 إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَإِذَا

وقف لازم

sight. Most surely Allah has power over everything.

O Mankind,²¹ submit to your Lord Who created you and those who were before you; in this way only you may expect to save yourselves.²² It is He Who has made the earth a bed for you and the sky a canopy; and it is He Who sends down rain from above for the growth of every kind of food products for your sustenance. So, when you know this, you should not set up equals to rank with Allah.²³

And if you be in doubt whether the Book We have sent down to Our Servant is from Us or not, then produce, at least, one sūrah like this.²⁴ You may call all your associates to assist you and avail yourselves of the help of any one other than Allah. If you are genuine (in your doubt, do this). But if you do not do this, and you can never do this, then fear the Fire which has been prepared for the disbelievers and which shall have men and stones for fuel.²⁵

And give good news (O Muhammad), to those who believe in this Book and do good deeds (in accordance with its teachings). For them there will be gardens underneath which canals flow. Their fruits will so resemble the fruits on the Earth that every time they will be provided with fruits, they will say, "Such fruits were provided to us before on the Earth."²⁶ And there will be pure spouses²⁷ for them and therein they will abide for ever.

Well, Allah is not ashamed to cite the similitude of a gnat or of something even more insignificant than this.²⁸ As for those who believe, they come to know from the same similitude that it is the Revelation from their Lord; but those who disbelieve, say, "What does Allah mean by such similitudes?"²⁹ Allah leads astray many and guides others to the right way by the same thing.³⁰ And He leads astray only those who disobey Allah; who break Allah's covenant after ratifying it;³¹ who cut asunder what Allah has ordered to be joined³² and who produce chaos on the Earth.³³ These are the people who are indeed the losers.

How is it that you adopt the attitude of disbelief towards Allah when the fact is that you were lifeless and He gave you life, and He will take away life from you and will again restore you to life : then you shall ultimately return

to Him. He it is Who created for you all that there is on the Earth; He then turned to the sky and ordered it into seven heavens.³⁴ And He has full and perfect knowledge of everything.³⁵

21. Now that it has been shown in the preceding verses (1-20) that only those people who are willing and inclined to benefit from the Qurān can obtain guidance from it by Allah's grace, it invites the whole of mankind to accept the Message for which it has been revealed. It has also fore-warned that there are certain types of people who cannot benefit from its guidance, though it extends its invitation to all mankind.

22. That is, "You will be saved from committing errors of judgement and evil in this world and delivered from punishment in the Hereafter.

23. The Qurān is very emphatic on this point because it considers the setting up of equals and partners with Allah as the root cause of all the ills of the world. Therefore it allows neither an idol of stone nor of personality nor of nation nor of state etc., to be made a compeer in the worship of or loyalty and obedience to Allah. Hence it exhorts people to submit to Allah alone when they themselves admit that Allah is the Creator of mankind and of every thing that supports life.

24. This challenge was repeated many times in the Qurān both at Makkah and at Al-Madīnah. It was meant to convince the opponents of Islam that the Qurān, which was matchless in its literary excellence and subject-matter, could not be produced by any human being. It must have, therefore, been revealed by Allah. (See also X : 38-39, XI : 13-14, XVII : 88 and LII : 33-34).

25. That is "You alone will not become fuel for Hell but the idols of false gods you worship will also be thrown into it along with you to show that they were mere stones."

26. It will be an agreeable surprise to the dwellers of Paradise to have fruits just like the ones with which they were familiar during their abode on the Earth. Of course, they will be far more delicious. For instance, they will be like mangoes, apples, etc., in shape and colour and the dwellers of Paradise will at once recognise them but they will be infinitely more delicious than the mangoes and apples of this world.

27. 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. That pious man will be united with another pious woman whose marriage had been similarly 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 for ever in Paradise.

28. Here an objection has been answered in continuation of the proof of the authenticity of the Qurān which began from v. 23. The

objection (which has not been mentioned) was that if the Qurān had been the Book of Allah, it would not have adduced illustrations from such insignificant things as gnats, spiders, ants, flies, bees etc.

29. These people, who do not want to understand the Reality and do not seek the Truth, get entangled in the words of such similitudes, draw wrong conclusions from them and go astray from the Truth on account of their own perversion. They only see how insignificant these tiny creatures are but do not perceive the lessons for which their similitudes have been cited. On the other hand, the seekers-after-truth ponder over the wisdom contained in them and are convinced that these sublime things are from Allah.

30. The word "*fāsiq*", used in the original, literally means 'disobedient'. Hence it refers to those who transgress the limits imposed by Allah.

31. The edicts and instructions issued by a sovereign to his subjects are called "*'ahd*" (covenant) according to the Arabic idiom, because they are obligatory on them. In this verse the word 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. (For further details, please refer to VII : 172.)

32. This concise verse is so vast in meaning that it covers the whole of the moral world, ranging from relations between two persons to international affairs. According to this verse, the violation and the vitiation of the relations which Allah has enjoined people to establish, cause chaos and disorder because these relations alone can bind people to their Allah and to one another.

"Breaking of relations" 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 Qurān, therefore, abhors not only their violation but also their abuse as it causes chaos, conflict and disorder in the world.

33. In this verse, the full definition of *fāsiq* has been given : he is one who breaks or vitiates relations between man and Allah or between man and man, and thus produces chaos on the earth.

34. It is not easy to specify the significance of "seven heavens". In every age man has been formulating different theories about the sky and the expanse of the space surrounding the earth and beyond it. Hence it will not be correct to link anyone of the different theories about the sky with the "seven heavens" referred to in the Qurān. It may either mean that God has divided the whole of the universe beyond the earth into seven permanent spheres or that part of universe in which the earth lies consists of seven spheres.

35. Here the people are warned that they should not rebel

{Contd. on p. 66}

قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۗ قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا
 مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ
 لَكَ ۗ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ
 عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلِكَةِ ۖ فَقَالَ أَنبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢١﴾
 قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا ۗ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ
 يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ ۖ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ
 إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
 تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۖ
 أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ ۖ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَ
 زَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا رَغَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا ۖ وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ
 الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَآزَلَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا
 كَانَا فِيهِ ۖ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدَاوَةٌ ۖ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَتَلَقَىٰ آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ ۗ
 إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٢٧﴾ قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا ۖ فَمَا يَأْتِيَكُمْ
 مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾
 وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾
 يٰٓبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي
 أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِيَّايَ فَارْهَبُونِ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَأٰمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ
 وَلَا تَكُونُوا أَوَّلَ كَافِرٍ بِهِ ۖ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ وَإِيَّايَ

Just³⁶ recall the time when your Lord said to the 30-33
 angels,³⁷ "I am going to appoint a vicegerent³⁸ on the
 Earth." They humbly enquired, "Art Thou going to make
 such a one as will cause disorder and shed blood on the
 Earth?³⁹ We are already engaged in hymning Thy praise,
 (and carrying out Thy orders) and hallowing Thy name."⁴⁰
 Allah replied, "I know what you know not."⁴¹ After this
 He taught Adam the names of all things.⁴² Then He set
 these before the angels and asked, "Tell Me the names of
 all these things, if you are right (in thinking that the
 appointment of a vicegerent will cause disorder)". They
 replied, "Glory be to Thee! Thou alone art free from
 defect. We possess only that much knowledge which Thou
 hast given us."⁴³ Indeed Thou alone art All-Knowing and
 All-Wise." Then Allah said to Adam, "Tell them the names
 of these things." When Adam told them the names of all
 those things,⁴⁴ Allah declared, "Did I not tell you that I know
 those truths about the Earth and the Heavens which are hidden
 from you? I know what you disclose and what you hide."

Then We commanded the angels, "Bow yourselves to 34
 Adam." All bowed⁴⁵ but *Iblīs*⁴⁶ refused to do so; he waxed
 proud and joined the defiers.⁴⁷

Then We said, "O Adam, you and your wife, both dwell 35-37
 in the Garden and eat to your hearts' content from it where
 from you will, but do not go near this tree;⁴⁸ otherwise you
 shall become transgressors."⁴⁹ After a time Satan tempted
 them with that tree (to disobey Our Command) and brought
 them out of the state they were in, and We decreed, "Now,
 go down all of you from here; you are enemies of one an-
 other."⁵⁰ Henceforth you shall dwell and provide for your-
 selves on the Earth for a specified period." At that time
 Adam learnt appropriate words from his Lord and repented,⁵¹
 and his Lord accepted his repentance, for He is very Relenting
 and very Merciful.⁵²

(On the eve of Adam's departure from the Garden,) 38-39
 We said, "Now go down, all of you from here."⁵³ Hence-
 forth there shall come to you Guidance from Me now and
 again; whoever will follow it shall have neither fear nor
 sorrow, and whoever will refuse to accept it and defy Our

Revelation⁵⁴ shall be doomed to the Fire wherein they shall remain for ever.⁵⁵

- 40 O Children of Israel!⁵⁶ Just recall to mind My favour where-with I blessed you : fulfil your covenant with Me and I shall fulfil My covenant with you and fear Me alone.

Continued from p. 63]

against Allah, for He knows everything and none can conceal anything from Him. Moreover, they have been admonished to follow His Guidance and submit to Him because He alone knows what way of life is best suited to mankind. Anyone who turns away from His Guidance will most surely go astray into ignorance because He alone is the source of true Knowledge. No good can come if one swerves from His Guidance, because there is no other source from which knowledge of the Truth can be obtained. It is His light alone which can guide Man through the darkness prevailing around him.

36. In the foregoing verses, Man has been asked to submit to Allah because He is the Creator and Sustainer and has power over life and death, and because He is the Master and the Ruler of the Universe in which man lives. In these verses, he has been exhorted to submit to Him because he is His vicegerent on the Earth. He has, therefore been warned to submit to Him and follow His Guidance and not to be led astray by Satan who is his permanent enemy and is always on the look-out to mislead him. If he yields to Satan's temptations, he will be guilty of the worst crime of rebellion against Allah and meet with dire consequences.

Incidentally, the Qurān here throws light on that chapter of human history, the creation of Man, which could not be ascertained in any other way. Undoubtedly, this most authentic knowledge is far more important than the so-called 'knowledge', which is mere guesswork, based on the bones excavated from the bowels of the Earth. Above all, this knowledge raises the status of Man from the helpless and mean creature of evolution to the noblest creation of Allah, His vicegerent on the Earth, to whom the angels and everything in their charge were made to bow.

37. "*Malak*" (angel) literally means a messenger especially of Allah. Angels are not mere abstract powers without any personality. They are beings with personalities and are, so to speak, the agents of Allah, Who employs them for the administration of His Kingdom. It is clear from the Qurān that both the materialists, who doubt their very existence, and the ignorant people, who set them up as partners in God-head or worship them as relations of Allah, are equally wrong.

38. *Khalīfah*, vicegerent, is one who exercises the delegated powers on behalf of the supreme authority. Man is, thus, not the master; he is only His deputy and does not possess any powers of his own except those

which are delegated to him by the real Master. He, therefore, has no moral right to have his own will but his duty is to fulfil the will of the delegating Authority. It would be dishonesty and treason, if he assumed sovereign powers himself or used them according to his own whim or if he acknowledged some one else as his sovereign and submitted to his will.

39. This question was not put in order to raise an objection but as a request to get more information about the matter. 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 some one was entrusted with autonomy, could be free from disorder.

40. By this, they 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 Thy orders obediently, faithfully and earnestly and are keeping the whole universe clean and in order, and sing hymns of Thy praise and sanctify Thee. Therefore, we are unable to understand what need there is then for a vicegerent."

The Arabic word *tasbiḥ* has double meanings : it implies "to sanctify" and "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 do not understand the wisdom of the appointment of a vicegerent. 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."

42. Nomenclature is the means by which the human mind perceives things. In fact, the whole information of Man about things is really based on the ability to assign names to them. Hence the teaching of the names of all things to Adam was meant to impart their knowledge to him.

43. It appears that the knowledge of an angel is confined only to his own special department—air, water, cloud etc. . . In contrast to an angel, man's knowledge is comprehensive. He may not know as much about these things as the angel in charge of a special department but he possesses some knowledge about all these things. In contrast to this, an angel does not possess any knowledge of any department other than his own.

44. This demonstration was the answer to the first doubt of the angels. (Please see E.N. 39). In this way Allah, so to say, told them, "I am giving to Adam not only authority but knowledge as well. Thus his appointment as vicegerent has two aspects. Its dark aspect is that he might create disorder by abusing his authority and the bright aspect is that with the help of his knowledge, he may do more good than evil. A wise person, therefore, does not give up a thing having better prospects

merely because it has some evil potentialities of a comparatively less degree.”

45. This was symbolic of the submission and subjugation to Man of the angels who manage the Earth and that part of the universe which is connected with it in any way. As Man was being appointed vicegerent by Allah's command, it was ordained that all the angels, who worked in that part of the universe, must, as far and as long as Allah willed, co-operate with him in their own spheres whether he wanted to use or abuse the powers given to him. This implied : “You must help him in whatever he wants to do, irrespective of whether it is right or wrong. Supposing he wants to offer prayer or do any other good work, you must contribute to it in your own sphere. Or, if he wants to commit theft or any other evil, you must be helpful to him, as long as We let him exercise his powers in that way. But when We revoke those powers, you should cease to co-operate with him.” 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, cease to obey him. They even handcuff him and take him to prison, if the government so orders. It appears that the angels were ordered to have the same kind of relations with Man. Possibly the word *Sajdah*, “bowing down”, here may be merely symbolic of submission, and probably the angels were ordered to perform some such act actually to signify their subordination.

46. Literally “*Iblīs*” is one who is extremely desperate. It is the name given to 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 Satan. He is not merely some abstract power of evil but is a being with his own personality like that of man. He was not an angel as is commonly known but was one of the *jinns* who form a species of their own like that of angels. (Please see XVIII : 50).

47. It appears from the words of the Arabic Text that *Iblīs* was not the only one who refused to bow down before Adam, but a group of other *jinns* was also bent upon disobedience. The name of *Iblīs* has been mentioned particularly because it was he who led the rebellion.

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 prohibited even from going near it. They were duly warned that if they violated this command, they would be considered guilty of iniquity in the sight of Allah.

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 the temptations of Satan, 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 Qurān because there was nothing intrinsically evil in the tree itself. It was merely chosen for the purpose of trial.

49. The Arabic word *dhālim* is very comprehensive in its meaning. *Dhulm* (iniquity) is a "violation of a right or duty" and *dhālim* 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. Then he violates the rights of all things and beings whom he employs in this disobedience, e.g., of his own limbs and faculties, of his fellow beings and of those angels who contribute to the fulfilment of his will and of 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. 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 on his self 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. This is why the Qurān, in many places, calls sin "*dhulm*".

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, however, 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.

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 Qurān 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 Qurān 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 sincerely 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

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 of the sin of disobedience, but his future descendants were also 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 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, (please 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.

54. The Arabic word *ā-yāt* which has been translated as "revelation" here is the plural of *ā-yat*, which literally means a "sign" or "symbol" that points to something. The Qurān 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 *ā-yāt* 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 *ā-yāt* (signs) because these showed that they were the representatives of the Ruler of the

universe. At some places, the verses of the Book have also been called "*ā-yāt*" because they point not only to the Truth and the Right but also to the Great Author of the Book. It is not the subject-matter of the Book alone, but also its words and its mode of expression and its style that point to its Author. The meaning of the word "*ā-yā?*" in a particular place becomes clear from the context in which it occurs,

55. The law of Allah, contained in vv. 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 covenant in II : 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 and vicegerent. And there are only two means of knowing this : either a man should receive direct revelation from Allah or learn it from one who has received Guidance from Him. There is no third way of knowing Allah's will. Therefore, every way other than this is not only wrong but rebellious as well and will lead to eternal damnation.

The story of the creation of man and mankind has been described in six other places in the Qurān : VII : 11-25, XV : 26-48, XVII : 60-65, XVIII : 50, XX : 116-123, XXXVIII : 71-85.

It will be useful to read the same story in the Old Testament (Genesis, Chapters 1 to 3). The comparison of the Qurānic version with the Biblical one, will conclusively show that the Qurān 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 Qurān 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 this 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.

56. 'Israel' means the servant of Allah. This was the title that Allah bestowed upon Jacob, who was a son of Isaac, and a grandson of Abraham (Allah's peace be upon them all). His descendants 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 the Muslims. In order to understand the full significance of this address, the following should be kept in view :—

- (a) It aims to appeal to those followers of the former Prophets, who were still capable of reforming themselves by understanding

[*Contd. on p. 74*]

فَاتَّقُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَا تَلْسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾
وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ
بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَ
اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ الَّذِينَ
يُظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ يٰبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا
نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا
لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَاعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ
مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَإِذْ بَعَجْنَاكَ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكَ
سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُدَبِّحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكَ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكَ وَفِي ذَلِكَ بَلَاءٌ
مِّنْ رَبِّكَ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمُ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ
اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِنْ
بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَإِذْ اتَّيْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِالْكِتَابِ وَالْفُرْقَانِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ
يَا اتَّخَذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِيكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ
عِنْدَ بَارِيكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ
لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّىٰ تَرَىٰ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّعِقَةُ وَأَنْتُمْ
تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ
الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوىٰ كُلُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَ

And believe in the Book I have now sent down; as it confirms the Scriptures you already possess, be not the first to reject it; barter not away My Revelations for paltry worldly gains,⁵⁷ and guard yourselves against My wrath. Confound not the Truth with falsehood nor conceal it knowingly.⁵⁸ Establish Ṣalāt, pay Zakāt⁵⁹ and bow before Me along with those who bow down. How is it that you enjoin others to follow the Right Way, but forget it yourselves, though you read the Scriptures? Have you no sense at all? Seek help with Ṣalāt and fortitude:⁶⁰ no doubt, Ṣalāt is a hard task but not for those obedient servants, who realize that at last they shall meet their Lord and shall return to Him.⁶¹ 41-46

O Children of Israel ! Just recall to mind My favour that I bestowed upon you, and remember that I exalted you above all the peoples of the world.⁶² And guard yourselves against the Day when no one shall avail anyone else ; nor shall intercession be accepted from anyone; nor shall anyone be acquitted for any (amount of) ransom; nor shall the guilty ones be helped from any quarter.⁶³ 47-48

Recall⁶⁴ the time when We delivered you from the slavery of Pharaoh's people.⁶⁵ They had inflicted dreadful torment on you; they killed your sons and let your daughters live. And in this was a hard trial for you from your Lord.⁶⁶ 49

Remember the time when We parted the sea to make way for you and let you pass safely through it and We drowned Pharaoh's people before your very eyes. 50

Call to mind that when We invited Moses for a fixed term of forty nights and days,⁶⁷ you took the calf worship in his absence.⁶⁸ Though you had committed a wicked transgression, yet We pardoned you even after that so that you might become grateful. 51-52

Remember that (at that very time, when you were committing this gross iniquity), We gave the Book and the criterion of right and wrong⁶⁹ to Moses so that you might be guided aright. 53

Remember that when Moses (returned with the Divine Gift, he) said to his people, "O my people, you have wronged 54

yourselves grievously by taking the calf for worship. Therefore, you should turn to your Creator in penitence and slay the guilty ones among you.⁷⁰ This is best for you in the sight of your Creator". At that time your Creator accepted your repentance because He is Relenting and Merciful.

55-56 Remember when you said, "O Moses, we are not going to believe you until we see with our own eyes Allah (talking to you)". At that very time a thunderbolt struck you while you were looking on and you fell lifeless. Then We raised you to life so that you might become grateful for this favour.⁷¹

Contd. from p. 71]

and accepting the Message of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). They are, therefore, told that the Message of the Qurān is the same as was that of the Scriptures of the former Prophets, and the mission of the Holy Prophet was also the same. It means to say: "At 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 that mission, you discarded that 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 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."

- (b) It aims also to argue the Jews out of their wrong position and to expose thoroughly their moral and religious degeneration. 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 those of their own religion and that there was nothing in the teachings of the Qurān that was different from or opposed to the teachings of the Torah in principle. It shows also that they had utterly failed to follow the Guidance which was given to them and fulfil 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 unravelled 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 Holy Prophet, 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 good element of the Jews and put an end to the spiritual superiority of their religious leaders at Al-Madīnah and its surroundings. Besides this, when they themselves were once exposed, they were so dismayed that they dared not oppose Islam openly with the courage of conviction.

- (c) 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 consequence 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 story can be seen all the ups and downs which result from following the Divine Guidance or from discarding it.
- (d) Though the appeal is addressed to the Jews, it is also meant to forewarn the Muslims against the pitfalls 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 hand, the demands of the true religion have been stated so that the Muslims may be able to see the Right Way clearly and avoid wrong ways.

The Holy Prophet knew by Divine inspiration that, by and by, the Muslims would also 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 heed to this warning and adopted the same ways in their degeneration.

57. It refers to the worldly gains for the sake of which these people discarded and rejected the Law of Allah. It does not, however, mean that they should not exchange the Guidance of the revelations for small profits but may do so for big ones. 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.

58. In order to understand the meaning of this verse, it should be kept in mind that the Arabs were generally illiterate and uneducat-

ed. On the other hand, education was more common among the . who had among them great scholars renowned even beyond Arabia. That is why the *mushrik* 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-Madīnah were specially overawed by the learning of the Jews, for they came in contact with them day and night. As a result of this, they were immensely influenced by them just as illiterate people are usually influenced by those neighbours who are more educated, more civilised and more religious.

This was the religious condition of the Arabs when the Holy Prophet declared that he was a Messenger of Allah and, therefore, they should follow him. 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 who claims to be a Messenger of Allah". But their scholars would never give a direct or correct answer to this. For they could not find fault with his teaching, and could not say that there was not one Allah but many; nor could they say that the knowledge which he imparted about Prophets, Scriptures, Angels and the Hereafter was wrong; nor could they criticise the morality taught by him. Nevertheless, they were not ready to admit in plain words the righteousness of the teachings of the Holy Prophet; nor had they the courage to refute it openly; nor were they willing to profess the Truth candidly. Therefore, they devised a subtle strategy to oppose it; they created one suspicion after the other about the Holy Prophet, his followers and his mission; they would concoct allegations against the Holy Prophet 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. Ṣalāt and Zakāt have always formed the essential parts of the revealed Religion. Like all other Prophets, the Israelite Prophets also had strictly enjoined these on the Jews, but by and by the Jews began to neglect them. They gave up the performance of Ṣalāt in congregation and the majority of the people did not even offer it individually. Instead of paying Zakāt, they started charging interest on money.

60. That is, "Ṣabr and Ṣalāt will help solve the difficulties in the way of Allah." The lexical meaning of the Arabic word *ṣabr* is "to check and tie," but in usage it stands for patience, perseverance, endurance and fortitude. The Qurān uses this word to express that fortitude, that moral strength, that firmness of purpose and decision, that determination and that 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.

61. "Ṣalāt is a hard task" only for the one who is disobedient to Allah and who 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 have to appear before Allah; nay, it rather becomes hard for him to leave his prescribed Prayer.

