

THE MEANING OF THE QURĀN

Vol. III

(*Sūrah Al-Mā'idah & Al-An'am*)

(ARABIC TEXT WITH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY)

BY

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We are grieved to say that Ch. Muhammad Akbar, the translator, passed away on January 16, 1972. May Allah in His mercy accept his services to the cause of the Quran, grant his soul eternal peace and fill the void caused by his sad demise !

Al-Mā'idah المائدة

V

AL-MĀ'IDAH المائدة

INTRODUCTION

Name. This Sūrah takes its name from verse 112 in which the word *māi'dah* occurs. Like the names of many other sūrahs, this name has no special relation to the subject of the Sūrah but has been used merely as a symbol to distinguish it from other sūrahs.

Period of Revelation. The theme of this Sūrah indicates, and traditions support it, that it was revealed after the treaty of Hudaibiyah at the end of 6 A.H. or in the beginning of 7 A.H. That is why it deals with those problems that arose from this treaty.

The Holy Prophet with 1400 Muslims went to Makkah in Zil-Qa'adah 6 A.H. to perform 'Umrah, but the Quraish spurred by their enmity, prevented him from its performance, though it was utterly against all the ancient religious traditions of Arabia. After a good deal of hard and harsh negotiations, a treaty was concluded at Hudaibiyah according to which it was agreed that he could perform 'Umrah the following year. That was a very appropriate occasion for teaching the Muslims the right way of performing a pilgrimage to Makkah with the true Islamic dignity, and enjoining that they should not prevent the disbelievers from performing pilgrimage to Makkah as a retaliation for their misbehaviour. This was not difficult at all as many disbelievers had to pass through Muslim territory on their way to Makkah. This is why the introductory verses deal with the things connected with pilgrimage to Makkah and the same theme has been resumed in vv. 101-104. The other topics of this Sūrah also appear to belong to the same period.

The continuity of the subject shows that most probably the whole of the Sūrah was revealed as a single discourse at

one and the same time. It is also possible that some of its verses were revealed at a later period and inserted in this Sūrah at different places where they fitted in. But there appears to be not the least gap anywhere in the Sūrah to show that it might have comprised two or more discourses.

Occasion of Revelation. This Sūrah was revealed to suit the requirements of the changed conditions which were now different from those prevailing at the time of the revelation of Al-i-'Imrān and An-Nisā. Then the shock of the set-back at Uḥd had made the very surroundings of Al-Madīnah dangerous for the Muslims, but now Islam had become an invulnerable power and the Islamic State had extended to Najd on the east, to the Red Sea on the west, to Syria on the north and to Makkah on the south. This set-back which the Muslims had suffered at Uḥd had not broken their determination. It had rather spurred them to action. As a result of their continuous struggle and unparalleled sacrifices, the power of the surrounding clans, within a radius of 200 miles or so, had been broken. The Jewish menace which was always threatening Al-Madīnah had been totally removed and the Jews in the other parts of Hijaz had become tributaries of the State of Al-Madīnah. The last effort of the Quraish to suppress Islam had been thwarted in the Battle of the Ditch. After this, it had become quite obvious to the Arabs that no power could suppress the Islamic Movement. Now Islam was not merely a creed which ruled over the minds and hearts of the people but had also become a State which dominated over every aspect of the life of the people who lived within its boundaries. This had enabled the Muslims to live their lives without let or hindrance, in accordance with their beliefs.

Another development had also taken place during this period. The Muslim civilization had developed in accordance with the principles of Islam and the Islamic viewpoint. This civilization was quite distinct from all other civilizations in all its details, and distinguished the Muslims clearly from the non-Muslims in their moral, social and cultural behaviour. Mosques had been built in all territories

prayer had been established and Imam (leader) for every habitation and clan had been appointed. The Islamic civil and criminal laws had been formulated in detail and were being enforced through the Islamic courts. New and reformed ways of trade and commerce had taken the place of the old ones. The Islamic laws of marriage and divorce, of the segregation of the sexes, of the punishment for adultery and calumny and the like had cast the social life of the Muslims in a special mould. Their social behaviour, their conversation, their dress, their very mode of living, their culture etc., had taken a definite shape of its own. As a result of all these changes, the non-Muslims could not expect that the Muslims would ever return to their former fold.

Before the treaty of Hudaibiyah, the Muslims were so engaged in their struggle with the non-Muslim Quraish that they got no time to propagate their message. This hindrance was removed by what was apparently a defeat but in reality a victory at Hudaibiyah. This gave the Muslims not only peace in their own territory but also respite to spread their message in the surrounding territories. Accordingly the Holy Prophet addressed letters to the rulers of Iran, Egypt and the Roman Empire and the chiefs of Arabia, inviting them to Islam. At the same time the missionaries of Islam spread among the clans and tribes and invited them to accept the Divine Way of Allah.

These were the circumstances at the time when Al-Ma'idah was revealed.

Topics. It deals with the following three main topics:

(1) Commandments and instructions about the religious, cultural and political life of the Muslims.

In this connection, a code of ceremonial rules concerning the journey for Haj has been prescribed; the observance of strict respect for the emblems of Allah has been enjoined; and any kind of obstruction or interference with the pilgrims to the Ka'abah has been prohibited. Definite rules and regulations have been laid down for what is lawful and unlawful in the matter of food, and self-imposed foolish restrictions of the pre-Islamic age have been abolished. Permission has been given to take food with the people of

the Book and to marry their women. Rules and regulations for the performance of Wudu (ablutions) and bath and purification and *tayammum* (ablutions with dust) have been prescribed. Punishment for rebellion, disturbance of peace and theft have been specified. Drinking and gambling have absolutely been made unlawful. Expiation for the breaking of oath has been laid down and a few more things have been added to the law of evidence.

(2) Admonition to the Muslims.

Now that the Muslims had become a ruling body, it was feared that power might corrupt them. At this period of great trial, Allah has admonished them over and over again to stick to justice and to guard against the wrong behaviour of their predecessors, the people of the Book. They have been enjoined to remain steadfast to the Covenant of obedience to Allah and His Messenger, and to observe strictly their commands and prohibitions in order to save themselves from the evil consequences which befell the Jews and the Christians who had violated them. They have been instructed to observe the dictates of the Holy Quran in the conduct of all their affairs and warned against the attitude of hypocrisy.

(3) Admonition to the Jews and the Christians.

As the power of the Jews had been totally weakened and almost all their habitations in north Arabia had come under the rule of the Muslims, they have been warned again about their wrong attitude and invited to follow the Right Way. At the same time a detailed invitation has also been extended to the Christians. The errors of their creeds have been clearly pointed out and they have been admonished to accept the guidance of the Holy Prophet. Incidentally, it may be noted that no direct invitation has been made to the Majūsis and idolaters living in the adjoining countries, because there was no need for a separate address for them as their condition had already been covered by the addresses to the *mushrik* Arabs.

SUMMARY

Subject : Consolidation of the Islamic Community.

In continuation of the instructions about the consolidation of the Islamic Community given in Sūrah AN-NISĀ, the Muslims have been directed to observe and fulfil all their obligations : further regulations have been prescribed to train the Muslims for that purpose.

They have also been particularly warned as rulers to guard against the corruption of power and directed to observe the Covenant of the Qurān. They have also been exhorted to learn lessons from the failings of their predecessors, the Jews and the Christians, who in their turn have been admonished to give up their wrong attitudes towards the Right Way and accept the guidance taught by Prophet Muhammad (God's peace be upon him).

Topics and their Interconnection

The Believers have been exhorted to fulfil scrupulously all of their obligations and follow the regulations prescribed by the Divine Law about food, sex, Ṣalāt, justice, etc. 1-10

The Muslims have been warned to guard against the errors of their predecessors ; they should follow the Right Path and avoid the bad example of the Jews and the Christians, who broke their Covenants and went astray into evil ways. They, in their turn, have been admonished to give up their wrong ways and accept Islam. 11-26

The story of the two sons of Adam has been related to reproach the Jews for their plot to kill the Holy Prophet 27-32

and his Companions. (v. 11 & E.N. 30). The story has also been used to emphasize the sanctity of human life.

- 33-40 To achieve this object, punishments have been prescribed for those who create chaos in the Islamic State, and the Believers have been urged to exert their utmost to establish the Right Way; the sanctity of property has also been emphasized.
- 41-50 The Holy Prophet (and through him the Muslims) has been reassured that he should not mind the enmity, the evil designs and the machinations of the Jews, but continue exerting his utmost to establish the Right Way in accordance with the Guidance of the Qur'an; for nothing better could be expected from those who had forsaken their own Torah. He should deal with the Christians likewise, for they, too, had forsaken their Gospel.
- 51-69 In view of the degenerate moral condition of the Jews and the Christians, the Believers have been warned not to make them their friends and confidants. Likewise they should be on their guard against the evil designs of the hypocrites, the disbelievers and the like and should rely on the true Believers alone. The people of the Book have, in their turn, been exhorted to give up their enmity and adopt the right attitude, for they cannot get salvation without this.
- 70-86 The theme of the corruptions of the Jews and Christians has been resumed. The Christians especially have been reproved for their errors in regard to the doctrine of *Tauhid*. At the same time they have been preferred to the hard-hearted Jews, for there are among them some who are more inclined towards the Truth.
- 87-108 In this portion of the Sūrah, further regulations about the lawful and the un-lawful, in addition to those contained in vv. 1-10, have been given.
- 109-119 At the end of the Sūrah, the mention of the conversation that will take place between Allah and His Prophets

on the Day of Judgement, has been made for the benefit of the erring people to serve as a corrective to their creeds. The conversation with Prophet Christ has been cited as a specimen to warn particularly the Christians, who profess to believe in him, and generally all those people who put false hopes in their Prophets, etc.

Conclusion : "O man-kind ! The Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah : therefore you should become His true servants and fear Him, for He has full powers over everything." 120



يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ ۗ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ
 إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ
 مَا يُرِيدُ ۗ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحِلُّوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشُّهُرَ الْحَرَامَ
 وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا أُمِّينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا
 مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا ۗ وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا ۗ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ
 قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا ۗ وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى
 الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ ۗ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۗ حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ
 وَمَا أَهَلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ ۖ وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَ
 النَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ ۗ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصُبِ
 وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ فِسْقٌ ۗ الْيَوْمَ يَيسُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 مِّن دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ ۗ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَ
 أَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ۗ فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي
 مَخْصَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ ۗ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ۗ يَسْأَلُونَكَ

المنزل ٦

وقفلاز

الربع

AL-MĀ'IDAH المائدة

Verses : 120

Revealed at Al-Madīnah

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

O Believers, observe strictly the prescribed limits.¹ All kinds of cattle-like animals have been made lawful for you² except the ones which will be told you here-in-after, but you should not make hunting lawful for yourselves during the state of *iḥrām*³ : indeed Allah ordains whatever He pleases.⁴

1

2

O Believers, do not violate the emblems⁵ of God-worship. — Do not make lawful for yourselves any of the forbidden months nor catch hold of the animals dedicated to sacrifice nor lay hands on those animals which are collared as a mark of their dedication to God, nor molest the people repairing to the Inviolable Mosque (the Ka'abah), seeking their Lord's bounty and pleasure.⁶ You are, however, allowed to hunt after you have put off *iḥrām*.⁷ And be on your guard : let not your resentment against those, who have barred you from visiting the Ka'abah, incite you so much as to transgress the prescribed limits.⁸ Nay, cooperate with all in what is good and pious but do not cooperate in what is sinful and wicked. Fear God : for Allah is severe in retribution.

3

You are forbidden carrion⁹ and blood, the flesh of swine and of that animal which has been slaughtered in any other name than that of Allah,¹⁰ and of the strangled animal, and of that beaten to death or killed by a fall or gored to death or mangled by a beast of prey—save of that you duly slaughtered while it was still alive¹¹—and of that which is slaughtered at (un-godly) shrines.¹²⁻¹³ It is also unlawful for you to try to find your fortune by means of divining devices,¹⁴ for all these things are sinful acts. Today the disbelievers have despaired of (vanquishing) your religion ; therefore do not fear them but fear Me.¹⁵ To-day I have perfected your religion for you and completed My blessing on you and approved Islam as the way of life for you.¹⁶ (Therefore observe the limits prescribed by the Law) ; if,

however, one, dying of hunger, eats of any of these forbidden things, provided that he is not inclined towards sin, he will find Allah Forgiving and Compassionate.¹⁷

1. That is "Observe those limits which are being prescribed for you in this Sūrah and all limits in general which have been laid down in the Divine Law." After this brief introductory sentence begins the statement of those limits that are to be observed strictly.

2. The Arabic word *An'ām* applies to camel, cow (ox), sheep and goat and *bahimah* applies to all kinds of grazing quadrupeds. The combination of the two words has made the meaning more comprehensive by including all the grazing quadrupeds that resemble those four contained in the word *an'ām*. It also implies that carnivora that kill other animals for food are unlawful. The Holy Prophet made this thing explicit in a Tradition declaring the carnivora unlawful. Likewise he also declared unlawful those birds that have claws and kill other animals for food or eat dead bodies. According to a Tradition related by Ibn 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet prohibited the eating of the flesh of the carnivora and of the birds with claws. Other Traditions from several Companions support the same.

3. *Ihrām* is the pilgrim's robe which has to be put on at fixed boundaries at known distances from the Ka'abah. It is not lawful for any pilgrim to proceed to the Ka'abah till he puts off the ordinary dress and puts on the pilgrim's garb. This consists of two pieces of cloth without seam or ornament, one of which is wrapped round the loins and the other thrown over the shoulders. The instep, heel and head must be bare. This is called the state of *Ihrām* because it makes unlawful even some of the things that are ordinarily lawful. For instance, one should not have a shave or a hair-cut and should not wear other clothes or ornaments nor use perfumes nor indulge in sensual desires and the like. Another restriction is the prohibition against killing any animate object or against hunting or against directing any one else to help hunt an animal. (Also please refer to E.N. 213, Al-Baqarah).

4. This means that Allah has absolute authority to issue any decree He wills, and that the servants have no right at all to question it. Though all His Decrees and Commands are based on wisdom and are full of excellence, yet a Muslim, His servant, does not obey these just because they are proper and conducive to his good, but obeys them because they are commandments from his Sovereign. If He declares anything to be unlawful, it becomes unlawful for no other reason than this, that it has been made unlawful by Him. Likewise if He makes anything lawful, it becomes lawful for no other reason than that its Owner and the Owner of everything permits His servants to use it. This is why the Qurān establishes with full force this fundamental principle that the only basis which makes a thing lawful or un-

lawful is whether there is the permission of the Owner for its use or not. Likewise there is no other basis for the servant to consider a thing to be lawful or un-lawful except this : it is lawful if Allah makes it lawful and unlawful if He prohibits it.

5. *Sha'ā-ir* is the plural of *shi-'ār* (emblem). Every object or a representation of it, that symbolises a way or a creed or a mode of thought or action or a system is called its *shi-'ār* because it serves as an emblem of it. Official flags, police and army uniforms, coins, currency notes, stamps etc., are the *sha'ā-ir* of governments which demand due respect for these from all under them, and as far as possible, from others as well. For instance, Temple, Altar, Cross etc., are the *sha'ā-ir* of Christianity. The Hammer and Sickle is the *shi-'ār* of the Communist Party, and the Swastika, of the Nazi Party. All of them demand reverence and respect for their emblems from their followers. If anyone shows disrespect for any of the emblems of any system, it is an indication that he has enmity with that system and if the offender belongs to the same system, this act will be tantamount to apostasy and rebellion against it.

The Emblems of Allah are those signs and symbols that represent the pure way of God-worship as against the ways of idolatry, unbelief, paganism and atheism. The Muslims are required to show respect to the emblems of Allah wherever they find them in any way or system, provided their psychological background is purely attributed to God-worship and has not in any way been polluted by any association with idolatry or unbelief. Therefore, if a Muslim comes across anything in the creed and deed of a non-Muslim which has an element of God-worship in it, he will show due respect to that element and to the emblems connected with God-worship. There will be no dispute with the non-Muslims on that account : a dispute arises only when he pollutes God-worship with the worship of others.

In this connection, it should be noted well that the command to show due respect to the emblems of Allah was given at the time when the Muslims were at war with the pagan Arabs who were in possession of Makkah. This was necessitated because some of the pagan Arabs had to pass on their way to the Ka'abah through places where the Muslims could strike at them easily. Therefore the Muslims were enjoined not to molest them when they were proceeding to the House of Allah, even though they were idolaters and at war with them. Like-wise the Muslims should not attack them during the months of Haj nor snatch from them those animals, which they were taking to the House of Allah as offering. This is to ensure that the element of God-worship, which had remained intact in their corrupt religion, should be respected and not violated.

6. Immediately after this Command, a few emblems of Allah have been specially mentioned because there was an imminent danger of their violation by the Muslims owing to the state of war. This does

not, however, mean that these emblems alone are to be respected.

7. Incidentally the command about *Ihrām* has been given here because this is also one of the emblems of Allah. Hunting during the state of *Ihrām* is prohibited, because it is the violation of one of the emblems of Allah. But when the restrictions of *Ihrām* come to an end according to the law, one is permitted to hunt, if one desires to do so.

8. This prohibition was laid down to check the Muslims from preventing the pagan Arabs from proceeding to Haj and attacking them when they were passing through their territories. The Muslims had been so enraged when their enemies had prevented them from visiting the Ka'abah and from the performance of Haj in contravention even of their old custom that they were prone to retaliate, but Allah warned them not to transgress the bounds.

9. That is, "The flesh of animals that die a natural death."

10. That is, the flesh of that animal which has been slaughtered in the name of anyone or anything else than that of Allah or has been slaughtered with the intention of dedicating to a saint or a god or a goddess etc. (Please also see E.N. 171 of Al-Baqarah).

11. That is, "If an animal falls a victim to any of these accidents but is still alive and is duly slaughtered, it is lawful to eat its flesh. This also implies that the flesh of a clean animal becomes lawful only when it is slaughtered in the prescribed way and that there is no other way of making it lawful. In the prescribed way only that much of the throat is cut that enables the blood to flow out freely. This cannot happen if the whole of the neck is cut off or if the animal is strangled or killed in any other way because in that case most of the blood remains in the body and congeals at different places and sticks to the flesh. But when it is slaughtered in the prescribed way, the whole of the body remains connected with the brain for a sufficiently long time to allow the blood to flow totally out of the body and the flesh is cleansed of the blood which in itself is unlawful. Therefore it is essential that the flesh should be cleansed of blood in order to become lawful.

12. The Arabic word *musub* applies to all those places which have been specifically dedicated to any saint or god, etc.; for making offerings to them or for any other kind of ungodly worship whether there is or is not any sort of stone or wooden idol therein.

13. In this connection, it should be clearly understood that the limits prescribed by the law for making eatables lawful or unlawful are not laid down from the point of view of physical health but from the moral and spiritual point of view. As regards the matters concerning physical health, these have been left to man's own judgement and discretion. It is his own business to find out what things are useful or harmful for his physical health and nourishment and the law does not take any responsibility for his guidance in this respect. Had it done so, poison would have been the first thing to be made unlawful,

but there is absolutely no mention of this or other deadly things in the Qurān or the Traditions. The Law is only concerned about what is morally or spiritually harmful or beneficial and also about the right or wrong means for obtaining lawful things. It is obvious that man has no means of finding out these things by himself and is consequently liable to commit errors in this matter without the guidance of the Law. For whatever has been prohibited, has been forbidden because it is harmful from the point of view of cleanliness or morality or belief. On the other hand, whatever has been made lawful, has been made so because it is free from all these evils.

One might ask why A'lah has not explained the philosophy underlying the prohibition of certain things for the clear understanding of the people. This is because it is not possible for mankind to comprehend this. For instance, it is not possible for us to make a research into the nature of moral evils that are produced by eating carrion, blood or the flesh of swine nor is it easy to find out how they are produced and to what extent, because we have no means of measuring or weighing morality. It is, therefore, obvious that, even if their evil effects had been explained, the position of the sceptic would have remained the same as before for the lack of means of testing their veracity.

This is why Allah has declared the observance of the limits prescribed for the lawful and the unlawful as a matter of belief. One, who believes in the Qurān as the book of God and in the Holy Prophet as His Messenger and in Allah as All-Knowing and All-Wise, will observe the prescribed limits whether one understands their philosophy or not. On the other hand, if one does not believe in this basic creed, one will avoid only those things which are harmful according to the human knowledge and will go on suffering from the consequences of those things which man has not learnt to be harmful.

14. This verse comprises three categories of prohibitions :

(1) It prohibits the pagan ways of taking omens from a god or a goddess and the like, about one's fortune or getting indications as to the future or deciding disputes. For instance, the pagan Quraish of Makkah had specified the idol of Hubal at the Ka'abah for this purpose and kept near it seven divining arrows. They would, after presenting the offering to the priest and performing certain ceremonies, pull out an arrow and regard the words engraved on it as the verdict of Hubal.

(2) The second category consists of the superstitious ways and irrational methods of taking decisions about the daily problems of life for anything regarded as portending good or evil regardless of reason or knowledge, or of finding out future events blindly by the ominous significance of particular things, circumstances, occurrences or proceedings or the like. In short, it included all the so-called arts of prediction and prophetic significance.

(Contd. on p. 18)

مَا ذَا أَحَلَّ لَهُمْ قُلُّ أَحَدٍ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُمْ مِنَ الْجَوَارِحِ
 مُكَلِّبِينَ تَعَلَّمُوهُنَّ مِنَّا عَلَيْكُمْ اللَّهُ فَكُلُوا مِنَّمَا آمَسَكَنَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 وَادْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ
 الْيَوْمَ أَحَلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ لَكُمْ وَ
 طَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ
 الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ
 غَيْرَ مُسْفِحِينَ وَلَا مَخْذِي أَخْدَانٍ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ
 حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَسِرِينَ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ
 وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَرُوا
 وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ
 لَسْتُمْ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا
 بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ
 وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ
 وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمِيثَاقَهُ الَّذِي وَاثَقَكُمْ بِهِ إِذْ قُلْتُمْ
 سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ يَا أَيُّهَا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوِّمِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا
 نُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ آلَا تَعْدِلُوا إِعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ

They ask you what has been made lawful for them. 4
 Say, "All the good and pure things have been made lawful for you.¹⁸ You may also eat of what the hunting animals, which you have trained to hunt in accordance with the knowledge Allah has given you, catch and hold for you;¹⁹ you should, however, mention Allah's name over it,²⁰ and fear (to violate the Law of) Allah, for Allah is swift at reckoning."

All the good and pure things have to-day been made 5
 lawful for you; the food of the people of the Book is lawful for you, and your food for them.²¹ Likewise you are permitted to marry chaste believing women or chaste women from among the people who were given the Scripture before you,²² provided that you give them their dowries and become their protectors in wed-lock: this permission is not for sensual license or secret illicit relations; whoso rejects the way of Faith, all the deeds of his life shall become vain and he shall be a bankrupt in the Hereafter.²³

O Believers, when you rise to offer Ṣalāt you must 6
 wash your faces and hands and arms up to the elbows and wipe your heads with wet hands and wash your feet up to the ankles;²⁴ and if you have become unclean, cleanse yourselves with a full bath;²⁵ if, however, you are sick or are on a journey, or if any of you has relieved himself or if you have "touched" women and you can find no water, then cleanse yourselves with pure dust; strike your palms on it and wipe your hands and faces with it.²⁶ Allah does not will to make life hard for you, but He wills to purify you and complete His blessing upon you²⁷ so that you may show gratitude.

Keep in mind the blessing Allah has bestowed upon 7-8
 you²⁸ and do not forget the solemn covenant which He made with you (and which you confirmed), when you said, "We have heard and submitted." Fear Allah for Allah knows the very secrets of the hearts. O Believers, be steadfast in righteousness and just in giving witnesses for the sake of Allah;²⁹ the enmity of any people should not so provoke you as to turn you away from justice. Do justice for it is akin to piety. Fear Allah (in your affairs); indeed He is fully aware of what you do.

Contd. from p. 15]

(3) The third category includes all kinds of gambling in which the distribution of things etc., is based on mere chance and not on merit, right, service or other rational considerations. For instance, all the schemes of lottery which entitle a certain holder of a ticket to a prize merely on chance, and at the expense of a large number of other holders of such tickets, or the award of prizes for cross-word puzzles in which a certain answer out of a large number of correct ones corresponds, by mere chance, to the answer that has been ear-marked as correct for the purpose—all these things are unlawful.

However, one simple form of casting lots is lawful in Islam, when there are two equally lawful things or rights and there is no rational method of deciding between them. Supposing two persons have equal rights, in every respect, to something and the judge finds no rational justification to give preference to either of the disputants, neither of whom is willing to forego his rights. In such a case, if they mutually agree, the matter may be decided by casting lots. Or if one has to choose one of the two lawful things and is in difficulty in regard to the choice, one is allowed to cast lots for it. The Holy Prophet adopted this method on such occasions as required a choice to be made between two persons with equal rights, whenever he thought that if he himself decided in favour of one, the other might be grieved.

15. "Today" does not mean a particular day or date but the time when this verse was revealed.

"The disbelievers have despaired of your religion" means, "After a long systematic resistance and opposition, they have lost hope of defeating your religion. Now they do not expect that you will ever return to the former way of "ignorance" because your religion has become a permanent system of life and has been established on a firm footing." Therefore, "Do not fear them but fear Me." That is, there is no danger of interference from the disbelievers that they will prevent you from the performance of your religious obligations. You should fear God and observe His commands and instructions because no ground for fear has been left for you. Now your disobedience of the Law will mean that you do not intend to obey Allah.

16. "I have perfected your religion" means "I have provided it with all the essential elements of a permanent way of life which comprises a complete system of thought and practice and civilization, and have laid down principles and given detailed instructions for the solution of all human problems. Hence there is no need for you to seek guidance and instructions from any other source."

The completion of "the blessing" is the completion of the blessing of guidance.

"I have approved Islam as the way of life for you because you have practically proved by your obedience and devotion to it that you sincerely believe in Islam which you have accepted. As I have practically set you free from every kind of subjection and servitude"

there is no compulsion for you to submit to any one else than Me in your practical life." It also implies, "As a gratitude for these blessings of Mine, you should show no negligence in the observance of the prescribed limits."

As regards the authentic traditions that this declaration was revealed on the occasion of the last Haj performed by the Holy Prophet in 10 A.H., I am of the opinion that it was at first revealed in A.H. 6 as a part of this discourse, but was again sent down to the Holy Prophet for its declaration on that suitable occasion. This is because this verse is so well knit in this context that it would be incomplete without it. Therefore it cannot be imagined that it was inserted here afterwards when it was revealed in 10 A.H. I believe (and the real knowledge is with Allah) that at the time of its revelation its real significance was not realized, therefore in A.H. 10, when the whole of Arabia was subdued and the power of Islam reached its zenith, it was again sent down to the Holy Prophet for its declaration on the occasion of his last Haj.

17. Please refer to E.N. 172 of Al-Baqarah.

18. A subtle point is hidden in this answer. It is meant to set right the doubting attitude of some "religious persons," who regard everything as unlawful unless it is explicitly declared to be lawful. There was a need to remove this doubt because it makes people very fastidious. So much so that such people begin to demand a complete list of lawful things in every sphere of life and look at everything with a doubting attitude. Those who asked the question did so with the intention of obtaining a detailed list of lawful things so that they might consider all other things as unlawful. However, the Qurān did the opposite of it and gave a detailed list of forbidden things and made all other good things lawful. This was a great reform, for it set human life free from many bondages and opened wide the doors of the vast world for mankind. Before its revelation only a limited number of things was lawful and the remaining vast world was unlawful, but this verse declared a limited number of things unlawful and made the remaining vast world lawful.

"Lawful" has been qualified with "pure" so that impure things might not be made lawful just because they have not been included in the list of prohibition. As regards the criterion for judging whether a thing is pure or not, it should be noted that all those things are pure which are not unclean according to any principle of the Islamic Law, or which are not offensive to good taste or have not universally been regarded as repugnant by cultured people.

19. Hunting animals are dogs, leopards, falcons, hawks and other beasts and birds of prey which are trained to chase wild animals and catch them for their masters, without mangling them. The game of the trained hunting animals is lawful because they do not mangle it

and that of the untrained beasts and birds of prey is unlawful because they mangle it.

There is, however, a difference of opinion among the jurists about this matter. Imām Shāfi'i and those of his school of thought are of the opinion that if the hunting beast or bird eats a part of what it catches, it becomes unlawful, for this means that the animal had caught the game for itself and not for its master. Imām Mālik and those of his school of thought are of the opinion that if the hunting bird or beast eats less than one-third of the game, the remaining two-thirds or so is lawful for the master. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and those of his school of thought are of the opinion that if the hunting beast eats a part of what it catches, the remaining game will become unlawful, but if the hunting bird eats a part of it the remaining game will not become unlawful because the hunting beast can be trained to catch and hold the game for the master without eating anything of it, but the hunting bird cannot be so trained. In contrast to these Ḥadīth 'Alī is of the opinion that the game of the hunting bird is absolutely unlawful, because it cannot be trained to catch and hold the game for its master without eating something of it.

20. That is, recite *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ* (*bismillah*), "In the name of Allah," when letting loose the hunting animal for game. According to a Tradition, 'Adī-bin-Ḥātīm asked the Holy Prophet whether he could hunt a game with a hunting dog. The Holy Prophet replied, "You may eat of the game if you recited the name of Allah at the time of letting loose the hunting dog, provided that he did not eat of it. In the other case you should not eat it because that would mean that the dog had really caught it for himself." Then 'Adī-bin-Ḥātīm further asked, "If I let loose my own dog on the game but afterwards find another dog there, what should I do in that case?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Do not eat it because you mentioned the name of Allah in relation to your own dog and not the other dog."

The verse enjoins that the name of Allah should be mentioned at the time of letting loose the hunting animal in order to make the game lawful. If, however, the hunted animal is found alive, it should be duly slaughtered in the name of Allah. But in case it is not found alive, it will be lawful if the name of Allah was mentioned at the time of letting loose the hunting animal. The same applies to hunting with arrows.

21. "The food of the People of the Book" also includes what has been slaughtered by them.

"The food of the People of the Book is lawful for you and your food for them" means that there are no restrictions either on us or on them to take food together. The Muslims are permitted to take meals with the People of the Book and they with the Muslims. But the repetition of the sentence "all good and pure things have been made

lawful for you" is very significant. It shows that the Muslims should not partake of their food, if the people of the Book do not observe those rules which are essential from the point of view of the Islamic Law or if they include unlawful things in their food and drink. For instance, if they do not mention the name of Allah over the animal they slaughter or mention any other name than that of Allah over it, the flesh would be forbidden for the Muslims. Likewise if liquor or pork or any other forbidden thing is served, the Muslims are not permitted to sit at the same table with them.

The same rule applies to the food and drink of other non-Muslims except that the Muslims are not permitted at all to eat the flesh of the animals slaughtered by non-Muslims. Moreover they are permitted to eat the flesh of the clean animals, slaughtered by the People of the Book only, if they duly pronounced the name of Allah over it.

22. This refers to the Jews and the Christians. Permission to marry from among the women of the People of the Book alone has been given, and that, too, with the provision that they should be chaste (*muhṣanāt*). There is a difference of opinion in the details of the application of this permission. According to Ibn Abbās, a Muslim may marry from among the women of the People of the Book who are the subjects of the Islamic State, but is not permitted to marry from among the women of the People of the Book living in the regions which are at war with the Islamic State or are living in a territory of the unbelievers. The Ḥanafīs differ a little from this and consider it undesirable, though not unlawful, to marry women from among the People of the Book living in a foreign territory. On the contrary, Sa'id bin Musayyab and Ḥasan Baṣrī are of the opinion that the Command is of a general nature ; therefore there is no need to make any kind of distinction between the People of the Book whether they are subject of an Islamic State or living in a foreign territory.

Besides this there is a difference in the interpretations of the word *مُحْصَنَاتٍ* (*muhṣanāt*.) According to Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, it refers to virtuous and chaste women. That is why he excludes characterless women of the People of the Book from this permission. Ḥasan, Sh'ibī and Ibrahīm Nakh'ī are of the same opinion and the Ḥanafīs also approve of this. On the other side, Imām Shafi-'ī takes it to mean free women of the People of the Book as opposed to slave girls from among them.

23. The warning that immediately follows the permission given to marry women from the People of the Book is very significant. The Muslim who makes use of this permission has been warned to guard his faith and morality very cautiously against the influence of his unbelieving wife. There is genuine danger that his deep love might make him a prey to wrong creeds and acts of his unbelieving wife and he might lose both his Faith and morality, or he might adopt

(Contd. on p. 24)

مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ
 الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٤٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ
 أَنْ يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۗ وَعَلَى
 اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ۖ
 وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا ۖ وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ ۖ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ
 الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ
 اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي
 مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ
 السَّبِيلِ ﴿١٤٩﴾ فِيمَا نَقُضَتْ مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعْنَتُهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً
 يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ ۖ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ ۗ وَلَا تَزَالُ
 تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ۖ مِنْهُمْ فَأَعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ ۚ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرَى أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَهُمْ
 فَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ ۖ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى
 يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ۖ وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ يَا أَهْلَ
 الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ
 الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ ۖ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥٢﴾
 يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ
 الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٥٣﴾ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ
 الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ مِنَ اللَّهِ

Allah has promised that He will pardon the errors of those who believe and do good deeds, and give them a rich reward. As for those who disbelieve and treat the Revelations of Allah as false, they shall go to Hell. 9-10

O Believers, recall to mind the favour which Allah has (recently) shown to you : when some people intended to do harm to you, Allah restrained their hands from you.³⁰ Fear Allah in whatever you do for the Believers should put their trust in Allah alone. 11

Allah had bound the Israelites by a solemn covenant, and appointed twelve supervisors³¹ from among them and said, "I am with you ; if you establish Ṣalāt, pay Zakat and believe in My Messengers, and support³² them and give a generous loan to Allah,³³ I shall surely wipe out your evils from you,³⁴ and admit you into gardens under which canals flow. But after this whoso from among you adopted the way of disbelief has indeed gone astray from the Right Way."³⁵ Then they broke their covenant and because of this We deprived them of Our mercy and hardened their hearts. Now they have become so degenerate that they distort the word of the Scriptures so as to change their meanings completely : moreover they have forgotten the major portion of the teachings given to them and every now and then you find out one act or the other of their dishonesty. There are only a few of them who are free from this vice : (so whatever mischief they do is to be expected of them). Yet forbear them and connive at what they are doing : Allah likes those people who show generosity in their dealings. 12-13

Likewise We bound by a covenant those people, who said, "We are *Naṣāra*."³⁶ But they, too, forgot much of what had been taught to them. So We sowed among them seeds of discord, enmity and hatred that shall last up to the Day of Resurrection, and surely the time will come when Allah will tell them of what they had been contriving in the world. 14

O People of the Book, Our Messenger has come to you : he makes manifest to you many things of the Book which you were concealing, and passes over many things.³⁷ Light 15-16

has come to you from Allah and the Book which guides to the Truth, whereby Allah leads to the paths of peace²⁴ those who seek His pleasure and brings them out of the depths of darkness into the Light of His grace and guides them towards the Right Way.

Contd. from p. 21]

such a wrong moral and social attitude which might be against the spirit of his faith.

24. According to the practice and instructions of the Holy Prophet, the washing of the whole face includes the inside washing of the mouth and the throat, and the nose before proceeding with the face. It is also essential to wipe the ears from outside and inside as they form a part of the head. The hands should be cleansed first of all because the other parts are to be cleansed with them.

25. A full bath is essential in case one becomes "unclean" by cohabitation or by a discharge of semen during sleep etc. It is forbidden to touch the Qurān or offer Prayer while one is "unclean". (For further details please refer to E.N.'s 67, 68, 69 of An-Nisā).

26. Please refer to E.N.'s 69 and 70 of An-Nisā.

27. Cleanliness of the body is a blessing like the purity of the soul. The blessing of Allah becomes complete only when one gets full guidance for the purity of both the body and the soul.

28. The blessing is that Allah has made the right way of life clear for the Muslims and appointed them to the high position of the leadership of the world to guide it on the straight path.

29. Please refer to E.N.'s 164 and 165 of An-Nisā.

30. This refers to the incident that has been related by Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās. Some Jews plotted to kill the Holy Prophet and some of his eminent Companions in order to give a crushing blow to Islam. Accordingly, they invited the Holy Prophet to a dinner. But by the grace of God the Holy Prophet came to know of the plot and did not go to the dinner. This incident has been mentioned here by way of introduction, as the address onward is directed towards the Israelites.

The address, which begins from here, has two objects. It is meant to warn the Muslims to guard against the attitude which the People of the Book had adopted towards the covenant they had made with God: they had broken the covenant and swerved into wrong and evil ways. Moreover, it also warns the People of the Book of their error and invites them to the Right Way.

31. The Arabic word *نقيب* (*naqib*) means one who guards and keeps a protecting and restraining watch. Allah commanded Moses to appoint twelve supervisors from among each of the twelve tribes of Israel to keep a watch over their affairs in order to protect them from irreligious and immoral ways. The Bible also mentions twelve 'princes

of the tribes of their fathers' (NUMBERS, 1 : 16) as 'heads of thousands in Israel' but not as supervisors of religion and morality as is implied in the word *naqib*.

32. That is, "if you accept the invitation of My Messengers and help them in their mission"

33. ". . . . a goodly loan to God" is the money spent in His Way. Such money has been called a goodly loan in the Qurān at several places and Allah has very graciously promised to return the loan after increasing it manifold, provided that it is a "goodly loan" which has been lawfully earned and spent in accordance with the Divine Law with good intentions. In that case Allah will pay back every farthing spent in His Way by increasing it manifold.

34. Allah "wipes out" evils in two ways : (1) When a person adopts the Right Way and follows the Divine Guidance in thought and action, his soul begins to purify itself and his life begins to be clean of many evils. (2) But if, in spite of this, he does not attain the high rank of perfection as a whole, and still has some evils left in him, Allah, by the exercise of His grace, will not take him to task and will "wipe out" these from his account. This is because Allah is not hard and strict in taking account of minor evils, provided that the person sincerely accepts the fundamental Guidance and begins to reform himself accordingly.

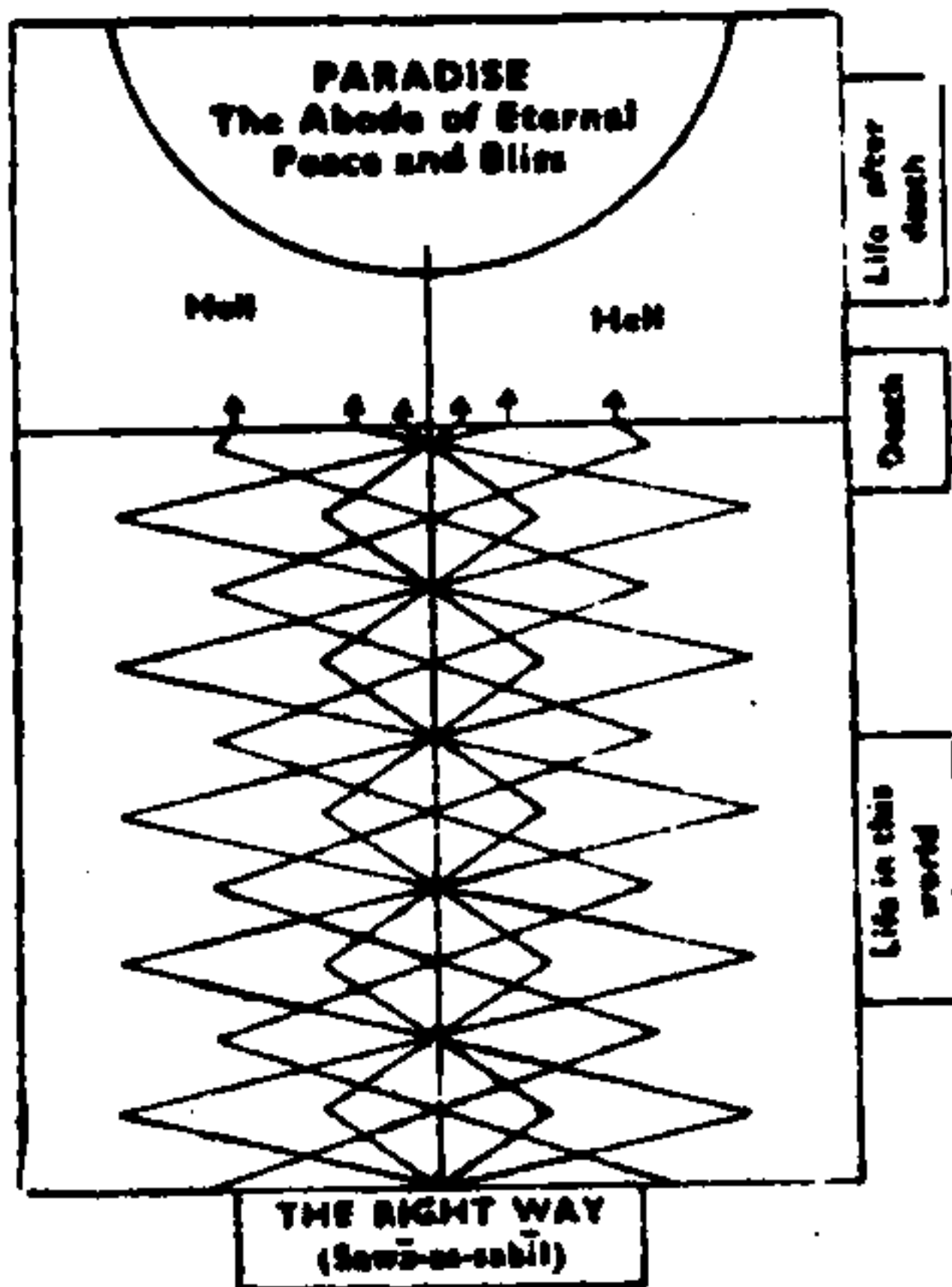
35. The significance of ". . . . he has indeed gone astray from the Right Way" is that at first he found the Right Way and then lost it and strayed into paths of ruin.

"The Right Way" does not fully express the meaning of *سواء السبيل* ("sawā-'as-sabil"). It is that way of life which enables a man to develop harmoniously all his powers, faculties, and abilities : which satisfies all his cravings, urges and feelings and the demands of his body and soul in a congenial manner : which guides him rightly to keep balanced the multifold complex relations with other human beings : which leads him individually and collectively to exploit and use equitably the natural resources for his own good and that of humanity. In short, it is that way of life which enables the individual and the society to solve spiritual, moral, social, physical, economic, political and international problems in a straight, smooth, even and just manner.

It is obvious that man with his limited powers and intellect cannot by himself solve these problems, as he is simply incapable of comprehending at one and the same time all the aspects of human problems so as to weigh and estimate their relative importance and judge between the different courses before him. That is why, whenever he has tried to plan a way of life for himself, he has utterly failed to do justice to his own self or his society, and made a mess of all his affairs and problems, and created a state of chaos everywhere. This

is because with his narrow vision he becomes so absorbed in one basic need out of many and one problem out of many that he loses sight of all others and neglects them intentionally or un-intentionally. As a result of this, life loses its balance and begins to rush towards one extreme. When this state of affairs becomes unbearable, one of the neglected needs or problems takes hold of man and life begins to rush towards another extreme with the same destructive result. In this way, life goes on running from one extreme to the other and man never finds the balanced middle way which is "The Right Way", because all the ways planned by him keep running in wrong directions from one extreme to the other.

As has been pointed out, man cannot plan that right way which



may lead him clear of the pitfalls of the myriad wrong and crooked ways ; so Allah has very graciously made arrangements for showing the right way to mankind. He sent His Messengers with Guidance to lead mankind to the right way to real success in this world and in the Hereafter ; and the one who loses this way will go wrong here and act wrongly, and inevitably go to Hell in the next world, for all the wrong ways lead to Hell. In this connection, it will be pertinent to point out the blunder that has been committed by some so-called philoso-

phers. When they noticed that human life was continually running between two extremes, they came to the wrong conclusion that the Dialectical process was the natural way of the evolution of human progress. According to them, internal contradictions are inherent in all things and the struggle between these opposites and their synthesis constitutes the contents of the process of development. They apply the Dialectical methods to the study of social life and come to the wrong conclusion that the same is the right way of evolution. Accordingly they start with a thesis of an extreme nature for the solution of a problem and go on rushing away from the Right Way towards one extreme till they discover, to their dismay, that in this process gross injustice has been done to some other equally important problems. Then they turn back with the antithesis of the first theory and presume that the synthesis of the two will help evolve its right solution. Though it is true that the struggle between the two opposite theories helps them approach the Right Way, yet they cross it rapidly towards the other extreme because they do not believe

in Divine Guidance which alone can make one firmly adhere to it. Then they do gross justice to some other problems and the same process is repeated over and over again. If such short-sighted philosophers had not rejected God and religion and made an impartial study of the Qurān, they would have discovered to their joy that the Right Way is the straight path, leading to the human evolution, and not the myriad crooked and curved paths. Thus they would have saved mankind from continually rushing aimlessly between extremes.

36. It is wrong to presume that the title *Naṣārā* pertains to Nazareth, the home of Jesus. In fact, its root is *nuṣrat* (help). The Christians have been called *Naṣārā* (helpers) for the reason that when Jesus asked, "Who will be my *anṣār* (helpers) in the cause of Allah?" his disciples answered, "We are Allah's انصار (helpers)". LXI : 14. The Christian writers got the wrong impression that the Qurān contemptuously calls the Christians *Naṣārā* because of the apparent similarity between *Naṣārā* and Nazarenes, a sect of early Christians who were contemptuously called Nazarites. But the Qurān makes it clear here that the Christians themselves said, "We are *Naṣārā*." It is obvious that the Christians never called themselves Nazarites.

In this connection, it may also be noted that Jesus Christ never called his disciples "Christians" or "Messiahites," for he had not come to found a new religion after his own name, but had come to revive the same religion that Moses and other Prophets before him (and after him) had brought. Therefore he did not form any new community other than that of the Israelites : nor did they live like a new one ; nor did they adopt a distinctive name or symbol for themselves. They used to go to the Temple (Jerusalem) for prayer along with the other Jews and considered themselves to be bound by the Mosaic Law. (Please refer to the Acts, 3 : 1, 10 : 14, 15 : 1 & 5, 21 : 21).

Later on the process of separation began from two sides. On the one side St. Paul, a follower of Prophet Jesus, put an end to the observance of the law and declared that the only thing needed for salvation was belief in Messiah. On the other side, the Jewish rabbis cut off the followers of Christ by declaring them to be a misguided sect. But in spite of this separateness, at first the sect bore no distinctive name. The followers of Christ called themselves by different names, such as disciples, brethren, believers, saints etc. (Please refer to the Acts, 2 : 44, 4 : 32, 9 : 26, 11 : 29, 13 : 52, 15 : 1 & 23, Romans, 15 : 45, and Corinthians, 1 : 12). But the Jews called them contemptuously and tauntingly, the Galileans or the sect of the Nazarenes, (Luke, 13 : 2, The Acts, 24 : 5) because of the Roman Province of Galilee in which Nazareth, the birth place of Jesus, was situated. These names, however, did not become current as the permanent names of the followers of Christ.

(Contd. on p. 30)

شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 جَمِيعًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا يُخَلِّقُ مَا يَشَاءُ
 وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ
 اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ
 يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
 وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٧١﴾ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ
 لَكُمْ عَلَى قُرْآنٍ مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِن بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ
 فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٧٢﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ
 مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يُقَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ
 وَجَعَلَ لَكُم مَّلَوكًا ۗ وَاشْكُرُوا مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِ أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ يُقَوْمِ
 ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا عَلَى أَدْبَارِكُمْ
 فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خِصْرِينَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ قَالُوا يَمُوسَى إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ ۗ وَإِنَّا لَنْ
 نَدْخُلَهَا حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا مِنهَا ۗ فَإِن يَخْرُجُوا مِنهَا فَإِنَّا دَاخِلُونَ ﴿١٧٥﴾ قَالَ
 رَجُلٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا ادْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ
 فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ فَإِنَّكُمْ غَالِبُونَ ۗ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٦﴾
 قَالُوا يَمُوسَى إِنَّا لَنْ نَدْخُلَهَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَاذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ
 فَقَاتِلْ إِنَّا هُنَا قَاعِدُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَ
 أَخِي فَافْرِقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٧٨﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ
 عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَتِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ

Indeed they committed blasphemy, who said, "The Messiah, son of Mary, is verily God."³⁹ O Muhammad, say to them, "If Allah chose to destroy the Messiah, Mary's son, and his mother and all the dwellers of the earth, who has the power to prevent Him from this? For, to Allah belongs the Kingdom of the Earth and the Heavens and all that is between them: He creates whatever He wills⁴⁰ and has power over everything." 17

The Jews and the Christians say, "We are the sons of Allah and His beloved ones." Ask them, "Why then does He punish you for your sins? In fact, you are also human beings like other human beings He has created. He forgives whomever He wills and punishes whomever He wills. To Allah belongs the Kingdom of the Earth and the Heavens, and all that is therein and all shall return to Him." 18

O People of the Book, this Messenger of Ours has come to you and is making clear to you the teachings of the Right Way after a long interval during which there had come no Messengers, lest you should say, "No bearer of good news nor warner came to us. Lo, now the bearer of good news and warner has come.—And Allah has power over everything."⁴¹ 19

Call to mind the time when Moses said to his people, "O my people, remember the favour which Allah bestowed upon you: He raised up Prophets from among you and made you rulers and gave you that which had not been given to anyone in the world."⁴² O my people, enter the Holy Land that Allah has destined for you,⁴³ and, do not turn your backs or you will turn about losers."⁴⁴ They replied, "O Moses, in that land dwell mighty people; therefore we are never going to enter it till they leave it; if, however, they leave it we are ready to enter it." Among those, who were filled with fear, there were two persons⁴⁵ whom Allah had blessed with His favour: they said, "Make your way into the gate against those mighty people; when you enter it, you will surely be victorious. Trust in Allah, if you are true believers." But even then they replied, "O Moses, we are never going to enter it so long as they remain therein. Therefore, go, both you and your Lord, and fight: 20-21

we will stay here." At this Moses cried, "My Lord, I have no power over anyone but myself and my brother: so set us apart from these disobedient people." Allah replied, "Very well, they are forbidden this land for forty years, during which period they shall wander homeless on the earth⁴⁶: so do not grieve at all for these disobedient people."⁴⁷

Contd. from p. 27]

As a matter of fact, the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch, when Barnabas and Paul went there in 43-44 A.D. to preach the Gospels. (The Acts, 11:26). Though this name was also given to them contemptuously by their enemies, yet, by and by, their leaders accepted this, saying, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, . . . if any man suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed." (1 Peter, 4:16). At long last, they lost the feelings that the name "Christian" was a bad title that had been given to them by their enemies.

Thus it is clear that the Qurān has not called them Christians because of the contempt associated with it, but has called them *Anṣār* (helpers) in order to remind them that they were the name-sake of those disciples of Jesus who had responded to his invitation and said, "We are helpers of Allah." Is it not an irony that instead of being grateful to the Qurān for giving them their name, the Christian missionaries of today should bear a grievance against it for not calling them "Christians"?

37. That is, "He makes known many things which you were dishonestly keeping back from the Scripture, for these are essential for the establishment of the true Faith, but disregards many other such things for there is no real need to disclose them."

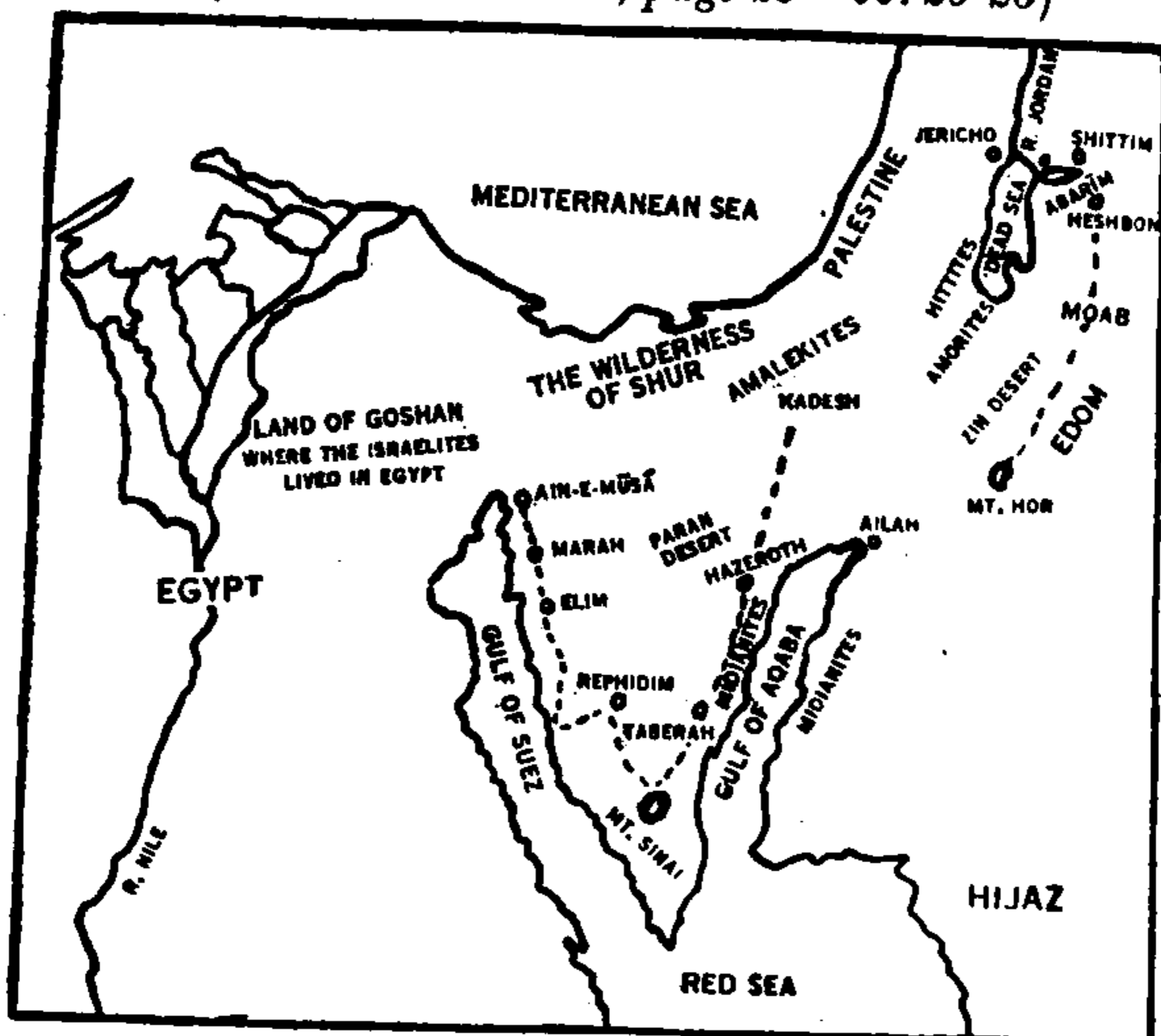
38. "Allah leads to the paths of peace" those who intend to walk in the Light of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet. They remain safe from wrong notions, wrong thoughts and wrong acts and their consequences, because at every cross-road they come to know the safe way with the help of that light.

39. The Christians were guilty of blasphemy in regarding Jesus as God and worshipping him as such. This was the result of the error they committed in regarding Jesus as the union of man and God, for it made his personality an enigma, which their scholars have not been able to solve in spite of their verbosity and argumentations. The more they tried to solve it the more complicated it became. Those who were impressed by the human aspect of this complex personality made him the son of God and one of the Trinity, while others, who were impressed by the Divine aspect of his personality, declared him to be the incarnation of God and worshipped him as such. There were still

(Contd on p. 32)

Map showing the places that the Israelites visited during their homeless wanderings in the Sinai Peninsula after their Exodus from Egypt :

(*Sūrah Al-Mā'idah, page 29—vv. 20-26*)



Explanation : Prophet Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai by the way of Marah, Elim and Rephidim in the Sinai Peninsula. Here he stayed for a little over a year and received most of the Commandments of the Torah. Then he was commanded to lead the Israelites towards Palestine and conquer it, for that land was to be given to them as an inheritance. So, he led them through Taberah and Hazeroth and came to the desert of Paran from where he despatched a deputation of the prominent Israelites to spy out Palestine. The deputation returned after forty days and made their report at Kadesh. Except for the encouraging picture presented by Joshua and Caleb, the report made by the other members was so disappointing that the Israelites cried out in disgust and refused to march on to Palestine. Thereupon Allah decreed that they would wander about for forty years in the wilderness and none of their older generation except Joshua and Caleb would see Palestine. Thus, the Israelites wandered homeless in the wilderness of Paran, Shur and Zin, fighting and struggling against the Amalekites, the Amorites, the Edomites, the Midianites and the Moabites. When the period of forty years was coming to an end, Prophet Aaron died in Mount Hor, near the border of Edom. At about this time, Prophet Moses entered Moab at the head of the Israelites and conquering the whole area, reached Heshbon and Shittim. Here he also died in the mountains of Abarim. After him Joshua, his first successor, crossed river Jordan from the east and captured Jericho, the first Palestinian city to fall to the Israelites. Later the whole of Palestine was conquered by them within a short period.

Ailah (Aqaba of the present day) in this map is the place where probably the well-known incident of the Sabbath-breakers, as mentioned in II : 65 and VII : 166, took place.