62. It refers to the period in which the Israelites were the only people in the world who possessed the Truth from Allah and were, therefore, made leaders of the people and were required to invite all other nations to His submission and to guide them on the Right Way.

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 get salvation just because they were the descendants of great Prophets and had relations with great saints and pious people. That is why they neglected true 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 Favour (v. 47) that had been bestowed upon the sons of Israel, they have been warned that they shall be punished like the guilty people who lived in this world without belief in the Hereafter.

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 gone on doing evil deeds in spite of the continuous favours showered upon them by Allah.

65. "Āl-i-Fir'aun" includes both the persons 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.

67. When the Israelites entered the Sinai Peninsula after their escape from Egypt, Allah invited Moses to Mount Ṭūr 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 please refer to Exodus, Chapters 24 to 31). It should, however, be noted that the Ṭūr, referred to here, is not the modern port of Ṭūr on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Suez.

68. Cow-worship was very common in Can'ān, Egypt and the neighbouring countries. When the Israelites degenerated and became the slaves of the Copts after the death of Joseph, they learnt this evil

[*Contd. on p. 80*]

مَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ
 الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُولُوا
 حِطَّةً نَعْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتَكُمْ ۗ وَسَزَيْدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا
 قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِّنَ
 السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَإِذِ اسْتَسْفَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ
 بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ ۗ فَانفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا ۗ قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ
 مَّشْرِبَهُمْ ۗ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِن رِّزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعَثُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَافْسِدِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾
 وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نَّصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا
 مِمَّا تُثْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِيهَا وَبَصَلَهَا ۗ
 قَالَ أَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ ۗ اهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ
 لَكُمْ مِمَّا سَأَلْتُمْ ۗ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلَالَةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ ۗ وَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبِ
 مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۗ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّنَ
 بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۗ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَ
 الَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَىٰ وَالصَّبِيَّانَ مَنِ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
 وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
 يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ ۗ خُذُوا مَا
 آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ ۗ وَادْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ
 ذَلِكَ ۗ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ
 عَلَّمْتُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً

(Remember that) We caused the cloud to overshadow you and provided you with⁷² *manna* and *salvā*⁷³ for your food, saying, "Eat of the clean and pure things We have bestowed upon you". (In spite of this, your forefathers violated our commands:) however, they did not harm Us but harmed themselves. 57

Then call to mind the time when We said, "Go into the town⁷⁴ before you and eat to your hearts' content therein, where-from you will, but enter the gate bowing down with humility, repeating '*hittatun*';⁷⁵ We will forgive your sins and increase the reward of the righteous". But the transgressors perverted the words said to them entirely into a different thing. So We sent down upon the transgressors a severe torment from the sky : that was the punishment for the disobedience they were showing. 58-59

Remember that when Moses prayed for water for his people, We answered, "Strike the rock with your staff": whereupon twelve springs gushed forth from it;⁷⁶ the people of every clan came to know their drinking place. (Then they were enjoined:) "Eat and drink of what Allah has provided and do not spread disorder on the earth." 60

Remember ! You grumbled : "O Moses, we cannot endure one and the same sort of food. Pray your Lord to bring for us the products of the earth—green herbs, vegetables, corn, garlic, onions, pulses and the like". Moses replied "What ! would you exchange that which is meaner for that which is nobler?⁷⁷ Well, go and live in a town and you will get there what you demand." By and by, they became so degraded that disgrace and humiliation, misery and wretchedness were stamped upon them and they incurred Allah's wrath. That was because they began to reject the Revelations of Allah⁷⁸ and kill His Messengers without any just cause;⁷⁹ that was the consequence of their disobedience and their persistent transgression against the Law. 61

Rest assured that whosoever from among the Muslims or the Jews or the Christians or the Sabaeans believes in Allah and the Last Day, and performs good deeds, he will have his reward with his Lord and he will have no cause for fear, grief or sorrow.⁸⁰ 62

63-64

Call to mind the time when We raised above you the Ṭūr and made a covenant with you,⁸¹ saying, "Hold fast to the Book which We are giving you and bear in mind the commands and precepts contained therein. It is expected that this will lead you on to the paths of virtue and piety." But even after that you forsook the covenant : nevertheless Allah did not withhold His grace and mercy from you; otherwise you would have been utterly ruined long before this.

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practice from their rulers. The incident of the calf-worship is given in detail in Exodus, 32.

69. "*Furqān*" which is nearly the equivalent of "criterion" means an established standard of judgement for testing truth and falsehood. Here it stands for the knowledge and understanding of religion which enables a person to discern between right and wrong, truth and falsehood.

70. The guilty people were those who made the calf a deity and worshipped it.

71. When Moses went up Mount Ṭūr for forty days and forty nights, he was told to bring with him seventy of the chiefs of Israel. Allah bestowed upon him *Furqān* 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 Qurān says that at that time some wicked people from among them began to remark to this effect, "How can we believe, on a mere statement of yours, that Allah had a talk with you?" Allah was very angry with them at their insolence 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 : 10-11.) Strange though it may appear, the same Bible also tells us that Moses said, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." But He said, "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me, and live." (For further details please see Exodus, 33 : 18-23.)

72. When the Israelites emigrated from Egypt in a very large number and entered the Sinai Peninsula, there was no place of shelter for them to hide their heads, not to speak of houses or tents. Then Allah kept the sky cloudy to protect them from the scorching heat of the sun. If they had not been sheltered with clouds, they would most surely have perished by the heat of the blazing sun of the desert.

73. *Manna* and *salvā* were the relief provisions supplied by Allah to feed the Israelites in the wilderness. *Manna* fell on the ground like

dew-drops and *salvā* 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. It must also be kept in view in this connection that even today a modern nation, with all the resources and means of conveyance and communication of the modern world at its disposal, finds it extremely difficult to cope with the unforeseen problems of providing a few million emigrants with food, etc. (For details please refer to Exodus, 16; Numbers, 11 : 7-9, 31-32; Joshua, 5 : 12.)

74. The identity of the town has not as yet been determined. As this incident took place when the Israelites were still wandering in the Sinai Peninsula and in North Arabia, most probably it was situated somewhere there. It is also just possible that it might have been Shittim 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 on them a terrible punishment in the form of an epidemic which killed twenty-four thousand of them. (Numbers, 25 : 1-9.)

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 Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) did at the conquest of Makkah.

"*Hittatūn*" implies two things : "You should enter the town, (1) begging Allah's forgiveness for sins, and (2) granting general amnesty and abstaining from plundering and murdering the inhabitants."

76. That rock can still be seen near Mount Sinai 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.

77. It does not mean : "You are not satisfied with *manna* and *salvā* which you get gratis but are asking for that thing for which you will have to till the land with toil." 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 forgo these things even for some time." (For comparison, please see Numbers, 11 : 4-9.)

78. They rejected the Revelations in different ways : (a) They refused to accept anything as revealed, if it went against their own ideas and desires, (b) They brazen-facedly acted against the clear injunctions of Allah, knowing full well that they were discarding His Commandments, (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 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, king Asa of Judah sent a message with rich presents to Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, to force back Baasha, the king of Israel, who had attacked Judah. At this Prophet Hanani rebuked Asa for relying on the king of Syria instead of relying on “The Eternal your God”. Asa became so angry with the Prophet for this advice that he put him in a prison-house. (2 Chronicles, 16 : 1-10.)

(2) When Prophet Elijah rebuked the Israelites for serving and worshipping Baal, and asked them to serve and worship God alone, they became his mortal enemies. King Ahab of Samaria threatened to kill him because his idolatrous wife incited him against Prophet Elijah. In terror he ran for his life to the mountains in the Sinai Peninsula. During that 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 I 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, Prophet Zecharia raised his voice against these evil things and said, “Thus saith God, 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 with stones 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, 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. (For details please refer to Jeremiah, 15 : 10, 18 : 20-23; 20 : 1-18 and Chapters 36 to 40.)

(6) “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee.” (Matthew, 23 : 37.)

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(7) When John the Baptist raised his voice against the immoralities which were being openly practised 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 Holy Prophet of God was killed without any cause. (Mark, 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 to get hold of him by craft and put him to death. They 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 Bar-abbas, a murderer, as a boon at the festival but to "crucify him".

In this verse, the Qurān 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 from among themselves and made them their chiefs and leaders, and sent their most pious men to the gaol or the gallows.

80. This verse occurs here to remove the self-delusion of the Jews that salvation was their sole monopoly, irrespective of their creeds and deeds. They were suffering from the delusion that they had some special relation with Allah and they would go straight to Heaven, irrespective of their creed or conduct simply because they were Israelites and that all other people would go to Hell. In this verse, their misunderstanding has been removed. Allah declares that salvation does not depend upon one's connection with any group but on one's right beliefs and good deeds. Allah's judgement will not be based on the census records of this world but on one's real worth. Therefore they should accept the Guidance. Incidentally, it is clear from the context in which this verse occurs that the Qurān is not laying down here the details of the creed and the essential practices for salvation. These things have been described in detail in their proper places.

81. This incident has been described in the Talmud : "The Holy One blessed be He, inverted Mount Sinai over them like a huge vessel and declared, 'If you accept the Torah, well and good, if not here shall be your sepulchre' !" (Shab 88a.)

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 :

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خَسِيبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً
 لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقَرَةً
 قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوعًا قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ قَالُوا
 ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَا فَارِصٌ
 وَلَا يَكُوعٌ عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فافعلوا مَا تُمَرُّونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ
 يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْثُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاءٌ فَاقِعٌ لَوْنُهَا
 تَشْبهُ النَّظِيرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشْبَهُ
 عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ
 لَا ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَا شِيَةَ فِيهَا قَالُوا
 إِنَّ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبْحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ
 نَفْسًا فآذَرْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ
 بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ ثُمَّ
 قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنْ
 مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنْ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَقُّ فِيخْرِجُ مِنْهُ
 الْمَاءُ وَإِنْ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا
 تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا لَكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ
 كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَإِذَا
 لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بِبَعْضِهِمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ قَالُوا
 أَتُحَدِّثُونَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجُّوكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا

And you know well the story of those among you who broke the Sabbath.⁸² He said to them, "Be apes—despised and hated by all."⁸³ Thus We made their end a warning to the people of their time and to succeeding generations, and an admonition for God-fearing people. 65-66

Then call to mind the other event : when Moses said to his people, "Allah commands you to sacrifice a cow," they replied, "Do you mean to have a jest with us?" He answered, "I crave Allah's protection from behaving like ignorant people." Then they said, "Please make a request to your Lord to give us some details of that cow." Moses answered, "Allah says that the cow should neither be old nor immature but of middle age. Do, therefore, as you are bidden." But they further asked, "Please request your Lord to make it clear to us of what colour she should be." Moses answered, "He says that she should be of yellow colour so deep and bright as to delight the beholders." Again they said, "Pray your Lord to specify for us the kind of cow that is required; for cows (of this type) look alike to us. We shall then find her, if God wills." Moses answered, "Allah says that she should be a cow which has not been yoked nor has ploughed the land nor watered the fields; which is sound and whole, without blemish." Then they cried out, "Now you have given an accurate description." Then they sacrificed her but they did not appear to be doing this willingly.⁸⁴ 67-71

You should also recall to mind another incident : You slew a man and began to dispute about the murder and accuse one another of it, but Allah had decreed that what you were trying to hide should be disclosed. So We commanded, "Strike the corpse of the murdered man with a part of the sacrificed cow. See how Allah brings the dead to life and shows you His Signs so that you may understand."⁸⁵ But even after seeing these Signs your hearts hardened and became as hard as rocks; nay, even harder than rocks. For there are some rocks out of which springs gush forth, and others which split open, and water issues out of them; then there are some which tumble down for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unaware of what you are doing. 72-74

تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ أَوْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾
وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِيًّا وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٤٨﴾
الصف
قَوْلِ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ
اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا قَوْلِ لَّهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَقَوْلِ
لَّهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَقَالُوا لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَةً قُلْ
أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ تُخْلَفَ اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى
اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ بَلَى مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ
قَالَ لِيكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ
بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ قَدْ بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا
الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا
مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ
أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنتُمْ تُشْهِدُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ
فَرِيقًا مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِهِمْ فَتُظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِنْ
يَأْتُوكُمْ أَسْرَىٰ تُفدوهم وَهُوَ مُحْرَمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ
بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ
إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ
وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا

O Muslims, do you then expect that these people will accept your invitation and become believers?⁸⁶ whereas there have always been among them some who have been hearing the Word of God, understanding it well and then perverting and tampering with it knowingly.⁸⁷ When they meet those who believe in Muhammad, they say, "We also believe in him." But when they meet one another in private, they say, "Have you got no sense that you disclose to them those things which Allah has revealed to you so that they might bring them as a proof against you before your Lord?⁸⁸—Do they really not know that Allah is fully aware of what they hide and what they disclose?—Then there are among them some un-lettered people who have no knowledge of the Book but depend upon empty hopes and are guided by mere conjecture and guess-work.⁸⁹ So woe to their learned people, who write the law with their own hands and then say to the people, "This is from Allah," so that they might gain some paltry worldly end.⁹⁰ (They do not see that) this writing of their hands will bring woe to them and what they gain thereby will lead to their ruin. They also say, "The fire of Hell is not going to touch us, and even if it does at all, it will be only for a few days."⁹¹ Say, "Have you obtained a promise from Allah which He would not break? Or, do you attribute to Allah things you do not know? Why will not the fire of Hell touch you? Anyone who earns evil and becomes engrossed in sin shall be doomed to Hell and abide there for ever. Only those people who believe and do good deeds, will be the dwellers of the Garden and live there for ever.

Remember that We made a solemn covenant with the children of Israel to this effect : worship (and submit to) none save Allah : be good to your parents, to your relatives, to the orphans and to the helpless; speak aright with the people : establish Ṣalāt and pay Zakāt. But with the exception of a few, you all slid back from it and are paying no heed to it even now. 83

Remember also that We made another solemn covenant with you : you shall not shed blood among yourselves nor expel one another from your homes. And you 84-86

confirmed it and you are a witness to it. But in spite of this, you are killing your brethren and driving them out from their homes and making unjust and aggressive alliances against one another. And when they come to you as captives, you trade on their ransoms whereas their expulsion itself was unlawful for you. Do you then believe in one part of the Scriptures and disbelieve in the other?⁹² What other punishment do such people from among you deserve except an ignominious life in this world and the most grievous doom on the Day of Resurrection? Allah is not unaware of what you are doing. 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).

Contd. from p. 83]

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 thunderings, and the lightnings, 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.)

82. The Israelites were required to keep the Sabbath (Saturday) as "a sign between me and you throughout your generations" for a perpetual covenant. "Six days may work be done ; but in the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord : whosoever doeth 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 on the Sabbath.

83. This incident has been described in detail in VII : 163-166. 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 that from that time onward they began to behave like apes. The words of the Qurān, however, indicate that it was 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.

84. The Israelites were commanded to sacrifice a cow in order to do away with 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 the Oneness of Allah 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-coloured 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. (Please refer to Numbers, 19 : 1-10.)

85. The wording of the Qurān 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 as to 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.

86. Here the addressees are the new converts of Al-Madīnah, who had embraced Islam only recently. They had become interested in the Holy Prophet because they had often heard from the neighbouring 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-Madīnah turned to the Holy Prophet when they heard of him and entered into the fold of Islam in large groups. 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 (Allah's 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 (Allah's peace be upon him) really been a Messenger of Allah, these pious and learned people of the Book, would not have rejected him. 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 (Allah's peace be upon him) as the Prophet about whom prophecies has 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 even those pagans who formerly used to kill their own daughters. Not only this, these hard-hearted Jews made fun of those very verses also. Therefore, those 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 centred 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. The party referred to is the group of the scholars and religious leaders of the Jews, and the Word of God refers to the Torah 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.

88. When they met secretly, they warned each other not to disclose to the Muslims those passages of their Scriptures which contained prophecies about the Holy Prophet. They also warned each other against the danger of informing the Muslims about those verses and teachings of their Scriptures which, they feared, would expose to objection their own present attitude. They were also afraid that the Muslims would present these as arguments against them on the Day of Judgement. 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 in this world, there would be no possibility of bringing a case against them in the Next World. That is why they have been asked in the parenthetical clause that follows whether they really believed Allah to be unaware of the affairs of the people.

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.

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 original Text their own interpretations, their national history, their superstitions, their self-made theories, philosophies and laws. Then they presented all this mixture (contained in the existing form

of the Bible) to be from God. Every historical fiction, every interpretation, every man-made creed, and every by-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.

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 deluded themselves that no punishment would be inflicted on them and, even if any punishment were imposed on them, it would be for a few days only after which they would be sent to Paradise.

92. As a concrete example of this may be cited the strange conduct of the different clans of the Jews, who lived in the neighbourhood of Al-Madinah. Before the migration of the Holy Prophet, they had entered into alliances with the neighbouring 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 the Jewish allies of the 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.

بِالْآخِرَةِ فَلَا يُخَفِّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَ لَقَدْ آتَيْنَا
 مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ ۚ وَ آتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ
 الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَ آيَاتِنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۖ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى
 أَنْفُسُكُمْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ ۖ فَفَرِيقًا كَذَّبْتُمْ ۖ وَ فَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَ قَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا
 غُلْفٌ ۚ بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ
 مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَهُمْ ۖ وَ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَّا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ ۚ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى
 الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾ بِئْسَمَا اشْتَرَوْا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بَغْيًا
 أَنْ يَنْزِلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۖ فَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ
 عَلَى غَضَبٍ ۚ وَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَ إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا بِمَا
 أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا نُوْمِنُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا وَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ ۚ وَ هُوَ
 الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ ۚ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ
 كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَ لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ
 مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۚ وَ أَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَ إِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَ رَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ
 الطُّورَ ۚ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ ۚ وَ اسْمَعُوا ۚ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَ عَصَيْنَا ۚ وَ اشْرَبُوا
 فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ ۚ قُلْ بِئْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
 مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾ قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ
 دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَتُّوا الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَ لَنْ يَتَمَتَّوهُ أَبَدًا
 بِمَا قَدَّمْت أَيْدِيَهُمْ ۚ وَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَ لَتَجِدَنَّ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ

And We gave Moses the Book and sent after him a train of Messengers in succession. Then We sent Jesus, son of Mary, with clear Signs and supported him with the Holy Spirit.⁹³ How is it that whenever a Messenger came to you with that which did not suit your lusts, you grew rebellious against him : and repudiated some and slew others. They say, "Our hearts are quite secure."⁹⁴ Nay, the fact is that Allah has cursed them for their disbelief; so they are little disposed to believe. And how are they behaving now towards a Book which has come to them from Allah? In spite of the fact that it confirms the Scriptures which they already possessed, and, in spite of the fact that, before it came, they used to pray for a signal victory over the disbelievers, they rejected it, when it came, although they recognized it.⁹⁵ May Allah's curse be upon such disbelievers ! What a mean thing it is with which they delude their minds :⁹⁶ they reject the Guidance which has been sent down by Allah merely because of their grudge why Allah has in His bounty sent it to whom He chose from amongst His servants.⁹⁷ They have thus incurred wrath after wrath, and for such disbelievers there is a disgraceful doom.

When it is said to them, "Believe in that which Allah has sent down," they say, "We believe only in that which has been sent to us", and reject everything else, though it is the Truth and confirms what is with them. Well, ask them, "If you sincerely believed in what was sent down to you, why did you kill the Messengers of Allah (who were sent to you from amongst yourselves)? (More than that :) Moses came to you with clear Signs, yet no sooner was he away from you than you transgressed and took the calf for worship. Recall also to mind the Covenant We made with you while We raised the Tūr over you. We urged : 'Follow strictly the precepts We are giving you and give ear to Our Commandments.' Your forefathers replied, "We have heard but we will not obey." They were so prone to unbelief that they cherished the calf in their hearts. Tell them (O Muhammad), "If indeed you are believers, yours is a strange Faith that enjoins you to do such evil things."

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عَلَى حَيَوَةٍ ۖ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا ۗ يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ۚ وَ
 مَا هُوَ بِمُرْحَزِحِهِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ أَنْ يُعَمَّرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾
 قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا
 لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ وَ
 مَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَلَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ
 أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ ۚ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ أَوْ كَلَّمَا عَاهَدُوا
 عَهْدًا بَيْنَهُمْ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ
 رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ بَدَأَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
 الْكِتَابَ ۚ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَانَتْهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا
 الشَّيْطَانُ عَلَى مَلِكِ سُلَيْمَانَ ۚ وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ كَفَرُوا
 يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ ۚ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ
 وَمَا يَعْلَمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ
 مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ ۚ وَمَا هُم بِضَارِّينَ بِهِ مِنْ
 أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۚ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ ۚ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا
 لَمَنِ اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ نَّكَتَ وَلَيْسَ مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ
 لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ
 لَّو كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُولُوا انظُرْنَا
 وَاسْمَعُوا ۚ وَاللَّكْفَرِينَ عَذَابُ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ
 الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۚ وَاللَّهُ

Say to them, "If the abode of the Hereafter with Allah is exclusively reserved for you and not for the rest of mankind then you should long for death, if you are sincere in your claim."⁹⁸ Believe it that they will never wish for it, for (they are fully aware of the consequences of) what they have sent before them for the Hereafter. And Allah knows well the mentality of the transgressors. You will find that, of all mankind, they are the greediest for life,⁹⁹ nay, they are even greedier than the *mushriks*. Each one of them longs to have a life of a thousand years, but a long life can, by no means, remove them away from the scourge, for Allah is watching whatever they are doing. **94-96**

Say to them, "Whoever is enemy to Gabriel,¹⁰⁰ should understand that he has, by Allah's command, revealed to your heart the Qurān¹⁰¹ which confirms what was revealed before it,¹⁰² and brings Guidance and glad tidings¹⁰³ to the Believers. (If their enmity to Gabriel is due to this, let them understand that) whoever is enemy to Allah, His angels, His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael, Allah is enemy to such disbelievers." **97-98**

We have sent down to you Revelations that clearly expound the Truth, and none but the disobedient reject them. Has it not always been so that every time they made a covenant, some of them set it aside? Nay, most of them never believe in it sincerely. And whenever a Messenger came to them from Allah, confirming that Scripture which they already possessed, some from among the people of the Book threw the Book of Allah behind their backs as though they knew nothing about it. (Instead of this), they began to follow that (magic) to which the devils falsely attributed (the greatness of) the kingdom of Solomon.¹⁰⁴ In fact Solomon was never involved in any practice of disbelief, but the satans, who taught magic to the people were themselves guilty of disbelief.^{104a} They were after that thing which was sent to Hārūt and Mārūt, the two angels at Babylon. Whenever these two angels taught black art to anyone, they would always give a clear warning beforehand, saying, "We are merely a trial for you; so you should not commit blasphemy."¹⁰⁵ But in spite **99-103**

of this warning, those people used to learn from the angels the art which caused division between husband and wife.¹⁰⁶ Although it was obvious that they could not do any harm to anyone by means of this magic without Allah's permission, yet they learnt that art which could not be profitable even for them but was actually harmful. Moreover, they knew it full well that anyone, who purchased that art, would have no share in the Hereafter. What a vile commodity it was for which they sold their souls if they had but known it! Had they believed in Allah and practised piety, they would have received a far better reward from Allah, if they had but known it.