(Contd. from p. 30)

others who tried to adopt the middle course between the two extremes and spent all their abilities to prove the impossibility that Jesus was both man and God at one and the same time and that God and the Messiah were two separate beings, but at the same time a single being. (Please refer to E.N.'s 212-215 of An-Nisā).

40. "He creates whatever He wills" implies that the miraculous birth of Jesus was merely one of God's countless wonderful manifestations, and that this and his moral excellence and his miracles should not mislead the Christians to regard the Messiah as God. It was their shortsightedness that they did not consider the other creations of God which were even more wonderful than the creation of Jesus and foolishly made him God. They forgot that His power has no bounds and seeing the miracles performed by a wonderful creation of the Creator they began to regard him as a creator : whereas wise men see the All-Powerful Creator in the wonders of His Creation and get the light of Faith from them.

41. In this context, the sentence is very comprehensive and significant and has double meanings. One meaning is that God Who had the power of sending bearers of good news and warners before, has now appointed Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) for the same mission and He has the power to do so. The other meaning is that they should bear in mind that if they do not obey the bearer of good news and warner, Allah is All-Powerful and is able to inflict on them any punishment He likes without any hindrance.

42. This refers to the past glory of the Israelites they enjoyed at a much earlier period before the advent of Moses. On the one hand, Prophets of the high rank of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph were raised among the Israelites ; on the other, they won great political power in Egypt during the time of Prophet Joseph and after him. For a long time they remained the greatest rulers of their time in the then civilized world, and their currency was in circulation not only in Egypt but also in the countries around it.

In contrast to the general belief that the glory of the Israelites begins with the advent of Prophet Moses, the Qurān makes it clear here that the period of their real glory had passed long before him and he himself was holding that period before his people as an instance of their glorious past.

43. By Holy Land is meant Palestine, which had been the home of Prophets Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. When the Israelites left Egypt for good, God allotted this land to them and commanded them to conquer it.

44. This speech was made by Prophet Moses when two years after their exodus from Egypt, the Israelites were encamping in the desert of Paran which lies in the Sinai Peninsula near the junction of the Northern boundary of Arabia and the Southern boundary of Palestine.

45. It may mean that the two persons were from among those who were filled with the fear of the people or from among those who were God-fearing people.

46. The details of their homeless wandering can be had from the books, NUMBERS, DEUTERONOMY and JOSHUA, of the BIBLE. In brief, it is this : "Prophet Moses despatched twelve chiefs of Israel from the desert of Paran to spy out the Holy Land. Accordingly, they spied it out and returned at the end of forty days and made a report before all the congregation of Israel. They said, "Surely it floweth with milk and honey.....Nevertheless the people be strong that dwell in the land : (and) We be not able to go up against (them)and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants : and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers and so we were in their sight." At this, all the community wailed aloud and said, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt : or would God we had died in this wilderness ! And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword that our wives and our children should be a prey ? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt ?" But Joshua and Caleb, who had been among the twelve spies, rebuked the community for its cowardice. Caleb said, "Let us go up at once and possess it ; for we are well able to overcome it." Then both declared, "If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it us.....Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land and the Lord is with us : fear them not. But all the congregation stoned them with stones." At last God became wrathful at their continuous misbehaviour and decreed, "Doubtless ye shall now wander in the wilderness forty years until all that were numbered of you from twenty years old and upward shall fall as carcasses in this wilderness, (and) your little ones (grow young) them will I bring in and they shall know the land" According to this Divine decree, they took 38 years to reach Jordan from the desert of Paran. During this period all those who were young at the time of the exodus from Egypt died and after the conquest of Jordan Prophet Moses also died. After this, during the time of Prophet Joshua, son of Nun, the Israelites were able to conquer Palestine.

47. The incident contained in vv. 20-26 has been cited here with the special object to warn the Israelites. They have been reminded that they disobeyed Moses and swerved from the right path and showed cowardice and were consequently condemned to wander homeless for forty years but if they persisted in their attitude of rebellion against the mission of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), the chastisement shall be much more severe than that.

الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَىٰ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا
 فَتُقِبِلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَ لَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ ۗ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ ۗ قَالَ
 إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ لَئِن بَسَطْتَ إِلَىٰ يَدِكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا
 بِبَاسٍ بِيَدَيْكَ لِأَنَّكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ
 أَنْ تَبُوَأَ بِإِثْمِي وَإِثْمِكَ فَتَكُونَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاؤُ
 الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٣١﴾
 فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ يُورِي سَوْءَةَ أَخِيهِ
 قَالَ يُورِيكَهُ فَأَعْجَزْتَ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُورِي سَوْءَةَ أَخِي
 فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ
 مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ
 جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ
 رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنْ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَكٰفِرُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾
 إِنَّمَا جَزَاؤُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا
 أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ أَوْ
 يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۗ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ
 عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
 اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ
 وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُمْ
 مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَيَفْتَدُوا بِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ

وقيل
 النفر
 صلى الله عليه وسلم
 ومعاقبه
 وقف النبي

And tell them accurately the story of the two sons of Adam. When the two offered their sacrifices, the offering of the one was accepted but that of the other was not accepted. The latter said, "I will kill you." The other answered, "Allah accepts the offerings of the pious people only.⁴⁸ Even if you stretch your hand to kill me, I shall not lift my hand to kill you,⁴⁹ for I fear Allah, the Lord of the Universe ; I would rather prefer that you should bear the burden of my sin as well as of your own sin,⁵⁰ and become a dweller of Hell ; this is the just retribution of the iniquity of the aggressors." Even after this his evil soul prompted him to slay his brother without the slightest compunction : so he killed him and became one of the losers. Then Allah sent a raven which began to scratch the ground to show him how he might hide the corpse of his brother. Seeing this, he cried, "Woe be to me ! I have not been able to do even as this raven has done and so devise a plan of hiding the corpse of my brother."⁵¹ After this he became very remorseful of what he had done.⁵²

That was why We prescribed for the children of Israel⁵³: 32
 "He who killed any person, unless it be a person guilty of man-slaughter, or of spreading chaos in the land, should be looked upon as though he had slain all mankind, and he who saved the life of any person should be regarded as though he had given life to all mankind."⁵⁴ But the majority of them went on committing excesses in the land even after Our Messengers came to them one after the other with clear directions.

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and run about to spread mischief in the land⁵⁵ is this : they should be put to death or crucified or their alternate hands and feet should be cut off, or they should be banished from the land.⁵⁶ This is the disgrace and ignominy for them in this world and there is in store for them a harsher torment in the Hereafter, except those, who repent before you have power over them for you should know that Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate.⁵⁷

O Believers, fear Allah and seek the means of winning His pleasure⁵⁸ and exert your utmost in his way⁵⁹ so that 35-36

you may attain true success. Note it well that those, who have adopted the way of disbelief, shall not escape retribution for even if they possessed all the wealth of the earth and the like of it with it and offered it as ransom to redeem themselves from the torment of the Day of Resurrection, that will not be accepted from them and they shall receive a painful punishment.

48. That is, "It is no fault of mine that your sacrifice has not been accepted ; it is because you lack piety. You should, therefore, try to foster piety in yourself instead of making an attempt at slaying me."

49. It does not mean: "If you attempt to kill me, I will sit with folded hands before you, ready to be killed without any resistance." What it means is this: "You may cherish evil intentions of murdering me, but I will not ; you may make schemes for my murder but I will do nothing to forestall you, even after knowing that you are making preparation for my murder." In this connection, it should be understood clearly that it is not virtue to offer oneself for murder, nor is it a virtue to refrain from resisting an aggressive attack. True virtue is that one should not plan the murder of an enemy though he might be in search of an opportunity to kill the one. A virtuous man would rather prefer like the noble son of Adam that the enemy might be the aggressor and not he.

50. That is, "I would rather prefer that you alone should be guilty of the sin of cherishing evil intentions of slaying me than that I should also be guilty of the same thing. Thus you shall bear the burden of your own sin of aggression and of the injury I might inflict on you in self-defence."

51. Thus Allah warned the erring son of Adam of his ignorance and folly through a raven. And when once he became aware of the fact that the raven was better equipped for hiding the dead body, he was not only filled with remorse on this account but also began to feel that he had done an evil deed by slaying his brother. This is implied in "After this he became very remorseful of what he had done."

52. The story of the two sons of Adam has been related here to reproach the Jews in a subtle manner for their plot to kill the Holy Prophet and some of his eminent Companions. (Please refer to E.N. 30 of this Surah).

The similarity between the two events is quite obvious. The Jews plotted against the Holy Prophet and his Companions for the same reason for which the erring son of Adam had slain his pious brother. The Jews became jealous of the Holy Prophet and his

Companions because God withdrew His Favour from the People of the Book and bestowed it upon the un-lettered Arabs just because the former lacked piety and the latter were God-fearing. Instead of considering the matter coolly and considering why they had been condemned and making up for their error which had brought God's wrath on them, they plotted to kill those people whom God had blessed with His favours. And they did so in spite of the fact that they knew it well that their evil reaction could not win the favour of Allah but would make them even more condemnable than before.

53. That is, "Allah enjoins the Israelites to refrain from murder because they are showing the same murderous symptoms as were shown by the cruel son of Adam. That is why such strict checks on murder were applied." But the pity is that these precious instructions are not found in the present Bible. The Talmud, however, says, "To him who kills a single individual of Israel, it shall be reckoned as if he had slain the whole race and he who preserves a single individual of Israel, according to the Book of Allah he preserves the whole world." It also says that a judge of the Israelites in a case of murder would warn the witness saying, "To him who kills a single individual of Israel, it shall be reckoned as if he has slain the whole race."

54. This is to emphasize the sanctity of human life : it is essential for the preservation of human life that each and everyone should regard the life of the other as sacred and help to protect it. The one who takes the life of another without right, does not commit injustice to that one alone, but also proves that he has no feelings of mercy for others. Hence he is most surely the enemy of the whole human race, for if every individual suffered from the same kind of hard-heartedness, the whole human race would come to an end. On the contrary, if one helps to preserve a single human life, he is indeed a helper of all mankind for he possesses those qualities upon which depends the survival of the whole human race.

55. Here "the land" refers to that country or territory in which the maintenance of law and order is the responsibility of the Islamic State and "to wage war against Allah and His Messenger" is to wage war against the righteous system of government established by the Islamic State. As Allah likes that such a system of government should be established, He sent His Messenger to establish an equitable system of government, which should guarantee peace and justice to human beings, to animals, to trees, to vegetation and to everything in the earth, which may enable human beings to develop to the fullest their natural capabilities ; which should exploit natural resources of the earth for the true progress and improvement of humanity

[Contd. on p. 40]

الْقِيَمَةَ مَا تَقِيلُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرِجُوكَ مِنَ
 النَّارِ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنْهَا ۗ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ
 فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا ۗ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ ۖ وَأَصْلَحَ ۖ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ
 عَلَيْهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ
 وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ لَا يَحْزُنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ مِنَ
 الَّذِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِنْ قُلُوبُهُمْ ۗ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا ۗ
 سَمِعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمْعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُوكَ يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ
 مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ ۗ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِيتُمْ هَذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ
 تُؤْتَوْهُ فَاحْذَرُوا ۗ وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۗ
 أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُطَهِّرَ قُلُوبَهُمْ ۗ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ ۗ
 وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ سَمِعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ أَكَلُونَ لِلسُّخْتِ ۗ فَإِنْ
 جَاءُوكَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ أَوْ أَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَنْ
 يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْئًا ۗ وَإِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ
 الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ يُحْكُمُونَكَ وَعِنْدَهُمُ التَّورَةُ فِيهَا حُكْمُ اللَّهِ
 ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ ۗ وَمَا أُولَٰئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا بِعِ
 التَّورَةِ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ
 هَادُوا ۗ وَالرَّبِّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَكَانُوا

الوقف
 على الاول اجوز

They will wish to get out of the fire of Hell but shall not be able to come forth from it and theirs shall be an everlasting torment. 37

As for the thief, whether man or woman, cut off the hand⁶⁰ of either of them : it is the recompense for what they have earned, and an exemplary punishment from Allah ; Allah is All-Powerful, All-Wise. But whoso repents after his iniquity and reforms himself, Allah will surely turn towards him with his favour ;⁶¹ Allah is Forgiving and Compassionate. Do you not know that Allah is the Sovereign of the Kingdom of the Heavens and the Earth ? He may punish whom He wills and may pardon whom He wills ; He has power over everything. 38-40

O Messenger, let not those people who are striving hard in the way of disbelief,⁶² grieve you, whether they be from those who say with their mouths, "We believe," but their hearts do not believe, or from among those who have become Jews ; for the latter eagerly listen to lies⁶³ : they spy for other people who have never had any chance of coming to you⁶⁴ : they twist the words of Allah's Book out of their context in order to distort their proper meaning⁶⁵ : they say to the people, "If you are enjoined to observe such and such teaching accept it ; if it is other than this, reject it."⁶⁶ You can do nothing to save from Allah's punishment a man whom Allah wills to put to trial⁶⁷ : such people are those, whose hearts Allah does not will to purify⁶⁸ : there is ignominy for them in this world and a grievous punishment in the Hereafter. 41

They are listeners to falsehood and greedy devourers of the forbidden.⁶⁹ If, therefore, they come to you (with their cases,) you may judge between them or refuse to do so : for even if you refuse, they will not be able to do any harm to you, but if you judge between them, then judge with justice, for Allah loves those who act justly.⁷⁰—Yet how is it that they make you their judge, when they themselves possess the Torah, in which there is Allah's judgement, and even then they are turning away from it ?⁷¹ In fact, these people have no Faith. 42-43

Contd. from p. 37]

and not for its destruction. It is obvious that any attempt, big or small, to undermine or overthrow such an established system, is in reality a war against Allah and His Messenger. It does not make any difference whether that mischief is created by criminals and murderers who cause disorder in the settled and peaceful society, or by armed forces who attempt to overthrow the Islamic State and establish some corrupt un-Islamic system instead. And every sovereign treats such a violation directed against his authority or against any of his officials as war against himself.

56. An abstract of these alternative punishments has been given for the benefit of the judge so that he may exercise his discretion and award punishment according to the nature and extent of the crime. The real object of this is to show that any attempt by any person residing in the Islamic State, to overthrow its government is high treason and a most heinous crime, and that the offender is liable to be awarded any of these capital punishments according to the circumstance.

57. This implies that if they have refrained from creating mischief and from making any attempt at overthrowing the righteous system, and have shown by their conduct that they are peace-loving and law-abiding good citizens, none of the above mentioned punishments will be inflicted upon them, even if they might have committed any of the crimes before their repentance. They would, however, be liable to be called to account in a court of law for any offence against any individual, such as murder, theft etc., but they will not be tried for any previous offence of treason or rebellion or war against Allah and His Messenger.

58. That is, "Seek all those means that help obtain Allah's nearness and His pleasure."

59. "Exert your utmost" does not fully convey the meaning of *Jahidū*. It implies that the Believers should struggle against all the forces that stand in the way of Allah, as if to say, "You can please Allah and win His favour only if you exert your utmost in the way of Allah : struggle hard against all the persons, parties and forces which stand in Allah's way, which hinder you from Allah's way to turn you away from it, which do not let you follow Allah's way as His servants and force you to become their servants or servants of others. Such exertion and struggle will lead you to true success and become the means of obtaining the nearness of Allah."

Thus it must have become clear that this verse exhorts the Believer to fight his enemies on all fronts. On one side, he confronts Satan and a host of his followers, and on the second, his own self and its alluring temptations. On the third side, he has to fight many people who have swerved from the way of God, and with whom he is

bound by close social, cultural and economic relations. On the fourth side, he is required to oppose all those religious, cultural and political systems that are founded on rebellion against God and force people to submit to falsehood instead of the Truth. Though these enemies employ different weapons, they all have one and the same object in view, that is, to subdue their victims and bring them under their own subjection. It is obvious that true success can only be achieved if one becomes wholly and solely a servant of God and obeys Him openly and also secretly, to the exclusion of obedience to all others. Thus there is bound to be a conflict with all the four enemies. Therefore the Believer cannot achieve his object unless he engages himself with all these hostile and opposing forces at one and the same time and at all events, and removing all these hindrances marches onwards on the way of Allah.

60. One hand of the thief (and not both hands) is to be cut off, and the consensus of opinion is that the right hand should be cut off for the first theft.

The Holy Prophet has excluded an act of breach of trust from theft and decreed that the hand of the one guilty of this is not to be cut off. This shows that an act of theft is committed only when a person wrongfully takes away goods from the custody of another and brings them into his own possession.

The Holy Prophet has also decreed that a hand is not to be cut off for the theft of a thing whose value is less than that of a shield. At that time the price of a shield according to (a) 'Abdullah-bin-'Abbās was ten *dirhams*, (b) Ibn-i-'Umar three *dirhams*, (c) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā-'ishah one-fourth of a *dinār*. That is why there has been a difference of opinion among the Jurists in regard to the minimum limit for theft for the cutting off of a hand. According to Imām Abu Ḥanīfah it is ten *dirhams* and according to Imāms Mālik, Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad it is one-fourth of a *dinār*. (At that time a *dirham* was equal to the value of three *mashas* and $1\frac{1}{2}$ *rattis* of silver, and one-fourth of a *dinār* was equal to three *dirhams*).

Moreover, there are many things for the theft of which the hand is not to be cut off. For instance, the Holy Prophet directed, "The hand should not be cut off for the theft of fruits and vegetables," and "There should be no cutting off of hand for the theft of eatables." According to a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā-'ishah, "Hands were not cut off for the theft of paltry things during the time of the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him)." Caliphs 'Uthmān and 'Alī decreed and no Companion disagreed that a hand is not to be cut off for the theft of a bird. Moreover, Caliphs 'Umar and 'Alī did not cut off a hand for a theft from the Public Treasury and there is not mention of any kind of disagreement among the Companions about this also.

That is why the Jurists have not included different things in the list of those for the theft of which hands should be cut off. According

to Imam Abū Hanīfah, hands should not be cut off for the theft of vegetables, fruits, flesh, cooked food, grain which has not yet been gathered together, articles used for sports and music. Besides these, he is of the opinion that the hand should not be cut off for the theft of animals grazing in forests and for theft from the Public Treasury. Likewise the other Imams have also excluded the theft of certain things from this punishment, but this does not mean that there is no punishment at all for those thefts. These crimes should be punished in other ways than this.

61. This does not mean that if the thief repents, his hand should not be cut off. It only means that if a person repents after his hand has been cut off and reforms himself and becomes a true servant of God, he will save himself from the wrath of Allah, Who will cleanse him of his sin. On the other hand, if a person does not repent and reform himself even after his hand has been cut off, but goes on nurturing evil thoughts, this clearly shows that he has not cleansed his heart even after this severe punishment. Therefore he shall deserve the wrath of Allah as he did before his hand was cut off. That is why the Quran exhorts such a person to beg for the forgiveness of Allah and reform himself. The hand is cut off for the preservation of society. The punishment does not necessarily purify the soul. This can only be achieved by repentance and turning to God. It is reported in the Traditions that once the hand of a thief was cut off by the order of the Holy Prophet. After this he sent for him and asked him to say, "I beg for Allah's forgiveness and turn to Him." Accordingly, the thief uttered these words. Then the Holy Prophet invoked Allah's forgiveness for him.

62. This refers to the people who were using all their intellectual powers and energies to preserve the previous state of ignorance against the reformatory efforts of Islam. They were planning all sorts of shameless schemes against the Holy Prophet; they were distorting the Truth knowingly and doing their worst to defeat his holy mission by lies, deceit, cunning and the like, though he was selflessly working for the good of humanity and their own good. Naturally it grieved the Holy Prophet to see that those mean and ignoble people were employing mean tactics to defeat his noble mission. Of course Allah does not mean to ask the Holy Prophet to suppress that grief which is felt over such a state but consoles him not to be disheartened by their evil machinations and advises him to go on working patiently for the reform of the people who cannot be expected to behave otherwise.

63. It implies two things: (1) These people are the slaves of their lusts and are not interested at all in the Truth but in falsehood only. They eagerly listen to lies because that alone can gratify their lust for falsehood. (2) It also implies that they attend the meetings of the

Holy Prophet and his followers so that they might spread false reports about them in order to malign them.

64. This also implies two things : (1) They come as spies to the meetings of the Holy Prophet and his followers in order to obtain some secret information for the benefit of the enemies of Islam. (2) They come with hostile intent to gather material for bringing false accusations and slander against the Holy Prophet and his followers so that they may cause misunderstandings among those who had no opportunity of making direct contacts with the Holy Prophet and the Muslims.

65. Allah consoles the Holy Prophet that he should not be disheartened by the behaviour of those people who do not hesitate to twist the words of the Torah out of their context and change their meanings to suit their lusts.

66. That is, "The Jewish scholars tell their illiterate people to accept any teaching of the Holy Prophet only if it agrees with theirs ; if it does not they should reject it."

67. Allah puts to trial a man who cherishes evil inclinations by putting temptations before him to test whether he has any good left in him or not. If he has no goodness left in him, he takes each temptation as an "opportunity," and the evil in him overcomes him and renders him an easy prey to further temptations. In a degenerate case like this, it is not in the power of any well-wisher to save such a person from falling into temptation. It may be noted in this connection that individuals as well as communities are put to trial by Allah.

68. Allah did not will to purify such a person because he himself did not wish to purify himself. It is not the way of Allah to deprive a man of purification, if he desires it and tries for it. He does not will to purify that person only who does not intend to purify himself.

69. This particularly refers to their jurists and judges who accepted false evidence and unjustly decided cases in favour of those from whom they took bribes or from whom they expected unlawful gains.

70. At that time the Jews had freedom in their internal affairs and their cases were decided by their own judges according to their own law, for they had not as yet become subjects of the Islamic State, but had only entered into treaties with it. Therefore they were not bound to bring their cases to the Holy Prophet or to the judges appointed by him. Nevertheless, sometimes, when their own law did not suit them, they would take their cases to the Holy Prophet in the hope that they might obtain a more favourable decree from him than they could from their own law.

Here it refers to a case of illicit relation between a man and a woman who belonged to respectable families of the Jews of Khaibar.

[Contd. on p. 46]

عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءٌ فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَاحْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِإِيَّتِي ثَمَنًا
 قَلِيلًا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ۝ وَكَتَبْنَا
 عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنْ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ
 وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ
 بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَهُ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ
 الظَّالِمُونَ ۝ وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ
 يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا
 لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَهُدًى وَ مَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ۝ وَلِيَحْكُمَ
 آهْلُ الْإِنجِيلِ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
 فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ۝ وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا
 بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّبًا عَلَيْهِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
 وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً
 وَمِنْهَا جَاوِزًا ۝ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَكِن لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي
 مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا
 كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ۝ وَأِنْ أَحْكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ
 أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَاحْذَرُوهُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ۝
 فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَأَعْلَمَ أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَإِنْ
 كَثُرُوا مِنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ ۝ أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ
 اللَّهُ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ۝ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ

Indeed, We sent down the Torah wherein was Guidance and Light : thereby all the Prophets, who were Muslims, judged the cases of those who had become Jews.⁷² Likewise the *Rabbānis* and *Ahbār*⁷³ (based their judgement on it), for they were made the guardians of the Book of Allah and witnesses to it. So, (O Jews), do not fear the people but fear Me and do not sell My revelations for paltry worldly gains : those, who do not judge by the Law which Allah has sent down, are indeed the disbelievers. 44

We had prescribed this decree in the Torah for the Jews : "Life for life, eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, tooth for tooth, and for all wounds equal retaliation."⁷⁴ However, whoso forgoes retaliation as charity, it shall be expiation for him⁷⁵ : those, who do not judge by the Law which Allah has sent down, are indeed the unjust people. 45

Then after those Prophets, We sent Jesus, the son of Mary ; he confirmed whatever had still remained intact of the Torah in his time. And We gave him the Injil wherein was Guidance and Light ; that, too, confirmed what was intact of the Torah⁷⁶ at the time ; moreover, it was guidance and admonition for the God-fearing people. We had enjoined that those who were given the Injil should judge by the Law which had been sent down in it : those, who do not judge by the Law which Allah has sent down, are the transgressors.⁷⁷ 46-47

Then, O Muḥammad, We sent this Book to you which has brought the Truth : it confirms whatever has remained intact from the Book⁷⁸ at the time of its revelation and safeguards⁷⁹ and protects it. Therefore you should judge between the people by the Law sent down by Allah and do not follow their desires by turning aside from the Truth that has come to you.⁸⁰ —We prescribed a law and a way of life for each of you, though your Lord could have made all of you a single community, if He had so willed. But (He willed otherwise) in order to test you in what He has bestowed upon each of you : therefore try to excel one another in good deeds. Ultimately you shall all return to Him ; then He will let you know the truth about that in which you have been differing.⁸¹ So,⁸² O Muḥammad, judge be- 48-50

tween these people by the Law that has been sent down to you and do not follow their wishes ; be on your guard lest these people should tempt you away, even in the least, from the Guidance that has been sent down to you by Allah. If they turn away from it, then know that Allah wills to involve them in trouble in consequence of some of their sins. And the fact is that the majority of these people are transgressors. (If they turn away from the Divine Law, then) do they desire to be judged by the laws of ignorance? Yet there is no better judge than Allah for those who believe in Him

Contd. from p. 43]

According to the Torah (Deut. 22 : 23-24), their punishment was that both of them should be stoned to death. As the Jews did not want to inflict this punishment, they decided that the case should be taken to the Holy Prophet and that they would accept his decision only if it was other than stoning to death. When the Holy Prophet had heard the case he decreed that they should be stoned to death, but the Jews rejected it. Then the Holy Prophet asked them what the punishment was according to the Torah. They replied that it was to flog the culprits and to blacken their faces and to mount them on a donkey. The Holy Prophet asked them to declare on oath whether that was the punishment for adultery committed by a married couple. They all but one answered that it was so. The one who had kept quiet was Ibn Surya, who was considered to be the greatest scholar of the Torah by the Jews themselves. The Holy Prophet pointedly addressed him and asked, "I want you to swear by that God who saved your people from the Pharaoh and gave you Law on the Tur. and answer whether it is this same punishment for adultery in the Torah that these people tell." He said, "I would never have confessed that the punishment for adultery is stoning the culprits to death, if you had not laid upon me such a heavy oath. The fact is that when adultery became common among us, the judges would let the offenders go, if they happened to be big people. But as this differentiation caused a great discontent among the common people, we made a change in the Law that instead of stoning the culprits to death they should be flogged and mounted on a donkey with blackened faces." After this, no other course was left for the Jews and the culprits were stoned to death by the order of the Holy Prophet.

71. In this verse Allah has fully exposed the dishonesty of these "religious people" who had established their authority for piety and knowledge of the book throughout Arabia. The very fact that they had discarded the Book they themselves believed to be the Book of Allah and brought their case to the Holy Prophet whom

they did not believe to be a Prophet, showed that their claim of belief in the Book was hollow. This also showed that they did not sincerely believe in anything but their lusts. They discarded the Book which they believed to be the Book of God, just because its decree was against their lusts and they went to the one whom they considered to be a false Prophet in the hope that they might get a decree that might suit their lusts.

72. Here the fact, that all the Prophets were Muslims and that the Jews had given up Islam and turned Jews, has also incidentally been stressed.

73. The *Rabbānīs* were the doctors and the *Ahbār* the jurists of the Law.

74. Compare this with Exodus, 21 : 23-27.

75. It implies that if one forgoes retaliation with the intention of doing a good turn, this good act will atone for many of his sins. The Holy Prophet explained this, saying, "If one receives a wound in one's body and forgoes its retaliation, then one's sins will be forgiven in proportion to the degree of forgiveness."

76. This means that Jesus did not bring any new religion but followed the same way that was followed by all the Prophets before him and invited the people to the same. He believed in what was intact in his time from among the original teachings of the Torah. The Injil also testified the same. (Matthew, 5 : 17-18). The Qurān reiterates this fact over and over again that each and every Prophet, who was sent by Allah to any part of the world, confirmed the Message of all the Prophets who had gone before him and exerted his utmost to complete the work which they had left as a holy heritage, for he did not come to refute them or efface their religion and establish his own religion instead. Likewise Allah did not send down any of His Books to refute any of His own previous Books, but to support and confirm them.

77. In this passage (vv. 44-47) Allah has shown that those who do not judge by the Law sent down by Him are : (1) disbelievers, (2) unjust people and (3) transgressors. As a corollary to this, that person who discards the Law of Allah and judges by the law formulated by himself or by others is guilty of three crimes. First, he practises disbelief by his rejection of the Law of Allah. Secondly, he becomes guilty of injustice because he violates the Law of Allah which is perfectly just and equitable. Thirdly, he became (*fāsiq*) a transgressor against Allah, because, in spite of being Allah's servant, he transgressed against his Master's Law and adopted his own law or that of another. Thus practically he broke away from the allegiance and subjection of his Master and denied His Authority : this is *fiṣq*.

This disbelief and injustice and transgression are inherently part and parcel of the violation of Divine Law. It is, therefore, not

possible to avoid these three crimes where there is such a violation. They, however, vary in their relative guilt in accordance with the nature and extent of the rejection of the Law. If one gives judgement against the Divine Law on the basis that he considers that law to be wrong and his own or someone else's law as right, such a person shall be a disbeliever, unjust person and transgressor, in the fullest sense of the words. However, if one holds the belief that the Law of Allah is right, but in practice gives judgement against it, such a one shall not be outside the Muslim Community, but shall be considered to be mixing his belief with disbelief, injustice and transgression. Likewise, if one rejects the Law of Allah in all the affairs of life, he shall be considered to be a disbeliever, unjust person and transgressor in every aspect of life and if one accepts the Law in certain matters and rejects it in others, one shall have a mixture of belief and Islam, disbelief, injustice and transgression, all mixed together in one's life, exactly in the proportion one obeys the Law or violates it.

Some commentators are of the opinion that the above mentioned verses apply only to the People of the Book, but the words of the Qurān do not support this at all. Ḥaḍrat Huzaifah refuted this version very aptly. Someone said to him that these verses applied to the children of Israel only, that is, if one of the Jews judged against the Law sent down by Allah, he would be a dis-believer, transgressor and rebel but not a Muslim. Ḥaḍrat Huzaifah replied. "What good brethren the children of Israel are to you : all that is bitter is for them and all that is sweet is for you ! By God, you will follow their way step by step (and shall be dealt with like them)."

78. The use of the word *Al-Kitāb* (the Book) here is very significant. Instead of saying, "The Qurān confirms whatever has remained intact from the former Books," it says, "from the Book." This is to show that the Qurān and all the Books that have been sent down by Allah in different languages and in different ages are in reality one and the same Book which has one and the same Author and one and the same object and aim. They impart one and the same knowledge and teaching to mankind with the only difference that they are couched in different languages and employ different methods to suit the various addressees. Therefore the fact that these Books support and do not refute, confirm and do not contradict one another, shows that they are all different versions of one and the same Book (*Al-Kitāb*).

79. The Arabic word *Muhaimin* is very comprehensive in meaning. It means one who safeguards, watches over, stands witness, preserves, and upholds. The Qurān safeguards "the Book," for it has preserved within it the teachings of all the former Books. It watches over them in the sense that it will not let go waste their true teachings. It supports and upholds these Books in the sense that it corroborates the Word of God which has remained intact in them. It

stands a witness because it bears testimony to the Word of God contained in those Books and helps to sort it out from the interpretations and commentaries of the people which were mixed with it ; what is confirmed by the Quran is the Word of God and what is against it is that of the people.

80. "We prescribed..... to differ" is a parenthesis, which answers a perplexing question that might arise from the preceding passage. The question is : Why are there differences in the details of their Laws, if all the Prophets and all the Books taught the same way of life and all of them confirmed and supported one another ? For instance, how is it that there are some differences in the details of the form of worship, in the limits of the lawful and the unlawful and in cultural and social regulations taught by different Prophets and Books ?

81. Here is the answer to the above-mentioned question :

(1) It is wrong to infer from the above-mentioned differences in the details of the different Laws that they have been derived from different sources and have different origins. As a matter of fact, they all have come from Allah, Who prescribed different regulations to suit different communities and different ages.

(2) No doubt Allah could have prescribed one and the same Law for all human beings from the very beginning and made them a single Community but He did not do so for many good reasons. One of these points of wisdom is to test people whether they obey or not what is given to them by Allah. Those people, who understand the real nature and spirit of the Divine Way and the position of the regulations in it and are not prejudiced, will recognise and accept the Truth in whatever form it comes. Such people will never hesitate to submit to the new regulations sent by Allah to replace the former ones. On the contrary, those, who do not understand the true spirit of the Way, but consider the regulations and their details alone to be the Way and who have become static and prejudiced because of their own additions to it, will reject every new thing that comes from Allah to replace what they already possess. And such a test was essential to distinguish the two above-mentioned kinds of people ; therefore different laws and regulations were prescribed.

(3) As the real object of all the laws is the cultivation of virtues, Allah has commanded the people to excel one another in virtues, without paying heed to the apparent differences in different Laws. This is why those people, who keep in view the real aim of the Law, should advance towards it on the lines indicated by the Divine Laws and regulations.

(4) As regards the differences, which have been produced by the prejudices, obduracies and wrong mental attitudes, these can neither

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وَالنَّصْرَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَاِنَّهُ
 مِنْهُمْ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَتَرَى الَّذِيْنَ فِي قُلُوْبِهِمْ
 مَّرَضٌ يُسَارِعُوْنَ فِيْهِمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ نَحْشَى اَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَآئِرَةٌ ۗ فَعَسَى اللّٰهُ
 اَنْ يَّاتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ اَوْ اَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهٖ فَيُصِيبْحُوْا عَلٰى مَا اَسْرَوْا فِيْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ
 نِدْمِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَ يَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا اَهْلَآءَ الَّذِيْنَ اَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ
 اَيْْمَانِهِمْ اِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ حَبِطَتْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ فَاَصْبَحُوْا خٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
 الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مَنْ يَّرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَن دِيْنِهٖ فَسَوْفَ يٰتِي اللّٰهُ بِقَوْمٍ
 يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُجِبُّوْنَہٗ لَا اَذَلَّةَ عَلٰى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اَعِزَّةٌ عَلٰى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۗ
 يُجَاهِدُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَلَا يَخَافُوْنَ لَوْمَةً لَّآئِمَةً ۗ ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ
 اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيْهِ مَن يَّشَآءُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ وَاَسِعُ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ اِنَّمَا وَلِيْكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ
 وَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُوْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَ هُمْ
 رٰكِعُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فَاِنَّ حِزْبَ
 اللّٰهِ هُمُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا
 دِيْنَكُمْ هُزُوًا وَّ لَعِبًا مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوْا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَ الْكٰفِرَآءَ
 اَوْلِيَآءَ ۗ وَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ اِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَاِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ اِلَى الصَّلٰوةِ
 اتَّخَذُوْهَا هُزُوًا وَّ لَعِبًا ۗ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَهْلَ
 الْكِتٰبِ هَلْ تَنْقِمُوْنَ مِنَّا اِلَّا اَنْ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَ مَا اُنزِلَ اِلَيْنَا وَ مَا
 اُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَاَنْ اَكْثَرَكُمْ فٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ قُلْ هَلْ اُنبِئُكُمْ بِشَرِّ مِّنْ
 ذٰلِكَ مَثُوْبَةً ۗ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۗ مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللّٰهُ وَ غَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ وَ جَعَلَ

O Believers, do not take the Jews nor the Christians as your friends : they are one another's friends only. If any-one of you takes them as friends, surely he shall be counted among them ; indeed Allah deprives the wrong-doers of His Guidance. 51

You see that those, who have the disease of hypocrisy in their hearts, are always moving among them. They say, "We fear lest we get involved in some disaster."⁸⁴ But it may be that these people will feel ashamed of the hypocrisy they are hiding in their hearts, when Allah will give you a decisive victory or show something else from Himself.⁸⁵ At that time the Believers will say, "Are these the same people who stated us upon solemn oaths by Allah that they were with you ?" All their deeds became vain and they ended in utter failure.⁸⁶ 52-53

O Believers, whoso turns away from Islam, (let him) ; Allah will raise many such people whom He will love and who will love Him ; who will be lenient towards the Believers but stern towards the disbelievers⁸⁷ ; who will exert their utmost in the way of Allah and who will not fear the censure of anyone who censures them.⁸⁸ This is Allah's bounty : He bestows it on whomever He wills, for Allah's resources are boundless and He is All-Knowing. 54

Your friends, indeed, are Allah and His Messenger and the Believers who establish Ṣalāt, pay Zakāt and bow down before Allah. And whoso makes Allah and His Messenger and the Believers his friends, let him know that Allah's party will surely come out victorious. 55-56

O Believers, do not take your friends from among the people, who were given the Book before you and such as make a jest and pastime of your Faith ; and (likewise do not take for your friends) the other disbelievers ; fear Allah, if you are true Believers. When you make a call for Prayer, they make it an object of jest and sport⁸⁹ ; this is because they are devoid of understanding.⁹⁰ Say to them, "O people of the Book, what is there that gives you offence against us other than that we believe in Allah and what has been sent down to us and what was sent down before us ? And the fact is that most of you are transgressors." Then 57-60

say, "Should I inform you of those, who will have even worse recompense from Allah than the transgressors?" They are those whom Allah has cursed; who have been under His wrath; some of whom were turned into apes and swine; who worshipped *taghut*; those are the people who are in far worse plight and who have turned farthest away from the Right Way."⁹¹

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be resolved in polemical symposiums nor on the battlefield, but will be decided by Allah Himself in His Final Judgement. Then the Reality will be revealed and the people will come to know the amount of truth or falsehood that lay hidden in the arguments in which they were engaged throughout their lives.

82. From here the same subject has been resumed that was interrupted by the parenthesis.

83. The Arabic word *Jāhiliyyat* (ignorance) is the antonym of Islam. The way of Islam is entirely based on the knowledge imparted by Allah Who possesses the knowledge of all realities. On the contrary, every way different from and opposed to the way of Islam is the way of ignorance. The pre-Islamic period of Arabia is called the period of ignorance, in the sense that the people had invented their own ways of life that were based on mere guess-work or lusts. Therefore whenever any of these ways will be adopted, that period will be called the period of "ignorance." Likewise the knowledge which is imparted in Schools and Universities today is only a partial knowledge and cannot in any sense be the right guidance for mankind. That is why all the systems of life that are based on fancies and conjectures with the help of such partial knowledge, in utter disregard to the Divine knowledge, shall likewise be the ways of ignorance like the ways of the pre-Islamic period.

84. This refers to the condition of the hypocrites during the period when the conflict between Islam and *kufur* had not come to any decisive conclusion. Although Islam had become a power by dint of the sacrifices of its followers, the opposing forces were also very powerful and there were equal chances of the victory of either side. The hypocrites, while living among the Muslims, wanted to keep good relations with the Jews and the Christians so that if the conflict ended in the defeat of the Muslims, they might safely take refuge with their enemies. Then there was also the economic factor; at that time the Jews and the Christians were economically the most powerful people in Arabia. The money-lending business was almost entirely in their hands and they had a strong economic hold upon the people. Moreover, the most fertile regions of Arabia were in their possession. This also led the hypocrites to preserve their old relations with them. In

short, they considered it very dangerous to break relations with these people because of the conflict between Islam and *kufur*, for they feared that it might ruin them economically and politically.

85. That is, "Something short of a decisive victory that might convince the people that it was Islam that was ultimately going to win in the conflict."

86. All the good acts they did as Muslims were lost because they lacked sincerity. The prayers they offered, the fast they observed, the *Zukāt* dues they paid, and other things they did in obedience to the Islamic Law became null and void because there was no sincerity in them. They did not dedicate themselves wholly to Allah but had divided their loyalties equally between Allah and His rebels for the sake of their worldly interests.

87. "Who will be humble towards Believers" means that they will never use force against the Believers and will never employ their intelligence, ability, influence, wealth, power or anything else to suppress or oppress them or inflict loss on them. The Muslims will always find such persons to be mild, kindly, amiable and sympathetic.

"..... but stern towards the disbelievers" : it means that a Believer will be firm, strict, uncompromising and militant towards the opponents of Islam by virtue of his firm faith, sincere religiousness, strict principles, strong character and God given intelligence. Whenever the disbelievers will come in conflict with him, they will find that a Believer can neither be bought nor coerced because he is so uncompromising in his Islamic principles that he would rather die than yield.

88. It means that they will fearlessly follow the Way of Allah and act upon His commandments, and declare to be right what is right, and wrong what is wrong, according to it, and will not mind in the least the opposition, the censure, the criticism, the objections, the derision and the ridicules of their opponents. They will boldly follow the Way of Islam which they sincerely believe to be right, even if the popular opinion is against Islam and they are exposed to the ridicule, the derision and the taunts of the world.

89. They make the call to Prayer an object of ridicule by mimicking and deriding it and by perverting its words.

90. This very fact of their making the call to Prayer an object of ridicule is a clear proof of their lack of understanding. If they had not been involved in folly and ignorance, they would never have indulged in such frivolous things in spite of their religious difference with the Muslims, because no sensible person would ever think of ridiculing the worship of Allah made by any people whatsoever.

91. Verse 60 contains a subtle reference to the shamefaced impudence of the Jews in opposing the Muslims in spite of the

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مِنْهُمْ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّاغُوتِ أُولَئِكَ شَرُّ مَكَّانًا وَ
 أَضَلُّ عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ۝ وَإِذَا جَاءُوكُمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَقَدْ دَخَلُوا
 بِالْكَفْرِ وَهُمْ قَدْ خَرَجُوا بِهِ ۝ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْتُمُونَ ۝ وَتَرَى
 كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتًا
 لَئِشَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝ لَوْ لَا يَنْهَاهُمُ الرَّبِيبِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ عَنْ
 قَوْلِهِمُ الْإِثْمَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتًا لَئِشَ مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ۝ وَقَالَتِ
 الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدُ
 مَبْسُوطَةٍ لِيُنْفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ ۝ وَلِيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ
 مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا ۝ وَالْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعِمَاوَةَ وَالْبَغِضَاءَ إِلَى
 يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ۝ كُلَّمَا أَوْقَدُوا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ ۝ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي
 الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا ۝ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ۝ وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ
 آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَكَفَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأَدْخَلْنَاهُمْ جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ۝
 وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ
 لَأَكَلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ ۝ مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُقْتَصِدَةٌ ۝
 وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ سَاءٌ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝ يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ
 إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۝ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۝ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِكَ
 مِنَ النَّاسِ ۝ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ۝ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ
 الْكِتَابِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ حَتَّى تُقِيمُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا
 أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۝ وَلِيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ

When they come to you, they say, "We have believed," 61-63
but in fact they had come in a state of un-belief and departed with disbelief ; Allah knows full well what they were concealing in their hearts. You see most of them are striving for sinful and unjust deeds and eating what is unlawful : evil indeed are the things they have been doing. Why do their rabbis and divines not forbid them to say sinful words and to eat unlawful things ? It is indeed an evil record of their life-work they are preparing !

The Jews say that the hands of Allah are chained⁹²— 64
Nay, their own hands have been chained⁹³ and they have become accursed because of the blasphemy they utter⁹⁴— Allah's hands are free and He expends in whatever way He wills.

The fact is that the Message which has been sent down to you from your Lord has rather increased the rebellion and disbelief of many of them⁹⁵ : (as a consequence of this) We have cast between them enmity and hatred till the Day of Resurrection. Whenever they kindle the fire of war, Allah extinguishes it ; now they are striving to spread mischief in the world but Allah does not like the mischief-makers.

If (instead of this rebellion), the people of the Book 65-66
had believed and adopted the way of God-fearing, We would have removed their evils from them, and admitted them into the gardens of bliss. Had they observed the Torah and the Injil and the other Books which had been sent down to them by their Lord, abundance would have been given to them from above and from beneath.⁹⁶ Though there are some among them who are righteous, most of them are evil doers.

O Messenger, convey to the people whatever has been 67-68
sent down to you from your Lord ; for, if you do not do this, you will not be doing justice to His Message. Allah will protect you from the mischievous deeds of the people : Rest assured that He will not show the way to success (against you) to the disbelievers. Tell them plainly, "O people of the Book, you have no valid ground to stand on unless you observe the Torah and the Injil and the other Books which have been sent down to you from your Lord."⁹⁷

It is certain that the foregoing decree which has been sent down to you from your Lord, will increase all the more the rebellion and disbelief of many of them,⁹⁸ but you should not grieve for the disbelievers.

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fact that they had often been under the curse and wrath of Allah for their evil deeds. According to their own history, they broke the Sabbath and many of them were turned into apes and swine. They had become so degraded that they began to worship *tāghūt*. Therefore they were warned to desist from their opposition to the Muslims who sincerely believed in Allah and followed the Right Way, whereas they themselves were involved in disobedience and indecency and other moral sins of the worst type.

92. According to the Arabic idiom, one whose hands are 'chained' is an excessively parsimonious person. What the Jews meant by this was that Allah had ceased to be bounteous. When they had fallen into the lowest state of degradation for centuries and lost all hope of their national recovery, they used to lament their lost glory and blame Allah for showing niggardliness towards them. The foolish people from among them went so far as to say, "God has become so stingy that He has shut the doors of His treasures against us. He has now nothing left with Him for us except calamities and misfortunes."

This attitude is not peculiar to the Jews alone. The foolish people of other communities, instead of turning to Allah, also utter insolent words like these when a calamity befalls them.

93. That is, they themselves have become so niggardly as to become a proverb for parsimony and narrow-mindedness.

94. If they meant to provoke Allah to bounty by their taunts, they miserably failed in their object. On the contrary, they became subject to the curse of Allah in consequence of their insolent and impudent words and were deprived of His blessing and clemency.

95. Instead of producing the desired effect on the Jews, the Word of God fell on deaf ears. So they did not learn any lesson from it but in their obduracy began to oppose the Truth. Instead of redressing their wrong doings and evil deeds and mending their ways, they strove hard to suppress that Voice so that no one might listen to it. Thus the Word of God that was sent down to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) for their own good and the good of humanity produced no good effect upon them but increased the rebellion and disbelief of many of them.

96. This concise sentence refers to the speech of Prophet Moses contained in LEVITICUS 26 and DEUTERONOMY 28. In this he warned the Israelites in detail: "If you will carefully carry out all His Commands, then your God will lift you high above all the nations of the earth and all His blessings shall come upon you".

but "If you do not listen to the voice of God and are not mindful of all His Commands and rules,..... then shall all sorts of curses, calamities and plagues come upon you..... The Eternal will have you routed in front of your foes."

97. "To observe the Torah and the Injil" means to follow their teachings sincerely and to follow the code of life laid down in them.

In this connection, one must keep in mind that the Bible contains two kinds of writings. Some portions in them have been interpolated by the Jewish and the Christian scholars. It is obvious that the Qurān does not demand the observance of these parts. But there are other portions that have been put down as the Commandments of God or as the sayings of Moses, Jesus and other Prophets (Allah's peace be upon them all). The Qurān demands the observance of the latter parts only, for there is no marked difference between the teachings contained in them and those of the Qurān. Though even these parts of the Bible have not remained wholly intact and have been tampered with by the translators, the commentators etc., nevertheless, one does feel that these teach the same fundamental principles of the Faith that the Qurān teaches, and guides man to the same way of life that has been laid down in the Qurān. Thus it is clear that, if the Jews and the Christians had been following those teachings which have been attributed to God and their Prophets in the Bible, most surely they would have been a community of righteous people at the time when Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was sent as a Messenger and would have readily recognized that the Qurān contained the same Message that was contained in the former Books. In that case they would have felt no difficulty in following the Holy Prophet, for, then, there would have been no question of changing their religion; this would have been a continuation of the same way that they were following before.

98. The foregoing decree enjoined by Allah will increase their rebellion and disbelief because they will not consider it with a cool mind but in their obduracy oppose it more vigorously.

مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا ۚ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ إِنَّ
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّيْثُونَ وَالنَّاصِرَىٰ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ
 وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾
 لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَارْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ رَسُولًا قُلْنَا
 جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُوا وَفَرِيقًا يَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾
 وَحَسِبُوا أَنَّا لَنَكُونَ فَتْنَةً فَعَمُوا وَصَمُوا ثُمَّ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ
 عَمُوا وَصَمُوا كَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ
 الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۗ وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَبْنِي
 إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ مَنِ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ
 اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَقَدْ
 كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ ۗ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ
 وَإِنْ لَمْ يَدْنُوهُمْ عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ
 أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾
 مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ ۗ وَ
 أُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ ۗ كَانَا يَأْكُلِنَ الطَّعَامَ ۗ أَنْظَرَ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ
 ثُمَّ أَنْظَرَ أَلَىٰ يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قُلْ أَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ
 لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٦﴾ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ
 لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا
 مِن قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَن سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٦٧﴾ لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ

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(Believe it that none enjoys any privilege) : whoever from among the Muslims or the Jews or the Sabaeans or the Christians believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good deeds will have no cause of fear or grief or sorrow.⁹⁹ 69

We made a solemn covenant with the children of Israel and sent many Messengers to them ; but whenever any Messenger came to them with a thing which was against their desires, they either treated him as a liar or slew him : yet they presumed that no mischief would come of it ; they, therefore, became blind and deaf : after this Allah forgave them but again most of them went on behaving even more like the blind and the deaf ; Allah has been watching all the evil things they have been doing. 70-71

Most certainly they committed blasphemy, who said, "Allah, He is indeed the Messiah, Mary's son" ; whereas the Messiah said, "O children of Israel, "worship Allah alone, Who is my Lord and your Lord as well."^{99a} Whoso joins a partner with Allah, Allah shall forbid him the Garden, and Hell shall be his abode : and such workers of iniquity shall have no helpers. 72

Most certainly they committed blasphemy, who said, "God is one of the three" : whereas there is no deity other than the One Deity. And if these people do not desist from uttering such words, a painful chastisement shall be inflicted on all those from among them who have been guilty of blasphemy. Will they not, then, turn to Allah and ask His pardon ? Allah is very Forgiving and Compassionate. 73-74

The Messiah, son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger : many Messengers had already passed away before him. His mother was a righteous woman and they both ate food (like other human beings). Behold ! how We make clear to them the signs leading to the Reality, and, again behold, how they are perverted.¹⁰⁰ 75

Say to them, "Do you worship instead of Allah that, which has no power to harm nor benefit you ? In fact it is Allah alone who hears everyone and knows everything." Say, "O people of the Book, do not transgress the bounds of truth in your religion, and do not follow the fancies of those who themselves went astray before you and led astray many others and strayed away from the Right Way."¹⁰¹ 76-77

99. Please refer to verse 62 and E.N. 80 of Al-Baqarah.

99a. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Matthew 4 : 10.

100. This verse repudiates very clearly the Christian doctrine of the Godhead of Jesus. If one sincerely wishes to know what he really was, one can judge very easily with the help of the signs given herein that he was no more than a man. The Gospel itself bears witness to the fact that he was a human being, and subject to the usual wants and necessities of ordinary persons : he was born of a woman (Mary) : he had a genealogical tree like all other human beings : he had a human body which had all the characteristics and limitations of other human bodies : he slept, he ate food and he felt heat and cold : he was even tempted by the devil. These things clearly show that he could not be God nor could he have been a partner with God in His Godhead.

It is a strange feat of mental perversion that the Christians insist on ascribing God-head to Jesus in spite of the fact that their own Gospels depict him purely as a human being. This is a clear proof of the fact that they do not believe in the Gospels but in an imaginary Christ whom they themselves have invented and raised to Godhead.

101. This refers to the mis-guided nations from whom the Christians picked up wrong creeds and false ways. The reference is especially to the Greek philosophers whose fancies misled the Christians from the Right Way which had been shown to them at the start. The beliefs of the first followers of the Messiah conformed to a great extent to the reality they themselves had witnessed and to what had been taught to them by their Prophet. But later on the Christians went so much beyond the limits in showing reverence and veneration to the Messiah and were so influenced by the fancies and philosophical interpretations of their beliefs that they invented a new religion that had nothing in common with the real teachings of the Messiah. In this connection, the following extracts from JESUS CHRIST, pages 677-678, by the Rev. Charles Anderson Scott (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Fourteenth Edition) are worth reading :—

"Apart from the Birth stories at the opening of Matthew, Mark and Luke (the exact significance of which in this respect is ambiguous) there is nothing in these three Gospels to suggest that their writers thought of Jesus as other than human, a human being specially endued with the spirit of God and standing in an unbroken relation to God, which justified His being spoken of as the "Son of God". Even Matthew refers to Him as a carpenter's son and records that after Peter had acknowledged Him as Messiah he "took him and began to rebuke Him" (Matt. XVI. 22). And in Luke the two disciples on the way to Emmaus can still speak of Him as "a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people" (Luke, XXIV. 19). It is very singular that in spite of the fact that before Mark was composed, "the

Lord" had become the description of Jesus common among Christians ; he is never so described in the second Gospel (nor yet in the first, though the word is freely used to refer to God). All three relate the Passion of Jesus with a fulness and emphasis of its great significance, but except the "ransom" passage (Mark, X. 45) and certain words at the Last Supper, there is no indication of the meaning which was afterwards attached to it. It is not even suggested that the death of Jesus had any relation to sin or forgiveness. Had the "ransom" saying been suggested by Paul, it would not stand as it does in its isolated vagueness."

The same author says, "That He ranked Himself as a prophet appears from a few passages such as 'I have to go on my way today, tomorrow or day after tomorrow, because it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem.' (Luke, 13 : 39). He frequently referred to Himself as "the son of Man." Further on he says that it was St. Paul who declared that after his ascension, Jesus was made the 'son of God' by the very act of ascension and was invested with full powers. He says, "Jesus never refers to Himself as the "Son of God", and the title when bestowed upon Him by others probably involves no more than the acknowledgement that He was the Messiah. But He does describe himself "as the Son" absolutely Moreover, he uses the word "Father" in the same absolute way to define His relationship to God: It is conceivable that He did not always realise the uniqueness of this relationship, that in early life He thought of the privilege as one which He shared with other men, but that experience of life and deeper knowledge of human nature forced upon Him the discovery that in this He stood alone."

"Certain words of Peter spoken at the time of Pentecost, 'A man approved of God,' describe Jesus as He was known and regarded by His contemporaries The Gospels leave no room for doubt as to the completeness with which these statements are to be accepted. From them we learn that Jesus passed through the natural stages of development, physical and mental, that He hungered, thirsted, was weary and slept, that He could be surprised and require information, that He suffered pain and died. He not only made no claim to omniscience, He distinctly waived it. Indeed any claim to omniscience would be not only inconsistent with the whole impression created by the Gospels, it could not be reconciled with the cardinal experiences of the Temptation, of Gethsemane and of Calvary. Unless such experiences were to be utterly unreal, Jesus must have entered into them and passed through them under the ordinary limitations of human knowledge, subject only to such modifications of human knowledge as might be due to prophetic insight or the sure vision of God. There is still less reason to predicate omnipotence of Jesus. There is no indication that He ever acted independently of God, or as an independent God. Rather does He acknowledge dependence upon God, by His habit of

prayer and in such words as "this kind goeth not forth save by prayer". He even repudiates the ascription to Himself of goodness in the absolute sense in which it belongs to God alone. It is a remarkable testimony to the truly historical character of these Gospels that though they were not finally set down until the Christian Church had begun to look up to the risen Christ as to a Divine Being, the records on the one hand preserve all the evidence of His true humanity and on the other nowhere suggest that He thought of Himself as God"

"It may not be possible to decide whether it was the primitive community or Paul himself who first put fully religious content into the title "Lord" as used of Christ. Probably it was the former. But the Apostle undoubtedly adopted the title in its full meaning and did much to make that meaning clear by transferring to "the Lord Jesus Christ" many of the ideas and phrases which in the Old Testament had been specifically assigned to the Lord Jehovah. He gave unto him that name that is above every name—the name of "Lord." At the same time by equating Christ with the Wisdom of God and with Glory of God, as well as ascribing to Him Sonship in an absolute sense, Paul claimed for Jesus Christ a relation to God which was inherent and unique, ethical and personal, eternal. While, however, Paul in many ways and in many aspects, equated Christ with God, he definitely stopped short of speaking of him as God. . . ." (Pages 22-25, *Enc. Britt.*, Vol. 13, 1946).

"The moulds of thought (of Trinity) are those of Greek philosophy and into these were run the Jewish teachings. We have thus a peculiar combination—the religious doctrines of the Bible, as culminating in the person of Jesus, run through the forms of alien philosophy. . . ."

For the Doctrine of Trinity, "The Jewish source furnished the terms, Father, Son and Spirit. Jesus seldom employed the last term and Paul's use of it is not altogether clear. Already in Jewish literature it has been all but personified. Thus the material is Jewish, though already doubtless modified by Greek influence; but the problem is Greek; it is not primarily ethical nor even religious but it is metaphysical. What is the ontological relationship between these three factors? The answer of the Church is given in the Nicene formula, which is characteristically Greek"

(*Enc. Britannica*, Vol. 5, page 633 last line, Article "Christianity")

In the same connection, the following passage from "CHURCH HISTORY" (*Enc. Britannica*, Volume 5, Copy Right 1946) is also worth reading :

"The recognition of Christ as the incarnation of the "logos" was practically universal before the close of the 3rd century, but His deity was still widely denied and the Arian controversy which distracted the Church of the 4th century concerned the latter question. At the council of Nicaea in 325 the deity of Christ received official sanction

and was given formulation in the original Nicene creed. Controversy continued for some time, but finally the Nicene decision was recognised both in East and West as the only orthodox faith. The deity of the Son was believed to carry with it that of the Spirit, who was associated with Father and Son in the baptismal formula and in the current symbols and so the victory of the Nicene Christology meant the recognition of the doctrine of the Trinity as a part of orthodox faith.