104 O Believers,¹⁰⁷ do not say, "*Rā'i-nā*" but say, "*Unzur-nā*" and listen¹⁰⁸ to what is said; for the disbelievers deserve a painful punishment.

93. "*Rūh-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 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 of Allah.

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 might be said to the contrary." All such people, as are slaves of irrational prejudices, delude themselves like this. They believe such an obstinate attitude to be 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.

95. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet, the Jews were looking forward with great longings to the 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-Madīnah bore witness to this that the Jews lived in this expectation. It had become a by-word with them "Let the pagans tyrannise over us as much as they like. When that Prophet comes, we will settle accounts with them." Accordingly, when the people of Al-Madīnah learnt that Muhammad (Allah's 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. 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-Madīnah could not understand the attitude of the Jews who, instead of accepting him as the Prophet for whom they had been

waiting so anxiously, had become his greatest opponents.

As to the fact that they did recognise the Holy Prophet, many proofs were furnished at that very time. The most authentic evidence is that of Ḥaḍrat Ṣafiyyah (one of the wives of the Holy Prophet), who was the daughter of one learned Jew and the niece of another. She says, "When the Holy Prophet migrated to Al-Madīnah, my father and uncle went to see him. When they returned home, I myself 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.

U. Are you quite sure of it?

F. Yes.

U. Then what is your intention?

F. I will oppose him as long as I live and will not let his mission succeed. (*Ibn-i-Hisham*, Vol. II, p. 165, Cairo Edition, 1936).

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

97. Their racial arrogance made the Israelites averse to the Truth merely because it came through the Ismā'īlite Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). They wished that the Prophet should have been one of their own race; therefore, they refused to accept him when he was raised from 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, and in His bounty appointed one He chose by Himself, they were offended.

98. This was a retort which implied that if they really were sure and enamoured 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.

99. The literal translation of the original Arabic word "*ḥayāt*" 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 for them whether that was a life of honour and grace, or a life of dishonour and disgrace.

100. The Jews did not revile Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and the Believers only, 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 Qurān to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) by Allah's Command, so by abusing Gabriel they really abused Allah.

102. That is, "You abuse Gabriel for no other reason than that he has brought the Qurān, whereas the Qurān confirms the teachings of the Torah; so, in a way, you abuse your own sacred Book."

103. In the preceding verses, the Jews have been warned of the consequences of their attitude towards the Qurān and the mission of the Holy Prophet. In this part of the verse, they have been admonished to consider the matter, from another point of view. As the Qurān shows the way to the 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.

104. *Shayālīn*, plural of *Shaiṭān*, refers to the devils from among the jinns 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 delude themselves that they would be able to gain their ends through such occult devices without putting in any kind of labour 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 practise magical arts. Consequently they lost all their interest in the Scriptures and would not listen to those who invited them to Allah's Guidance.

104-a. Here the Qurān refutes not only the false accusation of sorcery against Solomon, but also the other charges levelled against him in the Bible (1 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 Qurān 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 Israelites were captives in Babylon, Allah sent two angels in human guise to test them. For this purpose, they might have set up an institution to teach magic to the people. They, however, used to warn everyone who came to learn these things, saying, "We are holding out these temptations merely for your trial. You should not, therefore, ruin your life here and in the Hereafter by asking and taking help from this 'science'." But in spite of this warning, they came to them in large numbers for talismans, charms, amulets and other magical arts.

There is nothing strange in the coming of the angels in human guise : being Allah's agents, they are endowed with extraordinary powers. 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 depravation 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 the whole society.

A Tradition of the Holy Prophet says that Satan sends his agents to the four corners of the world. When they come back to him to report, they relate to him the deeds they have performed. One says that he has created such and such dispute and the other that he has spread chaos and so on, but Satan goes on commenting, "You have done nothing." Then comes one who says, "I have caused division between a man and his wife." Satan hugs him and says, "You have done a really 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.

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 Holy Prophet came to live at Al-Madīnah, and Islam began to spread in the country around it, the Jews tried to involve 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

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يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٥٥﴾ مَا نُنسِخُ مِنْ
آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا ۗ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٦﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَمَا
لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٥٧﴾ أَمْ تَرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ
كَمَا سَأَلَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ
سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ
كُفْرًا ۗ حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ أَنفُسِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ ۗ فَاعْفُوا
وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَ
الثلث
أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ
تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ
الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرِيًّا ۗ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ ۗ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ بَلَىٰ ۗ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ ۗ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتْ
النَّصْرِيُّ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۗ وَقَالَتِ النَّصْرِيُّ لَيْسَتْ الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ ۗ وَلَا هُمْ
يَسْأَلُونَ الْكِتَابَ ۗ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ ۗ فَاللَّهُ
يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ
مِمَّن مَّنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ
مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ ۗ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ ۗ وَ لَهُمْ
فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۗ فَأَيُّمَا تَوَلَّوْا

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The people who have rejected the message of Truth, be they the people of the Book or the *mushriks*, would never like that any good be sent down to you from your Lord, but Allah chooses for His mercy whom He wills, and Allah is most Bountiful. 105

We bring a better or at least the like of it for whatever verse We abrogate or cause to be forgotten.¹⁰⁹ Do you not know that Allah has full power over everything? Do you not know that the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah alone and that you have neither protector nor helper beside Him? 106-107

Would you then ask your Prophet such questions as they asked Moses in former times?¹¹⁰ In fact, anyone, who changes the way of belief for that of disbelief, has surely swerved from the Right Way. Many of the people of the Book desire to turn you anyhow back to unbelief. They wish this out of the envy of their hearts though the Truth has become quite clear to them. Yet, you should show forbearance and forgiveness to them¹¹¹ till Allah Himself enforces His judgement. (Rest assured that) Allah has full power over everything : establish *Ṣalāt* and pay *Zakāt* : you will find with Allah whatever good you send forward for your future; Allah is watching everything you do. 108-110

They say, "None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or (according to the Christians) a Christian." These are their wishful fancies.¹¹² Say to them, "Bring your proof, if you are right in your claim." The fact is that no one has any special claim to Paradise; whoever surrenders himself to Allah in obedience and follows the Right Way, shall get his reward from his Lord : there shall be neither fear nor grief for such people. 111-112

The Jews say that the Christians have nothing (of the Truth) and the Christians say that the Jews have nothing of it, though both read the Scripture. And those who have no knowledge of the Scripture¹¹³ also make similar claims. Allah will surely give His judgement on the Day of Resurrection in all the matters they differ. 113

And who could be a greater wrong-doer than the one 114

who forbids the mention of Allah's name in places of worship and strives for their ruin? Such people do not deserve to enter the places of worship, and, if they enter at all, they should do so in fear;¹¹⁴ for there is ignominy for them in this world and an awful punishment in the Hereafter.

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even the meetings of the Holy Prophet and resorted to cunning and subtle talk, which showed how depraved they had become.

108. Whenever the Jews came to see the Holy Prophet, they showed every kind of outward respect to him but surreptitiously tried their worst 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 "*Rā'i-nā*" 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." Moreover, in Arabic it also means, "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 *rā-i-ya-nā* 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, "*unḡur-nā*," "Pay attention to us," which could serve the same purpose without having any secondary bad sense like "*rā'i-nā*." They were also advised to listen attentively to the Holy Prophet so that there should not be any need of inviting his attention.

109. This is the answer to an objection raised by the Jews to create doubts in the minds of the Muslims. They argued like this : The Qurān 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 Qurān 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 this, they said, "The Qurān 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?" It is quite obvious that 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 in its place something that serves the same purpose better or at least equally well."

110. The Jews were addicted to the disease of hair-splitting. They used to put subtle and unnecessary questions to the Muslims and incite

them to inquire about the same from the Holy Prophet. As they intended merely to create mischief, Allah warned the Muslims not to follow their example. The Holy Prophet 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.

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 judgement. 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."

112. It means, "In fact these are merely their own wishes, but they assert these as if it were actually going to happen so."

113. It refers to the idolaters of Arabia, who were ignorant of the Scriptures.

114. That is, "The places of worship should not be in the hands of such transgressors as those wicked people, but should be under the management of those who fear Allah. This arrangement will prevent the wicked people from doing any mischief there for fear of retribution." It implied also that the disbelievers of Makkah had quite unjustly prevented their own brethren (who had embraced Islam) from entering the Ka'abah which they themselves called the "House of Allah".

فَتَوَّجَّهُ اللهُ إِنَّ اللهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللهُ وَلَدًا ۗ سُبْحٰنَهُ
 بَلْ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۗ كُلُّ لَّهُ قٰنِطُوْنَ ۝ بَدِيعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
 وَالْاَرْضِ ۗ وَاِذَا قَضٰى اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ۝ وَقَالَ
 الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا اللهُ اَوْ نَاتِيْنَا اٰيَةً ۗ كَذٰلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ
 مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ ۗ تَشَابَهَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۗ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْاٰيٰتِ لِقَوْمٍ
 يُوقِنُوْنَ ۝ اِنَّمَا اَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيْرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ۗ وَلَا تُسْئَلُ عَنْ اَصْحٰبِ
 الْجَحِيْمِ ۝ وَاِنْ تَرْضٰى عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصٰرَى حٰثِي تَتَّبِعُوْهُمْ ۗ
 قُلْ اِنَّ هُدٰى اللهُ هُوَ الْهُدٰى ۗ وَاَلِيْنَ اتَّبَعَتْ اَهْوَاؤَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِيْ
 جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ ۗ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللهِ مِنْ قَوْلٍ وَّ لَا نَصِيْرٍ ۝ الَّذِيْنَ
 اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ الْكِتٰبَ يَتْلُوْنَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوٰتِهٖ ۗ اُوْلٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ ۗ وَاَمَنْ
 يَكْفُرُ بِهٖ فَاُوْلٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ۝ يٰبَنِيْ اِسْرٰءِيْلَ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتِيْ
 الَّتِيْ اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاِنِّيْ فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝ وَاَتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا
 تَجْزِيْ نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَّلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَّ لَا تَنْفَعُهَا
 شَفَاعَةٌ وَّلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُوْنَ ۝ وَاِذْ اٰتٰى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ رَبُّهٗ بِكَلِمٰتٍ فَاَتَّهَمْنٰ
 قَالَ اِنِّيْ جَاعِلٌ لِلنَّاسِ اِمٰمًا ۗ قَالَ وَاَنْتَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ ۗ قَالَ لَا يَنْتٰلُ
 عَهْدِيْ الظَّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝ وَاِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَاٰمِنًا وَاَتَّخِذُوْا
 مِنْ مَّقَامِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ مُصَلًّٔ وَاَعٰهَدْنَا اِلٰى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْحٰقَ اَنْ طَهِّرَا
 بَيْتِيْ لِلطَّٰئِفِيْنَ وَالْعٰكِفِيْنَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُوْدِ ۝ وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ رَبِّ
 اجْعَلْ هٰذَا بَلَدًا اٰمِنًا وَاَرْزُقْ اَهْلَكَ مِنَ الثَّمَرٰتِ مَنْ اٰمَنَ مِنْهُمْ

وقف منزل

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The East and the West all belong to Allah : you will face Allah in whichever direction you turn your face:¹¹⁵ Allah is All-Embracing and All-Knowing.¹¹⁶ 115

They say, "Allah has adopted a son." Allah is above such things. As a matter of fact, whatever is in the heavens and on the earth belongs to Him and all are obedient to Him. He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth : when He decrees a thing, He merely says, "Be," and there it is. 116-117

The ignorant people say, "Why does not Allah Himself talk to us or why does not a Sign come to us?"¹¹⁷ The people before them also talked like this, for all (who swerve from the Right Path) have the same mentality.¹¹⁸ We have already shown clear Signs to those who believe;¹¹⁹ (what greater Sign could there be than that) We have sent you with the knowledge of the Truth and made you a bearer of good tidings and a warner.¹²⁰ Now, you are not responsible and answerable for those who are bent upon going to Hell. 118-119

The Jews and the Christians will never be satisfied with you, O Muhammad, unless you follow their way.¹²¹ Tell them plainly, "The right way is shown by Allah." And if, after all the knowledge you have received, you were to yield to their desires, you shall find neither friend nor helper to protect you from Allah's wrath. There are those, even among the people of the Scripture, who read the Book as it should be read and believe in it sincerely;¹²² as for those who reject it, they are most surely the losers. 120-121

O Children of Israel,¹²³ remember that special favour I bestowed upon you, and that I exalted you above all the communities of the world. And dread the Day when no one shall avail anyone else in any way; nor shall any ransom be accepted from anyone; nor shall intercession profit any body; nor shall the offenders be helped from any quarter. 122-123

Recall to mind that when his Lord put Abraham to test¹²⁴ in certain things and he fulfilled all of them, He said, "I am going to make you the leader of mankind." Abraham humbly asked, "Does this promise apply to my descendants also?" He replied, "My promise does not apply to the transgressors."¹²⁵ 124

And remember that We made this House (the Ka'abah) the centre and sanctuary for mankind and enjoined the people 125

to dedicate to worship the place where Abraham used to stand for prayer, and We urged Abraham and Ismā'il to keep My House pure for those who would go round it and those who would retire to it for devotion and prayer and for those who would bow down and prostrate themselves there in worship.¹²⁶

115. That is, "Allah is not confined to any one direction, eastern or western, but is the 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 Him to be. On the contrary, His Kingdom is boundless and so are His vision and generosity. He knows which of His servants remember Him and also where and when and with what intentions.

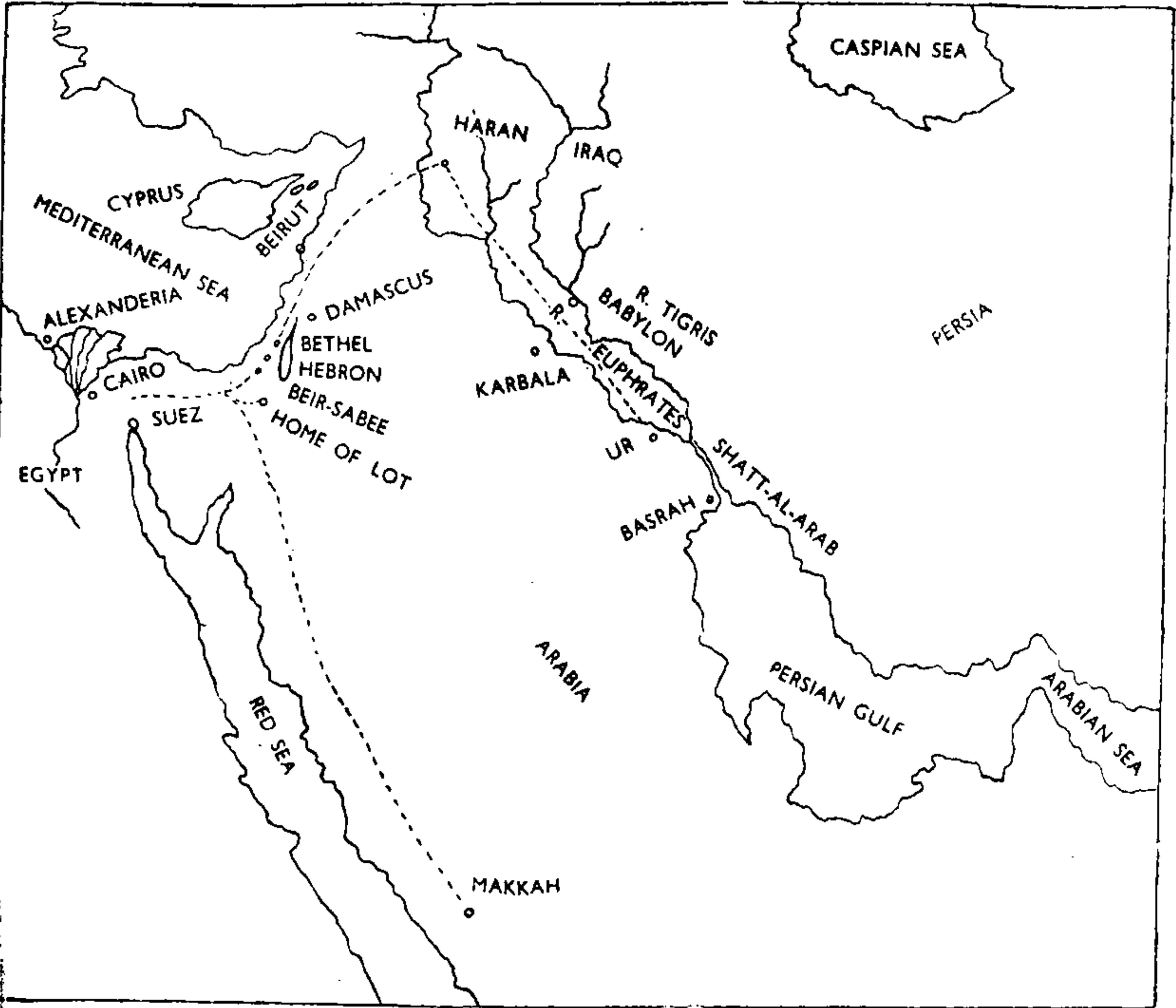
117. They demanded that either Allah Himself should come before them and say, "This is My Book and these are My Instructions for you to follow." Or He should show such a Sign to them as would conclusively demonstrate that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was really a Messenger of Allah and that what he cited 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 that 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 a Sign to them, Allah answers that He has shown many clear Signs but those who are not inclined to believe cannot see them.

120. Not to speak of other Signs, the most conspicuous one was the personality of Muhammad himself (Allah's peace be upon him). They knew everything about his life before his Prophethood; the conditions of his country and nation and the circumstances and environment under which he was brought up and how he spent the forty years of his life before his appointment as a Messenger; they understood perfectly well that there was nothing in these things that could have been conducive to the great and wonderful deeds he performed; therefore he was really a

MAP I
Showing places visited by Prophet Abraham.
(The Meaning of the Quran, Surah Al-Baqarah),
facing page 106



Explanation: Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) was born in 'Irāq in the city of Ur. After his escape from the heap of fire, he migrated to Haran. Then he went to Palestine : there he established centres of his mission at Bethel, Hebron and Beir-Sheba. Then he sent his nephew Prophet Lot (Allah's peace be upon him) to the land east of Lot Sea. From Palestine he went to Egypt which was then only second to 'Irāq in civilization and culture. It has not, however, been ascertained whether any centre of his mission was established there or not. From there he went to Hijāz : there he built the "House of Allah" at Makkah and appointed his son Prophet Ismā'il (Allah's peace be upon him) as its guardian. After this he made Hebron (Palestine) his permanent centre. When he died there, his second son Prophet Isaac (Allah's peace be upon him) continued his mission and after him Prophet Jacob (Allah's peace be upon him).

Messenger of Allah. As a matter of fact, that was such a clear Sign that no other Sign was needed after this.

121. It means, "The reason why these people are displeased with you is not that they are sincere seekers after the 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 loop-hole has been left for them to make religion a paying 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 bad example in your beliefs and practices."

122. The reference is to the pious among the people of the Book, who study the Qurān honestly and sincerely and accept it because they find it to be true according to their own standard.

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

(1) After Noah, Abraham was the first Prophet who was appointed by Allah to spread the universal Message of Islam. He began his mission in his own country, 'Irāq, and invited the people to Islam (submission to Allah). Then he visited Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Arabia with the same mission. Afterwards he appointed his deputies in different places. He deputed Lot, his nephew, to Trans-Jordan, Isaac, his son, to Syria and Palestine, and Ismā'il, the elder son, to Arabia. Then he was commanded by Allah to build at Makkah that house of worship which is called the Ka'abah and to make it the centre of his mission.

(2) From the two sons of Abraham sprang two nations—Ismā'ilites and Israelites. The former were the descendants of Ismā'il 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 Ismā'ilites because they were more or less influenced by his mission. The latter, the Israelites, were the descendants of Jacob, son of Isaac. Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, John, Jesus (may Allah's peace be upon them all) and many other Prophets rose from among them. They were called Israelites after Israel, the second name of Jacob. Some other people who accepted their religion also merged into them. All the Prophets of Israel, including Jesus, preached Islam, submission to Allah, but when the Israelites became degenerate and lost their religion (Islam) they invented Judaism and later on Christianity.

(3) Abraham was appointed to invite the world to surrender to Allah and to reform the people in accordance with Allah's Guidance.

[*Contd. on p. 110*

بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأَمَّتْهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرَّةً إِلَى
 عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَيُسَّ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ
 وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٧﴾ رَبَّنَا وَ
 اجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمَيْنِ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا
 وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٨﴾ رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا
 مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ
 أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ
 نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾
 إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسَلْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَوَصَّى بِهَا
 إِبْرَاهِيمُ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يَا بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى لَكُمُ الدِّينَ فَلَا
 تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ
 الْمَوْتَ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ
 وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ
 لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلكُمْ مَّا
 كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تَسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا
 أَوْ نَصْرَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
 الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى
 وَعِيسَى وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ

And remember that Abraham prayed, "Lord, make this city a city of peace and security, and provide with every kind of fruit those of its people, who believe in Allah and the Hereafter." Allah answered, "As for the disbelievers, I will also provide them with the necessities of life in this world,¹²⁷ though in the Next World I will drag them to the torture of Hell, and that is the worst abode." 126

And remember that when Abraham and Ismā'il were raising the walls of this House, they prayed, "Lord, accept this service from us; Thou art All-Hearing and All-Knowing. Lord, make us Thy Muslims (submissive servants) and also raise from our offspring a community which should be Muslim (submissive to Thy Will). Show us the ways of Thy worship and forbear our shortcomings. Thou art Forgiving and Merciful. Lord, raise up from among them a Messenger who shall recite Thy Revelations to them and teach them the Book and Wisdom and purify their lives:¹²⁸ Thou art All-Powerful and All-Wise".¹²⁹ 127-129

Now, who else can have aversion to the way of Abraham but the one who has debased himself with folly and ignorance? Abraham was the man whom We chose for Our service in this world, and in the Next World he shall be among the righteous. When his Lord said to him, "Surrender,"¹³⁰ he promptly responded, "I have surrendered to the Lord of the Universe (and become a Muslim)." He also enjoined on his children to follow the same way. Jacob also did the same¹³¹ and his last will to his sons was, "O my children, Allah has chosen the same way of life¹³² for you. Hence remain Muslims up to your last breath." (Dare you deny this?) Were you present at the time when Jacob was on the point of death? He asked his children, "Whom will you worship after me?" They all answered, "We will worship the same One Allah Whom you, your forefathers Abraham, Ismā'il and Isaac acknowledged as their Allah and to Him we all surrender as Muslims."¹³³ 130-133

They were a people who passed away; they shall receive the reward of what they earned and you shall have the reward of what you will earn; and you will not be questioned as to what they did.¹³⁴ 134

135-136

The Jews say, "Become Jews and you will be rightly guided"; the Christians say, "Become Christians and you will have the true guidance." Say to them, "Nay, we turn away from every other way and accept the way of Abraham, and Abraham did not associate other gods with Allah."¹³⁵ O Muslims, say to them, "We believe in Allah and the Guidance which has been sent down to us and which was sent to Abraham Ismā'il, Isaac and Jacob and his descendants and which was given by their Lord to Moses and Jesus and to all other Prophets. We do not discriminate against any of them¹³⁶ and we have completely surrendered to Allah as Muslims."