"The assertion of the deity of the Son incarnate in Christ raised another problem which constituted the subject of dispute in the Christological controversies of the 4th and following centuries. What is the relation of the divine and human natures in Christ? At the council of Chalcedon in 451 it was declared that in the person of Christ are united two complete natures, divine and human, which retain after the union all their properties unchanged. This was supplemented at the third council of Constantinople in 680 by the statement that each of the natures contains a will, so that Christ possesses two wills. The Western Church accepted the decisions of Nicaea, Chalcedon and Constantinople and so the doctrines of the Trinity and of the two natures in Christ were handed down as orthodox dogma in West as well as East

"Meanwhile in the Western Church the subject of sin and grace and the relation of divine and human activity in salvation, received special attention and finally, at the 2nd Council of Orange in 529, after both Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism had been repudiated, a moderate form of Augustinianism was adopted, involving the theory that every man as a result of the Fall is in such a condition that he can take no steps in the direction of salvation until he has been renewed by the divine grace given in baptism, and that he cannot continue in the good thus begun except by the constant assistance of that grace which is mediated only by the Catholic Church". (Page 677-678).

It has become very clear from the above quotations from Christian Scholars that the first thing which misled the Christians was their exaggerated credulity. Accordingly, they went beyond the limits in their reverence and love of Christ. That is why they began to apply epithets like "Lord" and "Son of God" to Jesus Christ (Allah's peace be upon him) and to ascribe Divine Attributes to him and to invent the Doctrine of Atonement, when, in fact, there was absolutely no room for such things in his teachings. Afterwards when they came under the influence of philosophy, they began to put forward interpretations to justify the errors of their former religious leaders and went on inventing new creeds, one after the other, in utter disregard of the real teachings of Jesus Christ, merely on the strength of Philosophy and Logic, whereas the right thing for them would have been to turn to the real teachings of Christ.

It is against such wrong beliefs that the Qurān warns in vv. 72-77.

كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ
 بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ
 لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ تَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 لَبِئْسَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ أَنْ سَخِطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي الْعَذَابِ
 هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَكَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا نَزَّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ
 مِنْ تَحْتِ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ غَلِيظٍ لِيَلْجِئَ لِيُتَّخَذَ
 النَّاسُ عَدَاوَةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا وَلِتَجِدَ
 أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَوَدَّةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرِي ذَلِكَ بِأَن
 مِنْهُمْ قَيْسِيَيْنِ وَرُهَبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

الجزء

وَمَا نَزَّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ تَحْتِ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ غَيْرِ غَلِيظٍ لِيَلْجِئَ لِيُتَّخَذَ

مِنَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾
 وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا نَطْمَعُ أَنْ يَدْخُلَنَا
 رَبَّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَأَنشَأَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا جَنَّتِ تَجْرِي مِنْ
 تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥٩﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 لَا تَحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
 الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَكُلُوا مِنْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي
 أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ
 يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَّدْتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ فَكَفَّارَتُهُ إِطْعَامُ عَشْرَةِ مَسْكِينٍ

Those who adopted the way of disbelief from among the children of Israel were cursed by the tongue of David and of Jesus, Mary's son, because they had grown rebellious and become transgressors : they would not forbid one another to do the wrong deeds they committed ;¹⁰² it was an evil way which they had adopted. Today you see many of them who take the side of the disbelievers (against the Believers). Indeed it is an evil end to which their souls have prompted them : for they have incurred the wrath of Allah and they are going to suffer eternal torment. Had they believed in Allah and the Prophet and in what was revealed to him, they would never have made friends with the disbelievers¹⁰³ (against the Believers), but many of them have become disobedient to Allah.

78-81

You will find that the most hostile of all people in their enmity to the Believers are the Jews and the *mushriks* ; and you will find that the nearest in friendliness to the Believers are those, who say, "We are Christians." This is because there are among them some pious scholars and monks and because they are free from pride. When they listen to that which has been sent down to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflow with tears because of the Truth they recognise therein. They spontaneously say, "Our Lord, we have believed ; therefore, write down our names with those who bear witness to it." And they say, "Why should we not believe in Allah and accept the Truth that has come to us, when we are eager that our Lord may count us with the righteous people ?" And, for these words of theirs, Allah rewarded them with the Gardens underneath which canals flow, wherein they will live for ever. This is the reward of the righteous people. As for those who rejected Our Revelations and treated them as false, they deserve Hell.

82-86

O Believers, do not make unlawful those pure things which Allah has made lawful for you,¹⁰⁴ and do not go beyond the limit ;¹⁰⁵ indeed Allah does not like the transgressors. Eat easefully of the lawful and pure things with which Allah has provided you, and refrain from disobeying Allah in Whom you have believed.

87-88

102. The corruption of the children of Israel took place according to the universal process. At first some individuals of a community become corrupt, and if the collective conscience of the community is alive, the public opinion keeps them suppressed, and the community, as a whole, is saved from that corruption. But on the other hand, if the community connives at their evil ways, and leaves them free to do as they like, by and by, that corruption which was at first confined only to some individuals, spreads in the whole community. The same thing happened in the case of the children of Israel.

As to the curse by the tongue of the Prophets David and Jesus, please refer to Psalms 10 and 50 and Matthew 23.

103. If the Jews had been sincere believers in God, Prophethood and Revelation, they would have naturally taken the side of the Muslims, who were believers in these teachings. But the Jews were a strange sort of believers in the Book : they sided with the *mushriks* against the Believers in the battle between the Unity of God and *shirk*. Moreover, they professed to believe in Prophethood, but took the side of those who did not believe in it. Still they shame-facedly declared that they were believers in God, Prophets and the Books.

104. This Divine Commandment implies two things. First, "You have no authority to make certain things lawful and others unlawful. Lawful is only that which Allah has made lawful and unlawful is that which Allah has made unlawful. Therefore if you make a lawful thing unlawful, and, *vice versa*, you will be following your own law and not the Divine Law." Secondly, "You should not adopt the way of asceticism like the Christian monks or the Hindu friars or the Buddhist mendicants and the like." This was meant to warn the Muslims against the general tendency, which has always existed among the religious-minded people, to consider even the normal satiation of the desires of the body and mind to be against spiritual progress. They imagine that self-torture, self-denial and abstinence are virtues in themselves and that one could not approach God without these austerities. As a matter of fact, there were some Companions, who had developed such tendencies. When the Holy Prophet came to know that some of his Companions had taken vows that they would always observe fast during the day and would not go to bed for sleep but keep awake and worship God the whole night, and would abstain from flesh and butter and women, he forbade them from such practices. He said, "I have not ordained such things ; your own self has rights on you ; therefore observe fast and also eat easefully. Stand in worship at night and also go to sleep. I myself sometimes observe fast and at others I do not. I eat flesh and butter. (This is my way) and the one who does not like my way, is not of me."

According to another Tradition, he emphasised the same and said, "How is it that some people have made unlawful for themselves

women, good food, scents and perfumes, sleep and other good things of the world? As for me I have not taught you to become monks and hermits. The way of life taught by me does neither allow abstention from women nor from eating flesh nor retirement and seclusion from the world. The Law has prescribed Fasting for self-discipline, and *Jihād* for the same benefits that might be obtained from asceticism. Worship Allah and associate none with Him as partner, perform Haj and 'Umrah, establish and pay *Zakāt* dues, and observe the Fasts during the month of Ramaḍān. The people who were doomed before you, were doomed because they practised austerity of their own accord, and when they did so, Allah also prescribed the same for them. Those whom you see now in the Monasteries, are of the same type."

In the same connection, we learn from some Traditions that when the Holy Prophet came to know that a certain Companion had been abstaining from having conjugal relations with his wife for a long time and had been devoting the whole of his time to worship, he immediately sent for him and ordered, "Go to your wife instantly." The Companion replied, "I am observing fast." The Prophet again said, "Break your fast and go to your wife."

There is another instance of the same kind. A woman came to Caliph 'Umar and complained, "My husband observes fast during the day and passes the night in worship and does not have conjugal relations with me." Ḥaḍrat 'Umar ordered Ka'ab-bin-Saur-al-Azdi to hear the case. He decreed that the husband was permitted to pass three nights in worship but he must go to his wife on the fourth night.

105. "To go beyond the limit" has very extensive meanings. One goes beyond the limit, if one makes lawful things un-lawful or abstains from things which Allah has declared to be pure as if they were impure or if one is extravagant in the use of pure things, or if one makes use of un-lawful things as if they were lawful. Allah does not like such acts of transgression.

مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ ۗ فَمَنْ
 لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ۚ ذَلِكَ كَفَّارَةٌ لِمَا كَفَرْتُمْ ۚ وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ ۚ وَ
 أَحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ ۚ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَيْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ
 عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ
 يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمْ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَيْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيُصَدِّكُمْ عَنْ
 ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ ۗ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَاطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا
 الرَّسُولَ وَاحْتَذُوا ۚ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا إِنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ
 الْمُبِينُ ﴿٥٠﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعِمُوا
 إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا ۚ وَآمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا ۚ وَآمَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا
 ۚ وَأَحْسَنُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِيَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ
 اللَّهُ بَشْيَءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَنَالَهُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَرِمَاحُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن
 يَخَافُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ ۗ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ ۗ وَمَن قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَدِّدًا
 فَجَزَاءٌ مِّثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ هَدْيًا
 بِلِغَةِ الْكَعْبَةِ أَوْ كَفَّارَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسْكِينٍ أَوْ عَدْلٌ ذَلِكَ صِيَامًا لِّيَذُوقَ
 وَبَالَ أَمْرِهُ ۗ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَمَّا سَلَفَ ۗ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ ۗ وَ
 اللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامُهُ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ
 وَالسِّيَارَةِ ۗ وَحُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرْمًا ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ

Allah does not take you to task for the inadvertent oaths you swear, but He will call you to account for the intentional and deliberate oaths you make. The expiation (of breaking such an oath) is to feed ten indigent persons with the normal food you serve in your own family or to give them clothes or to free one slave, or to fast for three days, if one cannot afford any of them. This is the expiation of breaking the solemn oaths you have taken ;¹⁰⁶ be mindful of your oaths.¹⁰⁷ Thus Allah makes His Commandments plain to you so that you may show gratitude. 89

O Believers, wine, gambling, (ungodly) shrines and divining devices are all abominable works of Satan ;¹⁰⁸ therefore refrain from these so that you may attain true successes.¹⁰⁹ Indeed Satan intends to sow enmity and hatred among you by means of wine and gambling, and to prevent you from the remembrance of Allah and from *Ṣalāt*. Will you not, therefore, abstain from these things ? Obey Allah and His Messenger and abstain from these things ; but if you will disobey, note it well that Our Messenger's only responsibility was to convey the Message clearly. 90-92

Those, who have believed and have done good deeds, shall not be called to account for whatever they might have eaten in the past, provided that they abstain from those things that have been made unlawful, and remain steadfast in their Faith, and do good works : then restrain themselves from whatever they are forbidden and believe in the Divine Law : then fear Allah and adopt the righteous attitude, for Allah likes those who do righteous deeds. 93

O Believers, Allah will put you to a hard trial by that game which will come within the very reach of your hands or lances, in order to see who fears Him even though He is invisible : there shall, therefore, be a painful punishment for those who transgress the limits after this warning. O Believers, do not kill game while you are in the state of *ihram*.¹¹⁰ And, if anyone kills an animal intentionally, he shall have to make an offering of a head of cattle equivalent to it, which will be decided by two just men from among you. This offering shall have to be sent to the 94-95

Ka'abah or, failing this, he shall have to feed indigent people by way of expiation or compensate for it by equivalent fasting,¹¹¹ so that he may taste the evil consequence of what he did. Allah has forgiven what has gone before, but if anyone repeats the same, Allah will inflict retribution on him : Allah is All-Mighty and All-Powerful to inflict retribution.

96

Game of the sea and its use as food has been made lawful for you :¹¹² you may eat it at your halting place and also use it as a provision for the caravan, but game of the land has been prohibited so long as you are in the state of *ihrām*. So refrain from the disobedience of that Allah before Whom you shall all be mustered together.

106. The Commandment about oaths has been laid down here in connection with instructions about food, because some people had taken oaths of making some lawful things unlawful for themselves. The Commandment is that if one uttered a word of oath without any intention behind it, one shall not be bound to observe it, for there is no punishment or expiation for this. But if one has deliberately taken such an oath, one must break it and expiate the violation because one must abrogate such a sinful oath. (Please also refer to E.N.'s 243 and 244 of Al-Baqarah and E.N. 125 of An-Nisā).

107. "Being mindful of an oath" implies three things. First, one should make the right use of an oath and should not take it for useless and sinful things. Secondly, when one takes an oath for anything, one should remember it lest one should forget it. Thirdly, if one takes a deliberate oath to do a right thing, one must fulfil it and if any one violates it, he should expiate the sin.

108. Please refer to E.N.'s 12 and 14 of this Sūrah for the meaning of *anṣāb* (ungodly shrines), *azlām* (methods of divination) and *maisar* (gambling). Though *azlām*, divination, is in its very nature a form of gambling, there is a slight difference between it and *maisar*. *Azlām* applies to those forms of divination and casting lots, which are tinged with *shirk* and superstition and *maisar* applies to all those forms by which wealth is acquired or divided by devices of chance.

109. In this verse four things have been made absolutely unlawful. They are wine, gambling, ungodly shrines (which are dedicated to the worship of others than Allah and in which sacrifices are made and offerings given in the name of others than Allah) and divining devices. The nature of the last three has already been explained. Here are the details of the Commandment about wine.

Before making wine absolutely unlawful in this verse, two other Commandments had already been given. (II : 219, IV : 43). Before

this last Commandment was given, the Holy Prophet addressed the people in order to prepare them for its absolute prohibition. He warned and said, "Allah does not like at all that people should drink wine. Probably absolute prohibition will soon be prescribed: therefore those who possess wine are advised to sell it." Some time after this, when V. 90 was sent down he declared, "Now those who possess wine, can neither drink it nor sell it. They should, therefore, throw it away." Accordingly it was spilt in the streets of Al-Madīnah to run wastefully. Some people, however, asked the Holy Prophet, "May we give it as a present to the Jews?" He replied, "The One who has made it unlawful has also forbidden to give it as a present." Others asked, "May we convert it into vinegar?" He replied, "No, you must spill it." Another asked again and again, "Is one permitted to use wine as medicine?" The Holy Prophet emphatically rejected this also and said, "No, it is not a medicine but a disease." Yet another asked, "Sir, we live in a place, which is very cold, and we have to do tiresome labour. So we drink wine to refresh ourselves from fatigue and to keep warm in the cold." He said, "Is what you drink intoxicant?" The man replied, "Yes." Then the Holy Prophet replied, "Refrain from it." At this the man said, "The people of our part of the country will not submit to this." He replied, "If they do not submit to this, then go to war against them."

According to a Tradition related by Ibn 'Umar, the Holy Prophet declared, "Allah has cursed wine and the one who drinks it and the one who serves it and the one who sells it and the one who buys it and the one who extracts it and the one who has it extracted and the one who carries it and the one for whom it is carried."

According to another Tradition the Holy Prophet prohibited the Muslims from eating that food which is served alongwith wine. In the initial stage of the prohibition, he forbade even the use of those utensils which were employed for extracting wine or for drinking it. Afterwards when the prohibition had become thoroughly effective, the use of such utensils was permitted.

Though originally the Arabic word *خمر* (*Khamr*) meant only wine, it was also applied to the liquors made from wheat, barley, dried grapes, dates and honey but the Holy Prophet applied the prohibition to all the intoxicants, and there are Traditions that clearly support this. For instance, "Every intoxicant is wine and is unlawful." "Every drink that intoxicates is unlawful." "I prohibit every intoxicant." In one of his Friday sermons, Caliph 'Umar defined *Khamr* as everything that dulls the faculty of thinking.

In this connection, the Holy Prophet laid down the general principle: if a large dose of something is intoxicant, then even its smallest dose is also unlawful, and if a cup of anything is intoxicant, then even a drop of it is also unlawful.

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الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿١١﴾ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَمًا لِلنَّاسِ
 وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَالْهَدْيَ وَالْقَلَائِدَ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا
 فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾ اَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
 اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾ مَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ
 وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَيْثُ وَالطَّيْبُ
 وَلَوْ أَحْبَبْتَ كَثْرَةَ الْخَيْثِ ۖ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ
 تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنَ أَشْيَاءٍ إِن بُدِيَ لَكُمْ تَسْأَلُوكُمُوهَا
 وَإِن تَسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنزَلُ الْقُرْآنُ بُدِيَ لَكُمْ عَقَا اللَّهُ عَنْهَا ۚ
 وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ قَدْ سَأَلَهَا قَوْمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَصْبَحُوا بِهَا
 كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَحِيرَةٍ وَلَا سَائِبَةٍ وَلَا وَصِيلَةٍ وَلَا
 حَامٍ ۚ وَلَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ ۚ وَكَثَرَهُمْ لَا
 يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَىٰ الرَّسُولِ
 قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا ۚ أَوْ لَوْ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ
 شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ ۚ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ
 مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ ۚ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ
 تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا شَهَادَةٌ بَيْنَكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ
 حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ أَوْ إِخْرَانٍ ۖ مِن غَيْرِكُمْ إِن أَنْتُمْ
 حَضَرْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةُ الْمَوْتِ تَحْسِبُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ
 الصَّلَاةِ فَيقْسِمِن بِاللهِ إِن ادْتَبَعْتُمْ لَا نَشْتَرِي بِهِ ثَمَنًا ۚ وَلَوْ كَانَ

Allah has made the sacred House of Ka'abah a means of stabilising the (community) life of the people ; the Sacred Month and the animal offerings and the animals which are collared as a mark of dedication (have also been made conducive to the same object)¹¹³ so that you may know that Allah is fully aware of all that is in the Heavens and the Earth and that He has perfect knowledge of everything.¹¹⁴ Note it well that Allah is very severe in punishing, and at the same time He is very Forbearing and Merciful. The only duty of the Messenger is to convey the Message ; as regards all you disclose and hide Allah knows it. Tell them, O Messenger, that the pure and the impure cannot be alike anyhow, although the abundance of the impure may allure you.¹¹⁵ So, O people of understanding, refrain from the disobedience of Allah : it is expected that you will attain true success. 97-100

O Believers, do not ask questions concerning such things, which, if made known to you, would cause harm to you ;¹¹⁶ but, if you will ask such questions at the time, when the Qurān is being sent down, they will be made known to you. Allah has forgiven what you have done up to this time : for He is Forgiving and Forbearing. Some people before you asked such questions : then they were involved in disbelief because of those very things.¹¹⁷ 101-102

Allah has ordained neither *Bahīrah* nor *Sāi'bah* nor *Waṣilah* nor *Hām* :¹¹⁸ but the un-believers have invented a falsehood against Allah, and most of them lack understanding (so they believe in such superstitions). And when it is said to them, "Come to the Law which Allah has sent down and to the Messenger," they reply, "Sufficient for us is the way on which we found our forefathers." What, will they go on following their forefathers, even if they knew nothing, and were quite ignorant of the Right Way ? 103-104

O Believers, look after your own souls ; it can do no harm to you, if anyone else goes astray, provided that you yourselves are on the right path.¹¹⁹ To Allah shall you all return : then He will let you know what you have been doing. 105

106

O Believers, when the time of death approaches any one of you, and he is going to make his will, the principle of evidence is that two just men¹²⁰ from among you should act as witnesses. Or, if you are on a journey and the calamity of death befalls you there, then two witnesses may be taken from among the non-Muslims.¹²¹ Then, if you have any doubt, both the witnesses should be detained in the mosque after the Prayer, and they should testify upon oath by Allah, "We are not going to sell our evidence for any personal benefit, and even though he be our own relative, (we will not be partial to him); we are not going to hide evidence which we are giving for the sake of Allah: for we shall be sinners if we do so."

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During the time of the Holy Prophet, there was no fixed punishment for a drunkard. The culprit, who was arrested and brought for trial, was beaten with shoes, kicked, given blows and thrashed with sticks and ropes. Forty stripes were the maximum punishment given for this crime. The same was the punishment during the early days of Caliph 'Umar. But when he saw that the crime was on the increase, he in consultation with the other Companions, laid down eighty stripes for this.

Imām Mālik and Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and according to a tradition, Imām Shāfi'ī also, were of the same opinion. But Imām Aḥmad bin-Ḥanbal and, according to another tradition, Imām Shāfi'ī also, were of the opinion that forty stripes should be inflicted for the crime of drinking. Ḥadrat 'Alī also considered forty stripes to be the punishment for it.

According to the *Shari'at* (Law), it is the duty of the Islamic State to enforce prohibition. That is why during the time of Ḥadrat 'Umar, the shop of a man, named Ruvaishid, who belonged to the clan of Banī-Thaqīf, was burnt by his order, because wine was secretly extracted and sold there.

110. It is forbidden to hunt game or to help another to hunt it in any way whatsoever, while one is in the Pilgrim's garments or in the sacred precincts. It is also unlawful for one in this state to eat of the game that has been specifically killed for him. If, however, someone else, not in this state, kills a game for himself and then gives a part of it to a pilgrim as a present, there is no harm for the latter to eat it. Of course, the harmful animals are an exception to this prohibition. One is permitted to kill a snake, a scorpion, a mad dog and other harmful animals, even when one is under the restrictions imposed on a pilgrim.

111. Those two just men will also decide how many indigent

persons are to be fed, or how many fasts are to be observed for killing a certain animal.

112. Game from the sea has been made lawful because sometimes when provisions run short on a sea journey, there is nothing else close at hand to eat.

113. For Arabia, the Ka'abah was not merely a sacred place of worship, but it occupied a central position in the country and because of this and of its sanctity, it was the means of stabilising its economy and culture. The people from all over the country came there to perform Haj and 'Umrah and the huge gathering helped to create the feeling of unity among the Arabs who were otherwise torn by clannish strifes. The pilgrims who came from different clans and places met together and established cultural relations. Poetic contests helped to make their language and literature rich. Trade and commerce which were transacted on the occasion helped to satisfy the economic needs of the people. The sacred months provided peace to the Arabs for four months and this was the only period during which their caravans could travel in security from one part of the country to the other. The animals dedicated to sacrifice and the collars round their necks proved very helpful to the movements of the caravans, for the Arabs showed so much reverence for them that none dared touch them with the intention of robbery.

114. That is, "If you just think deeply about the wisdom contained in the sanctity of the Ka'abah and the restrictions laid down for the pilgrimage to it and the benefits accruing therefrom, you yourselves will be convinced that Allah, Who has prescribed these, has deep and perfect knowledge of the welfare and needs of His creatures. You will realise that each one of His Commandments is very beneficial for different aspects of human life. Even during the centuries of chaos before the advent of the Holy Prophet, Allah had made the Ka'abah a means of security and stability for your national life though you yourselves were senselessly bent upon destroying it. In the same way, Commandments of Allah guaranteed your own security and welfare, therefore you should, for your own good, observe these, for there are hidden benefits in them that you can neither foresee nor obtain by your own devices."

115. This verse sets up a new standard of values, which is quite different from the standard of those who look only at the outward aspect of things. Such people usually judge things by their quantity and not by their quality. For instance, one hundred rupees are always considered greater than five rupees by one who does not attach any value to the means by which these might have been obtained. But contrary to this evaluation, this verse declares that if these one hundred rupees have been obtained by unfair means and those five rupees earned by fair means, then the former are less in worth because of their impurity than the latter because of their purity. According

to this standard, it is not the number or the quantity of a thing that increases or decreases its true worth but the question whether it has been obtained by fair means or foul. Obviously, a drop of rose scent has greater value than a heap of filth and a cup of pure water is far greater in worth than a cistern full of impure urine. Therefore one who is really wise will always remain content with the lawful, though it may appear to be very insignificant and worthless, and will never try to grab the unlawful, though it might appear to be very alluring and grand.

116. This verse forbids people to ask useless and unnecessary questions because some people used to put such questions to the Holy Prophet as were of no practical good for mundane affairs nor for spiritual up-lift. For example, once a certain person while sitting in a gathering asked, "Who is my real father?" Likewise, sometimes, some people put unnecessary questions concerning legal matters so as to get these defined, whereas they had been purposely kept undefined for the good of the people. For example. Haj was made obligatory by a commandment without specifying whether it was to be performed every year or not. When a certain person heard it, he instantly asked, "Has it been made obligatory to perform Haj every year?" The Holy Prophet did not make any reply. The man repeated the question, but he again kept quiet. When the man put the question for the third time, the Holy Prophet replied, "Woe to you! If I had said: 'Yes', the performance of Haj every year would have become obligatory and people like you would have been unable to perform it and been guilty of disobedience."

The Holy Prophet himself forbade people to ask questions for the sake of asking questions and to probe into things aimlessly. In a Tradition he warned, "The worst offender against the Muslims is the person who asked a question about something that had not been made unlawful but was made so because of his question." In another Tradition he said, "Allah has prescribed some obligatory duties for you; let not these go unfulfilled and He has made certain things unlawful, do not go near them. He has prescribed certain limits, do not transgress them. He has been silent concerning certain things, but not because He has forgotten them; so do not try to probe into such things."

In these two Traditions a warning has been served against a very serious matter. There are certain things and Commandments which have been left vague and without details. This is not because the Law-giver had forgotten to give details or to make them specific but because He did not intend to limit these in order to leave a wide scope for the people. Therefore if a person goes on creating one issue after the other, by putting unnecessary and useless questions and thus creates limitations and specifications, he puts the people to unnecessary trouble. Likewise if he tries to deduce the details by the force of his

“reasoning” and does not rest content till he has made the vague things specific and the indefinite definite, he in reality puts the Muslims in a very awkward position. This is because the more details we offer for the Unseen and the Next World, the more will be the chances for creating doubts about them and likewise, the more limitations are imposed concerning the Commandments, the greater will be the chance for their violation.

117. The people, who were involved in disbelief because they asked useless and unnecessary questions, were the Jews. At first they were involved in hairsplitting, which led them to put unnecessary questions about the details of the Faith and the Commandments. Consequently, they helped to impose upon themselves such restrictions as they could not observe and so became guilty of disobedience and disbelief. What a pity that the Muslims are following the Jews, step by step, in spite of these warnings by the Qurān and the Holy Prophet!

118. In this verse the superstitious practice of dedicating animals to deities, etc. and leaving them to roam about and graze at liberty has been condemned. In the pre-Islamic Arabia, they gave different names to such animals and marked them off, and considered it unlawful to take any service from them or slaughter them for food or derive any benefit from them in any way.

Bahīr h was the name given to a she-camel which had five young ones, the last of which was a he-camel. Her ear was then split and she was turned loose to roam at liberty. After this, none would ride her nor drink her milk nor slaughter her nor shear her hair. She was allowed to graze in any field and pasture and drink from any watering place.

Sāi'bah was the name given to that he-camel or she-camel which was let loose as a mark of gratitude in fulfilment of a vow taken for recovery from some illness or safety from some danger. *Sāi'bah* was also the name given to the she-camel which had ten young ones, each of which was a she-camel.

Waṣīlah was the name given to a special he-goat which was one of the first born twins, the other of which was a she-goat. The practice about the first born young ones was this : they used to sacrifice, in the name of their deities, the first born young one if it happened to be a he-goat. But if they happened to be twins they would not sacrifice the he-goat and would call it *Waṣīlah* and set it at liberty in the name of deities.

Hām was the name given to a he-camel as soon as his “grandson” became grown up and fit for riding. The old one was then set at liberty. The same name was also given to a camel which begot ten young ones and was set at liberty.