Contd. from p. 107]

He himself surrendered and acted upon the knowledge he received from Allah 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. This was the special favour which the Israelites were asked, over and over again, to remember. Accordingly, during the time of Solomon, the Holy Temple at Jerusalem became the centre and the *qiblah* (the place towards which face is to be turned for prayer) of all the worshippers of Allah, as long as the Israelites remained the leaders of this mission.

(4) In the foregoing address (vv. 40-121), Allah has charged the Israelites with their sins of omission and commission during their leadership. Therefore the Qurān points out their moral condition and tells them plainly, "You have proved yourselves quite unworthy of the favour 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) They were plainly told that leadership was 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. As they had swerved from that Way, and proved utterly unworthy of leadership, they were deposed from it.

(6) It also implied that the non-Israelite Jews and Christians who were proud of their relationship with Abraham had also swerved from the way of Abraham. Similarly, the idolaters of Arabia, who were also proud of their relationship with Abraham through Ismā'il, have been told that they also were utterly unworthy of leadership, for they, too, had

swerved from the Way of Abraham and Ismā'il.

(7) Now that the Israelites had been deposed from leadership, the argument proceeds to show why Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was raised as a Prophet from among the descendants of Ismā'il, in answer to the prayer of Abraham and Ismā'il. It is because he followed the same Way that was followed by all the Prophets 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 Messengers. 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 the *qiblah* of all the followers of the Truth. That was why the Holy Prophet and his followers 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 is, therefore, declared that the Ka'abah at Makkah, where Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) started his mission, is to be the *qiblah* in future. As it also was the centre of Abraham's mission, neither the Israelites nor the Arabs could object to it because both acknowledged Abraham as their Prophet and ancestor. Thus there was no reason left for them to raise any objection against making the Ka'abah the centre of the Divine mission. But the fact is that obdurate people will go on arguing against the Truth even after knowing it to be the Truth.

(9) After declaring the Muslims to be the leaders, with the Ka'abah as their centre, Allah gives instructions (vv. 153-186) for their guidance to enable them to carry out their obligations as leaders of the world.

124. At different places the Qurān has described in detail the hard test to which Abraham 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 the 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 Ismā'il were not entitled to this promise.

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 therein. 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 Ka'abah and worshipping them instead of Allah. It implies that these idolaters who were proud of being the heirs of Abraham and Ismā'il were not discharging the obligations of that heritage. Hence they, like the Israelites, has forfeited all rights to that promise of Allah which was made to Abraham.

127. When Abraham 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, as if to say, "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 someone 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.

128. "The purification of life" means the purification of beliefs, ideas, deeds, habits, customs, culture, politics, in short, of every aspect of life.

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

130. The Arabic word used in the text is "*aslim*," that is, "become a Muslim," or "adopt the attitude of Islam" (surrender to the will of Allah). Thus a Muslim is one who surrenders himself completely to Allah and obeys Him; who acknowledges Allah 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.

131. Special mention of Jacob has been made because the Israelites were his direct descendants.

132. The Arabic word "*dīn*" 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 death has been described in detail in the Bible, no mention has been made of this last will of his. It, however, has been given in detail in the Talmud and its substance is more or less the same as that contained in the Qurān :

"At the time when Jacob quitted this world, he summoned his sons and said to them, 'Serve the Lord your God, and He will deliver ye 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. . . . ' And the sons of Jacob responded, 'All that you have commanded us, our father,

we will do. May God be with us.' And Jacob answered: 'The Lord will be with ye if ye shall depart not from His ways to the right hand or the left.'"

The same thing about Prophet Jacob's will has been cited by Rodwell from Midr. Rabbah, "Have ye 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."

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 Qurān, 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 Qurān refers to actions and deeds as earnings in order to focus attention on the serious results produced by them.

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. 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. 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 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 in this world. 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 practised *shirk* and had, therefore, swerved from the way of Abraham, 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.

[Contd. on p. 116]

وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِبِشْرٍ مَّا آمَنُوا بِهِ فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا ۗ
 وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ ۗ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ
 الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٨﴾ صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً ۗ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ
 عِيدُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قُلْ أَتَحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ۗ وَلَنَا أَعْمَالُنَا وَ
 لَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ ۗ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَ
 إِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى ۗ قُلْ
 ءَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ
 اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤١﴾ تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ۗ لَهَا مَا
 كَسَبَتْ وَلكُمْ مَّا كَسَبْتُمْ ۗ وَلَا تَسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٢﴾

١٦
 ع ١٢
 ١٦

العِزَّةُ ٢

سَيَسْأَلُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّهُمْ عَن قِبَلِهِمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهِمُ

قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ ۗ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٣﴾
 وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَ يُكُونَ
 الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ
 مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ ۗ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا
 عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ إِيْمَانَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ
 لَخَبِيرٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٤﴾ قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ ۗ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً
 تَرْضَاهَا ۗ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۗ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا
 وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ ۗ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ
 وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَلَيْنَ آيَاتِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ

Then if they believe the way you have believed, they have the right guidance, and if they turn away from this, it will become obvious that they are obdurate. Therefore, rest assured that Allah will suffice to defend you against them : He hears everything and He knows everything. 137

Say, "Take Allah's colour,¹³⁷ and who can give a better colour than Allah? Therefore we worship and submit to Him alone." 138

O Prophet, say to them, "Do you argue with us concerning Allah, whereas He is our Lord and also your Lord?¹³⁸ We shall be accountable to Him for our deeds and you for yours; so we have dedicated our worship to Him alone.¹³⁹ Or do you say that Abraham, Ismā'īl, Isaac, Jacob and his children were all Jews or Christians?" Ask them, "Do you know more than Allah does?¹⁴⁰ And who is more unjust than the one who hides the testimony which Allah has entrusted to him? Allah is not unaware of what you are doing.¹⁴¹ They were a people who have passed away and they shall be repaid for what they earned and you for what you earn; you will not be questioned as to what they did." 139-141

Of course the foolish people will say, "What has turned them abruptly away from the *qiblah* towards which they formerly used to turn their faces in prayer?"¹⁴² Tell them, O Messenger, "East and West all belong to Allah; He shows the Right Way to anyone He wills."¹⁴³ Thus have We made you a Community of the "Golden Mean" so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you.¹⁴⁴ 142

We had appointed the former *qiblah* towards which you used to turn your face merely to test who would follow the Messenger and who would turn back.¹⁴⁵ It was indeed a hard test but not for those who had been blessed with Guidance from Allah. Allah will not let go to waste this faith of yours; rest assured that He is full of pity and mercy for mankind. 143

We have seen you (O Muhammad), turning your face over and over again towards heaven. Now, therefore, We turn you towards the *qiblah* that you like best : so turn your face towards the Masjid-i-Ḥarām. Henceforth, wheresoever you may be, turn your face at prayer towards it.¹⁴⁶ 144

The people who were given the Book know it well that the commandment (about the change of *qiblah*) is in fact from their Lord, and is based on the Truth, but Allah is not unaware of what they are doing (in spite of this).

Contd. from p. 113]

136. "We do not discriminate against any of them" means that we believe in all the Prophets of Allah and reject none of them. It is obvious that all the Prophets who came from Allah brought the same Truth and invited the people to the same Guidance. 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, they could not have rejected any other Prophet (e.g. Muhammad, Allah's 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. It may also mean, "We take colour from Allah."

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 baptised person has been washed away and he had received a new colour of life. Later on this custom was adopted by the Christians also and it was called "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 newly-born babies.

The Qurān says that there is nothing substantial in this ceremonial "colouring," since it is not necessary for salvation. For this purpose one should take colour from Allah by adopting His Way and submitting to His Law.

138. That is, what we say is only this : Allah is the 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, as it is you (and not we) 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. . . ? If you 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 very amicably.

139. That is, "You are responsible for your deeds and we 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. 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. Besides this, they kept their common people under the delusion that salvation depended on these 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 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.

142. This refers to the change of *qiblah* (the place towards which face is turned in prayer) from the Temple (Jerusalem) to Masjid-i-Harām (Makkah). At first the Holy Prophet used to turn his face in *Ṣalāt* to Jerusalem, but towards the middle of the second year of Hijra, he was commanded to turn his face towards the Ka'abah (Makkah). This change of *qiblah* with its implications has been described in detail 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 east, west and all other directions belong to Allah. The fact that *qiblah* lies in a certain direction does not mean that Allah is confined to that direction only. Those people who are blessed

[Contd. on p. 120

بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ ۖ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ ۗ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ
 قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ
 إِنَّكَ إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ
 أَبْنَاءَهُمْ ۗ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِّنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ الْحَقُّ مِنْ
 رَبِّكَ ۗ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَ لِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ مَوْلِيهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا
 الْخَيْرَاتِ ۗ إِنَّمَا تَكُونُوا يَاتٍ بِكُمْ اللهُ جَمِيعًا ۗ إِنَّ اللهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ
 شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ
 وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۗ وَمَا اللهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ 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 ۗ وَارْتَمِ بِعِمَّتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ
 وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ فَادْكُرُونِي
 أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَ اشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ
 وَالصَّلَاةِ ۗ إِنَّ اللهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ
 اللهِ أَمْوَاتٌ ۗ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ ۗ وَلَكِنَّ لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَ لَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ
 الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَ الشَّمْرِ ۗ وَ بَشِيرِ
 الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ
 رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۗ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ

وقف لازم

وقف منزل

١٤٦

وقف

النبي

صلى الله عليه وسلم

معانقہ ۳

١٤٨

Even though you may show every kind of sign to the people of the Book, they will not adopt your *qiblah*, nor are you going to adopt their *qiblah*; nor will any of them adopt the *qiblah* of the other; therefore if, after the knowledge you have received, you follow their desires, you will certainly be counted among the transgressors.¹⁴⁷ As for those to whom We gave the Book, they recognise the place (which has now been made *qiblah*), as clearly as they recognise their own children.¹⁴⁸ But some of them are knowingly concealing the truth. This is in fact a commandment from your Lord; so you should not have any doubt concerning this. 145-147

Everyone has a direction towards which he turns in prayer : so try to excel one another in good works.¹⁴⁹ Allah will find you wheresoever you be, for nothing is out of Allah's reach. 148

At whatever place you may be, turn your face towards Masjid-i-Harām for this is in fact a commandment of your Lord, and Allah is not unaware of what you do. At whatever place you may be, you must turn your face towards the Masjid-i-Harām, and wherever you may be, you must turn your face towards the same at prayer so that people might not find an argument against you.¹⁵⁰ As for the unjust people, they will never stop talking; so do not fear them but fear Me—(Do this) so that I may complete My favour¹⁵¹ upon you and you may find the way to real success,¹⁵² just as (you have found from this : that) We sent the Messenger to you from among you, who recites to you My Revelations; who purifies your lives; who instructs you in the Book and in wisdom and teaches you those things you did not know. So remember Me and I will remember you, and give thanks to Me and be not ungrateful. 149-152

O Believers,¹⁵³ seek help with fortitude and *Ṣalāt* for Allah is with those who show fortitude.¹⁵⁴ And do not say of those who are slain in the way of Allah, "They are dead." In fact they are alive but you do not perceive that life.¹⁵⁵ We will surely put you to trial by involving you in fear and hunger and by causing loss of property, life and earnings. And give good tidings to those who remain steadfast in these trials: when 153-157

a misfortune comes to them, they say, "We are Allah's and we shall certainly return to Him."¹⁵⁶ Their Lord will bestow great blessings and mercy upon them; such are the people who are rightly guided.

Contd. from p. 117]

with guidance cannot harbour such narrow ideas. (Also refer to E.N.'s 115 and 116).

144. This is the declaration of the leadership of the Muslim Community. "Thus" refers both to the Guidance of Allah which was sent through Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and to the change of *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 *qiblah* from the Temple to the Ka'abah that was an indication that the Israelites had been deposed from the leadership and the Muslims had been appointed instead. Therefore the change of *qiblah* from the Temple to the Ka'abah 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 (Allah's peace be upon him).

The Arabic word "*ummat-i-wasat*" which has been translated into "a Community of the Golden Mean" 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-i-wasat*, so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you."

On the Day of Judgement when the whole of humanity will be gathered together, every Messenger will be asked to give evidence to prove that he had imparted, by word and by deed, without any reservation, to the *ummat* that Truth which he had received from Allah. The *ummat* in its turn will be required to give evidence to prove that it had exerted its utmost to impart that Guidance, by word and by deed, to the people of the world just as it has received it from the Messenger.

It should also be borne in mind that Allah confers the honour of leadership along with the obligation to bear witness to that Truth before the people. Though it is a position of honour, 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 Holy Prophet 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 Holy Prophet was responsible for conveying the Guidance of Allah, in the same way 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 Judgement, 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 *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 Ka'abah and to adopt the Temple at Jerusalem as *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 Ka'abah, 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 Holy Prophet.

146. This is the Commandment for the change of *qiblah*. When this was revealed, the Holy Prophet was leading the Dhuhr (early afternoon prayer) in the house of Bishr-bin-Barā'-bin Ma'arūr 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 Ka'abah during the prayer and those who were saying their prayer following his lead did the same. Afterwards it was announced publicly in Al-Madīnah and its suburbs that the *qiblah* had been changed. Barā'-bin 'Āzib says that at one place this announcement was heard at the time when the people had bent down in prayer. But when they heard the Commandment, they turned about in the same posture towards the Ka'abah. Anas-bin-Mālik says that next day when the people of Bani Salmah heard about this change, they were saying their Morning Prayer and the whole congregation turned about towards the Ka'abah.

In this connection, it should also be kept in mind that "The Holy Temple at Jerusalem" is to the north of Al-Madīnah and the Ka'abah at Makkah to the south of it. The *Imām* (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 lines. All these things have been

related in detail in the Traditions.

It is quite clear from "We have seen you turn your face over and over again towards heaven" and "We turn you towards the *qiblah* that you like best" that the Holy Prophet 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 the Ka'abah which had been set up by Prophet Abraham should be the *qiblah*.

"*Masjid-i-Harām*" means the "Inviolable place of worship and reverence". Here it refers to that place of worship at Makkah which has the Ka'abah in its centre.

The Commandment "Turn your face towards the Ka'abah" does not mean that one should turn one's face exactly to the point of the Ka'abah 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 Qurān directs us to turn our faces towards the Ka'abah and not to the point of the Ka'abah. We should do our best to find out the exact direction of the Ka'abah : 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 one's 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.

147. That is, "You cannot convince by argument those who are disputing with you about the wisdom of the change of *qiblah* because they are not disposed to listen to any reasoning or 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 stick to Our Commandments strictly and firmly. If you turn from these, you will be transgressing the limits of Prophethood and showing ingratitude towards the favour of leadership with which We have blessed you."

148. This Arabic idiom is used to denote that one has absolutely no doubt about the identity of something. 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 Ka'abah was built by Prophet Abraham, just as they knew their own children. They also knew it as another fact that the Holy Temple at Jerusalem was built by Prophet Solomon some 1,300 years after the Ka'abah was built by Prophet Abraham. The Ka'abah, therefore, had priority and superiority over the Holy "Temple" and the Jews and the Christians should have no difficulty in recognizing and acknowledging it as *qiblah* in the light

of the above historical facts.

149. There is a 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 direction or the other. 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 the real purpose of the prayer and not any particular direction or place.

150. That is, "We have re-emphasised this Command lest anyone of you should turn his face to any other direction in prayer and give to opponents cause to say, 'These people of the *ummat-i-wasaq* claim that they are witnesses of the Truth but their behaviour falsifies it. While they profess that the Commandment about the change of *qiblah* has come from their Lord, they do not act upon it'."

151. The blessing refers to the 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 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 favour 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 *qiblah*." This promise is very encouraging for a servant of Allah. The assurance gives him great consolation that he should expect such a big reward from his King, if he obeys His Commandments with all his heart and soul.

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 go through all these ordeals with fortitude and proceed on in the way of Allah, they will be blessed with countless blessings and rewards by Him.

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

الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ
 أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ
 اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَالْهُدَى
 مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ
 اللَّعْنُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنَّوْنَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ
 وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٥٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُولَٰئِكَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ خَلِيدِينَ فِيهَا ۗ لَا
 يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ وَالْهَكَمُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ ۗ لَا
 إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾ إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ
 اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِهَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا
 أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ
 فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ ۗ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ
 السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا
 لِلَّهِ ۗ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ الْعَذَابَ ۗ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ۗ
 وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٢﴾ إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا
 وَرَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ
 أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّءُوا مِنَّا ۗ كَذٰلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ
 أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا

Indeed Şafā and Marwah are among the emblems of Allah : it is, therefore, no sin for him, who performs Haj or 'Umrāh¹⁵⁷ to the House of Allah, to run between the two hills;¹⁵⁸ and Allah knows and appreciates him who does any good with a willing heart.¹⁵⁹ 158

Indeed Allah curses, and the cursers, too, curse those people who conceal the clear teachings and guidance We have sent down, after We have made these plain in the Book for the guidance of all mankind.¹⁶⁰ I, however, will forgive those of them who repent of it, mend their ways and make known what they were concealing : for I am very generous in accepting repentance and showing mercy. 159-160

Those people who adopted the way of disbelief¹⁶¹ and died as disbelievers, are accursed of Allah and of angels and of all mankind : they shall remain accursed for ever. Their punishment shall not be lightened, nor shall they be reprieved. 161-162

Your Deity is Allah alone : there is no deity save the All-Beneficent and the All-Merciful Allah. (If they want a sign for the perception of this Reality) surely there are countless signs for those who use their common sense;¹⁶² they can see these in the structure of the heavens and the earth, in the alternation of the night and day, in the ships that sail the ocean laden with cargoes beneficial to mankind, and in the rain-water which Allah sends down from the sky and thereby gives life to the earth after its death and spreads over it all kinds of animate creatures; in the blowing of the winds and in the clouds which obediently wait for orders between the sky and the earth. (In spite of such clear signs of the Oneness of Allah), there are people who set up equals and rivals with Allah¹⁶³ and adore them with the adoration due to Allah—whereas the Believers adore Allah most ardently.¹⁶⁴—Would that these transgressors could realise now what they will realise, when they will see the chastisement before them—that power and authority wholly belong to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishment ! When He will inflict punishment, those very leaders and guides whom they followed in the world will disown them. But punishment they shall get and all their bonds shall be cut off. Then those who followed will say, "Would that we were given another chance to return to 163-167

the world : then we will disown them just as they have disowned us today.”¹⁶⁵ Thus Allah will bring before them the deeds they did in the world in such a manner as to make them wring their hands in regret but they shall be unable to come out of the Fire.

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 of this, the Muslims are told to believe the martyrs to be enjoying eternal life. And this is a reality which revitalises and keeps alive the spirit of courage.

156. It does not mean that these words are to be uttered merely with the tongue. We should believe sincerely from the core of our hearts that “We belong to Allah and to none else.” Thus if anything is sacrificed in the way of Allah, it is spent rightly because it has gone to His service to Whom it really belonged.”

“We shall certainly return to Him” means that we shall not live here for ever 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. Ḥaj is the pilgrimage to the Ka‘abah (Makkah) during the fixed days of the month of Zul-Ḥijjah and ‘Umrāh is the voluntary visit to the Ka‘abah at any other time.

Directions about Ḥaj and ‘Umrāh are being given at this place because the Ka‘abah had recently been made the *qiblah* and naturally questions and problems connected with it had arisen.

158. The running between Ṣafā and Marwah (two hills) near the Ka‘abah was one of the rituals taught by Allah to Abraham in connection with Ḥaj. But afterwards when the people began to associate false gods with Allah, they built temples on Ṣafā and Marwah and dedicated these to two idols, Asāf and Nā’ilah, and went round them in reverence to them. When the Arabs embraced Islam, a question arose whether running between Ṣafā and Marwah was one of the original rituals of the Ḥaj or whether this had been invented by the worshippers of false gods and whether they would not be guilty of practising *shirk* by running between the two hills.

Besides this, a Tradition related by Ḥaḍrāt ‘Ā’ishah says that the people of Al-Madīnah had an old aversion to running between Ṣafā and Marwah even before they had not accepted Islam. Therefore, now when the Ka‘abah was made the *qiblah*, Allah removed their misunderstanding concerning running between Ṣafā and Marwah and told them that this ritual had really been connected with Ḥaj ever since the time of Prophet

Abraham and was not the invention of ignorant people after him.

159. It means, "It is far better to run between the two hills with a willing heart to please Allah than as a mere compliance to a Command from Him."

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 their own common people. As a result of this, the Jews began to practise irreligious 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 irreligious 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 which has been given to them and should not keep it back from the common people as the Jewish rabbis and scribes did.

161. The literal meaning of the Arabic word *kufr* 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 *īmān*. *īmān* means to believe, to accept and to submit, and *kufr* means to disbelieve, to reject and to oppose. According to the Qurān, one shall be guilty of *kufr*:

(1) If one does not believe at all in Allah or refuses to accept Him as the Supreme Authority or as one's Master and that of the 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) Even 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 some Messengers and rejects the 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 Qurān. Besides the above usages, the Qurān sometimes uses *kufr* as a substitute for ingratitude, for it is nothing but ingratitude to use the things and faculties given by Allah against His will and to adopt the attitude of rebellion against one's benefactor.

Incidentally, it will have also become clear from the meaning of *kufr*

[Contd. on p. 130

النَّاسُ كُلُّوْا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا ۗ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ
 إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾ إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوْءِ وَ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا
 عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَإِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوْا
 بَلْ نَسِيْعُ مَا آَلَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آِبَاءَنَا ۗ أَوْ لَوْ كَانَ آِبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ
 شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوْا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا
 لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَ نِدَاءً ۗ صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْىٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٧١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوْا كُلُّوْا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَ اشْكُرُوْا لِلَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
 إِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿١٧٢﴾ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَيْتَةَ وَ الدَّمَ وَ لَحْمَ الْخِنْزِيْرِ وَ
 مَا أَهْلَكَ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ ۗ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَآءٍ وَ لَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ
 عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنْ اللَّهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿١٧٣﴾ إِنْ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُوْنَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ
 الْكِتٰبِ وَ يَشْتَرُوْنَ بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا ۗ أُولٰٓئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُوْنَ فِي بُطُوْنِهِمْ إِلَّا
 النَّارَ وَ لَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَ لَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ ۗ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
 أَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٧٤﴾ أُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الضَّلٰةَ بِالْهُدٰى وَ الْعَذَابَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ ۗ
 فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ ﴿١٧٥﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ نَزَّلَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوْا فِي الْكِتٰبِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿١٧٦﴾ لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ أَنْ
 تُوَلُّوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَ الْمَغْرِبِ وَ لَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ آمَنَ
 بِاللَّهِ وَ الْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَ الْكِتٰبِ وَ النَّبِيِّنَّ ۗ وَ آتَى الْمَالَ
 عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبٰى وَ الْيَتٰمٰى وَ الْمَسْكِيْنَ وَ ابْنَ السَّبِيْلِ ۗ وَ
 السَّآئِلِيْنَ وَ فِي الرِّقَابِ ۗ وَ أَقَامَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَ آتَى الزَّكٰوةَ ۗ وَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ

O people, eat of what is lawful and clean in the earth 168-169
and do not follow the ways of Satan¹⁶⁶ for he is your avowed
enemy. He enjoins you to commit vice and indecency and
induces you to attribute to Allah's name things you do not
know to be from Him.¹⁶⁷

When it is said to them, "Follow the commands that 170-171
Allah has sent down," they reply, "We will follow only what
we found our forefathers practising."¹⁶⁸ Well, will they go
on following their forefathers even though they did not use
common sense and did not find the right way? The mental
condition of those who rejected the way of Allah may be
likened to that of the cattle whom the shepherd calls but
they hear nothing except the sound of shouts and cries.¹⁶⁹
They are deaf, they are dumb, they are blind; therefore they
do not understand anything.

O Believers, if you are true worshippers of Allah alone, 172-173
eat without hesitation of the good and clean things where-
with We have provided you and be grateful to Allah.¹⁷⁰ Allah
has forbidden only these things : do not eat what dies of itself,
nor blood nor swine flesh nor what has been consecrated to
any other name than of Allah.¹⁷¹ But one will incur no sin
if, forced by absolute necessity, he eats of any of these forbid-
den things, provided he has no intention of transgressing
the law and does not take more than what is absolutely indis-
pensable : for Allah is very Forgiving and very Merciful.¹⁷²

Indeed those, who conceal the commands that Allah has 174-176
sent down in His Book and barter them away for paltry worldly
gains, fill their bellies with fire.¹⁷³ Allah will not speak to
them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He regard them
as pure;¹⁷⁴ there is a painful torment for them. They are
the people who have bartered away Guidance for error and
Allah's pardon for His punishment. How audacious they
are : they are ready even to undergo the fire of Hell. This
was in spite of the fact that Allah had sent down the Book
with the Truth because people sought differences in the Book
and swerved far away from the Truth in their disputes.

It is no virtue that you turn your faces towards the east 177
or the west,¹⁷⁵ but virtue is that one should sincerely believe

in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets and, out of His love, spend of one's choice wealth for relatives and orphans, for the needy and the wayfarer, for beggar and for the ransom of slaves, and establish Ṣalāt and pay Zakāt. And the virtuous are those who keep their pledges when they make them and show fortitude in hardships and adversity and in the struggle (between the Truth and falsehood); such are the truthful people and such are the pious.

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that there is nothing abusive or derogatory in the word, as is generally misunderstood. When the Muslims call an unbeliever a *kafir*, they merely state a fact.

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 over by the All-Powerful and 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.

163. "They set up equals. . . .": 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 foci of nature and has the power to fulfil 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 to Him. Then, 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 to 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 to 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.

165. This helpless end of the ring-leaders and misguiders 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.

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

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 imposed by Allah, although there is no authority to show that they are from Him."

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.

169. This parable has two aspects :

(1) 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) 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.

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.

If they really believe in Allah, as they profess, they should abstain from eating what Allah has forbidden and eat, without any hesitation, those things which Allah has declared lawful.

According to a Tradition of the Holy Prophet, "One who offers Ṣalāt in the way we offer, turns his face towards our *qiblah*, 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 Ṣalāt, turning his face towards the Ka'abah. He should give up the prejudices and superstitions of ignorance if he really and sincerely has become a Muslim. The very observance of old traditions and customs is a proof that he is still imbued with the poison of ignorance.

يَعْهَدِهِمْ إِذَا عَاهَدُوا ۗ وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ
 الْبَأْسِ ۗ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا ۗ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ ۗ الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ
 بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأَنْثَىٰ بِالْأُنْثَىٰ ۗ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتِّبَاعُهُ
 بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ۗ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ
 فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ
 حَيَوةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ
 الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا ۗ الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ حَقًّا
 عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
 يُبَدِّلُونَهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾ فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مَوْصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ
 إِثْمًا فَاصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٩﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۗ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ
 فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ ۗ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ ۗ
 فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ ۗ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ
 تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ
 وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ ۗ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ ۗ
 وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ
 الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ ۗ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا

O Believers, the law¹⁷⁶ of retribution has been prescribed 178-179 for you in cases of murder; if a free man commits a murder, the free man shall be punished for it and a slave for a slave : likewise if a woman is guilty of murder the same shall be accountable for it.¹⁷⁷ But in case the injured brother¹⁷⁸ is willing to show leniency to the murderer, the blood money should be decided in accordance with the common law¹⁷⁹ and the murderer should pay it in a genuine way. This is an allowance and mercy from your Lord. Now there shall be a painful torment for anyone who transgresses the limits after this.¹⁸⁰ O men of understanding, there is security of life for you in the law of retribution.¹⁸¹ It is expected that you will refrain from breaking this law.

It has been prescribed for you that when death approaches 180-182 one of you and he is leaving some property behind him, he should bequeath it equitably for his parents and relatives : it is an obligation on those who fear Allah.¹⁸² Then if those, who heard the will, change it, they themselves shall bear the sin of this. Allah hears everything and knows everything. If, however, one apprehends genuinely that the testator had (intentionally or unintentionally) done some injustice, and then alters the will to set things right between the parties concerned, in that case he does not incur any sin. Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.

O Believers, the Fast has been made obligatory on you 183-184 just as it was prescribed for the followers of the Prophets before you. It is expected that this will produce piety in you.¹⁸³ The Fast is to be observed for a fixed number of days. If, however, anyone of you be sick or on a journey, he should fast the same number of other days. As for those who can fast (but do not), the expiation of this shall be the feeding of one needy person for one fast day, and whoso does more than this¹⁸⁴ with a willing heart does it for his own good. But if you understand the thing, it is better for you to observe the Fast.¹⁸⁵

Ramadhān is the month in which the Qurān was sent 185 down : this Book is a perfect guidance for mankind and consists of clear teachings which show the right way and are a

criterion of Truth and falsehood. Therefore from now on whoever witnesses it, it is obligatory on him to fast the whole month, but if one be ill or on a journey, he should make up for the same number by fasting on other days.¹⁸⁶ Allah desires to show leniency to you and does not desire to show any hardship. Therefore this method is being shown to you so that you may complete the number of Fast days and glorify Allah for the Guidance He has shown to you and be grateful to Him.¹⁸⁷

171. This applies both to the flesh of that animal which is slaughtered in the name of anyone or anything other than that of Allah and also to that food which is to be offered to anyone or anything other than Allah. As a matter of fact, everything really belongs to Allah and is given by Him; therefore it should be offered in His name alone as a mark of gratitude to Him. And if it is offered in any other name it means that that one is acknowledged as the supreme authority and the giver of favours or at least a partner with Him in those matters.

172. In this verse, permission has been given for the use of an unclean thing 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 is absolutely necessary. Supposing that in a certain case, even a few bits or drops of an unclean thing can save life, then nothing more than this absolute minimum should be taken.

173. These were their learned people, who, in spite of possessing the knowledge of the Scriptures, 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 these 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. They always 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 and 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 as pious and holy, not to speak of granting them the authority of intercession.

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. It is meant to impress that the mere performance of some religious rites or formalities or show of piety is not real virtue and does not have importance or value with Allah.

176. The Arabic word "*qiṣās*" 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 "judgement" 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 "civilised" 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 "civilised" ruling nation and slain to an "uncivilised" 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 in it a kind of recommendation. "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 murder is a compoundable offence. It allows the relatives of the murdered man the right of pardoning the murderer, if they deem it proper. In that case the court cannot insist on taking his life. Of

course, he will have to pay compensation money for it, if the rightful claimants demand it.

179. The Arabic word "*ma'rūf*" has been used in many places in the Qurān. 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 these as right and just, and the Islamic law recognizes these in all those matters for which it has not laid down any regulations. Such common laws and general usages are called "*ma'rūf*".

180. For instance, it will be transgression if the relatives of the slain try to retaliate even after accepting ransom for the slain, or if the murderer (or his friends) does not mean to pay the ransom gracefully, or otherwise reacts in an ungrateful manner. Both parties should be equally generous and appreciate the goodwill shown by the other side.

181. This verse refutes those people who go to the other extreme and advocate total abolition of capital punishment. If it is inhuman to insist on retaliation without paying any heed to all other considerations, it is equally inhuman to encourage murder by totally abolishing capital punishment, as has been done in some "civilised" countries. That is why Allah declares that there is life 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.

182. This Commandment about making a will was given at the time when the law of inheritance had not as yet been prescribed. Its object was to safeguard the lawful heirs against injustice. But afterwards this Commandment was modified in two ways by the Holy Prophet, in the light of the law of inheritance laid down in the Qurān in Chapter IV. First, no one could bequeath anything to a legal heir, that is, no decrease or increase could be made in the shares fixed by the Law and no heir could be deprived of his shares nor could he get anything more than his legal shares. Second, bequest was limited to one-third of the property only. That is, one should leave at least two-thirds of one's property to the heirs to be divided among them according to the Law, but may leave by will only one-third of his property to those of his indigent relatives who might not have been entitled by law to any share in the inheritance, or for public works, etc. It is, therefore, wrong to say that the law about making a will has been abrogated. On the other hand, it is a right imposed by Allah on the God-fearing people and if this right is exercised properly, many problems, such as the inheritance to an orphan grandson etc., will be solved without tampering with the Islamic code of inheritance.

183. Islam proceeded step by step and by degrees in the imposition of most of its obligatory duties. The same was done in the case

of the Fast. At first the Holy Prophet advised the Muslims to observe fasts for three days in a month but this was not obligatory. Then in the second year of the Hijra, this Command (v. 183) about fasting in the month of Ramaḍān was revealed. There was, however, an option even 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 fast (v. 184). Then after some time the final Commandment contained in the next verse (v. 185) modified this, and the concession for able-bodied people was withdrawn, but retained for a sick person or a 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 Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, Ḥaḍrat Mu'āz bin Jabal says : "The Ṣalāt and the Fast took their present form gradually. At first the Muslims faced Jerusalem during the Ṣalāt but after some years they were commanded to turn their faces towards the Ka'abah, Makkah. Besides this, at first they used to inform one another about the time of each Ṣalāt but afterwards the same was proclaimed by means of Azān (the call for prayer). (As to the Fast), when the Holy Prophet migrated to Al-Madīnah, he observed fasts for three days in a month and also on the tenth of Muḥarram. Then Allah made it obligatory to fast during the whole month of Ramaḍān 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 (*Ibn Kathir*, p. 214).

Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd and other scholars have also quoted Traditions from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, and 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd to the same effect. In support of the same, Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī, a famous commentator of the Qurān, 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 Ḥaḍrat Mu'āz bin Jabal : "As the Arabs were not used to 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 Ramaḍān. 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 'Abbās to this effect. In the first Commandment (v. 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. "More than this" is to feed more than one person for each fasting day or to feed one and to observe fast as well.

185. The first Commandment about fasting contained in vv. 183-184 was revealed in the second year of Hijrah before the battle of Badr. The

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هَذِكُمْ وَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ
 أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۗ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ
 يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ أَحَلَّ لَكُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الرَّفَثُ إِلَى نِسَائِكُمْ ۗ هُنَّ لِبَاسٍ
 لَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٍ ۗ هُنَّ ۗ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۗ فَالْتَنَ بِأَشْرَوْهِنَّ وَابْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَ
 كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ
 مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ۗ ثُمَّ آتُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى اللَّيْلِ ۗ وَلَا تُبَاشِرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ
 عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۗ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا ۗ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ
 آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ
 وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِتَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَ
 أَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلَةِ ۗ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَ
 الْحَجِّ ۗ وَ لَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ
 اتَّقَى ۗ وَاتُّوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٨٩﴾
 وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
 يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ ۗ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ
 حَيْثُ أَخْرَجُوكُمْ ۗ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۗ وَلَا تُقَاتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ
 الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ ۗ فَإِنْ قَاتَلُوكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ ۗ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ
 الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩١﴾ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٢﴾ وَ قَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى
 لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ ۗ وَ يَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ ۗ فَإِنْ انْتَهَوْا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ إِلَّا عَلَى

And if My servants ask you, O Prophet, concerning Me, 186
tell them that I am quite near to them. I hear and answer
the prayer of the suppliant, when he calls to Me. So let them
respond to My call and believe in Me.¹⁸⁸ Convey this to
them, O Prophet; perhaps they may be guided aright.¹⁸⁹

It has been made lawful for you to go to your wives 187
during the nights of the fast days. They are (like) a gar-
ment to you and you are (like) a garment to them.¹⁹⁰
Though Allah knew that you were secretly dishonest to your-
selves, He has pardoned your guilt and forgiven you. Now
you are permitted to have intercourse with your wives and
enjoy what Allah has made lawful for you.¹⁹¹ You are also
permitted to eat and drink during the nights of the Fast
months,¹⁹² until you can discern the white streak of dawn
from the blackness of night.¹⁹³ Then (abstain from all these
things and) complete your Fast till night-fall.¹⁹⁴ But you
should not have intercourse with your wives while you con-
fine yourselves to mosques (during the last ten days of
Ramadān).¹⁹⁵ These are the bounds set by Allah; so do not
even go near them.¹⁹⁶ In this way Allah makes His Com-
mands clear to mankind. It is expected that they will guard
themselves against wrong ways.

Do not usurp one another's property by unjust means 188
nor offer it to the judges so that you may devour knowingly
and unjustly a portion of the goods of others.¹⁹⁷

They ask you about the phases of the moon. Say, 189
"These are signs for the people to reckon dates and fix the
periods for Hajj."¹⁹⁸ Also tell them, "It is no virtue to enter
your houses from their backs (during the Hajj days); real
virtue is that one should refrain from incurring the displeasure
of Allah; so enter your houses by their proper doors, and
fear Allah so that you may gain (true) success."¹⁹⁹

And fight in the way of Allah with those who fight against 190-192
you²⁰⁰ but do not commit aggression because Allah does not
like aggressors.²⁰¹ Fight against them wherever they con-
front you in combat and drive them out from where they
drove you out. Though killing is bad, persecution is worse
than killing.²⁰² Do not fight against them near the Masjid-i-

Ḥarām unless they attack you there. And if they attack you first (even in that sacred area), strike them (without any hesitation); this is the due punishment for such disbelievers. If, however, they desist from fighting (you should also do likewise), and know that Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.²⁰³

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subsequent verse which superseded it was revealed a year later but was inserted here because it dealt with the same matter.

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 Holy Prophet observed fasts and some did not when they were on a journey with him and neither raised any objection against the other. The Holy Prophet himself sometimes observed fasts on a journey and sometimes did not. Once he saw people gathered round a man who had fallen to the ground and asked what the matter was with him. The Holy Prophet 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, he used to issue orders for postponing the fasts. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar related that they did not observe fasts twice during the month of Ramaḍān when they went to war under the command of the Holy Prophet, that is, 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 Holy Prophet 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 Holy Prophet 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 fasts may be postponed for that distance which is commonly understood to be a journey and in which one begins to feel to be on a journey. One may also leave the fast on the day one has to start on a journey.

There is a difference of opinion as to the postponement of the fasts for the residents of a place which is attacked by an enemy but Imām Ibn Taimiyyah maintained with strong arguments that the postponement of the fasts under such circumstance 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 Ramaḍān alone 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 Qurān during the month of Ramaḍān.

It is clear from this verse that fasting in Ramaḍān has been prescribed not only as a form of worship and a training for piety, but also

to show gratitude for the great favour of the Revelation of the Qurān during the month of Ramaḍān. And the best way to show gratitude for a favour is to fulfil the object for which it has been bestowed and to prepare oneself for its completion as best as one can. The object for which Allah has bestowed the Qurān upon us is to reveal His will so that we may fulfil it ourselves and persuade others to do the same. Fasting provides the best training for the fulfilment of this object and is both a devotion and a sign of gratitude for the favour shown in the form of the Qurān.

188. It means: "Though you cannot see Me and feel Me with your senses, 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 requests before Me wherever he may be. 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 go 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 the powers and authority, so near to hear and answer you that you need no recommendation or intercession for making any request anywhere and 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 from you this truth and adopt the right attitude, in which lies their own good."

190. The relation between husband and wife is like that between clothes and the body. Just as they are close to and fit into each other and nothing intervenes between them, in the same way, husband and wife are closely related to each other and are a source of mutual comfort to each other.

191. Although at first there was no clear injunction forbidding intercourse between husband and wife during the nights of Ramaḍān, 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 warned them of their dishonest behaviour 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 Ramaḍān. Some were of the opinion that eating and drinking was prohibited after the 'Ishā' (night) prayer up to the sunset of the next day. Others thought that one was permitted to eat and drink as long as one kept awake after the 'Ishā' 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.

The Holy Prophet also directed 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 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 mid-day and mid-night 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.

194. 'Complete your fast till nightfall' means "Your fast ends where the boundary of the night begins." It is also obvious that the boundary line of the night begins at the 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 one's 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 Holy Prophet 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 finish the meal." Likewise he is enjoined to break the fast without delay

as soon as the dark line of the night appears in the east.

195. *I'tikāf* is a special voluntary practice of devotion, during the last ten days of the month of Ramaḍān. 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 not to leave the mosque except to attend to the call of nature, etc.

196. The wording of the Commandment about the extreme limits is very significant. It does not only prohibit their transgression but also warns one not even to go near them. It is very dangerous to roam about 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 Holy Prophet 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, 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, some people, who are ignorant of the Islamic law, persist in going to the extreme limits and some "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.

197. This verse has two aspects. One should not try to seize the property of others by bribing the judges and one should not go to the court of law to seize the property of others through specious arguments. It is just possible that the judge might decide, on the basis of available evidence, in favour of the transgressor, but it does not mean that the property has thereby really become lawful for him. The Holy Prophet 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 favour. 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 favour."

198. The phases of the moon have always 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, 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 Holy Prophet concerning the same thing. Allah answered their question and

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الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَاتِ قِصَاصٌ ۗ فَمَنْ
 اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ ۖ وَانْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا
 بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ ۗ وَأَحْسِنُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَ
 اتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ ۗ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ۗ وَ
 لَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ ۗ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا
 أَوْ بِهِ آذَىٰ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّنْ صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ ۗ فَإِذَا
 أَمِنْتُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ۗ فَمَنْ
 لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ ۗ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ
 كَامِلَةٌ ۗ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلَهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٤٦﴾ الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ ۗ 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 ﴿١٤٧﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ ۗ فَإِذَا
 أَقَضْتُمْ مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ ۖ وَاذْكُرُوا كَمَا
 هَدَاكُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ ثُمَّ أَيْضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ
 أَقَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٩﴾ فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ
 مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا ۗ فَمِنَ النَّاسِ
 مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ﴿١٥٠﴾ وَ

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وَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Go on fighting with them till there is no more a state of 193
tribulation and Allah's way is established instead.²⁰⁴ Then if
they desist from it, there should be no more hostility except
against those who had been guilty of cruelty and brutality.²⁰⁵

A prohibited month is to be respected, if the same is 194
respected (by the enemy),²⁰⁶ and likewise there is the law of
just retribution for the violation of all prohibited things.
Therefore if anyone transgresses a prohibition by attacking
you, you may do likewise, but always fear Allah and bear in
mind that Allah is with those who desist from breaking
Allah's bounds.

Spend your wealth in the Way of Allah and do not cast 195
yourselves into ruin with your own hands.²⁰⁷ Do all things
gracefully, for Allah loves those who do all things with ex-
cellence.²⁰⁸

When you make up your mind to perform Ḥaj and 196
'Umrāh, accomplish these to please Allah. But if you are
hemmed in somewhere then offer to Allah whatever sacrifice
you can afford.²⁰⁹ And do not shave your heads until the
sacrifice reaches its place.²¹⁰ But whoever among you is sick
or has an ailment of the head and has his head shaved shall
atone for this either by fasting or by alms-giving or by
offering a sacrifice.²¹¹ However, when you are secure²¹²
(and you reach Makkah before the Ḥaj season begins),
whoever takes advantage of this opportunity to perform
'Umrāh shall offer the sacrifice that he can afford. But
if he cannot afford a sacrifice, he shall fast three days during
the Ḥaj season and seven days after reaching home, that is,
ten days in all. This concession is only for those whose homes
are not near the Masjid-i-Ḥarām,²¹³ refrain from trans-
gressing these Commandments of Allah and know it well that
Allah is very severe in punishment.

The months for Ḥaj are well known to all; whoever 197-200
makes up his mind to perform Ḥaj during these fixed months,
let him totally abstain from all sorts of sexual indulgence,²¹⁴
wickedness²¹⁵ and wrangling²¹⁶ during the Ḥaj; and re-
member that Allah knows whatever good you do. Take
necessary provisions for Ḥaj, and piety is the best of all

provisions : so refrain from disobeying Me, O men of understanding !²¹⁷ And there is nothing wrong if you seek the bounty of your Lord during the pilgrimage.²¹⁸ Moreover, when you return from 'Arafāt, stay at Mash'ar-i-Harām (Muzdalifah) and remember Allah. And remember Him just as He has enjoined you, for you had gone astray before this.²¹⁹ Then return from where others return and ask Allah's forgiveness.²²⁰ Most surely He is Forgiving and Merciful. And when you have performed your Haj rites, remember Allah as you had been remembering your own forefathers, or even with greater zeal.²²¹ (Even those who remember Allah do it in different ways.) Some say, "Our Lord, give us all the good things here in this world." Such people shall have no share in the Hereafter.

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informed them that the phases of the moon were nothing more than a natural calendar. Haj 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 Haj and 'Umrāh and war was suspended and the routes were made safe, and business flourished on account of peace.