119. This is a warning against a common human weakness. Some people are always on the look-out to find out and criticise errors in

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ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَلَا نُنْكِرُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذَا لَمِنَ الْإِشْيَيْنِ ۖ فَإِنْ عَثَرَ
 عَلَىٰ أَنَّهُمَا اسْتَحَقَّا إِثْمًا فَأَخْرَجَ يَقُومِينَ مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَحَقَّ
 عَلَيْهِمُ الْأُولَىٰ فَيُقْسِمِينَ بِاللَّهِ لَشَهَادَتُنَا أَحَقُّ مِنْ شَهَادَتِهِمَا وَمَا
 اعْتَدَيْنَا إِلَّا لِنَا إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ آدَتُنِي أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ عَلَىٰ
 وَجْهِنَا أَوْ يَخَافُوا أَنْ تُرَدَّ أَيْمَانٌ بَعْدَ آيْمَانِهِمْ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْمَعُوا
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ۚ يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ
 مَا ذَا أُجِبْتُمْ ۖ قَالُوا لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ۗ إِذْ قَالَ
 اللَّهُ يُعِيسَىٰ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَبَدْتِكَ
 بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۖ فَكَلَّمَ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا ۗ وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ
 وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ۗ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ
 يَأْذُنُ فَنفخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِأْذُنِي ۖ وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ
 بِأْذُنِي ۗ وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِأْذُنِي ۗ وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْكَ
 إِذْ جِئْتَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ
 مُّبِينٌ ۗ وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ امْنُوا بِى وَبِرَسُولِى ۗ قَالُوا آمَنَّا
 وَاشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ۗ إِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ يُعِيسَىٰ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ
 يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ۗ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ قَالُوا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَأْكُلَ مِنْهَا وَتَطْبِخَ قُلُوبُنَا وَنَعْلَمَ
 أَنْ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَنَا وَنَكُونُ عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ۗ قَالَ عِيسَىٰ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ
 اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوَّلِنَا

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تقر

الربع

But if it is discovered that the two had been guilty of this same sin, then two other better qualified witnesses than the former, from among those who were deprived of their right, should come forward and testify upon oath, "By Allah, our testimony is truer than their testimony, and we have not made any transgression in our testimony: we shall be among the unjust, if we do so." It is expected that in this way the people will give only true evidence: or, at least, they will fear lest their oaths be contradicted by subsequent oaths. Fear Allah and listen: Allah does not show His Guidance to those who are disobedient. 107-108

On the Day,¹²² when Allah will assemble all the Messengers, He will ask, "What was the response you received?"¹²³ They will answer, "We have no knowledge:¹²⁴ You alone have the full knowledge of all that is hidden." Just imagine the occasion, when Allah will say,¹²⁵ "O Jesus, son of Mary, recall to mind My favour I bestowed upon you and upon your mother: I strengthened you with the Holy Spirit; you talked to the people even in the cradle as you talked when you were grown up; I taught you the Book and the Wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; by My leave you made from clay the likeness of a bird, and breathed into it, and by My leave it became a living bird; by My leave you healed the born-blind and the lepers; by My leave you brought forth the dead."¹²⁶ Also remember that I protected you from the Israelites, when you came to them with clear signs, and the disbelievers among them said, "These signs are nothing but obvious sorcery, and remember also that I inspired the Disciples to believe in Me and My Messenger; then they, said, 'We believe and bear witness that we are Muslims.'¹²⁷

(In regard to the Disciples),¹²⁸ this incident may also be kept in mind: the Disciples said, "O Jesus, son of Mary, can your Lord send down to us from heaven a tray of food?" Jesus said, "Fear Allah, if you are true Believers." They replied, "We only wish to eat of this tray so that our hearts may be re-assured and we may know it for certain that what you have said to us is true, and that we may bear witness to it." At this, Jesus son of Mary, prayed, "O Allah, our Lord, send to us from heaven a tray 109-114

وَأَخْرَجْنَا وَإِيَّةَ مَنَّكَ ۖ وَارزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّزُقِينَ ۝ قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنَّي
 مُؤْتِلَهَا عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بَعْدُ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا لَا أُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَدًا
 مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ لِيَعِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ءَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ
 اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمَّيَّ إِلَهَيْنِ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۖ قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ
 أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِشَيْءٍ بِحَقِّكَ إِن كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ ۖ تَعَلَّمْ مَا فِي نَفْسِي
 وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ ۖ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ۝ مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا
 أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ۖ وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ
 فِيهِمْ ۖ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 شَهِيدٌ ۝ إِنْ تُعَذِّبُهُمْ وَإِنَّهُمْ فِيَّ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ
 الْحَكِيمُ ۝ قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمُ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ ۖ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي
 مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۖ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ۖ
 ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝ لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ ۖ وَهُوَ
 عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۝

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 ع
 قول الله عليه وسلم
 وقت النبى

of food that it may become a recurring festival to us, to the first of us and to the last of us, and that it may be a Sign from Thee. Provide for us and Thou art the best of Providers."

Allah answered, "I am going to send it down to you,¹²⁹ but whoever among you shall disbelieve after that I will surely give him such a chastisement wherewith I will not have chastised any other creature in the world."———
 (After reminding him of these favours), Allah will say, "O Jesus, son of Mary, did you ever say to the people, 'Make me and my mother deities besides Allah?'"¹³⁰ He will say, "Glory be to Thee ! It did not behove me to say that thing which I had no right to say. Had I ever said such a thing, You would most surely have known it, for You know all that is in my mind, but I do not know what is in Your mind : indeed You have full knowledge even of all the hidden things. I never told them anything other than what You bade me. I said, 'Worship Allah, Who is my Lord as well as your Lord.' I was a witness to their conduct as long as I remained among them but when You recalled me, You watched over them ; for You keep watch over everything. Now, if You punish them, they are your own servants, and if You forgive them, You are All-Powerful and All-Wise." Then Allah will declare, "This is the Day when the truthfulness of the truthful benefits them; there are such Gardens for them underneath which canals flow ; they will dwell therein for ever. Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him ; this is the greatest success."

The Sovereignty of the Heavens and the Earth, and whatever is therein, belongs to Allah and He has power over everything. 120

Contd. from p. 77]

others. Here such people have been admonished against this evil and asked to concentrate their attention on their own acts, deeds, morals and beliefs instead of probing into and criticising the conduct and beliefs of others. If a man himself is obedient to Allah and fulfils his obligations to Allah and man, and treads the path of truth and righteousness, which also includes the establishment of virtue and the eradication of vice, then most surely the crookedness and deviation of any other can do him no harm.

This verse however, does not mean that a person should think only of his own salvation and leave alone the reform of others. Hadrat Abū Bakr Siddīq refuted this misconception in an address, saying, "O people, you recite this verse and put on it a wrong interpretation. I myself heard the Holy Prophet say, 'When the people become so indifferent that they see evil and do not try to eradicate it and see an unjust person doing injustice and do not prevent him from it, Allah may punish all of them.' I swear by Allah that it is obligatory on you to enjoin virtue and forbid evil ; (if you neglect this) Allah will place you under the worst people who will inflict hardships on you. Then your good people will offer prayers but He will not accept these."

120. That is, "Pious, righteous and trustworthy" Muslims.

121. This shows that the Muslims are permitted to make the non-Muslims their witnesses only in that case when Muslim witnesses are not available.

122. The Day of Resurrection.

123. That is, "What was the response of the world to the invitation you gave towards Islam?"

124. "We know only of that outward response which was made to our invitation during our lifetime. As regards the real practical response, we have no correct knowledge of it for that is known to You alone."

125. At first this question will be put collectively to all the Messengers. Then each of the Messengers will stand, as a witness individually. Here that question, which will be put to Jesus Christ (Allah's peace be upon him), has been specially mentioned because it fits into the context.

126. That is, "You brought them back to life after death."

127. That is, "It was a favour upon you that the Disciples believed in you, by Our Grace ; otherwise you had no power by yourself to convert even a single person out of the disbelievers.

Incidentally the use of the word Muslims for the Disciples is meant to show that their religion was Islam and not Christianity.

128. This incident has been inserted here as a parenthesis to show that even his Disciples, who had received his teachings from him directly, considered Jesus as a man and servant of God. Therefore, they could never conceive to make their Master a god or a partner of God or son of God. This also shows that Jesus also presented himself as a servant without having any authority of his own.

It may be asked, "What was the occasion of inserting this parenthesis here to interrupt the conversation that was being cited?"

In order to answer this question, it must be kept in view that the conversation that would take place on the Day of Resurrection has been quoted here for the benefit of the Christians so that they may learn the lesson and adopt the right way. It is, therefore, quite

pertinent to insert the incident mentioned in the parenthesis to impress the same lesson.

129. The Qurān is silent as to whether the 'tray' was sent down or not and there is no other authentic source of information. Possibly it was sent down, but it is equally possible that the Disciples themselves might have taken back their request after the warning in V. 115.

130. This refers to another error of the Christians. They had made Mary an object of worship along with Christ and the Holy Ghost, though there is not a word or hint in the Bible about this doctrine. During the first three centuries after Christ, the Christian world was totally unaware of this creed. The words "Mother of God" were used for the first time by some theologians of Alexandria. Though the response which these words found in the popular heart was great, yet the Church was not at first inclined to accept the doctrine and declared that the worship of Mary was a wrong creed. Then at the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., the words 'Mother of God' were officially used by the Church. As a result of this, 'Mariolatry' began to spread by leaps and bounds both inside and outside the Church. So much so that at the time of the Revelation of the Qurān, the exaltation of the 'Mother of God' had eclipsed that of the Father and the Holy Ghost. Her statues were set up in Churches and she was worshipped, implored and invoked in prayers. In short, the greatest source of reliance of a Christian was that he should obtain the help and protection of the 'Mother of God'. Emperor Justinian in one of his laws bespeaks her advocacy for the empire and he inscribed the high altar in the new church of St. Sophia with her name. Narses (his general) looks to her directions on the field of battle. Emperor Heraclius, a contemporary of the Holy Prophet Muhammad, bore her image on his banner and believed that because of its auspicious nature it will never be lowered. Though the Protestants after the Reformation did their best to fight against Mariolatry, yet the Roman Catholic Church still adheres to it passionately.

VI

Al-An'am الأنعام

VI

AL-AN'ĀM الأَنْعَام

INTRODUCTION

Name. This Sūrah takes its name from vv. 136, 138 and 139 in which some superstitious beliefs of the idolatrous Arabs concerning the lawfulness of some cattle (*an'ām*) and the unlawfulness of some others have been refuted.

Period of Revelation. According to a tradition of Ibn 'Abbās, the whole of the Sūrah was revealed at one sitting at Makkah. Asmā', a daughter of Yazīd and a first cousin of Ḥaḍrat Mu'āz-bin-Jabl, says, "During the revelation of this Sūrah, the Holy Prophet was riding on a she-camel and I was holding her nose-string. The she-camel began to feel the weight so heavily that it seemed as if her bones would break under it." We also learn from other traditions that the Holy Prophet dictated the whole of the Sūrah the same night that it was revealed.

Its subject-matter clearly shows that it must have been revealed during the last year of the Holy Prophet's life at Makkah. The tradition of Asmā', daughter of Yazīd, also confirms this. As she belonged to the *Anṣār* and embraced Islam after the migration of the Holy Prophet to Yathrab, her visit to the Holy Prophet at Makkah must have taken place during the last year of his life there. For, before this, his relations with those people were not so intimate that a woman from there might have come to visit him at Makkah.

Occasion of Revelation. After determining the period of its revelation, it is easier to visualise the background of the Sūrah. Twelve years had passed since the Holy Prophet had been inviting the people to Islam. The antagonism and persecution by the Quraish had become most savage and brutal, and the majority of the Muslims had to leave their homes and migrate to Ḥabash (Abyssinia).

Above all, the two great supporters of the Holy Prophet, Abū Talib and Hadrat Khadijah, were no more to help and give strength to him. Thus he was deprived of all the worldly support. But in spite of this, he carried on his mission in the teeth of opposition. As a result of this, on the one hand, all the good people of Makkah and the surrounding clans gradually began to accept Islam ; on the other hand, the community as a whole, was bent upon obduracy and rejection. Therefore, if anyone showed any inclination towards Islam, he was subjected to taunts and derision, physical violence and social boycott. It was in these dark circumstances that a ray of hope gleamed from Yathrab, where Islam began to spread freely by the efforts of some influential people of Aus and Khazraj, who had embraced Islam at Makkah. This was a humble beginning in the march of Islam towards success and none could foresee at that time the great potentialities that lay hidden in it. For, to a casual observer, it appeared at that time as if Islam was merely a weak movement ; it had no material backing except the meagre support of the Prophet's own family and of the few poor adherents of the Movement. Obviously the latter could not give much help because they themselves had been cast out by their own people who had become their enemies and were persecuting them.

Topics. These were the conditions, when this discourse was revealed. The main topics dealt with in this discourse may be divided under seven headings :

- (1) Refutation of *shirk* and invitation to the creed of *Tauhid*.
- (2) Enunciation of the doctrine of the "Life-after-death" and refutation of the wrong notion that there was nothing beyond this worldly life.
- (3) Refutation of the prevalent superstitions.
- (4) Enunciation of the fundamental moral principles for the building up of the Islamic Society.
- (5) Answers to the objections raised against the person of the Holy Prophet and his mission.
- (6) Comfort and encouragement to the Holy Prophet and his followers who were at that time in a state of

anxiety and despondency because of the apparent failure of the mission.

(7) Admonition, warning and threats to the disbelievers and opponents to give up their apathy and haughtiness. It must, however, be noted that the above topics have not been dealt with one by one under separate headings, but the discourse goes on as a continuous whole and these topics come under discussion over and over again in new and different ways.

The Background of Makki Sūrah. As this is the first long Makki Sūrah in the order of the compilation of the Qurān, it will be useful to explain the historical background of Makki Sūrahs in general, so that the reader may easily understand the Makki Sūrahs and our references to its different stages in connection with our commentary on them.

First of all, it should be noted that comparatively very little material is available in regard to the background of the revelation of Makki Sūrahs whereas the period of the revelation of all the Madani Sūrahs is known or can be determined with a little effort. There are authentic traditions even in regard to the occasions of the revelation of the majority of the verses. On the other hand, we do not have such detailed information regarding the Makki Sūrahs. There are only a few Sūrahs and verses which have authentic traditions concerning the time and occasion of their revelation. This is because the history of the Makki period had not been compiled in such detail as that of the Madani period. Therefore we have to depend on the internal evidence of these Sūrahs for determining the period of their revelation : for example, the topics they discuss, their subject-matter, their style and the direct or indirect references to the events and the occasions of their revelation. Thus it is obvious that with the help of such evidence as this, we cannot say with precision that such and such a Sūrah or verse was revealed on such and such an occasion. The most we can do is to compare the internal evidence of a Sūrah with the events of the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah, and then come to a more or less correct conclusion as to what particular stage a certain Sūrah

belongs.

If we keep the above things in view, the history of the mission of the Holy Prophet at Makkah can be divided into four stages.

The first stage began with his appointment as a Messenger and ended with the proclamation of Prophethood three years later. During this period the Message was given secretly to some selected persons only, but the common people of Makkah were not aware of it.

The second stage lasted for two years after the proclamation of his Prophethood. It began with opposition by individuals : then by and by, it took the shape of antagonism, ridicule, derision, accusation, abuse, and false propaganda : then gangs were formed to persecute those Muslims who were comparatively poor, weak and helpless.

The third stage lasted for about six years from the beginning of the persecution to the death of Abū Ṭalib and Ḥaḍrat Khadijah in the tenth year of Prophethood. During this period, the persecution of the Muslims became so savage and brutal that many of them were forced to migrate to Habash. Social and economic boycott was applied against the Holy Prophet and the members of his family, and those Muslims who continued to stay in Makkah were forced to take refuge in Shi'b-i-Abi Ṭalib which was besieged.

The fourth stage lasted for about three years from the tenth to the thirteenth year of Prophethood. This was a period of hard trials and grievous sufferings for the Holy Prophet and his followers. Life had become unendurable in Makkah and there appeared to be no place of refuge even outside it. So much so that when the Holy Prophet went to Ṭā'if, it offered no shelter or protection. Besides this, on the occasion of Ḥaj, he would appeal to each and every Arab clan to accept his invitation to Islam but met with blank refusal from every quarter. At the same time, the people of Makkah were holding counsels to get rid of him by killing or imprisoning or banishing him from their city. It was at that most critical time that Allah opened Islam the hearts of the *Anṣar* of Yathrab, where he

rated at their invitation.

Now that we have divided the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah into four stages, it has become easier for us to tell, as far as possible, the particular stage in which a certain Makkī Sūrah was revealed. This is because the Sūrahs belonging to a particular stage can be distinguished from those of the other stages with the help of their subject-matter and style. Besides this, they also contain such references as throw light on the circumstances and events that form the background of their revelation. In the succeeding Makkī Sūrahs, we will determine, on the basis of the distinctive features of each stage, and point out in the Preface, the particular stage in which a certain Makkī Sūrah was revealed.

SUMMARY

Subject : Islamic Creed.

This Sūrah mainly discusses the different aspects of the major articles of the Islamic Creed : *Tauhid*, Life-after-death, Prophethood and their practical application to human life. Side by side with this, it refutes the erroneous beliefs of the opponents and answers their objections, warns and admonishes them and comforts the Holy Prophet and his followers, who were then suffering from persecution.

Of course, these themes have not been dealt with under separate heads but have been blended in an excellent manner.

Topics and their Interconnection

- 1-12 These verses are of introductory and admonitory nature. The disbelievers have been warned that if they do not accept the Islamic Creed and follow the 'Light' shown by the Revelation from the All-Knowing and All-Powerful Allah, they would go to the same doom as the former disbelievers did. Their arguments for rejecting the Prophet and the Revelation sent down to him have been refuted and a warning has been given to them that they should not be deluded by the respite that is being granted to them.
- 13-24 These verses inculcate *Tauhid*, and refute *shirk* which is the greatest obstacle in the way of its acceptance.
- 25-32 In these verses, a graphic scene of the life in the Hereafter has been depicted in order to warn the disbelievers of the consequences of the rejection of the Articles of Faith.
- 33-73 Prophethood is the main theme which has been discussed from the point of view of the Holy Prophet, his Mission, the limitations of his powers, the attitude towards his followers and also from the point of view of the disbelievers.

In continuation of the same theme, the story of Prophet Abraham has been related to bring home to the pagan Arabs that the Mission of Prophet Muhammad, which they were opposing, was the same as that of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon them). This line of argument was adopted because they considered themselves to be his followers, especially the Quraish who were proud of being his descendants as well. 74-90

Another proof of his Prophethood is the Book, which has been sent down to him by Allah, for its teachings show the right guidance in regard to creed and practice. 91-100

Divine restrictions have been contrasted with the superstitious restrictions of the pagan Arabs in order to show the striking differences between the two and thus prove the Qurān to be a Revealed Book. 109-154

The Jews, who were criticised in vv. 144-147 along with the pagan Arabs, have been urged to compare the teachings of the Qurān with those of the Torah so that they might recognize their similarity and give up their lame excuses against it, and adopt its Guidance to escape the retribution on the Day of Resurrection. 155-160

This is the conclusion of the discourse : the Holy Prophet has been instructed in a beautiful and forceful manner to proclaim fearlessly the articles of the Islamic Creed and their implications. 161-165



الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ
 ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ۝ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ ثُمَّ
 قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ ۝ وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي

VI

الْاَنْعَامِ AL-AN'AM

Verses : 165

Revealed at Makkah

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

Praise is only for Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth and ordained light and many kinds of darkness ; in spite of this, those who have rejected the Message of their Lord have set up equal partners with Him.¹ It is He Who has created you from earth² and decreed a fixed term of life for you, and with Him there is another settled³ term also—yet you have doubts thereof. He is the same One Allah in the heavens and also on the earth : He has knowledge of all that you make known and of all that you keep secret and is fully aware of the good or evil you are earning. 1-3

1. It should be kept in mind that the addressees were the *mushrik* Arabs, who acknowledged that the Creator of the earth and the heavens and of the moon and the sun was Allah, Who brought about day and night. None of them believed that these were the creations of *Lāt* or *Hubl* or *'Uzzā* or of any other of their gods or goddesses. Therefore Allah admonished them, saying (so to speak), "O foolish people, when you yourselves admit that the Creator of the heavens and the earth is Allah, why do you, then, make others your gods, and prostrate before them and make offerings to them and present your needs before them and invoke their help?" (Refer to E. N. 163, Al-Baqarah).

It may be noted that *ظلمت* (*dhulumāt*) : plural form of *ظلم*, has

السَّمَوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ يُعَلِّمُ سِرَّهُمْ وَجَهْرَهُمْ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُكْتُمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾
 مَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَقَدْ
 كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَاءُ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾
 أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ مَكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا لَمْ
 لَنُنَكِّنْ لَهُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِدْرَارًا وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِيًا
 مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾
 وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَابٍ فَلَسَوْهَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالَ الَّذِينَ
 كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ وَ لَوْ
 أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكَ لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ ثُمَّ لَا يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ مَلَكَ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ
 سَاجِدًا وَ لَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَا يَلْبِسُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ اسْتَهْزَيْتُمْ بِرُسُلٍ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ
 فَحَقَّ بِالَّذِينَ سَخَرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُلْ سِيرُوا
 فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قُلْ لِمَنْ مَا فِي
 السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ كُتِبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةُ لِيَجْعَلَ لِكُلِّ
 شَيْءٍ الْقِيَمَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾
 وَلَهُ مَا سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ قُلْ أَعِدَّ اللَّهُ
 لِيَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ضِعْفًا الضَّعْفَ لَهُمْ وَهُوَ يُطْعِمُ وَلَا يُطْعَمُ قُلْ إِنِّي
 رَأَيْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّرِיקِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي
 خَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٦٢﴾ مَنْ يُضَرْفُ عَنْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ
 فَقَدْ رَجِمَهُ وَ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْبَيِّنُ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَإِنْ يَسْسَكَ اللَّهُ بِيضًا فَلَا كَاشِفَ

Yet the reaction of the people to the Signs of their Lord has been that, whenever a Sign has come to them, they have turned away from it: accordingly, they have rejected as false the Truth that has come to them now. Well, they will receive some news⁴ about what they have been ridiculing up to this time. Do they not see that We destroyed many a people who were dominant in the world during their time? We had given them such power in the land as We have not given you. We sent down for them abundant rains from heavens and made canals flow beneath them. But (when they showed ingratitude), We destroyed them because of their sins and raised up other people in their place. 4-6

O Messenger, even if We had sent down to you a Book written on paper, and even if they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would have said, "This is nothing but manifest sorcery." And they say, "Why has no angel been sent down to him?"⁵ If We had sent down an angel, their fate would have been decided long before this and they would have been given no respite after this⁶; for if We had sent an angel, We would have sent him in the human form and thus involved them in the same doubt they are involved in now.⁷ 7-9

O Muhammad, many Messengers before you have also been ridiculed, but in the long run those, that scoffed, were overpowered by the very thing they had derided. Say to them, "Just travel in the land and see the end of those who treated the Truth as false."⁸ 10-11

Ask them, "Whose is all that is in the heavens and the earth?" Say, "All belongs to Allah.⁹ He has prescribed mercy and generosity for Himself (that is why He does not catch hold of you immediately at your first disobedience). He will, however, certainly muster all of you on the Day of Resurrection. There is no doubt about this; yet those who have made themselves liable to ruin, do not believe in this." 12

All that lies in the darkness of the night and in the light of the day belongs to Allah, and He hears and knows everything. Say, "Should I take as my guardian any other 13-16

than Allah ? Should I forsake that Allah Who is the Creator of the earth and the heavens and Who nourishes all and does not stand in need of nourishment from anyone ?”¹⁰ Say, “I have been enjoined to be the first of those who surrender to Him, (and I have been urged) not to be of those who commit *shirk*.” Say, “I do fear the torment of a (dreadful) Day, if I should disobey my Lord.” He, who will be delivered from the torment of that Day, will have received Allah’s mercy, and this is a great success.

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been used in contrast to نور *nūr* (light, singular form). It is because ‘darkness’ is merely the absence of light and may be of many kinds.

2. Allah says that He has created you from “earth” because each and every particle of the human body comes from the earth alone.

3. “The other settled term” is the “Day of Resurrection”, when each and every human being will be brought back to life and presented before Allah for rendering the account of the life on the earth.

4. The reference is to the “news” of the successes that were to follow the migration of the Holy Prophet from Makkah to Al-Madīnah. At the time of this revelation, neither the disbelievers nor the Believers could ever imagine the nature of the “news” they were going to receive. So much so that even the Holy Prophet himself was unaware of the kind of successes the Muslims were going to achieve in the near future.

5. The ignorant objectors argued that if Muhammad (Allah’s peace be upon him) had really been sent as Messenger from Allah, an angel ought to have come down from heaven to declare to the people, “This is the Messenger of Allah. So obey him ; otherwise you shall be punished”.

The ignorant objectors could not understand how the Creator of the heavens and the earth could leave His Messenger in such a plight as to be maligned and stoned by his enemies. They argued that the Messenger of such a great Sovereign ought to have come with a large retinue or at least with an angel in attendance on him, to protect him from his enemies and to fill the people with awe and to convince them of his Prophethood and to carry out his orders in some supernatural ways.

6. (1) The first answer to their objection is this : in case Allah had sent down an angel, no respite would have been given to them for reforming themselves and mending their ways. They have been given a chance because no angel has been sent to make the Reality so naked as to leave no alternative for them but to believe in it. It is obvious that this would have defeated the very purpose of their life in the

world to undergo their test. That is why no angel has been sent. Man should undergo his test and discover the unseen Reality without actually seeing it, merely by the right use of his reasoning and thinking powers, and then bring under control his own self and his lust in accordance with the dictates of that Reality. It is thus obvious that the "Unseen" must remain unseen for the sake of that test.

(2) The worldly life, the period of that test, will remain so only as long as the "Unseen" remains unseen. No sooner will the "Unseen" become evident than that "Period" shall automatically come to an end, and instead of test, it will be the time of the result of the test. Therefore Allah is not granting your demand for an angel to appear before you because Allah does not like to end the term of your test before the expiry of the period of the test. (Refer to E.N. 228, Al-Baqarah, also).

7. The only other alternative was to send an angel in the human form. Allah says that if He had sent an angel in the human form, they would have felt the same difficulty in recognizing him as they were feeling in recognizing Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). This, too, would have involved them more and more in doubts. Therefore it was for their own good that Allah had not sent an angel in attendance on His Messenger.

8. That is, "Those, who ridicule the Message, should travel through the land and see the remains, and study the history of the former people. These will bear witness to the horrible end of those who behaved in the way they are behaving towards Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him)."

9. It is a nice way of cornering the *mushriks*. At first Allah tells His Messenger to ask them, "Whose is all that is in the heavens and the earth?" The questioner put the question and waited for an answer. But they kept silent because their answer could neither be in the negative nor in the affirmative. They could not deny this because they themselves believed that 'all belongs to Allah'. But they could not affirm this because in that case, they themselves would have supplied the adversary with an argument against their own creed of *shirk*. After putting them in this critical position, Allah enjoined His Messenger to say, "All belongs to Allah."

10. This contains a subtle argument: all those, whom the *mushriks* have made their gods besides Allah, stand in need of nourishment from their devotees, not to speak of giving nourishment to them. No Pharaoh can set up his grandeur unless his subjects pay taxes to him; no saint becomes worthy of worship, unless his worshippers build a grand mausoleum for him; no god becomes a god unless his devotees make his idol and set it up in a grand temple and decorate it with ornamentation. Thus all the artificial gods stand in need of their servants. It is the Lord of the universe alone, Who does not stand

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لَهُ إِلَّا هُوَ وَإِنْ يَسْسُكَ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ۖ وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ
 فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ۙ قُلْ أَيْ شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً ۗ قُلِ
 اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۖ وَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرَكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ
 بَلَغَ ۗ أَيْتَكُمْ لَتَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهَةً أُخْرَىٰ ۗ قُلْ لَا أَشْهَدُ ۗ قُلْ
 إِنَّمَا هُوَ إِلَهٌُ وَاحِدٌ ۖ وَإِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ۙ الَّذِينَ اتَّيَهُمُ الْكِتَابُ وَاقف لازم
 يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ ۗ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ۙ وقف لازم
 وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ ۗ ۲٠
 إِنَّهُ لَا يُغْنِيهِ الظُّلُمُونَ ۙ وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ
 أَشْرَكُوا آيِنَ شُرَكَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ۙ ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فَتَنَّهُمْ
 إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا وَاللَّهِ رَبِّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ ۙ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ
 أَنفُسِهِمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ۙ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ
 وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ۖ وَإِنْ تَرَوْا
 كَلِمَةً لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۙ وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْتَوْنَ عَنْهُ ۗ
 وَإِنْ يُهْلِكُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ۙ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ
 فَقَالُوا يَلَيْتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَلَا نُكَذِّبُ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۙ
 بَلْ بَدَأ لَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ
 وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ۙ وَقَالُوا إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ۙ
 وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ قَالَ أَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ ۗ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا ۗ

If Allah afflicts you with an evil there is none other than Him to relieve you from this, and if He bestows some good on you, (know that) He has power over everything. He has supreme authority over His servants and He is All-Wise, All-Aware. 17-18

Ask them, "Whose testimony is the most reliable?" 19-21
 Say, "Allah is witness¹¹ between me and you (that I am His Messenger), and this Qurān has been revealed to me so that I should thereby warn you and all whom it may reach. What, will you really testify that there are other deities besides Allah?"¹² Say, "As for me, I will never testify such a thing."¹³ Say, "Indeed, He alone is the Deity and I feel disgusted with the *shirk* you practise." Those, to whom We have given the Book, recognize this thing with as much certainty as they recognize their own sons.¹⁴ But those, who made themselves liable to perdition, do not believe in this. And, who can be more unjust than the one who brings false allegations against Allah¹⁵ or denies Allah's Signs?¹⁶ Indeed, such unjust people can never attain true success.

On the Day, when We will muster them all together, We shall ask the *mushriks*, "Where are now your associates whom you had taken for your deities?" Then they shall not be able to play any other trick than make this (false) statement: "We swear by Thee our Lord, we were not at all *mushriks*." Behold, how they will invent a lie against themselves and how all other false gods, they had forged, will forsake them! 22-24

There are some among them, who (pretend to) listen to what you say, but they do not understand it, as We have cast veils over their hearts; We have made them hard of hearing (so they are deaf¹⁷ to what they hear). Even if they see any Sign whatever, they will not believe in it; so much so that when those, who have already made up their minds to disbelieve (after hearing all), come to you, they say, "This is nothing but the same old story."¹⁸ They forbid other people to believe in this Truth, and themselves turn away from it. (They imagine that in this way they are doing you some harm) whereas they are preparing 25-30

their own perdition, though they do not perceive it. Would that you could see their condition at the time, when they will be made to stand before the Hell: they will say, "Would that we could return to the earthly life again: then we would not deny the Signs of our Lord, and would join the Believers." As a matter of fact, they will say this because that Reality which they had concealed before this, will have appeared manifest before them.¹⁰ But the fact is, that even if they be sent back to the earthly life, they would do all that they had been forbidden to do. They are liars (that is why they will give vent to such a false wish). Today they say, "There is no other life than this present life, and we shall never be raised again to life after our death." Would that you could witness the scene, when they will be brought before their Lord: then their Lord will ask them, "Is this not the Reality?" They will say, "Yes, our Lord, this is the Reality." Then He will declare, "Well, taste the torment for denying this Reality."

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in need of anyone but all others stand in need of Him, and it is His Godhead alone that does not stand in need of any prop from anyone whosoever, but supports itself.

11. That is, "Allah is a witness to the fact that I have been appointed a Messenger by Him and whatever I say is from Him."

12. They have been asked whether they have any knowledge about the existence of a partner or partners of Allah to show that mere guess-work or speculation does not suffice for testifying anything, and that none can testify a thing with certainty without the necessary knowledge about it. The question implies: you have no such knowledge that there is any other Sovereign with authority than Allah; therefore it is wrong to serve or worship any other than Allah.

13. That is, "You may, if you like, give false testimony without any knowledge, but, as for me, I cannot give a false testimony."

14. It means that those, who possess the knowledge of revealed Books, know it for certain that there is only One God, Who has no partner in His Godhead. Therefore they can discern the right creed about Allah from among many a different kind of other creeds and theories about Godhead, just as any person can easily identify his own child from among many thousands of other children.

15. "False allegation" is the claim that there are other partners with Allah in His Godhead and that they are also worthy of worship: it is also false to allege that Allah Himself has made such and such

His special courtiers and has enjoined (or at least approved) that Divine attributes should be ascribed to them and that they should be treated with reverence etc., like Allah.

16. "Allah's Signs" are all those signs that point to the fact that there is only One God in the universe and that all others are His servants. These signs are spread all over the universe. They are found in the person of man himself and in the character and the great achievements of the Prophets and in the revealed Books. That is why the one, who in the presence of all these "Signs," ascribes Divine attributes to others and considers them worthy of Divine rights, is in fact guilty of gross iniquity. It is indeed a great injustice that one should ascribe such Divine attributes to others without any evidence, knowledge, observation and experience merely on the basis of guesswork or on the traditions of the forefathers. As a result of this false creed, he does injustice to truth, to Reality, to his own self and to everything and everyone he deals with in this universe.

17. Here Allah has ascribed to Himself the cause of the defects produced in their faculties of understanding, hearing and seeing, for everything that takes place in the world under the Natural Law does, in fact, take place by the command of Allah because He is the Author of that Law. Therefore the resultant effects of the working of that Law, in fact, take place by the will and order of Allah. The obdurate disbelievers do not understand, do not hear and do not see the Truth, even though they seem to listen to the Message of the Messenger, because their obduracy, their prejudice and their unwillingness have, according to the law of Nature, dulled their faculties. The law is that if one is bent upon obduracy and does not adopt the attitude of a righteous person, all the doors of his heart automatically get locked against every kind of truth that goes against his lusts. When this natural process is described in the human language, it will be said, "The doors of the heart of such and such a person have got locked." But God, without Whose Command and Leave nothing whatsoever can happen, will describe the same like this, "We have locked the doors of the heart of such and such a person." This is because a human being will describe the thing as it seems to happen, whereas Allah states the true nature of the happening.

18. This is the excuse that these foolish people put forward for rejecting the Message. They say, "There is nothing new in the Message towards which the Messenger is inviting us. This is the same old Message that we have been hearing before." According to these foolish people, in order to be true, a Message must be new because according to them that which is old cannot be true. Whereas the fact is that the Message has always been one and the same and will ever remain so. The Messengers of Allah, who had been coming from the earliest times for the guidance of mankind, have always been communi-

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قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَدْ خَيْرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بِلِقَاءِ
 اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً قَالُوا يَحْصُرْتَنَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَقْنَا فِيهَا
 وَهُمْ يَخْبِلُونَ أَوَّارَهُمْ عَلَىٰ ظُهُورِهِمْ إِلَّا سَاءَ مَا يَزِرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ
 الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَ لَهْوٌ وَ لَلَّذَارِ الْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا
 تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزُنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يُكَذِّبُونَكَ
 وَلَٰكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَ لَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ
 فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كَذَّبُوا وَ أَوْدُوا حَتَّىٰ آتَاهُمْ نَصْرًا وَ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ
 اللَّهِ وَ لَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِنْ نَّبِيِّ الْأُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَ إِنْ كَانَ كِبْرُ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ
 فَإِنِ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَبْتَغِيَ نَفَقًا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ سُلَّمًا فِي السَّمَاءِ فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ
 بآيَةٌ ۗ وَ لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾
 إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْعَوْنَ ۗ وَ الْمَوْتَىٰ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾
 وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ ۗ قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ
 يُنَزِّلَ آيَةً ۗ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَ مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ
 لَا طَيْرٍ يُطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمٌّ أَمْثَلُكُمْ ۗ مَا فَرَقْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
 ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمُّ وَ بُكْمٌ فِي
 الظُّلُمَاتِ ۗ مَنْ يَشَأِ اللَّهُ يُضِلَّهُ ۗ وَ مَنْ يَشَأِ يَجْعَلْهُ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢٤﴾
 قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَنزَلْنَا عَذَابَ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَتَشْكُرُ السَّاعَةَ ۗ أغيرَ اللَّهِ تَدْعُونَ
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِنْ
 شَاءَ وَ تَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَ لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَآخَذْنَاهُمْ

النصف

وقف
وقف

وقف منزل عند البعض على يسمعون

١٥٠

Losers indeed are those who consider it a lie that they will ever have a meeting with Allah. When the Hour will overtake them unawares, they will exclaim, "Alas! how negligent we have been of this matter!" and they will be carrying the burdens of their sins on their backs: behold, how heavy is the burden they are carrying! This worldly life is but a sport and pastime.²⁰ In fact, the abode of the Hereafter is better for those who desire to be safe from harm. Will you not, then, use your common-sense? 31-36

O Muhammad, we know that what they say, grieves you, but it is not you whom they charge with falsehood; these wicked people are, in fact, denying the Revelations of Allah.²¹ Many Messengers have been treated as impostors before you, but they bore with fortitude the charge of imposture and persecution (by the disbelievers), till Our help came down to them. None has the power to change the Law of Allah,²² and you have already received the news of what happened to the Messengers before you. However, if you find it hard to bear their aversion, then seek out, if you can, an opening into the earth, or set up a ladder to the sky so that you may bring them a Sign.²³ Had Allah willed, He would have gathered them all on guidance; so do not behave like the ignorant people.²⁴ Only those, who listen to it, accept the Message; as for the dead,²⁵ Allah will raise them from the graves and they shall be brought back to (be produced in His Court). 33-36

These people ask, "Why has no Sign been sent down to this Prophet from his Lord?" Say, "Allah is able to send down a Sign, but most of these people do not understand the wisdom underlying it."²⁶ As regards Signs, just have a look at any of the beasts that move upon the earth and at any of the birds that fly in the air: they too are species like you. (You will see that) We have left out nothing in pre-determining the courses of their lives: then ultimately they are all gathered to their Lord. But those, who deny Our Signs, are deaf and dumb, dwelling in many sorts of darkness²⁷; Allah lets go astray whom He wills and guides to the Right Way whom He pleases.²⁸ Ask them to consider deeply and answer, "When some great misfortune 37-41

befalls you, or the last hour approaches you, do you invoke any other than Allah? Answer, if you be in the right." At that time you invoke Allah alone: then, if He pleases, He wards off from you the affliction you prayed Him (to avert) and on such occasions, you forget those whom you had set up as His partners.²⁰

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cating the same Message; likewise, the Holy Prophet was also presenting the same old Message. Of course, only those, who being devoid of Divine Light, cannot see the aforesaid eternal reality, might invent something new and by forging some theories, present them as truth, saying, "We have a new Message, which has never been given by anyone before us."

19. Their desire, that, if they could return to this world again, they would believe in the Message, will not be the outcome of any right thinking and reasoning or any real change of their hearts and minds, but will be the result of witnessing the Reality after which even the most obdurate disbeliever dare not deny it.

20. This does not mean that the life in this world is not real and earnest and has been created merely for sport and pastime without any serious purpose. What it means is that compared with the everlasting life in the Hereafter, the short transitory life in this world is like sport and pastime, which are diversions from serious work, to which one has to return after recreation. Moreover, this worldly life has been likened to sport and pastime, because here are many things of deceptive appearances that are liable to involve in misunderstanding those people, who lack common-sense and vision, and help them assume false positions so as to make life mere sport and pastime. For instance, the role of a ruler in this worldly life is, in fact, not different from that of an actor who plays the role of a king on the stage, wears a crown and gives commands which are obeyed like those of a real king; whereas, in fact, he has no powers of a real king and is deposed, imprisoned and killed by the order of the director; likewise many other such dramas are being performed on the stage of this world day and night all around us. There is 'the court' of a 'saint' or a goddess, where the needs are being "fulfilled", whereas, in fact, that 'court' has no such power. Then there is another actor who performs the feats of divining the unseen and the future; whereas, in fact, none possesses such knowledge. Still another poses to be the nourisher of others, when, in fact, he himself stands in need of obtaining provisions from others. There is still another who poses as if he has the power of bestowing honour and benefit or of inflicting disgrace and loss and behaves arrogantly as if he were the absolute master of all around him. In fact, he himself is utterly powerless and helpless, for a little turn of

fortune can dethrone him from the high pedestal of greatness to the lowest depths of disgrace. So much so that he might even be at the feet of those very people, over whom he was ruling as a despot. All these dramas that are being played on the stage of life are abruptly brought to an end by death. Then everyone will cross over to the other world and see for himself everything in its true colour ; then all the misunderstandings of the life of this world shall be removed and everyone will be shown the real worth of what he had earned for the Life-after-death.

21. It is a fact that all the people of his tribe regarded the Holy Prophet truthful and honest up to the time he had not begun to recite the Revelations of Allah before them. They falsified him only when he began to deliver to them the Message of Allah. Even then, there was none who dared charge Muhammad, the Man (Allah's peace be upon him), with falsehood ; nay, even his bitterest enemies never accused him of having ever told a lie concerning any worldly matter. It was Muhammad, the Prophet, whom they charged with falsehood. So much so that even Abū Jahl, who was the bitterest of all the enemies of the Holy Prophet, never accused him of falsehood. According to a tradition related by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Abū Jahl declared during a conversation with the Holy Prophet, "We do not call you a liar, but regard as false what you are presenting." On the occasion of the Battle of Badr, Akhnas bin Shariq asked Abū Jahl in private, "There is no third person here besides us two. Tell me the truth whether you regard Muhammad to be a truthful man or a liar." He answered, "By God, Muhammad is a truthful person and has never told a lie in his whole life, but if Banī Qusayy, who have already the privilege of being the bearers of the national flag and the providers of water to the pilgrims and the keepers of the keys of the Ka'abah, should also be acknowledged as the recipients of Prophethood, what would then be left for the rest of the Quraish ?" For this very reason Allah is comforting His Prophet, saying, "It is not you whom they are rejecting as impostor but it is Our Message which they are rejecting : when We are forbearing everything and giving them respite after respite, why should you show any kind of anxiety ?"

22. The "Law" referred to here is the Law of Allah concerning the conflict between the right and the wrong. According to this Law, it is essential that the righteous people should be tried for a long period to stand their test in order to prove their fortitude, their righteousness, their spirit of sacrifice and their fidelity, their firm belief in their Faith and their complete trust in Allah. For this they must pass through afflictions and difficulties in order to develop those high moral qualities which can be learnt only by going through this hard and tough course, for with these weapons alone, they are required to win the battle against un-Islam. When, according to this Law, they prove their competence, then Allah's help will come at the right

moment to support them and this help can never be brought about before its time by anyone.

23. Whenever the Holy Prophet felt that his people did not accept the Message in spite of his continuous preaching, he cherished the wish that Allah might send such a clear Sign that they should have no alternative left with them but to accept his Message. In this verse Allah has admonished His Messenger against cherishing any such desire so as to say, "Do not show impatience at their obduracy, but go on performing your mission persistently in the way and order We are laying down for it. If this mission had to be performed by means of miracles, could We not Ourselves have done so? But We know that this method is not suitable for bringing about that intellectual and moral revolution and for the establishment of that righteous society for which you have been appointed as a Messenger. If, however, you cannot endure the heart-burning caused by their indifference and rejection and if you imagine that a tangible Sign, that might appeal to them, is required to break this inert state of their minds, then you should yourself try to bring about such a Sign: you may, if you can, go deep down into the bowels of the earth or ascend up to the heavens for this purpose, but you should not expect from Us that We will fulfil this desire of yours, for there is no room for it in Our scheme."

24. This is to impress that it is not the purpose of Allah that each and every human being should be forced to accept the Guidance somehow or other. Had it been so, He would have created them in such a way that they would have been righteous by birth like angels. Then there would have been no need of sending Prophets and Books and of making the Believers enter into this conflict with the disbelievers for the gradual establishment of the Way of Allah. But Allah does not desire this. On the contrary, He intends that the Truth should be presented to the people in a rational way so that those, who are convinced of it, may adopt it without any coercion, and then mould their characters in accordance with it to prove their moral superiority over the disbelievers. In this way they would go on attracting the best among the people towards it till they succeed in establishing the Way by virtue of their high ideals, best principles of life, pure characters and strong arguments and with resolute struggle with the disbelievers. Then Allah assures them of the guidance and help they need and deserve at any stage. But if one wishes that, instead of this natural process, Allah should adopt some supernatural method and eradicate false ideas from the minds of the people and bring in pure ones instead and establish the righteous civilization in place of the evil ones, he should know that Allah will not do this for this will be against the wisdom of the scheme of His creation of Man. He has created Man as a responsible person, granted him powers to exploit the things of the world and

given him the freedom of action—both good and evil—and granted him a definite term for the preparation of the test and fixed the time for the declaration of the result of the test—to punish or reward according to his efforts.

25. "Those, who listen to it..." are the people whose conscience is alive, and who try to judge rationally between right and wrong ; who do not deliberately and obdurately lock the doors of their hearts.

"As for those who are dead..." are the people who blindly follow a way and are not ready to leave it and follow any other way even though that may manifestly be the Right Way.

26. "Sign" means a tangible miracle. In this verse (37), Allah says that He is not showing a Sign because He is unable to do so but for another reason whose wisdom they do not understand. (See E.N. 6).

27. That is, "If you are really serious in your demand of seeing a Sign in order to judge whether the Message of this Prophet is true or false, you should see and ponder over the innumerable Signs that are found in abundance all around you. For instance, if you consider animal life, you will see that the structure of the bodies of each species of birds and beasts suits its functions immensely well ; the qualities and characteristics that have been ingrained in its nature help to fulfil all its needs ; the provision of its nourishment has been arranged in a wonderful way ; and the course of its life has been so predetermined that it cannot transgress its limits in any way whatever. Allah also sees that each and every bird, nay, even the smallest insect, is being looked after, protected and guided, wherever it be, for the performance of the functions pre-destined for it. In short, you will find that its structure suits it well : it has been given inherent powers that help provide its needs : excellent provisions have been made for its food. The process of its birth, procreation and death has been going on according to a regulated fixed scheme. If you give a careful consideration to this Sign alone, you will realize that the teachings of this Prophet about the One-ness of God and His attributes and the way of life based on these are absolutely true. But you neither try to see with open eyes these Signs nor listen to the Message this Prophet is conveying to you. As a result of this you have been involved in ignorance and, therefore, you desire to see some wonderful miracle for 'mere pastime.'"

28. This is how Allah lets them go astray : (1) He holds back the opportunity for observing His Signs from the one who chooses to remain in ignorance ; (2) He keeps hidden the pointers to the Reality from the one who is a victim of prejudices, even though he should see His Signs, and lets him remain involved in misunderstandings and move farther and farther away from the Reality. On the contrary, He guides the seeker after truth to the Right Way by affording him

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بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَلَوْ لَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا
 وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَلَمَّا
 نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّى إِذَا فَرِحُوا
 بِمَا أُوتُوا أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَقَطَّعَ دَائِرَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ
 ظَلَمُوا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ
 وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ وَخَمَّ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ مَنْ إِلَهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِهِ أَنْظَرُ
 كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ هُمْ يَصْذِقُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَسْكُمُ
 عَذَابُ اللَّهِ بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَمَا
 نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ ؕ فَمَنْ أَمَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا
 خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَمَسُّهُمُ
 الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ
 وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ ؕ إِنْ أَتَيْتُمْ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ
 قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلَا تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ
 يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ وِليٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ
 لَهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ
 يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ
 عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا
 بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لِيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ مَنَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا لَئِنَّ اللَّهَ
 يَأْتِيهِمْ بِالشَّكِرِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ

We sent Messengers before you to many peoples and afflicted them with calamities and misfortunes so that they might bow down before Us with humility. Why did they not then humble themselves when Our scourge overtook them? Instead of this, their hearts were hardened all the more and Satan made, what they were doing, seem fair to them. After this when they forgot the Admonition that was given them, We opened the gates of every kind of prosperity for them, so much so that they were deeply absorbed in enjoying what was given to them. Then We seized them all of a sudden, and they were in a state of utter despair. Thus the transgressors were totally uprooted, and Allah, the Lord of the universe, be praised (that He uprooted them). 42-45

O Muhammad, ask them, "Have you ever considered this? If Allah were to take away your hearing and your sight and set a seal upon your hearts,³⁰ is there a deity other than Allah to restore them to you?" Behold! how We present Our Signs before them over and over again, and how they turn away from them in disdain. Say, "Have you also ever considered this? If the scourge of Allah comes upon you suddenly or openly, shall any but the transgressors be destroyed? For We send Our Messengers only to give good news to the righteous people and to warn the evil-doers: then those, who accept their Message and reform their own conduct, will have no cause for fear and sorrow and those who treat Our Revelations as false, shall have to suffer punishment as the consequence of their evil deeds. 46-49

Tell them, O Muhammad, "I do not claim that I possess the treasures of Allah nor that I know the "unseen", nor do I claim that I am an angel. (What I say is that) I follow the Revelation that is sent down to me."³¹ Then ask them, "Can the blind man and the seeing man be alike³²? Do you not consider this thing?" 50

And, O Muhammad, admonish with this (knowledge of the Revelation) those, who fear that one Day they shall be brought before their Lord in such a state that they will find none other than Allah with competent powers as protector 51-53

or intercessor : it may be that (by this admonition) they adopt the God-fearing attitude.³³ And do not drive away those who invoke their Lord morning and evening and are engaged in seeking His favour.³⁴ You are not in any way accountable for them nor are they in any way accountable for you : so, if you should drive them away, you shall be counted among the un-just.³⁵ As a matter of fact, in this way We have made some of them a means for testing the others,³⁶ so that, seeing them, they should say, "Are these the people from among us upon whom Allah has showered His blessings ?"—Yes : does not Allah know His grateful servants better than they ?

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the opportunity to make use of his knowledge for the purpose of discovering the Reality, and showing him the signs guiding towards it.

We daily notice instances of these types. There are millions of people before whose eyes countless Signs are spread in their own persons and in the universe, but like animals they neither observe them nor learn lessons from them. Then there are the physicists, the chemists, the zoologist, the botanists, the biologists, the geologists, the astronomers, the physiologists, the anatomists, the historians, the archaeologists, the scientists, etc., etc., who observe such Signs as may enlighten the minds and the hearts with Faith, but they seem to see no "Sign" to lead them to the Reality, just because they begin their study with prejudiced minds, merely for the sake of material gains. Not only this : every Sign leads them to atheism, disbelief, materialism and nature-worship. In contrast to them, there are those, who observe the wonders of the universe and the phenomena of Nature with open eyes and open hearts, and find the Signs of God all around them : so much so that they can see His Sign in each and every green leaf.

29. In answer to the demand of the disbelievers for a Sign, they were told that there was not one Sign, but innumerable Signs scattered all around them and their attention has been drawn in v. 38 to study the mystery of the life of any bird or beast and they would find Signs of God. Now in vv. 40-41, they have been directed to another Sign that they can find in their own selves. When some affliction befalls a man or death confronts him with all its dreads, then he sees no refuge in any other than Allah. On such occasions even the most confirmed polytheists forget their gods and invoke Allah's help. Likewise the most obdurate atheists, in their utter helplessness, involuntarily pray to Allah for rescue. This Sign—man's own state of mind—is being presented here as a pointer to the Reality, for this is a clear proof of the existence of One God, and of the urge of

God-worship that has been embedded deep in the heart of every human being. Though it might have been kept suppressed by negligence and ignorance, sometimes it comes to the surface under the stimulus of some misfortune.

'Ikrimah, son of Abū Jahl, who was an arch enemy of Islam, was led towards Islam by witnessing such a Sign. When the Holy Prophet conquered Makkah, 'Ikrimah fled to Jaddah and sailed for Abyssinia. During the voyage, there came a furious storm which threatened to sink the boat. At first the passengers began to invoke their gods and goddesses for help. But when the storm became so violent that they feared that the boat was going to sink, they all cried out, "This is not the time to call any one except Allah, because He alone can save us." This opened the eyes of 'Ikrimah and the locked doors of his heart: "If there is none here except Allah to help us, how can there be any to help us in any other place? This is what Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has been teaching us for the last twenty years and we have been fighting it out with him". That was the most decisive moment in the life of 'Ikrimah. He made a solemn pledge with Allah to this effect: "If I escape from this storm, I will directly go to Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) to become a follower of his." Allah rescued him from that storm and he fulfilled his pledge. He not only became a Muslim, but spent the rest of his life in the service of Islam by performing *Jihād*.

30. "...and set a seal upon your hearts" means "...deprive you of the powers of thinking and understanding."

31. This verse removes the silly notions about Prophethood and answers the absurd objections raised against the claim of Prophethood by Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). The foolish people have always had the silly notion that a Prophet of Allah must be supernatural and capable of performing wonderful miracles. For instance, they expected that a whole mountain should turn into a mass of gold at his bidding: that the earth should throw out treasures by his orders: that he should be able to tell the people all about their past and future: that he should be able to locate a lost thing and foretell whether a sick person will get well or die and whether a pregnant woman will give birth to a male or a female. They also believed that such a person should be above the common human limitations. They could not conceive anyone to be a prophet, if he suffered from hunger or thirst and needed sleep, or, if he had wife and children and went to the bazar to buy and sell the necessities of life, or, if he was sometimes forced to borrow money or was involved in poverty and indigence.

When Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) put forward the claim that he was a Messenger of Allah, his contemporaries wanted to test his claim with the touch-stone of such silly notions. They would

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عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لَا آتِيَهُ مِنْ عَمَلٍ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا
 بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَدِيدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ
 نَفِصِلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلِتَسْتَبِينَ سَبِيلُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي نُهَيْتُ أَنْ
 ٢٤٥
 ١٢٢
 أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَا أَتَّبِعُ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ قَدْ
 ضَلَّتُمْ إِذَا مَا أَنَا مِنَ الْهَادِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَى بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَ
 كَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ مَا عِندِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَقْضُ
 الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَصِلِينَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ قُلْ لَوْ أَن عِندِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ
 لَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَعِندَهُ مَفَاتِحُ
 الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنَ
 السَّمَاءِ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظِلْمٍ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَأْسٌ
 فِي مَكْرٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَقَّعُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُمْ
 بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
 ٤٤٥
 ١٢٢
 ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ
 عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ
 لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقُّ إِلَّا لِمَنْ أَلَّهِ الْحُكْمُ وَهُوَ
 سَرِعٌ الْحَسِيبِينَ ﴿١١٠﴾ قُلْ مَنْ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِّن ظِلْمِ الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ تَدْعُونَهُ
 سِرًّا وَخُفْيَةً لِّئِنْ أَنْجَيْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ لَنُكُونَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ قُلْ
 لَهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ مُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ
 عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابًا مِّن فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ

When those, who have believed Our Revelations, come to you, say to them, "Peace be upon you : your Lord has prescribed for Himself mercy and compassion. It is His compassion that He forgives and treats with leniency anyone who commits an evil through ignorance and then repents and mends his ways."³⁷ In this way, We make Our Signs clear and plain so as to expose the way of the guilty ones.³⁸ 54-55

O Muhammad, say, "I have been forbidden to worship those, whom you invoke beside Allah." Say, "I will not follow your wishes for if I did that I should have gone astray, and would not be of the right guided." Say, "I take my stand on a clear proof from my Lord, and you have rejected it. Now, that thing which you demand to be hastened is not in my power,³⁹ for Allah alone has the sole authority of passing judgement : He declares the Truth and He is the best of arbiters". Say, "Had I the power to hasten that which you are demanding, the dispute between you and me would have been settled long before this, but Allah knows best how to deal with evil-doers. He alone has the keys of the "unseen", of which none has the knowledge but He. He knows all that is in the land and in the sea ; there is not a leaf that falls from a tree but He knows about it ; there is not a grain in the darkest bowels of the earth of which He is not aware ; everything fresh and dry has been recorded in an open Book. It is He Who recalls your souls at night and knows what you do during the day ; then next day He returns you to your usual work to complete the fixed term of your life. At long last, you shall all return to Him and He will let you know what you had been doing. He reigns supreme over His servants and appoints those, who keep watch over you⁴⁰ till the time the death of anyone of you approaches ; then the angels sent by Him take away his soul and do not show the least negligence in the performance of their duty. Then all are brought back to Allah, their real Master. Beware of it that the sole authority of passing judgement rests with Him alone and He is the swiftest at reckoning." 56-62

63.64

O Muhammad, ask them, "Who rescues you from perils in the darkness of the land and of the sea? Who is He whom you implore humbly and invoke secretly (at the time of affliction)? (To whom do you make this promise:) 'We will be grateful if you rescue us from this affliction'." Say, "Allah delivers you from that and every other affliction, yet you associate other partners with him."⁴¹

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ask him questions about the unseen things and demand supernatural miracles from him. They would also raise the objection that he was merely a common man, who needed food and drank water like them: who had wife and children and who moved about in the bazars. In answer to these things, Allah told His Prophet to inform them that he never claimed to be supernatural; his only claim was that he was following the Revelations he received from Allah and that he should be judged by this standard only.

32. The question is meant to bring home to them this fact: "I have seen with my own eyes the realities I am presenting to you, and I have also gained the knowledge about them through Revelation; therefore my evidence about this is that I am an eye witness. On the contrary, you are blind with regard to those realities: all your notions concerning them are based on guess-work and speculation or on the blind following of others. Therefore the difference between you and me is the same that is between the man who is able to see and the one who is blind. That is what gives me a superiority over you and not that I possess the treasures of God or have the knowledge of the unseen or that I am free from the common human limitations."

33. That is, "You should pay special attention only to those who believe that One Day they shall have to go before Allah to render the account of their deeds and do not cherish any such false hopes that somebody's intercession and help will save them. It is because this "Admonition" can produce good effect only on such people and not on those who are so absorbed in the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world that they never think of their death or of going before Allah. Likewise this "Admonition" will fall flat on those who go on making merry in this world, deluding themselves into believing that no harm would come to them in the Hereafter because of their 'spiritual' relation with such and such a saint or because such and such a holy person will intercede with Allah in their behalf or because such a one has already made atonement for them. Obviously, no admonition can be beneficial to such people."

34. In this passage Allah has answered one of the objections that the big chiefs of the Quraish used to raise in regard to the followers of the Holy Prophet. They would say that none but the

lowest stratum of society, consisting of slaves, menials and the like, had accepted Islam : they would taunt him of having such companions as Bilāl, 'Ammār, Suhaib, Khabbāb, etc., and ask in a jeering way, "Are these the only (honourable) people from amongst us, upon whom Allah has showered His blessings?" They did not rest content with making fun of their poor condition, but also passed stinging remarks about their past shortcomings, saying, "Just have a look at the past history of such and such people, who are today forming the "pious" group of the believers." Allah has advised His Prophet not to be disheartened by their unkind remarks.