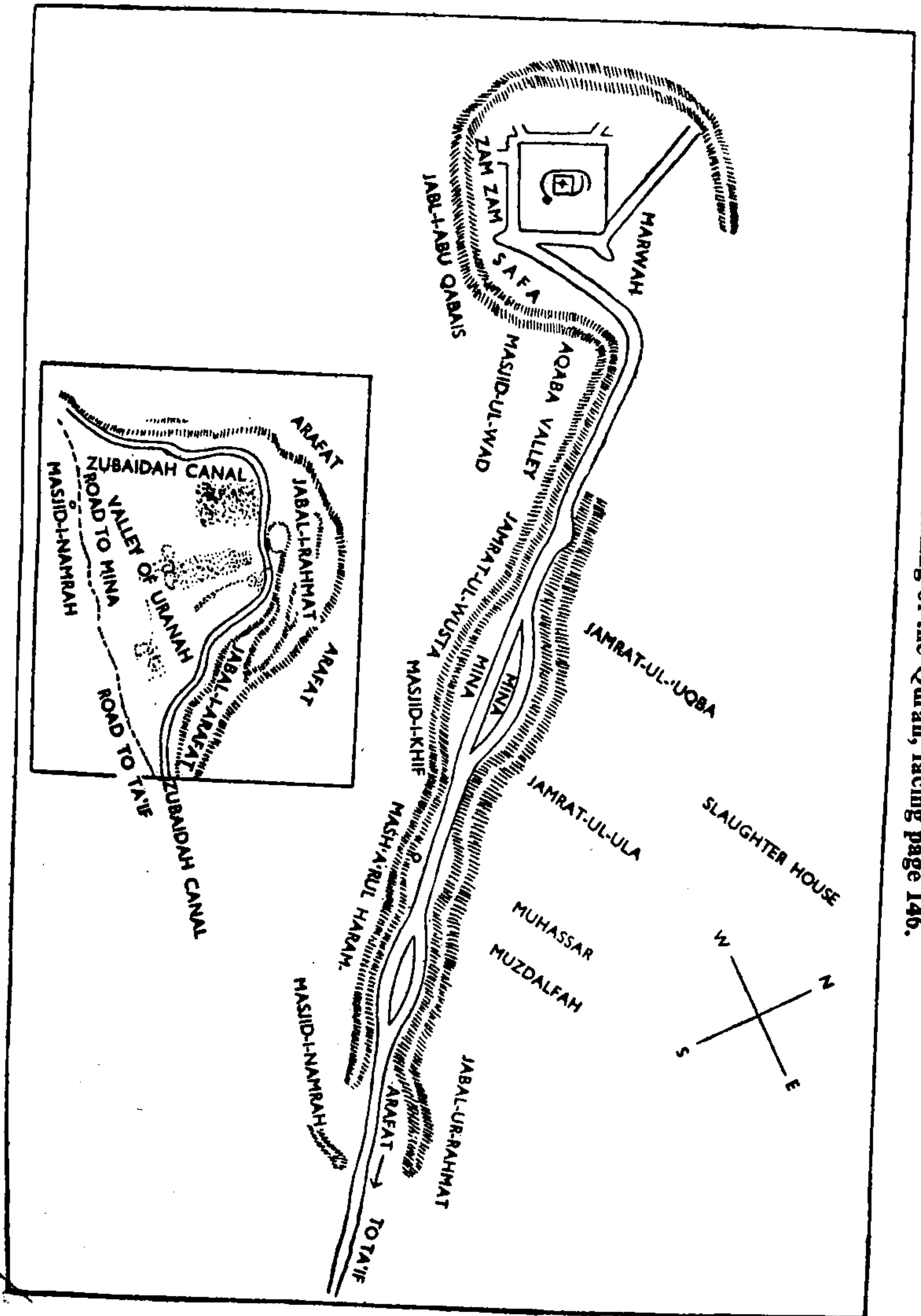
199. This was one of their superstitious customs. As soon as they put on the *Ihrām*, the ceremonial dress for Haj, they would not enter their houses by the front doors, but would jump over the walls from the back of their houses. In this verse, Allah has not only refuted this superstitious custom but warned also that virtue has nothing to do with the superstitious rites and customs which were being practised merely in blind imitation of their forefathers.

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-Madīnah 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 Holy Prophet gave detailed instructions for keeping the war humane. He asked the Muslims

Map II (Showing the places to be visited in connection with Haj)
 The Meaning of the Qurān, facing page 146.



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 dishonouring 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.

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 which are 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, yet 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 than this. Therefore it is also lawful and justifiable to use force against such people as resort to brute force instead of argument.

203. That is, "You should create in yourselves those qualities which are the attributes of Allah in Whom you believe. He forgives even the worst offenders and criminals and shows mercy to them. You should also 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, then you should also stop fighting."

204. In this verse the word "*fitnah*" has been used in a different sense from the one in verse 191. It is quite obvious from the context in which it occurs that here it denotes that condition of 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 '*din*' which has been translated here into "way" originally means "submission" and is technically used for that 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 of man over man and in which it is not possible for anyone to follow the Way of Allah is *fitnah*. The aim of Islam in a war 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 blasphemy 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 one chooses and worship or not worship anything or anyone. 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 war for this purpose. On the other hand, it does not allow any one the right to enforce any ungodly law on the servants of Allah and make them 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 cannot, therefore, 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 from it, there should be no more hostility except against those who might be guilty of cruelty and brutality," it has been deduced that when Islamic rule replaces ungodly rule, there should be a general amnesty save for those who were extremely cruel and tyrannous in opposing the Truth. Although it behoves the believers to show forgiveness at the time of victory, yet they are perfectly justified in punishing those who break all limits in their blind opposition and persecution. The Holy Prophet, who was an embodiment of mercy and clemency, himself availed of this permission and sentenced to death two prisoners of war taken in the battle of Badr. It may also be mentioned in this connection that, 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.

206. This verse answered the question that rose about fighting during the four sacred months of the lunar year, that is, Zul-Qa'adah, Zul-Hijjah and Muharram dedicated to Haj and Rajab to 'Umrāh. These were called the prohibited months because ever since the time of Prophet Abraham, 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 Ka'abah 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.

207. "To spend in the Way 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. As a result of this, Allah will set the unbelievers to dominate over you in this world and condemn you in the next world for not spending the wealth given by Him in His Way."

208. A true Muslim is one who works for the love of Allah. If one loves Allah sincerely and deeply, one will put one's whole heart, mind, soul, body and one's resources into His work. Such a person will not rest content with the mere performance of a duty which requires nothing more than the fear of Allah, but will exert his utmost to do it with excellence for the love of Allah.

209. That is, "In case you are prevented from proceeding on to the Ka'abah and are obliged to break your journey, you should make offering of any animal, camel, cow, goat etc., to Allah."

210. There is a difference of opinion as to what is meant here by "its place". According to the Hanafī school of thought, it refers to the bounds of Masjid-i-Harām, the House of Allah. If a person is prevented on the way, he should send the animal or money to buy one to be sacrificed there on his behalf. According to Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'ī, the sacrifice should be made at the place where one has been prevented.

211. According to a Tradition, the Holy Prophet directed that in such a case, one should observe fast for three days or feed six indigent persons or sacrifice at least one goat.

212. Security 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 Haj at that time. Just as "prevention" includes all the causes which prevent one from performing Haj, in the same way security includes the removal of all the causes of prevention.

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

In order to understand the references to the Haj rites in the succeeding verses, it will be worthwhile to state these briefly. The pilgrims should put on the pilgrims' garment (*iḥrām*) as soon as they reach a *mīqāt*, one

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مِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا
 عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾
 وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ ۖ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ
 عَلَيْهِ ۖ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا
 أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
 الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ ۖ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ
 سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
 الْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ
 جَهَنَّمُ ۖ وَلَيْسَ الْبِهَادُ ﴿٢٠٦﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ
 مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا
 فِي السَّلَامِ كَافَّةً ۖ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾
 فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٩﴾
 هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَ
 قُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٢١٠﴾ سَلِّ بِنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ
 مِنْ آيَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ ۗ وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ
 اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢١١﴾ زَيْنٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ
 مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ۗ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ
 مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢١٢﴾ كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ۗ فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ
 النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ ۖ وَأَنْزَلَ مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ

النصف

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وقف لازم

Then there are others who say, "Our Lord, give us what is good in this world and also what is good in the Hereafter and save us from the torment of Fire." Such people shall have their due share (in both the worlds) according to what they earn. And Allah is swift at settling accounts. So pass these appointed days in remembering Allah; then there is nothing wrong if one hastens on (from Minā) after two days or stays there (a day) longer,²²² provided that he spends these days in piety. Fear Allah and do not disobey Him and remember that One Day you shall be mustered before Him. 201-203

There is a certain type of man who charms you in this worldly life with his glib talk. He calls Allah to witness again and again that he cherishes good intentions in his heart,²²³ whereas, in fact he is the deadliest opponent²²⁴ of the Truth. When he gets power²²⁵ he directs all his efforts towards spreading corruption in the land, destroying harvests and killing the human race—whereas Allah (Whom he makes his witness) does not like corruption. And when it is said to him, "Fear Allah," vanity seizes him and makes him adhere to the sin. Hell is the proper place for such a person and it is a very bad dwelling indeed. On the other side, there is another type of man who devotes his whole life to please Allah, and Allah is gracious to such of His servants. O Believers, enter completely into Islam²²⁶ and do not follow the footsteps of Satan for he is your avowed enemy. If you lapse back after receiving the clear teachings that have come to you, know it well that Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise.²²⁷ (If people do not follow the right way even after receiving such clear admonitions), do they await that Allah Himself should come down to them in the canopies of clouds with a retinue of angels, and seal their doom?²²⁸ Ultimately every thing shall be presented before Allah (for judgment). 204-210

Ask the children of Israel how many a clear sign We have shown to them : (also ask them) what a severe chastisement Allah inflicts on the community that after receiving Allah's favour exchanges it (for wretchedness). 211

This worldly life has been made very charming and alluring for those who have adopted the way of disbelief. So they mock at those, who have adopted the way of belief, but 212

(they forget that) the pious people will rank above them on the Day of Resurrection. As to the worldly riches, Allah has full authority and power to bestow these without measure on anyone He wills.

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of the fixed points on all the roads to Makkah. After this they should abide by the code prescribed for Ḥaj. If on reaching Makkah, a pilgrim wished to perform 'Umrāh, he might then put off *Iḥrām* and release himself from restrictions imposed by it up to the 7th of Zul-Ḥijjah. On the 8th, he should again put on *Iḥrām* at Makkah and go to Minā, a valley, about six miles from there. On the 9th he should proceed to the valley of 'Arafāt, which is about five miles further from Minā and stay there up to the evening. Then he should return to Mash'ar-i-Ḥarām (Muzdalifah) which is midway between 'Arafāt and Minā, 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 Minā and offer sacrifice there. After this he should put off the *Iḥrām* and return to Makkah and perform *Tawwāf-i-Ziārat* (going round the Ka'abah). Then he should go to Minā and stay there for two or three days. The three days (from the 11th to the 13th of Zul-Ḥijjah) are called the days of "*Tashrīq*."

214. During the course of Ḥaj, 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 every time, they become all the more heinous when they are committed during the course of Ḥaj.

216. One cannot rebuke even a servant.

217. This verse removes a wrong notion of piety.

Before the advent of Islam, it was considered to be a worldly act to take provisions for the pilgrimage journey and it was expected that a pious man would go to the House of Allah without any worldly goods. It is declared here that it is no virtue to go without provisions on a pilgrimage to Makkah. Real virtue is that one should fear God, obey Him and keep one's life pure. Even if a pilgrim does not take any provisions with him, but at the same time commits evil deeds without any fear of Allah, he makes a profitless show of piety. In the sight of Allah and man, such a man will dishonour 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 honour with Allah and man, though he may provided himself fully with provisions.

218. The Arabs had another wrong notion about Ḥaj. They considered it a worldly thing to do any kind of business during the Ḥaj season. The Qurān 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 practise along with the worship of Allah. Now worship Allah exclusively in accordance with the Guidance He has revealed."

220. Ever since the time of Abraham and Ismā'il (may Allah's peace be upon them), all pilgrims used to go to 'Arafāt from Minā on the 9th of Zul-Hijjah for the performance of Haj and then returned from there to Muzdalifah on the evening of the same day. But later on the Quraish established their own priesthood and arrogantly asserted, "It is below our dignity to go to 'Arafāt along with other people 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 'Arafāt. Then this distinction was extended to their relatives and allies as well and they also would not proceed to 'Arafāt. In this verse the same privilege of distinction and pride has been abolished and all the people have been enjoined to accompany other people to perform the essential ceremonials along with them before coming back to Makkah. They were also told to ask Allah's forgiveness for their past behaviour which was against the way of Abraham.

221. After performing their Haj, the Arabs used to hold meetings in Minā and brag about their own achievements and those of their forefathers. Here they were told to give up these customs of ignorance which they practised at Minā, and pass their time in remembering and praising Allah instead of singing the praises of their ancestors.

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

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 the glib talk of this worldly-wise man is hypocritical.

224. He is "the deadliest opponent of the Truth," 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 oath in the name of Allah.

225. It may also mean, "When he returns to everyday life after this glib talk. . ."

بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۗ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ
 مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
 مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٧١٣﴾ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا
 مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ ۗ مَسَّتْهُمْ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ
 وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرَ اللَّهُ ۗ الْآ إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٧١٤﴾
 يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۗ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَ
 الْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالسَّبِيلِ ۗ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
 فإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧١٥﴾ كَتَبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَكُمْ ۗ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ
 تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۗ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ ۗ
 وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧١٦﴾ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ
 فِيهِ ۗ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ ۗ وَصَدٌّ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالسَّجْدِ
 الْحَرَامِ ۗ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ ۗ
 وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ إِنْ اسْتَطَاعُوا ۗ وَمَنْ
 يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فِيمَتٍ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ
 فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٧١٧﴾ إِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ
 رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٧١٨﴾ يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخُمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ ۗ قُلْ
 فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ ذُو إِثْمِهِمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا ۗ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ

In the beginning all the people followed the same way. 213
 (Afterwards there came a change and differences arose.)
 Then Allah sent Prophets to give good tidings to those who followed the Right Way and warnings to those who swerved from it.²²⁹ And He sent down with them the Book based on the Truth so that it should judge between the people concerning their differences.—(Differences arose not because people were not given the knowledge of the Truth in the beginning, nay), differences arose between those very people who had been given clear teachings, and (for no other reason than that) they wanted to tyrannize over one another.²³⁰ So Allah, by His leave, guided those who believed in the Prophets to the Truth about which they had differed; Allah guides whomever He pleases to the Right Way.

Do²³¹ you think that you will enter Paradise without 214
 undergoing such trials as were experienced by the believers before you? They met with adversity and affliction and were so shaken by trials that the Prophet of the time and his followers cried out, “When will Allah’s help come”— (Then they were comforted with the good tidings): “Yes, Allah’s help is near.”

The people ask, “What should we spend?” Tell them, 215
 “Whatever you spend, spend for your parents, your relatives, orphans, the needy and the wayfarer; and whatever good you do, Allah has knowledge of it.”

You have been enjoined to go to war, and you dislike 216
 it; it may be that you dislike a thing and the same is good for you, and you love a thing and the same is bad for you : Allah knows but you do not.

They ask you (O Muhammad) concerning warfare in the 217-218
 prohibited month. Say, “Fighting is a heinous offence in this month, but in the sight of Allah it is far worse to hinder people from the Way of Allah and to deny Him and to prevent His worshippers from visiting the Masjid-i-Harām, and to expel the dweller of the Sacred place from it; and persecution is far worse than bloodshed.”²³² As for them, they will go on fighting with you till they succeed in turning you away from your Faith, if they can. But (note it well)

that whosoever renounces his Faith and dies a renegade, all his works shall be fruitless both in this world and in the Hereafter. All such people deserve Fire and shall abide in Hell for ever.²³³ In contrast to them, those, who have believed and left their homes in the way of Allah and exerted their utmost in His cause,²³⁴ rightly look forward to His mercy : and Allah is Forgiving and full of mercy.

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."

227. That is, "He has full power to punish criminals and knows how to deal with them."

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 naked 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 recognise 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 Judgement.

229. The Muslims have been told to enquire about it specially 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 favoured with Prophethood and Scriptures and had been entrusted with leadership for the guidance of the world but they had deprived themselves of this favour (leadership) by 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.

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 and started with nature-worship and polytheism : then by and by he began to worship God, but associated other gods with Him : this went on for a long time and at last he recognised and accepted the Oneness of God. But the Qurān 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 shares 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.

231. A whole story has been left between this verse and the preceding one, for this verse itself implies it and because it had already been related in detail in the sūrahs 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.

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 Holy Prophet sent a detachment of eight men to Nakhlah, a place midway between Makkah and Ṭā'if. He told them to watch the

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مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۗ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ ۗ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٧﴾ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَىٰ ۗ قُلِ إِصْلَاحٌ
 لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَآخِوَانُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ ۗ
 وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَاعْنَتَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾ وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ حَتَّىٰ
 يُؤْمِنَ ۗ وَلَا مَآءَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ ۗ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ ۗ وَلَا تُنكِحُوا
 الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا ۗ وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ ۗ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ ۗ
 أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى التَّارِخِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْبِرَّةِ وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ
 وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٩﴾ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ ۗ قُلِ
 هُوَ آذَىٰ ۗ فَاعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ ۗ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهَرْنَ ۗ فَإِذَا
 تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ
 الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ﴿٢٧٠﴾ نِسَاءُكُمْ حَرَّتْ لَكُمْ ۗ فَأْتُوا حُرَّتَكُمْ أَنْى شِئْتُمْ ۗ وَقَدِّمُوا
 لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُّسْلِقُونَ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧١﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا
 اللَّهُ عُرْضَةً لِإِيمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٢﴾ لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ ۗ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا
 كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٣﴾ لِلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ تَرَبُّصُ
 أَرْبَعَةِ أَشْهُرٍ ۗ فَإِنْ فَاءُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٤﴾ وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ
 فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٥﴾ وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ ۗ وَلَا
 يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ
 وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ وَبَعُولَتُهُنَّ أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا ۗ

They ask you about drinking and gambling. Say, 219-220
 "There is great harm in both, though there is some benefit also for people. But the harm of the sin thereof is far greater than their benefit."²³⁵

And they ask, "What ought we to spend (in the way of Allah)"? Say, "Spend whatever you can spare." Thus Allah makes His commands clear to you so that you may think about the good of both this world and the Hereafter.

They ask you about the right way of dealing with orphans. Say, "The right way is that which is for their good."²³⁶ Then there is no harm if you live a common life with them, for they are after all your own brethren. Allah knows well the one who means harm and also the one who means good. If Allah had willed, He would have been hard upon you in this matter for He is All-Powerful but He is at the same time All-Wise.

Do not marry *mushrik* women unless they believe; a slave 221
 woman who believes is better than a free woman who does not believe, even though the latter may appear very attractive to you. (Likewise) do not wed your women to *mushrik* men unless they believe; a slave man who believes is better than a free man who does not, even though he may be very pleasing to you. These *mushrik* people invite you to the Fire²³⁷ while Allah by His grace invites you to the Garden and His pardon, and He makes His revelations plain to the people so that they should learn a lesson and follow the admonition.

They ask about the monthly course. Say, "It is a state 222-223
 of impurity;²³⁸ so keep apart from women during their monthly course and do not go near them until they are clean.²³⁹ When they have cleansed themselves, then you may go to them in the manner Allah has enjoined you."²⁴⁰ Most surely Allah loves those people who refrain from evil and keep themselves pure and clean. Your wives are your tilth : so you may go to your tilth as you please,²⁴¹ but you should take care of your future²⁴² and refrain from the displeasure of Allah. Know it well that One Day you shall meet Him. (O Prophet !) bear good tidings to the Believers.

Do not use Allah's name for such oaths which are taken 224-225
 to keep back from virtue, piety and the welfare of mankind;²⁴³

Allah hears everything you utter and knows everything. Allah does not call you to account for unintentional and meaningless oaths,²⁴⁴ but will surely take you to task for oaths taken deliberately and in earnest : Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing.

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Those who take an oath to keep apart from their wives are given four months (for a final decision).²⁴⁵ Then if they resume their relations, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.²⁴⁶ And if they resolve on divorce,²⁴⁷ (let them remember that) Allah hears everything and knows everything.

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movements of the enemy 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-Madīnah 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 Sha'abān had commenced, it was doubtful whether the attack was made in Rajab, a prohibited month, or in Sha'abān. Nevertheless, the Quraish and their secret allies, the Jews and the doublefaced "Muslims" of Al-Madīnah, 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 Ka'abah, 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 Holy Prophet, 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 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 unauthorised 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-Madīnah who approved of this act of theirs.

233. Some simple-minded Muslims considered 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 that they should not under-rate 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.

234. The Arabic word '*jihād*' 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 *mujāhid* 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 of such a person will be technically *Jihād*. 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 *Jihād*. It has thus become clear that the *Jihād* of a Muslim is *not* "general war of extermination against infidels".

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 prayers when they were drunk. Finally drinking, gambling and the like were all made absolutely unlawful. (Please refer to IV : 43 and V : 90).

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 Holy Prophet 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.

237. The reason why the believers have been prohibited from marrying *mushrik* spouses is that 'they invite you to the Fire'. This means that such marriages might mislead the Muslim spouses to the ways of *shirk*, for the relations between the husband and the 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 and her family and their offsprings in favour of the Islamic way of life. But it is equally possible that the *mushrik* spouse may imbue the Muslim spouse, his (and 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.

238. The Arabic word "*azā*" stands both for illness and uncleanness. 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 Qurān 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 Holy Prophet explained that this commandment meant only to prohibit intercourse with them during menses. All other relations with them may be continued as before.

240. The Arabic word *amr* does not refer to any legal regulation but to the natural instinct that has been embedded in the nature of every human being and animal and is known to everyone.

241. Allah has not made women merely for the enjoyment 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 this 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 they may imply : You must take special pains to bring up and train your children on the right lines. 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.

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. (Please see V : 89).

244. There is neither expiation for those oaths that one utters unawares as a byword nor is there any punishment for them.

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 called "*ilā'*" in the Islamic code of Law. During this period they must either make a 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 Hanafī and Shafī'i 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 Mālikī school of thought are of the opinion that the maximum period of four months applies to all cases of separation. A saying of Imām Aḥmad also supports this opinion.

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās and Ḥasan Baṣrī 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 *ilā'* 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, in that case there would be no expiation for this; Allah will forgive the breach

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وَ لَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَ
 اللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَيْنِ ۖ فَاِمْسَاكٌ بِمَعْرُوفٍ اَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ ۚ
 بِاِحْسَانٍ ۗ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ اَنْ تَاْخُذُوْا مِمَّا اَتَيْتُمُوْهُنَّ شَيْئًا اِلَّا اَنْ يَخَافَا
 اَلَّا يُقِيْمَا حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ ۗ فَاِنْ خِفْتُمْ اَلَّا يُقِيْمَا حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ فَاَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا
 فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهٖ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوْهَا ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُوْدَ
 اللّٰهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَاِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهٗ مِنْ بَعْدِ حَتٰى
 تَتَّكِفَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَةً ۗ فَاِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا اَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا اِنْ ظَنَّا
 اَنْ يُقِيْمَا حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ ۗ وَ تِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَاِذَا
 طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ اَجَلَهُنَّ فَاُمْسِكُوْهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ اَوْ سَرِّحُوْهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ
 وَلَا تُمْسِكُوْهُنَّ ضِرَارًا لِّتَعْتَدُوْا ۗ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ ۗ وَ
 لَا تَتَّخِذُوْا اٰيَاتِ اللّٰهِ هُزُوًا ۗ وَاذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ وَمَا اَنْزَلَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتٰبِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهٖ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۗ وَاعْلَمُوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ
 بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ اَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوْهُنَّ
 اَنْ يَتَّخِذْنَ اَزْوَاجَهُنَّ اِذَا تَرَاضَوْا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ ذٰلِكَ يُوعِظُ بِهٖ
 مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ۗ ذٰلِكُمْ اَزْكٰى لَكُمْ وَ اَطْهَرُ ۗ
 وَ اللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَ اَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالْوَالِدٰتُ يُرْضِعْنَ اَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ
 كَامِلَيْنِ اِمَنْ اَرَادَ اَنْ يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ ۗ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُوْدِ لَهٗ رِزْقُهِنَّ وَ
 كِسُوْتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ لَا تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسٌ اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۗ لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ
 بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُوْدٌ لَهٗ بِوَلَدِيْهٖ ۗ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذٰلِكَ ۗ فَاِنْ اَرَادَا

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Divorced women must wait for three monthly courses. 228
And it is not lawful for them to hide what Allah has created in their wombs, if they sincerely believe in Allah and the Last Day. Their husbands are best entitled to take²⁴⁸ them back as their wives during this waiting period, if they desire reconciliation.²⁴⁹

Wives have the same rights as the husbands have on them in accordance with the generally known principles. Of course, men are a degree above them in status, and above all is Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Wise.

Divorce may be pronounced twice ; then keep the wife 229
with honour or let her leave gracefully.²⁵⁰

And it is not lawful for you to take back anything out of what you have given them.²⁵¹ There is, however, an exception to this; if you fear that they might not be able to keep within the limits imposed by Allah, there is no harm if both agree mutually that the wife should obtain divorce by giving something as compensation to the husband.²⁵² These are the limits imposed by Allah ; therefore do not violate them, for those who violate the limits of Allah are the transgressors.

And if the husband divorces his wife (for the third time), 230
she shall not remain his lawful wife after this (absolute) divorce, unless she marries another husband and the second husband divorces her.²⁵³ (In that case) there is no harm if they re-marry, provided that the woman and her first husband are convinced that they will be able to keep within the bounds fixed by Allah. And these are Allah's bounds, which He makes clear for the guidance of those who know (the consequences of transgression).

And when you have divorced your wives and they are 231
about to complete their prescribed term, then either retain them gracefully or release them generously. It is transgression to retain them merely for harassment; and whoever does that really wrongs his own self.²⁵⁴ Do not play with Allah's Commandments, and remember that Allah has blessed you with a great favour. He admonishes you to show due respect to the Book and the Wisdom He has sent to you.²⁵⁵

Fear Allah and know that He is fully aware of everything.

- 232 When you have divorced your wives absolutely and they have completed their prescribed term, then you should not prevent them from marrying their prospective husbands, if they mutually agree to marry each other in a lawful way.²⁵⁶ You are enjoined not to commit such an offence, if you sincerely believe in Allah and the Last Day. It is most decent and pure for you to desist from this thing :

Allah knows and you know not.

- 233 The (divorced) mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years, if the fathers desire the suckling to be completed.²⁵⁷ In that case the father of the child shall, in the fair known way, be responsible for their food and clothing. But none should be burdened with more than one can bear : neither the mother should be pressed unjustly (to accept unfair terms) just because she is the mother nor should the father be burdened just because he is the father.—And the same responsibility for the maintenance of the mother devolves upon the father of the child and his heir.²⁵⁸—There is no harm if they wean the child by mutual consent and consultation. Moreover, there is no harm if you choose to give your children a suckle by a wet nurse, provided that you pay her fairly. Fear Allah and know it well that whatever you do is in the sight of Allah.

Contd. from p. 163]

of their oath without expiation. But the majority of the 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 the wrong done against each other during their separation.

247. According to the verdict of Caliph 'Uthmān, Ibn Mas'ūd, Zaid bin Thābit and some other jurists, 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. If, however, both of them agree, they remarry. There is a verdict to the same effect from Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar and the jurists of the Ḥanafī school have accepted the same.

Ḥaḍrat Sa'id bin Musayyib, Makḥ-ūl 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.

On the other hand, 'Ā'ishah, Abud-Darda and many other jurists of Al-Madīnah 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 a verdict of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Alī and Ibn 'Umar to this effect and this has been accepted by Imām Mālik and Imām Shafī'i also.

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. The Ḥanafī jurists are of the opinion that 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 Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Mūsā Ash'arī, Ibn Mas'ūd and some other Companions of the first rank. The Shafī'i and Mālikī jurists, however, are of the opinion 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 Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ibn 'Umar and Zaid bin Thābit. It must, however, be clearly understood that the husband retains the right of reunion only in that case when he has pronounced one divorce or two divorces, but he forfeits the right of reunion when he pronounces three divorces.

250. This 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 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 Qurān 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, that 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 Qurān and the Traditions is this : 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 after she is cleansed, if he so wishes. 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

[*Contd. on p. 172*]

فَصَالًا عَنِ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ
 تَسْرِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا اتَّيْتُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَتَقُوا
 اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٢٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَ
 يَذُرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ
 أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
 تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٢٣﴾ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ
 أَوْ أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ
 سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ۗ وَتَعَزَّمُوا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ
 الْكِتَابَ أَجَلَهُ ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا
 أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٤﴾ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمْ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ
 أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً ۗ وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ قَدَرَهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ
 قَدَرَهُ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٢٥﴾ وَإِنْ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ
 قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ
 يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوا الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عُقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ ۗ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ
 وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٢٦﴾ حِفْظُوا عَلَى
 الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ ۗ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ﴿٢٢٧﴾ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرِجَالًا
 أَوْ رُكْبَانًا ۗ فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُمْ مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢٨﴾
 وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذُرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا ۗ وَصِيَّةٌ لِأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَّتَاعًا
 إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ ۗ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي

If those of you, who die, leave wives behind, they should abstain (from marriage) for four months and ten days.²⁵⁹ Then when their waiting term expires, they are free to do whatever they choose for themselves, provided that it is decent; you shall not be answerable for this ; Allah is fully aware of what all of you do. It is no offence if you make indirect proposal of marriage to widows during their waiting term or keep it concealed in your hearts : for Allah knows that you will naturally think of them. But be careful not to make any secret engagement. If you have to do anything, do it in an honourable way. And you should not settle anything finally about the marriage until the waiting term expires. Understand it well that Allah knows even what is hidden in your hearts ; so fear Him. Also know that Allah is lenient and forgives significant things. 234-235

It is no sin if you divorce your wives while you have not yet touched them or fixed any dowry for them. In such a case, pay them something anyhow.²⁶⁰ A rich man should pay fairly according to his means and a poor man according to his resources, for this is an obligation on the righteous people. In case you fixed a dowry for them and then divorced them before you touched them, you should pay half of the fixed dowry. But there is no harm if the woman agrees to forego it or the man, in whose hands is the marriage tie, is generous enough (to pay the dowry in full). And if you (men) act generously, it is akin to piety. Do not forget to show generosity in your dealings²⁶¹ with one another for Allah sees what you do. 236-237

Take great care of your Prayers,²⁶² especially of a Prayer that has excellent qualities of Ṣalāt²⁶³ and stand before Allah like devoted servants. Even if you are in danger, you must offer your Prayers anyhow—on foot or on horseback. And when you have peace again, remember Allah in that manner He has taught you, which you did not know before. 238-239

Those²⁶⁴ of you, who shall die and leave wives behind them, should make a will to the effect that they should be provided with a year's maintenance and should not be turned out of their homes. But if they leave their homes 240-241

أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَّعْرُوفٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَلِلْمُطَلَّاتِ مَتَاعٌ بِالمَعْرُوفِ
 حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ 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
 النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ
 عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضْعِفُهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً
 وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْضُطُ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ مِنْ بَنِي
 إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّ لَهُمْ ابْعَثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نُقَاتِلَ
 فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا
 قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا
 وَابْتِغَاءَ فَلَئِمَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ
 بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا
 قَالُوا آتِنَا آيَةً يُكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ
 يُؤْتِ سَعَةً مِّنَ الْمَالِ ۗ قَالَ إِنْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ اصْطِفَاكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ
 بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلِكًا مَّن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ
 عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ
 سَكِينَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ
 الْمَلَائِكَةُ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ
 طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ ۗ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ ۗ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ

of their own accord, you shall not be answerable for whatever they choose for themselves in a fair way; Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. Likewise, the divorced women should also be given something in accordance with the known fair standard. This is an obligation upon the God-fearing people.

Thus Allah makes clear His commandments for you : 242
it is expected that you will use your common sense.

Have²⁶⁵ you ever reflected upon the case of those who 243-245
fled their homes for fear of death, and they were thousands in number? So Allah said to them, "Die"; then He again gave them life.²⁶⁶ Indeed Allah is bountiful to mankind, but most of the people are ungrateful.—O Muslims, fight in the way of Allah and know that Allah hears everything and knows everything. Who is there among you who will lend to Allah a good loan²⁶⁷ that He may return it after multiplying it manifold? Allah alone can decrease and increase (wealth) and to Him you shall all return.

Have you also reflected upon the matter concerning the 246
chiefs of the Israelites after (the death of) Moses? They said to their Prophet, "Appoint a king for us so that we may fight in the way of Allah."²⁶⁸ The Prophet asked them, "Might it be that you will not fight, if fighting is prescribed for you?" They replied, "How can it be that we would refuse to fight in the way of Allah when we have been turned out of our homes and separated from our children?" But (in spite of this assurance) when they were enjoined to fight, they all, except a few of them, turned their backs. And Allah knows each and everyone of these transgressors.

Their Prophet said to them, "Allah has appointed Saul²⁶⁹ 247-248
to be the king over you." Hearing this, they replied, "How has he been entitled to become king over us? We have a better right to the kingship than he, for he does not possess even enough riches." The Prophet replied, "Allah has preferred him to you and blessed him with abundant powers of mind and body. And Allah has the power to give His kingdom to whomever He wills : Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing." Their Prophet further informed them, "The sign of his appointment as king from Allah is that during his

reign you will get back the Ark,²⁷⁰ wherein are the means of your peace of mind from your Lord, and which contains the sacred relics of the family of Moses and Aaron, and which is being borne at this time by angels.^{270a} Herein is a great Sign for you, if you are true believers.”

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after the first and second pronouncements for in the case of one of two divorces, the husband retains the right to take her back as his wife after their expiry. But if divorce is pronounced for the third time, the husband forfeits the right to take her back nor can the couple remarry.

As for those ignorant people who pronounce divorce thrice at one and the same sitting, they commit a heinous sin against the Law. The Holy Prophet has very severely denounced this practice and Ḥaḍrat ‘Umar used to whip the husband who pronounced divorce thrice at one and the same sitting.

251. The husband has no right to demand back anything of the dowry 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 another as a present or gift. The Holy Prophet likens this disgraceful behaviour 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 to give her something at her departure. (Please see II : 241).

252. When divorce is obtained by the wife from her husband by compensation, it is called *khula'a* 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 dowry 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 the Muslims, the term for the wife in the case of *khula'a* is the same as that of divorce. But Abū Da-ūd, Tirmizī and Ibn Mājah and others have related Traditions to the effect that the Holy Prophet prescribed only one monthly course as the term for the wife after the divorce, and Caliph ‘Uṭhmān decided a case in accordance with this. (*Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. I, p. 276).

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 prearranged scheme. Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū-Hurairah and Uqbah bin-'Amir, all relate the Tradition to the effect that the Holy Prophet cursed all the persons who indulge in such devices.

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, then he should re-unite with the intention of treating her well; otherwise the best thing would be to release her in a noble way. (Please also refer to E.N. 250).

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, behove 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."

256. That is, "If both agree to re-marry 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 re-united 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 than one should prevent his divorced wife from marrying another man just because he himself has divorced her".

257. This applies to all the cases in which the husband and the wife have separated in any manner (divorce, *khula'a* or judicial separation) and the child is still a suckling.

258. If the father dies, the responsibility of remunerating the mother or wet nurse who suckles the infant lies on the guardian just as it lay on the father.

259. This prescribed term for waiting applies even to those widows who might not have had any intercourse with their husbands. The pregnant widow is, however, an exception to this rule. Her prescribed term is her delivery whether it takes place just after the death of the husband or several months after this.

"They must abstain" implies that they must not re-marry during the term, and should not adorn themselves in any manner during this period. Traditions give clear instructions that widows should not

wear ornaments and coloured 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 or not. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Uthmān, Ibn 'Umar, the four Imāms and many other great jurists are of the opinion that she should reside in the house of the deceased husband. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ibn 'Abbās, 'Alī and some other great jurists are of the opinion that she is free to pass the period wherever she likes.

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.

261. 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.

262. After enunciating rules and regulations for ensuring social welfare and for leading a civilized life, Allah has impressed the importance of Ṣalāt 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 Ṣalāt, 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 "*Ṣalāt-i-wuṣṭā*" 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 "Aṣr Prayer." There is, however, no definite saying of the Holy Prophet in support of these interpretations. Those who are in favour of "Aṣr Prayer" infer their opinion from this Tradition: In the "Battle of Clans," the Holy Prophet was so engaged in repelling the invasion of the enemies that he got no time to offer the "Aṣr Prayer" till sunset. Then he said, "May Allah fill their graves with fire for depriving us of our '*Ṣalāt-i-wuṣṭā*'." From this they infer that by "*Ṣalāt-i-wuṣṭā*" is meant the "Aṣr Prayer." But in my opinion what the Holy Prophet meant by this was that they were responsible for the spiritual loss the Muslims had suffered by their inability to offer their "Aṣr Prayer" in time and with peace of mind. As the Prayer whose loss the Holy Prophet regretted happened to be the "Aṣr Prayer," the interpreters were led to conclude that Ṣalāt-i-Aṣr itself was the *Ṣalāt-i-wuṣṭā*.

The Arabic word "*wuṣṭā*" means both middle and excellent. Thus *Ṣalāt-i-wuṣṭā* 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 Ṣalāt. The subsequent sentence, "Stand before Allah like obedient servants", itself supports the interpretation that it meant an excellent prayer offered to Allah, having all the excellent qualities of Ṣalāt, and not any one particular Prayer out of the five prescribed Prayers.

264. After the end of the discourse, this has been added as an appendix and supplement.

265. From here begins a new address. In this the Muslims have been exhorted to do "Jihād," *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 ago and were living as refugees at Al-Madīnah, 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 (Please refer to II : 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 please see V : 20-26), when they had left Egypt in large numbers and were wandering homelessly in the deserts and wildernesses and were very anxious to find a home for themselves. But when inspired by Allah, Prophet Moses ordered them to fight against the Philistines and expel them from Palestine and conquer that territory, they showed cowardice and refused to march forward. Therefore Allah left them to wander in the land for forty years so that that 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 Philistines. Probably "death and second life" refer to these two aspects of the exodus.

267. "Good 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 to Himself. He promises that He will not only return the actual debt but increase it manifold, provided that it is a goodly loan in the real sense and is lent merely to please Him and for the sake of those objects He approves.

268. This incident has been mentioned here to fore-warn the Muslims about the hardship and trials of Jihād.

About 1000 B.C., the Amalikites tyrannised over the Israelites and usurped many parts of Palestine from them. At that time Prophet Samuel, who was at the helm of the affairs of Israel, had grown very old. So the elders of Israel went to Samuel and said, "You are old. Now appoint a king for us to rule us and march in front of us and fight in the way of God." They asked for a king to rule them like all other nations. They made this demand because under the evil influence of the ir-religious foreign rulers, they had forgotten the very distinction between "Divine Rule" and "kingship." That is why 'the thing 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 vineyards, 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 you; 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.

“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.”

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 Qurān this demand 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 causes 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.

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 : 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 parlour 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 annointed 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 annointed to be leader of Israel at the command of God like Aaron, David and Christ (God's peace be upon them all), but the Qurān or the Traditions do not say explicitly whether he was appointed as a prophet as well. His appointment as king by God does not necessarily mean that he was also made a Prophet.

270. Though the Bible differs a little from the Qurān 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 (shechinah) peace of mind and courage.

The Ark contained the sacred relics of the house of Moses and Aaron. These were the fragments of the tablets given to Moses on the Mount of Sināi. Besides these 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

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مِثْقَىٰ ذُرِّيَّةٍ مِّن لَّدُنِّي ۚ وَمَن لَّمْ يَصْعَقْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِثْقَلُ ذُرِّيَّةٍ مِّن رِّبَا ۚ
 فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ ۚ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ
 قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ ۚ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم
 مُّلِقُوا اللَّهَ ۖ كَوْمًا مِّن فِتْنَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ۚ وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا
 صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ۚ فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ
 اللَّهِ ۖ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ
 مِمَّا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْ لَا دَفَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَّفَسَدَتِ
 الْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ۚ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا
 عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۚ

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّن كَمَلْنَا وَرَفَعْنَا

بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ۗ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ
 الْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ مِّن بَعْدِ مَا
 جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَٰكِن اِخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ آمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ ۗ
 وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلُوا ۗ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ۚ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا شُرَكَاءَ
 وَلَا شَفَاعَةَ ۗ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۗ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ
 لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۗ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ مَن
 ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۗ

And when Saul marched out with his army, he warned : 249-251
 "Allah is going to put you to a test by the side of a river :
 whoso drinks of its water shall cease to be my companion :
 he alone shall be my companion who does not quench his
 thirst with its water : one may, however, take a sip or so out
 of his hand." But in spite of this warning, they all except a
 few of them, drank their fill of it.²⁷¹ Afterwards when Saul,
 and those who had believed with him crossed the river and
 advanced forward, the former said to Saul, "We have no
 power left this day to fight against Goliath and his hosts."²⁷²
 But those who believed that One Day they shall meet Allah,
 declared, "It has often been that a small host has by Allah's
 grace, overcome a big host? : for Allah is with those who
 show fortitude." Accordingly, when they marched forward
 to fight with Goliath and his hosts, they prayed, "Our Lord,
 bless us with fortitude, make firm our foothold and give us
 victory over the unbelieving host." Consequently, by Allah's
 grace, they routed the unbelievers, and David killed Goliath;
 and Allah gave him kingship and wisdom and taught him
 whatever other things He willed. And if Allah had not been
 repelling one set of people by means of another, the earth²⁷³
 would have been filled with chaos.²⁷⁴ But Allah is bountiful
 to the world (and so repels chaos in this way).

These are Allah's revelations, which We are conveying to 252-253
 you accurately. And most surely you are of those who have
 been sent as Messengers. Of these Messengers (whom We
 sent for the guidance of mankind), We raised some above the
 other in rank. Among them was one with whom Allah Him-
 self had direct talks. There were others whom He raised high
 in rank in other ways. Likewise We gave clear signs to Jesus,
 son of Mary, and supported him with the Holy Spirit. Had
 Allah so willed the people who had seen clear signs would
 not have fought against one another after the Prophets.
 But (it was not Allah's will to prevent people forcibly from
 differences : so) they disagreed; then some of them accepted
 the Truth and others rejected it. If Allah had so willed they
 would have never fought against one another, but Allah
 does whatever He pleases (to fulfil His designs.)²⁷⁵

O Believers, spend of the wealth We have bestowed upon .254

you²⁷⁶ (in Our way) before the Day comes when there shall be no buying and no selling : when neither friendship nor intercession will be of any avail. Those, who adopt the way of disbelief, are in fact the wrong-doers.²⁷⁷

Contd. from p. 177]

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.

270-a. Probably the Qurān 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 Beth-shemesh.

As the cart was driven without any driver, obviously it was being driven by the angels towards the sons of Israel under the direction of God.

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, Palmer and Rodwell have come to the strange conclusion that Gideon and Saul are here (v. 249) confused. Of course, by this they wanted to show that the Qurān was not a revealed Book but was the invention of Muhammad (Allah's 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.

273. According to the Bible, David was a raw youth at that time. By chance 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 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. (For further details please refer to I Samuel, Chapters 17, 18).

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 for ever, Allah's Earth would have been filled with utter confusion and disorder.

275. Naturally a question arises : Why does not then Allah will it? Why does He allow differences that sometimes result in wranglings, and 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 that 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.

276. Believers have been exhorted to make monetary sacrifices for the achievement of the cause they believe in.

277. "Those people who adopt the way of disbelief" may 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 or to those who foolishly imagine that somehow or other they will get salvation in the Hereafter through somebody's friendship or intercession.

وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ ۗ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضَ ۗ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥﴾ لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ
 قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۗ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ
 اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاهُمُ
 الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ
 فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي 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 الَّذِي كَفَرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ
 عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا ۗ قَالَ أَنَّىٰ يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ
 مَوْتِهَا ۗ فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ ۗ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُ ۗ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ
 يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۗ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَ
 شَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ ۗ وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ ۗ وَانظُرْ
 إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا عَصًا ۗ فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ ۗ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ
 اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ
 قَالَ أَوْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنْ ۗ قَالَ بَلَىٰ ۗ وَلَكِنَّ لِيْطَبِّينَ قَلْبِي ۗ قَالَ فَخُذْ أَسْـَٔنَّ مِنَ
 الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ
 يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا ۗ وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٠﴾ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ

٣٣

وقف لازم

٣٥
٤٣

Allah ! the Everlasting, the Supporter of the whole universe; there is no god but He.²⁷⁸ He does neither slumber nor sleep.²⁷⁹ Whatsoever is in the heavens and in the earth is His.²⁸⁰ Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His own permission?²⁸¹ He knows what is before the people and also what is hidden from them. And they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save whatever He Himself pleases to reveal.²⁸² His kingdom²⁸³ spreads over the heavens and the earth and the guarding of these does not weary Him. He alone is the Supreme and the Exalted.²⁸⁴ 255

There is no compulsion and coercion in regard to religion.²⁸⁵ The right thing has been made distinct from the wrong thing: now whoever rejects *tāghūt*²⁸⁶ and believes in Allah has taken a firm support that never gives way. And Allah (Whose support he takes) hears everything and knows everything. Allah is the Helper and Protector of those who believe in Him: He brings them out of the depths of darkness²⁸⁷ into the light. As for the disbelievers, they have *tāghūt*²⁸⁸ as their patron, who drives them out of light into the depths of darkness. These are the people who are doomed to the Fire, wherein they shall dwell for ever. 256-257

Have²⁸⁹ you not considered the case of the person who had an argument with Abraham²⁹⁰ as to 'whom Abraham acknowledged as his Lord?' The dispute arose because Allah had given him the kingship,²⁹¹ (which had made him arrogant). When Abraham said, "My Lord is He who gives life and causes death," he answered, "I give life and cause death." Then Abraham said, "Well, Allah brings the sun from the east : just bring it from the west." At this the disbeliever was confounded :²⁹² (yet he did not believe), for Allah does not show guidance to unjust people. 258

Or take the case of the one who passed by a township that had fallen down upon its roofs.²⁹³ He exclaimed, "How shall Allah bring back to life this township that has become dead?"²⁹⁴ At this Allah drew his soul out of him and lay dead for a hundred years. Then Allah brought him back to life and asked him, "How long have you lain here?" He answered, "I might have lain here for a day or a few 259

hours.” Allah said, “Nay, you have been lying here in this state for a hundred years : now, just have a look at your food and your drink; they have not become spoiled in the least. Then have a look at your ass, (and see that his very bones have become rotten) and We have done this in order to make you a Sign for the people.²⁹⁵ Look, how We raise up the skeleton and set the bones (of the ass) and cover them with flesh and (put breath of life into them).” And when the Reality became quite manifest to him, he said, “I know that Allah has power over everything.”

260 Call to mind the other event also, when Abraham said, “My Lord, show me how Thou bringest the dead back to life?” He said, “Have you no faith in this?” Abraham humbly replied, “I do believe but I ask this to reassure my heart.”²⁹⁶ Allah said, “Well, take four birds and tame them with yourself and then (cut them into pieces) and place a piece of each of them on each hill. Then call them and they will come running to you; know this for certain that Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise.”²⁹⁷

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 of the 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 that 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 the Owner of the earth and the heavens and each and everything 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 very 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., will intercede with Allah 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 Qurān, it is an unpardonable sin to associate any partner or set up any rival to rank with Allah or to assume to oneself His rights or characteristics in any way whatsoever. This is called *shirk*. In the preceding verse, the Qurān 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 pre-requisite 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 their own good lies. 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 their own good lies.

283. The Arabic word "*kursi*" (chair) has been translated into authority because *kursi* has been used here figuratively as a symbol of authority. Even in English the word chair is used for the seat of authority.

284. This verse is known as *āyatul-kursi*. It gives such a perfect knowledge of Allah that has no parallel elsewhere. That is why a Tradition declares it to be the best verse of the Qurān.

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 it or to 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.

285. The Arabic word "*dīn*" implies both the creed and the way of life built on it. Here it refers to the creed which has been stated in the preceding verses. This verse means that the creed of Islam and its way of life is not thrust upon anyone forcibly. As a matter of fact, this cannot be forced upon anyone.

286. The Arabic word *tāghūt* is literally applied to everyone who transgresses the limits. The Qurān uses this word for one who rebels against Allāh and claims himself to be the master and the sovereign of His servants and forces them to become his servants.

Rebellion against Allah has three degrees of criminality : (1) One is *fāsiq* (disobedient) if one professes to be His subject but practically acts against His Commandments; (2) One is *kāfir* (disbeliever) if one becomes independent of Him or owes allegiance to someone else ; (3) One is *tāghūt* 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 one disowns *tāghūt*.

287. Here 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 ways. 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 *tāghūt* 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 *tāghūt*. 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 *tāghūt* 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.

289. In the foregoing verse it was declared that Allah is the Helper and the Protector of a believer and brings him out of darkness, and *tāghūt* 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 *tāghūt* and so he went on wandering in the darkness. The other two instances are of those who had full confidence in Allah, Who 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 'Irāq, the land of the birth of Abraham. 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 Qurān. It says that Abraham's father was the chief officer of king Nimrod and a great favourite with his royal master. His son Abraham, 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 Allah. In order to demonstrate this, he broke the idols and his father hastened before king Nimrod and denounced Abraham, saying, "He has acted so and so; let him be brought before thee for judgement." Abraham was summoned before the king and the dispute mentioned here took place between them.

291. The point at issue in the dispute was this : Whom did Abraham acknowledge as his Lord—Allah or Nimrod? The dispute arose because of the arrogance of Nimrod who forced his subjects to acknowledge him, and not God, as their Lord. Obviously, the stand taken by him was wrong. As a grateful servant of Allah, Who had given him kingdom, he ought to have acknowledged Allah as Lord. Instead of being grateful, he had become so arrogant that he began to claim to be the Lord of his subjects. As Abraham could never accept this position, there was a dispute between them.

In order to understand the true nature of the dispute the following should be kept in view :

(1) It has been a common characteristic of all the *mushrik* communities 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 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 *mushriks* have in every age either totally usurped this

rank of Godhead from God and handed it over to royal families, their partisans etc., or partitioned 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 the 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 the ruler of the universe. He only claimed to be the absolute lord and sovereign of 'Irāq and its inhabitants. His claim was this : Whatever I say is law and there is none over me to whom I may be held accountable : therefore any inhabitant of 'Irāq who does not acknowledge me exclusively as his lord is a rebel.

(4) The dispute referred to arose when Abraham 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 'Irāq. That is why it was not tolerated and that is why Prophet Abraham was brought before Nimrod for trial as a rebel.

292. Although Abraham 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 non-plussed that he could not find any further argument to continue the dispute, as he himself knew and acknowledged that the sun was under the Command of that God whom Abraham 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 into the flaming furnace. This incident has been mentioned in the Qurān also : XXI : 51-74, XXIX : 16-24, XXXVII : 85-98.

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 do so. There is no mention of these things in the Qurān or the authentic Traditions, and we have no other reliable sources. Besides

this, it cannot add anything to our knowledge that might help us understand better the purpose for which the incident has been related here, that is "Allah brings into light those who make Him their patron." And this has been made clear even without specifying the town to be Jerusalem or any other town or the person to be Ezra or Nehemiah or Ezekiel. It is, however, clear from his subsequent words that he must have been a Prophet.

294. This question did not mean that the Prophet did not believe in Resurrection or had any doubt about it. It simply meant that like other Prophets, he 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.

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. 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 the Paradise and the 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 favour and distinction of prophethood. (For further reference, please see E.N.'s 17, 18, 19, 34 of Sūrah XI).

مَوَالِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَتَتْ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُبُلَةٍ
 مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُضْعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾ الَّذِينَ
 يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتْبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذًى
 لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَوْلُ
 مَعْرُوفٍ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتَّبِعُهَا أَذًى ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٩﴾
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ
 مَالَهُ رِئَاءَ 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 ﴿٤٠﴾ وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ
 أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ
 أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضِعْفَيْنِ ۗ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلَّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٤١﴾ أَيُّودٌ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّن تَخِيلٍ وَّ
 أَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَأَصَابَهُ
 الْكِبْرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَةٌ ضِعْفًا ۗ فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ ۗ كَذَلِكَ
 يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّنْ
 طَيَّبَتْ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَلَا تَيَسَّبُوا فِيهِ
 مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِأَخِيذِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْبِضُوا فِيهِ ۗ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
 غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٤٣﴾ الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاءِ
 وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِّنْهُ وَفَضْلًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٤٤﴾

The charity²⁹⁸ of those who expend their wealth in the way of Allah²⁹⁹ may be likened to a grain of corn, which produces seven ears and each ear yields a hundred grains. Likewise Allah develops manifold the charity of anyone He pleases, for He is All-Embracing, All-Wise.³⁰⁰ Those people who expend their wealth in the Way of Allah, and then do not follow up their charity with reminders of their generosity nor injure the feelings of the recipient, shall get their reward from their Lord ; they will have no fear and no sorrow of any kind.³⁰¹ A kind word and forbearance is better than that charity which is followed by insult or injury. Allah is Self-Sufficient and Forbearing.³⁰² O Believers, do not spoil your charity by taunts and injury to the recipients like the one who practises charity to be seen by men, and neither believes in Allah nor in the Last Day.³⁰³ His charity may be likened to the rainfall on a rock which had only a thin layer of soil upon it. When heavy rain fell on it, the whole of the soil washed away and the rock was left bare.³⁰⁴ Such people do not gain the reward they imagine they have earned by their seeming charity; Allah does not show the Right Way to the ungrateful.³⁰⁵ 261-264

In contrast to them, the charity of those, who expend their wealth sincerely with the sole desire of pleasing Allah, may be likened to a garden on a plateau. If heavy rain falls, it yields its produce two-fold : and even if there is no heavy rain but only a light shower, that, too, is sufficient³⁰⁶ for it : whatever you do is in the sight of Allah. 265

Would anyone of you wish that he should have a green garden of palm trees and vines, watered by canals and laden with all sorts of fruit? Then would he like that it be consumed by a fiery whirlwind at the very time when he himself has grown too old and his small children are too feeble to earn anything?³⁰⁷ Thus Allah makes His revelations clear and plain to you that you may ponder over them. 266

O Believers, expend in Allah's Way the best portion of the wealth you have earned and of that We have produced for you from the earth, and do not pick out for charity those worthless things which you yourselves would only accept in disdain by connivance, if they were offered to you. 267-268

Understand it well that Allah does not stand in need of anything whatsoever and has all the praise-worthy attributes.³⁰⁸ Satan holds out to you the threat of poverty and prompts you to adopt a shameless niggardly conduct, but Allah holds out from Himself the promise of pardon and bounty : Allah is All-Embracing, All-Knowing.

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 objects. Even when they seem to be spending for some noble cause, they do so after calculating how far it would benefit their tribe or 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 required 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 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 *Jihād*.

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 one's 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.

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.

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 and large-hearted, but does not like frivolous and narrow-minded people, for He Himself is Generous and 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 might have given only a farthing.

A Tradition of the Holy Prophet 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 some one.

303. His hypocrisy itself clearly shows that he does not believe in Allah and the Hereafter. The very fact that he practises 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 does he believe that one Day all deeds will be judged and rewarded.

304. In this parable rain is the charity. The hard barren rock on which the rain falls is the evil intention with which that charity is practised.

The thin layer of the earth is the seeming virtue which hides the evil intention. Though rainfall makes 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 practised with good intentions. Without these things the wealth spent in charity is nothing more than so much wealth wasted like the rainfall on the rock with a thin layer of soil.

305. The word *kāfir* here stands for "the ungrateful". 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 favour 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.

306. Heavy rainfall is that charity which is practised with the best intentions and the deepest feelings of devotion, and the light shower of rain is the charity which, though sincere, has not as much depth and

[Contd. on p. 196

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا
كَثِيرًا ۗ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٢٨﴾ وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ نَفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ
مِنْ نَذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهَا ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٢٢٩﴾ إِنْ تَبَدُّوا
الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ ۗ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُوتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۗ وَ
يَكْفُرْ عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٠﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَمَا
تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤْتِ الْيَتِيمَ وَأَنْتُمْ
لَا تظَلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣١﴾ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا
فِي الْأَرْضِ يُحَسِبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَعْيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا
يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِحْقَاقًا ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٢﴾
الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٣٣﴾ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا
لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ ۗ ذَلِكَ
بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا ۗ وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا ۗ وَتَمَّ لَكُمْ
فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَانْتَهَى فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ ۗ وَأَمْرٌ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۗ وَ
مَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٣٤﴾ يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَ
يُرَبِّي الصَّدَقَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٣٥﴾ إِنْ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ وَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا

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٢٣٥
٢٣٦

وقف منزل

وقف لازم

He bestows wisdom upon anyone He wills, and he who is given wisdom is in fact given great wealth,³⁰⁹ but only those who have common-sense learn lessons from these things. 269

Surely Allah knows whatever you may have spent and whatever vow you may have made, and the wrong-doers (who spend in the way of Satan) shall have no helpers.³¹⁰ If you practise charity publicly, it is good; but if you give charity secretly to the needy, it is much better for you,³¹¹ for this will do away many of your sins.³¹² Anyhow, Allah is well aware of whatever you do. 270-271

You are not responsible for their guidance; Allah Himself shows guidance to anyone He pleases. And whatever wealth you spend in charity, it is for your own good. As you spend of your wealth to win Allah's pleasure, you will be given full reward for whatever you spend and you will not be deprived in the least of your rightful due.³¹³ 272

Those people who are engaged so much in the cause of Allah that they cannot move about in the land to earn their livelihood and are, therefore, in straitened circumstances, specially deserve help. An ignorant person would suppose them to be well off because of their self-respect; you can know their real condition from their faces, for they are not the ones who would beg of people with importunity. And Allah will surely know whatever you will spend on them.³¹⁴ 273

Those who spend their wealth secretly and openly by day and night, will have their reward with their Lord, and they have nothing to fear nor to grieve. But those who devour interest³¹⁵ become like the one whom Satan has bewitched and maddened by his touch.³¹⁶ They have been condemned to this condition because they say, "Trade is just like interest",³¹⁷ whereas Allah has made trade lawful and interest unlawful.³¹⁸ Henceforth, if one abstains from taking interest after receiving this admonition from his Lord, no legal action shall be taken against him regarding the interest he had devoured before; his case shall ultimately go to Allah,³¹⁹ But if one repeats the same crime even after this, he shall go to Hell, where he shall abide for ever. Allah deprives interest of all blessing and develops charity;³²⁰ and Allah does not like an ungrateful sinful person.³²¹ As to those 274-277

who believe and do good deeds, establish Ṣalāt and pay Zakāt, they will most surely have their reward with their Lord and they will have nothing to fear nor to grieve.³²²

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intensity of feelings behind it as in the former case.

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 was because in the Life-after-death there would be left for you no more chance to earn anything for the Next World. If you do not practise 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 that of the old man of the parable. 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."

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 Himself has all the praiseworthy attributes and all the excellent characteristics, 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.

309. "*Hikmat*" which has been translated into "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 wealth. 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 deeds 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.

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 most surely get their rewards from Him. And those evil doers, who spend for the cause of Satan and make vows to others, shall have no helper to protect them from His punishment.

Nazar (a vow) is a solemn, religiously binding promise made by a person to Allah or to a deity or a saint to perform some act, or make some offering or gift etc., 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 vow must be fulfilled, for it is in the way of Allah. But if that wish is unlawful or if the vow is made to someone other than Allah, then the making of the vow is sinful and its fulfilment would merit condemnation.

311. It is better to practise the obligatory charity (*Zakāt*) 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 voluntary ones secretly.

312. It helps form the character of a man if he performs good deeds secretly. It develops virtues in him and eradicates vices. As a result of this, one becomes a favourite of Allah, Who, in view of one's virtue and sincerity, forgives any light sins of commission or omission He wills.

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 the Believers 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 fulfil the wants of the non-Muslims just because they have not accepted the Guidance. If they fulfil the need of anyone to please Allah, He will give them their reward.

314. In this verse Allah has recommended the Muslims to help such people as devote themselves wholly to the service of Islam and are, therefore, unable to earn their livelihood like some of the Companions during the time of the Holy Prophet. There was a regular band of volunteers of Islam known as *Aṣ-ḥāb-i-ṣuffah*. They were always at the beck and call of the Holy Prophet, who had imparted to them the know-

ledge 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 Holy Prophet. Obviously, such people specially deserve help because they are whole-time workers of Islam and have no spare time to earn their livelihood.

315. The Arabic word *ribā'* 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 revelations of the Qurān, 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 Qurān likens the money-lender to a madman. Just as a madman loses his sense on account of his disordered intellect, in the same way the money-lender is so mad for money-making that he divorces himself from common-sense. 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, human brotherhood and fellow-feeling, and destroying the common good of mankind. He does not care a bit 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 then 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 fixed and guaranteed profit without any risk*. In trade, commerce, industry, agriculture etc., one has to spend both labour 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 whole time, labour, 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 his capital only, 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 :—

(1) The settlement of profit 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, labour and brains he employs in providing that article to the buyer. In contrast to this, in the case of interest, obviously 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 as 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 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, labour and intelligence but the money-lender becomes the stronger partner in the earnings of the debtor without any risk or labour 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 quite clear that even from the economic point of view, trade helps construct society but interest leads to its 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 co-operation. 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, 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 that 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.

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

مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ
 مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۗ وَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ ۖ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا
 تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ ۗ وَأَن تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ
 لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۖ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى
 كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَمْتُمْ
 بَيْنَ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ ۗ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ وَلَا
 يَأْب كَاتِبٌ أَن يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ ۖ فَلْيَكْتُبْ ۖ وَلْيَسْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ
 وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ۚ فَإِن كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ
 سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَن يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيُمِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ وَ
 اسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِّن رِّجَالِكُمْ ۖ فَإِن لَّمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ
 مِمَّن تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَن تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَىٰ ۗ
 وَلَا يَأْب الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا ۗ وَلَا تَسْمَعُوا أَن تُكْتَبَ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا
 إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۖ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ ۖ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا ۗ إِلَّا
 أَن تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا ۗ
 وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ ۗ وَلَا يُضَارَ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ ۗ وَإِن تَفْعَلُوا
 فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۖ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٢﴾
 وَإِن كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهْنِ مَّقْبُوضَةٌ ۚ فَإِن أَمِنَ
 بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِنَ أَمَانَتَهُ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ ۗ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا
 الشَّهَادَةَ ۗ وَمَن يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ إِثْمٌ قَلْبُهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٣﴾

O Believers, fear Allah and give up that interest which is still due to you, if you are true Believers; but if you do not do so, then you are warned of the declaration of war against you by Allah and His Messenger.³²³ If, however, you repent even now (and forego interest), you are entitled to your principal; do no wrong, and no wrong will be done to you. If your debtor be in straitened circumstances, give him time till his monetary condition becomes better. But if you remit the debt by way of charity, it will be better for you, if you only knew it.³²⁴ Guard against the disgrace and misery of the Day when you shall return to Allah : there everyone shall be paid in full for the good or evil one has earned and none shall be wronged. 278-281

O Believers, when you contract a debt for a fixed³²⁵ term, you should put it in writing.³²⁶ Let a scribe write with equity the document for the parties. The scribe whom Allah has given the gift of literacy should not refuse to write. Let him write and let the one under obligation (the debtor) dictate, and he should fear Allah, his Lord, and should not diminish from or add anything to the terms which have been settled. But if the borrower be of low understanding or weak or unable to dictate (for any reason), then let the guardian of his interests dictate it with equity. And let two men from among you³²⁷ bear witness to all such documents. But if two men be not available, there should be one man and two women to bear witness so that if one of the women forgets (anything), the other may remind her. The witnesses should be from among such people whom you approve of as witnesses.³²⁸ When the witnesses are asked to testify, they should not refuse to do so. Do not neglect to reduce to writing your transaction for a specified term, whether it be big or small. Allah considers this thing more just for you, for it facilitates the establishment of evidence and lessens doubts and suspicions. Of course, there is no harm if you do not put in writing the common commercial transactions you conclude daily on the spot,³²⁹ but in case of commercial transactions you should have witnesses. The scribe and the witnesses should not be harassed:³³⁰ if you do so, you shall be guilty of sin. You should guard 282

against the wrath of Allah; He gives you the knowledge of the right way for Allah has the knowledge of everything.

283 If you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe to write the document, then transact your business on the security of a pledge in hand.³³¹

And, if any one transacts a piece of business with another merely on trust, then the one who is trusted should fulfil his trust and fear Allah, his Lord.

And never conceal evidence³³² for he who conceals it, has a sinful heart : Allah knows everything you are doing.

Contd. from p. 201]

bloody revolution, it sweeps away their honour and lives along with their ill-earned 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 per cent 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 A B C of economics. Can anyone then deny the truth of the Natural law enunciated by Allah that interest 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 inter-

est 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 cash, 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 exploiting His other servants who are getting less than he, he becomes not only ungrateful but also cruel and wicked.

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 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 his ownself and on others and in doing good deeds. 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.

323. This verse was revealed after the conquest of Makkah, but it has been inserted here because it also deals with interest. Even before its revelation, interest was regarded as a hateful thing in the Muslim society, though it had not yet been declared to be unlawful. But after its revelation, money-lending at interest became a criminal offence in the Islamic State. Those clans who carried on this business in Arabia, were duly warned to give up this business, 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 two.

From the concluding portion of this verse, Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ibn Sīrīn and Rubai'-bin-Anas have concluded that the one who takes interest in the Islamic State should be warned to repent of it, and if even then 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.

اللَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفَوُوهُ
 يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ
 شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ أَمِنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ
 أَمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ تَدَارَكُنْهُ نَضْوَاتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ
 وَقَالُوا سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَأَطَعْنَا أَطَعْنَاكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ
 نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا
 إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ
 مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحِثْ عَلَيْنَا مَا أَطَقْنَا لَنَا بِهِ ؕ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَنُفَعْنَا
 وَارْحَمْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

Whatever³³³ is in the heavens and the earth all belongs 284
to Allah.³³⁴ Allah will call you to account for what is in
your minds whether you disclose it or hide³³⁵ it. He, however,
has full authority to pardon or punish anyone He pleases, for
Allah has complete power over everything.³³⁶

The Messenger has believed in the Guidance which has 285
been sent down to him from his Lord, and those who believe
in the Messenger have also sincerely accepted the same.
They all believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books and Mes-
sengers. And they say, "We do not discriminate against
any of His Messengers. We have heard the Message and
submitted to it. Our Lord, we look up to Thee for forgiveness
for to Thee we shall all return."³³⁷

Allah does not burden any human being with a responsi- 286
bility heavier than he can bear.³³⁸ Everyone will enjoy the
fruit of the good that one has earned and shall suffer for the
evil that one has committed.³³⁹

(O Believers, pray like this to Allah :) "Our Lord, take
us not to task if we forget and lapse into error inadvertently.
Lord ! lay not on us the kind of burdens that Thou hadst lain
on the people before us.³⁴⁰ Lord, lay not on us the kind of
burden that we have not the strength to bear.³⁴¹ Be kind
to us, forgive us and show mercy to us. Thou art our Pro-
tector; help us against the disbelievers."³⁴²

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 Holy Prophet, he made an appeal to the
people to help him out of it. Accordingly, the people made monetary
contributions, but he could not even then clear all his debts. Then
the Holy Prophet addressed the creditors and told them that they
would have to be satisfied with whatever was collected for the payment
of their debts.

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 Holy Prophet says that three kinds of people cry out to Allah for help but are not answered : first, those who have illtempered 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.

327. That is, "from among the Muslims." It is clear from this that Muslims should have Muslims as their witnesses when they are available. The 'zimmīs,' however, may have 'zimmīs' as their witnesses.

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 witnesses.

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 neighbouring traders are not recorded.

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 any party.

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 Qurān 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. 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 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 equally to the evasion of evidence and also to the concealment of the true facts while giving evidence.

333. In the concluding portion of the *Sūrah*, 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 vv. 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 other 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; so much so that He knows even those intentions and thoughts that are hidden in the heart.

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.

337. In this verse, the basic articles of the Faith have been restated briefly. Belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books and in all of His Messengers and in the accountability to Him at the end of this life are the 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.

338. That is, "Allah will not call to account anyone for not doing something 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 certain person could do and what he could not do.

339. This is the other 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 oneself 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 trial, persecutions and obstacles as were encountered by those who went Thy 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 troubles 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 from 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 *Mi'i-rāj* (Ascension to Heaven) of the Holy Prophet about a year before his migration to Al-Madīnah. At that time the struggle between Islam and *kuf*r 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 offer 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 in it the tinge of revenge or of worldliness. This was urgently needed at that time because the Muslims were undergoing great 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.