35. That is, "There is no reason why you should drive them away. If they had done something wrong in the past, they themselves shall be accountable for it and not you, for everyone shall get the reward of the good or evil one does. "Therefore, no good deed of yours will be put to their credit, nor will you be burdened with any evil deed of theirs. They come to you merely as seekers after truth and it will be injustice to look down upon them and drive them away."

36. That is, "By bestowing the blessing of Islam on the poor and indigent and those who held a low position in the society, We have involved the upper rich and proud class in trial."

37. Allah has told His Messenger to console those of His followers who had committed heinous sins during the days of "ignorance" by inspiring them with the assurance that He forgives and treats leniently those who, like them, repent and mend their ways and, therefore, the taunts of the enemies of Islam need not worry them about what they had done in the past.

38. In order to understand the significance of v. 55, we should keep in view v. 37 in which the disbelievers asked, "Why has no Sign been sent down to this Prophet from his Lord?" In the subsequent passage (vv. 38-54) several manifest Signs have been cited to show that there is no lack of Signs but the disbelievers do not want to see them. Then in v. 55 such people have been warned, as if to say, "In this way We make Our Signs clear, plain and manifest so that those, who persist in their disbelief in spite of those Signs, should prove themselves to be guilty ones. For they choose the way of deviation deliberately, not because there is a lack of Signs to show the Right Way but because they do not want to see the Signs."

39. This alludes to the demand of the opponents for the scourge of Allah with which they were being threatened. They would say, "Why does a scourge not come upon us, when we are openly denying and defying you? If you have been really sent by Allah, then anyone, who denied and insulted you, would have been swallowed by the earth or stricken dead by lightning. How is it that the Messenger of Allah and his followers are undergoing untold afflictions and sufferings, while their tormentors are enjoying their lives merrily?"

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يَلِيْسَكُمْ شَيْعًا وَ يُذِيْقُ بَعْضَكُمْ بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَفْقَهُوْنَ ۝۱۵ وَ كَذَّبَ بِهٖ قَوْمُكَ وَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ قُلْ لَسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ
بِكَايِلٍ ۝۱۶ لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ وَ سَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝۱۷ وَ إِذَا رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ
يَخُوضُونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ ۝
وَ إِمَّا يُنَسِيْكَ الشَّيْطٰنُ فَلَا تَعْتَدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِ مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِيْنَ ۝۱۸
وَ مَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَلٰكِنْ ذِكْرِي لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَتَّقُونَ ۝۱۹ وَ ذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِيْنَهُمْ لَعِبًا وَ لَهْوًا وَ غَرْتَهُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ
الدُّنْيَا وَ ذَكَرِيْهٖ اَنْ تُبْسَلَ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ
وَالِيٌّ وَ لَا شَفِيْعٌ ۝۲۰ وَ اِنْ تَعَدِلْ كُلَّ عَدَلٍ لَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِينَ
اُبْسِلُوْا بِمَا كَسَبُوْا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ وَ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ اِمْا كَانُوْا
يَكْفُرُوْنَ ۝۲۱ قُلْ اَنْدَعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا وَ لَا يَضُرُّنَا وَ نُرَدُّ
عَلٰٓى اَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ اِذْ هَدٰنَا اللّٰهُ كَالَّذِي اسْتَهْوَتْهُ الشَّيْطٰنُ فِي الْاَرْضِ
حٰٓيْرَانَ ۝۲۲ لَهٗ اَصْحٰبٌ يَّدْعُوْنَهُ اِلَى الْهُدٰى اٰتِنَا قُلْ اِنْ هٰدٰى
اللّٰهُ هُوَ الْهُدٰى ۝۲۳ وَ اٰمَرْنَا لِنُسَلِّمَ لِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۝۲۴ وَ اَنْ اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ
وَ اتَّقُوْهُ ۝۲۵ وَ هُوَ الَّذِي اِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ۝۲۶ وَ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۝۲۷ وَ يَوْمَ يَقُوْلُ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ۝۲۸ قَوْلُهُ الْحَقُّ ۝۲۹ وَ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ
يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّوْرِ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ وَ الشَّهَادَةُ ۝۳۰ وَ هُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْخَبِيْرُ ۝۳۱
وَ اِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ لِاَبِيْهِ اِذْمَا اتَّخَذْتُمْ اَصْنَامًا اِلٰهَةً اِنِّىۤ اَرٰىكُمْ وَ
قَوْمَكُمْ فِي ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝۳۲ وَ كَذٰلِكَ نُرِيْ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ مَلَكُوْتِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ

١٤٠

الملك

Say, "He has the power to bring a scourge on you from above you or from beneath your feet or to split you into discordant factions to make you taste the violence of one another." Behold ! how We present Our Signs over and over again in different ways before them so that they should understand the Reality.⁴² Your people are rejecting it (the Qur'an), although it is the Truth. Say, "I have not been made a supervisor over you.⁴³ Every event takes its prescribed time to appear ; and, by and by, you yourselves shall see the consequences."

And, O Muhammad, when you see that people are finding fault with Our Revelations, withdraw from them till they get engaged in some other talk ; and, if ever Satan causes you to forget this,⁴⁴ quit the company of such unjust people when you realize your mistake. Though pious people are not in any way accountable for them, yet it is their duty to admonish them ; perhaps they might refrain from their evil ways.⁴⁵ And leave alone those who have turned their faith as sport and pastime and have been deluded by the life of this world ; nevertheless go on admonishing them by reciting the Qur'an to them lest any person should be seized because of his own deeds ; and that too at the time, when there would be no protector, no helper and no intercessor to rescue him from Allah, and no conceivable amount of ransom would be accepted from him ; this is because such people shall be seized in consequence of what they themselves had earned ; they shall get boiling water to drink and a painful torture to suffer for their rejection of the Truth.

O Muhammad, ask them, "Should we invoke, instead of Allah, those, who can neither benefit us nor harm us ? And should we turn upon our heels after Allah has shown us the Guidance ? Should we put ourselves in the sad plight of the man, whom the satans mislead to wander over the desert in a bewildered state of mind, while his companions are calling aloud, 'Come to us : here is the right way' ?" Say, "In fact, the right guidance is the Guidance of Allah and He has enjoined us to surrender to the Lord of the universe and establish *Ṣalāt* and refrain from His disobe-

dience ; you shall all return to Him. It is He Who created the heavens and the earth in all truth,⁴⁶ and there shall be Resurrection the day He says, "Be." His word is the very truth ; and on the Day, when the Trumpet⁴⁷ will be blown, His shall be the sole Sovereignty.⁴⁸ He has full knowledge of the visible and the invisible,⁴⁹ and He is All-Wise, All-Knowing."

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40. Allah has appointed such angels as keep strict watch over each and everything a man does or thinks of and maintain a complete record of all this.

41. That is, "You yourselves are a witness to the fact that Allah is All-Powerful ; He alone has the sole authority and your prosperity and adversity wholly lie in His power and He alone is the maker of your destiny. That is why you turn to Him in your affliction, when you find that no other means of rescue have been left for you. In the face of this clear Sign, you have set up, without any reason or rhyme, others as partners in His Godhead. You live on His provisions but treat others as your providers : You get help from Him in your need, but set up others as your helpers and protectors : it is He who rescues you from your distress yet you regard others besides Him as your rescuers : it is He Whom you humbly invoke in your affliction, yet you take your offerings to others when He removes it. In short, you witness the proofs of His Godhead, day and night, and still you serve and bow down before others."

42. It is a warning to those, who had become very bold in their enmity with the Truth because no scourge from Allah was in sight. They are being warned that the scourge of Allah does not take a long time to come. A gust of wind can destroy them all at once. A sudden shake of an earthquake can sink down their habitations into the earth. A spark can set on fire the magazines of enmity and involve clans, nations and countries in endless blood-shed. Therefore, "If no scourge is coming on you, this should not make you so bold and neglectful as to go on treading blindly the way you are following without discerning whether it is right or wrong. Instead of this, you should take advantage of the respite that is being given to you and of the Signs that are being presented to you and recognize the Reality and follow the Right Way."

43. That is, "It is no part of my duty to make you see what you would not see and to make you understand what you would not understand ; nor am I responsible for bringing down a scourge on you, if you would not see or understand it. The only duty that has been assigned to me is to make quite plain to you the distinction between the Truth and falsehood. Now that I have done my duty and you have rejected the Truth, the evil consequences of which I have been

warning you, will appear in due course."

44. That is, "If you ever forget the preceding instruction and keep sitting in the company of such people."

45. Here very important practical instructions have been given to the pious people. Their first and foremost duty is to save themselves from any disobedience of Allāh; they should not worry unnecessarily about the disobedient people, for they are not responsible for their disobedience. They should not, therefore, impose it upon themselves as an obligation that they have to convince them anyhow by arguments to make them follow the way of obedience. Therefore it is not the duty of the believers to refute their absurd objections, but present the Truth before them. Then, if they do not accept it, the pious people should not waste their time and energy by entering into useless polemical disputes, discussions and argumentations with the disbelievers. Instead of this, they should spend their time and energies in educating and training and reforming those who are sincere seekers after the Truth.

46. It occurs at several places in the Qurān that Allāh has created the heavens and the earth "in all truth." It has very comprehensive meanings :

(1) It means that the earth and the heavens have not been created merely for the fun of it. It is not the creation of the fancy of some god, or the toy of a child to be played with for amusement and broken after satiety. In fact, this world is a very serious affair and its creation has great wisdom and a grand purpose behind it. It must, therefore, come to an end at the appointed time and then be resurrected so that the Creator may take account of all that has been done in it and ultimately build the Next World on the result of that reckoning.

That this world has been created for a purpose has also been mentioned at other places in the Qurān in different ways :

- (a) "Lord, Thou hast not created all this in vain . . ." III : 91.
- (b) "We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them for mere fun." XXI : 16.
- (c) "Do you think that We have created you without any purpose and that you will never be brought to Us?" XXIII : 115.

(2) The whole universe has been built on the solid foundations of the Truth. Everything in it is based on just, wise and right laws and there is no room for injustice and folly and falsehood to take root and bear fruit in it. One should not, however, be misled by the partial and temporary successes of falsehood. At times they may allow the worshippers of falsehood opportunity to try their worst for the success of falsehood and injustice and wrong ways in order to show that all their efforts shall ultimately fail and every worshipper of falsehood will see at the Last Reckoning that all the efforts made for the success

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الْأَرْضِ وَلِيَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى كَوْكَبًا
 قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْإِفْلِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَى الْقَمَرَ
 بَازِغًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ
 مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسَ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا
 أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يُقَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ
 وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾
 وَحَاجَّةً قَوْمَهُ ﴿١٤٥﴾ قَالَ اتَّحَاجُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا
 تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا
 تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ أَنَّكُمْ أَشْرَكْتُمْ
 بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ بِالْأَمْنِ ﴿١٤٨﴾
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَئِكَ
 لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا آتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَى قَوْمِهِ
 نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ مَن نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَ
 يَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِن قَبْلُ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَ
 سُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾
 وَذَكَرْنَا وَيْحِي وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَ
 الْيَسَعَ وَيُونُسَ وَلُوطًا ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَمِن آبَائِهِمْ وَ
 ذُرِّيَّتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٥٧﴾ ذَلِكَ
 هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ﴿١٥٨﴾ وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحَبَطَ عَنْهُمْ

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And remember the incident when Abraham said to his father, Āzar, "Do you take idols for deities?⁵⁰ I see that you and your people are in manifest deviation." And We showed⁵¹ to Abraham the phenomena of the kingdom of the heavens and the earth in the manner (that follows) so that he may become one of the firm believers.⁵² Accordingly when the night outspread over him, he saw a star and said, "This is my Lord." But when it set, he declared, "I cannot love those that set." Afterwards when he saw the moon shining, he said, "This is my Lord." But when it also set, he cried, "If my Lord had not guided me, I, too would have been of those who had gone astray." Then, when he saw the sun shining brightly, he said, "This is my Lord. This is the largest of all." But when this also set, he exclaimed, "O my people, I have nothing to do with those whom you set up as partners with God.⁵³ As regards me, I have turned my face in exclusive loyalty and worship towards that Being Who has created the earth and the heavens and I am not at all of those who associate partners with Allah." And when his people began to argue with him, he said to them, "Do you argue with me in regard to Allah, whereas He has shown Guidance to me? And I do not fear those whom you have taken for gods: except that it be my Lord's will, for if my Lord wills anything it must happen. The knowledge of my Lord embraces everything. Will you not, then, remember this and come to your senses?⁵⁴ And there is no reason why I should fear those whom you have made partners with Allah, when you are not afraid of setting up those things as partners in Godhead for which He has sent no authority to you. Then tell me, if you have any knowledge, which of the two parties merits peace and freedom from fear? As a matter of fact, they alone, who have believed and not polluted their Faith with *shirk*,⁵⁵ have peace and are rightly guided."

This was the argument of Ours which We bestowed upon Abraham against his people. We raise whom We will to exalted ranks; indeed your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing. 83

Then We bestowed upon Abraham descendants like Isaac and Jacob, and showed all of them the Right Way (the same Right Way that) We had shown to Noah before them ; and (We bestowed Guidance upon) David and Solomon, Job and Joseph and Moses and Aaron from among his descendants. In this Way, We reward the righteous people for their good deeds. And (from among his descendants, We showed Guidance) to Zachariah, John, Jesus, and Elias, all of whom were upright men. And (We showed the Right Way) to Ismail, Elisha, Jonah and Lot (who were his offspring). And We exalted everyone of them over all the people of the world and showed favours to many of their forefathers and their descendants and their brethren and chose them for Our service and guided them aright.

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of this unholy cause had gone utterly waste.

(3) Allah has created the universe in His own right and is ruling over it by His own personal right. He wields authority here because of His personal claim as its Creator and one should not, therefore, be misled by seeing the others holding authority over the affairs of the world. In fact, no one has any right to rule here and no one can extend one's rule even for a second beyond the limit allowed by the Real Ruler.

47. It is beyond our comprehension to understand the real nature of the blowing of the Trumpet. What we learn from the Qur'an is that on the Day of Resurrection when the first Trumpet shall be blown by the Command of Allah, everyone and everything shall be destroyed. Then after this (Allah alone knows how long after this) the second Trumpet shall be blown then everyone from the beginning of the creation to its end, shall be brought back to life and mustered in the Plain of Resurrection. In short, on the first blowing of the Trumpet, the present system of the whole universe shall be destroyed and on its second blowing the new system, different in form and with different laws, shall be created.

48. It does not mean, "Today it is not His Sovereignty." What it means is this : "On that Day the curtain, that is covering the Reality today, will be lifted and it will become quite apparent that all those who seemed to wield authority or were supposed to wield it, had absolutely no authority, and that Sovereignty indeed belongs to Allah alone, Who is the Creator of the universe."

49. *غيب* (*Ghaib*) is all that is hidden from the naked eye and cannot be seen and *شهادت* (*Shahadat*) is all that is visible to it.

50. This event of the life of Prophet Abraham has been related

here in support of and as a testimony to this argument : "Just as Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his followers have rejected *shirk* today under the Guidance of Allah and, turning away from artificial gods, have surrendered only to the One Owner of the universe, likewise Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) did that before him. And just as the ignorant people are disputing with Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), likewise the people of Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) had a dispute with him before this and that the followers of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) are today giving the same answer to their people that was given by Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) to his people. Besides this, Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is following the same Way that was followed by Prophet Noah, Abraham and all the other Prophets from among Abraham's descendants (Allah's peace be upon them) : therefore, those people, who are denying him, should know that they are deviating from the Way of the Prophets and are following wrong ways."

In this connection it should also be noted that the mention of the creed of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) was very significant, for almost all the people of Arabia accepted him as their guide and leader. Especially the Quraish were very proud of being his descendants and the keepers of the Ka'abah that was built by him. Therefore, the reference to his creed of *Tauhid* and his refutation of *shirk* and his dispute with his people was very meaningful. This exposed the hollowness of the claim of their relationship with Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) and deprived them of the satisfaction they had with the creed of *shirk*. This meant to show to them that Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his followers were in the position of Prophet Abraham and their opponents were in that of the ignorant people who had a dispute with him. The argument was so subtle that it took, so to speak, the wind out of their sails and put them in such an awkward position that they did not know what to answer. This showed beyond all doubt that they were following a way opposed to that of Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) whom they held in great reverence and regarded as their ancestor and Prophet. Thus they were placed in the awkward position of his opponents.

51. That is, "Just as the phenomena of Nature are daily before your eyes and the Signs of God are being shown to you, likewise these were before Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him). But you, like blind men, do not see them in spite of looking at them, while Abraham reflected upon them deeply and saw the Reality. The same stars, the same moon and the same sun rise and set before your eyes, but they leave you as far away from the Reality at the time of their setting as you were at the time of their rising. But when Abraham saw with his mind's eyes these very phenomena of Nature, he reflected upon

them and came to know of the Reality.

52. In order to understand the true nature of the dispute between Prophet Abraham and his people mentioned in this passage and others in the Qurān, one should keep in view the religious and social conditions of his time. Now that Ur, the birth place of Prophet Abraham, has been unearthed by modern archaeologists, it has helped reveal the real conditions prevailing in that land during that age. Sir Leonardo Woolley has published the results of his research in this regard in his book, "Abraham", London 1935. A resume of the same, (which has been translated into English from the TAFHĪM-UL QURĀN), is given below :

It has been estimated that round about the year 2100 B.C., which is now generally regarded by scholars to be the period of Prophet Abraham, the population of Ur was nearly 2,50,000 ; it might even have been 5,00,000. It was a flourishing industrial and business centre. On the one side, it attracted trade goods from as far off places as Pamir and Nilgiri, and on the other, it had trade relations with Anatolia. The State, whose capital it was, extended a little less to the north of modern Iraq. The people were mostly craftsmen and merchants by profession. The inscriptions of the age that have been deciphered from the archaeological remains show that they had a materialist outlook on life ; their main object of life was to amass wealth and make merry. They practised usury and were wholly absorbed in business. They regarded one another with suspicion and resorted to litigation on minor grounds. Their prayers to their gods generally consisted of supplications for long life, prosperity and flourishing business. The population was divided into three classes :

(1) the *Amelu* : This was the highest class which consisted of the priests, state officials and military officers, etc.

(2) the *Mushkenu* : These were the merchants, craftsmen, and farmers.

(3) the *Ardu* : The slaves.

The *Amelu* class enjoyed special distinctions and privileges : they had greater rights both in the criminal and the civil law than those of other people and their life and property were held sacred and precious.

Such was the city and the society in which Prophet Abraham opened his eyes. According to the Talmud, he was a member of the *Amelu* class, and his father was the chief official of the state (Please see also Al-Baqarah : E.N. 290).

The tablets excavated at Ur mention the names of about 5,000 gods. Each city had its own god and also a special deity, who was regarded as the chief god or the city god and was entitled to greater reverence than the others. The city god of Ur was "Nannar" (the moon god) and scholars of the later ages have also called this city "Qamrinah" after that god. The other big city was "Larsah" which afterwards became the seat of government instead of Ur ; its chief god

was "Shamash" (the sun god). Under these chief gods there were many minor gods also, most of whom had been adopted from among the stars and planets and a few from among the earthly objects. People thought that their prayers for less important things were granted by these minor gods. The symbols of all these heavenly and earthly gods and goddesses had been formed in the shape of idols and all rites of worship were performed before them.

The idol of "Nannar" had been kept in a grand shrine built on the highest peak at Ur and near it the sanctuary of his wife "Ningil" had been built. The shrine of "Nannar" was just like a royal palace where every night a different female worshipper would go and become his bride. Thus there lived a large number of women in the shrine who had been dedicated to the god and their position was no better than religious prostitutes. The woman who would sacrifice her virginity in the name of the "god" was regarded very respectable. The common belief was that a woman must surrender herself at least once in her lifetime to another man "in the way of god" in order to attain salvation. It is obvious that the people to benefit most from this religious prostitution were the male priests themselves.

"Nannar" was not merely a god ; he was the biggest landlord of the country, the biggest merchant, the biggest craftsman and the chief executive of the country's political life, for a very large number of gardens, houses and fields had been dedicated to his shrine. Besides the income from these sources, farmers, landlords and merchants also brought their offerings of corn, milk, gold, cloth etc., to the shrine. Naturally there was a big staff to look after these offerings.

Many factories were run and business on a large scale was done on behalf of the Temple. The highest court of justice had been established in the shrine and the priests acted as judges and their judgements were regarded to be from "God". The royal dynasty also derived its sovereignty from "Nannar", who was the real sovereign. The king ruled over the country on his behalf and was, therefore, himself raised to the rank of a deity and worshipped like the other gods.

The dynasty which was ruling over Ur at the time of Prophet Abraham had been founded by Ur-Nammu who in 2300 B.C. had established a vast empire, which extended to Susa in the east and to Lebanon in the west. It was from him that the dynasty received the title of Nammu which became Namrūd in Arabic. After the emigration of Prophet Abraham this dynasty and this nation were visited by continuous disasters. Their downfall was hastened by the destruction of Ur and the capture of Namrūd along with the idol of Nannar by the people of Elam. Then the Elamites established their rule at Larsah which dominated over the land of Ur also. The last blow was dealt by Babylon, which had grown powerful under an Arab dynasty and brought both Larsah and Ur under its control. As a result of this downfall, the people of Ur lost their faith in Nannar who had failed to

protect them from humiliation, shame and ruin.

Nothing can be said with certainty about the response the people of this land made to the teachings of Prophet Abraham after his emigration, but the law promulgated in 1910 B.C. by Hamurabi (Amraphel of Gen. xiv), king of Babylon, bears evidence that it had been influenced directly or indirectly by the Guidance of Prophethood. A pillar inscribed with this complete Code was discovered by a French archaeologist in 1902 A.D. and its English version was published in 1903 A.D. by C. H. W. John under the title, "The Oldest Code of Law." Most of the principles and details of this law and the Law of Prophet Moses, are, in general, alike.

If the results of the archaeological research, which has been carried out so far, are correct, one thing that clearly stands out is this: *shirk* was not merely a religious belief and basis of polytheistic rituals with the people of Abraham but it was indeed the very basis of their economic, cultural, political and social system of life. In contrast to this, the Message of Prophet Abraham not only clearly struck at the root of idol-worship, but also hit hard upon the sovereignty and worship of the royal dynasty and the social, economic and political status of the priests and nobles and the collective life of the whole country. Therefore, the acceptance of his invitation had far-reaching implications. It called for a complete metamorphosis of the prevailing social pattern and demanded its re-construction on the basis of *Tauhid*. That is why, as soon as Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) began to deliver the Message, the common people and the nobles, the priest class and Nimrod, all stood up together to suppress his voice which gave rise to the bitter dispute, mentioned in the Qurān.

53. In vv. 76-78, that way of thinking has been stated which led Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) to the Reality before his appointment as a Messenger of Allah. It teaches that if a person uses his brain and eyes rightly, he can reach the Reality, even if he is born and bred, like Prophet Abraham, in surroundings surcharged with *shirk* in which one might have had no chance of learning anything about the Oneness of God. The only condition is that one makes the right sort of observation of the phenomena of Nature and reflects upon them carefully and exercises one's reasoning to reach the truth by a connected, logical train of thought. It appears from the preceding verses that Prophet Abraham, from the beginning of his conscious life, was surrounded by the people, who worshipped the stars, the moon and the sun. It was, therefore, natural that the starting point of his search for the truth should be the question: Can any of these objects really be the Lord? That is why his thinking centered round this question and when he discovered that all the gods of his people were bound tightly by an un-alterable law and were revolving in accordance with it, he came to the inevitable conclusion that none of these gods possessed, in the least, any quality that might entitle it to be the Lord.

The Lord is only that One, Who has created them and bound them to His own obedience.

The wording in which the event has been couched, has generally given rise to an objection. "When the night outspread over him, he saw a star and said . . . I am not one of those who set up partners with God." The question arises in the mind of the common reader : Did the night not outspread over Prophet Abraham every day of his life ever since he was a child and did he not see the stars, the moon and the sun rise and set before this particular occasion ? Though he saw them every night, it is obvious that he began to deliberate like this only when he had attained his maturity. Why has the event been described in such a way (. . . . When the night outspread over him) as to give rise to the doubt as if he had not seen the stars and the moon and the sun ever before this ? As such an assumption cannot hold good in ordinary circumstances, some people have had to invent an extraordinary story to remove this seeming anachronism. They say that Prophet Abraham was born and brought up in a cave, where it was arranged that he should not see the stars, the moon and the sun before he attained his maturity. The matter, however, is so simple that it does not need the invention of a fantastic story to explain it. It can be easily understood by a well-known incident in the life of Newton. One day when he saw an apple fall down from the tree to the ground, his mind suddenly turned to the problem : Why do things fall down to the ground ? At last his deliberation led him to formulate and prove the law of gravity. Here, too, the question might arise : Had not Newton ever seen anything falling to the ground before this incident ? It is obvious that he must have seen many things fall to the ground many times before this. How is it then, that the fall of that particular apple on that particular day stirred up that particular mental activity which the daily fall of hundreds of things to the ground had not roused before this ? The simple answer is that the minds are not always excited in the same way by the same kind of observations. Many a time, it so happens that one sees a thing over and over again but that does not stir up one's mind to any mental activity ; then there comes a moment when the sight of that very thing diverts the mental activity towards a particular problem. Or, if one's mind is engaged in the solution of a problem and one suddenly catches sight of a particular thing which had always been before one's eyes, it excites the mind to a mental activity that helps solve the problem. The same thing happened in the case of Prophet Abraham. Nights came and passed away, the stars, the moon and the sun rose and set for years, but on one particular night the observation of one particular star excited that mental activity which led him to the central Reality of the One-ness of God. It may be that ever since he attained maturity, he might have been

مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اتَّيْنَهُمُ الْكُتُبَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ فَإِنْ
 يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَؤُلَاءِ فَقَدْ وَكَلْنَا بِهَا قَوْمًا لَيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ
 هَدَى اللَّهُ فِيهِدَاهُمْ امْتَدَّاهُ قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا
 ذِكْرٌ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَى
 بَشَرٍ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ مَن أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي جَاءَ بِهِ مُوسَى نُورًا وَهُدًى
 لِلنَّاسِ تَجْعَلُونَهُ قَرَارِيسَ بُدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا وَعُلِّمْتُمْ مَا لَمْ
 تَعْلَمُوا أَنْتُمْ وَلَا آبَاؤُكُمْ قُلْ اللَّهُ ثُمَّ ذَرْهُمْ فِي خَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾
 وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبْرَكٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنذِرَ أُمَّ
 الْقُرَى وَمَن حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَهُمْ عَلَى
 صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ وَمَن أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ
 أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَمَن قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
 وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي غَمَرَاتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُوا أَيْدِيهِمْ
 أَخْرِجُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى
 اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَكُنْتُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا فُرَادَى كَمَا
 خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرَكْتُمْ مَا خَوَّلْنَاكُمْ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ وَمَا نَرَى مَعَكُمْ
 شُفَعَاءَ كُ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءُ لَقَدْ تَقَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ
 عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَى يُخْرِجُ الْحَىَّ
 مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَىَّ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ فَاتَى تَوْفِكُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ فَالِقُ
 الْإِصْبَاحِ وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ

This is Allah's Guidance by which He guides anyone of His servants He pleases : but if any of His people had ever practised *shirk*, all the good deeds they had done would have been rendered vain.⁵⁶ Such were the people on whom We bestowed the Book, the Judgement and Prophethood.⁵⁷ Now, if these people do not believe in it (it does not matter); We have bestowed this favour upon others who are not ungrateful to it.⁵⁸ O Muhammad, those were the people who were rightly guided by Allah ; so you should also follow their way and say, "I ask no recompense from you for showing this (Guidance) ; this is an admonition to all the people of the world."

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Those people formed quite a wrong estimate of Allah, when they said, "Allah has not sent down anything to any man."⁵⁹ Ask them : "Then who sent down the Book, which Moses brought: which was Light and Guidance for mankind: which you have divided into fragments, a part of which you show to the people and hide most of it from them: by which you were given that knowledge which neither you nor your forefathers possessed ?"⁶⁰—Just say, "Allah", and then leave them alone to play with their useless arguments. (Like that Book) it is a Book which We have sent down ; it is a blessed Book ; it confirms that which was sent down before it, and this has been sent down so that you should warn the people of this central place (Makkah) and those who dwell around it: Those, who believe in the Hereafter, believe in this Book, and observe their prescribed prayers punctually.⁶¹ And who can be more wicked than the one who intends a falsehood about Allah or said, "A Revelation has come to me," whereas no Revelation has come to him, or said, "I will also send down the like of what God has sent down ? "Would that you could see these wicked people, when they are in the agonies of death and the angels would be out-stretching their hands and saying, "Come, yield up your soul ; today you shall be awarded a disgraceful torment for the false things you attributed to Allah and for the rebellion you showed against His Revelations."

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92-93

(And Allah will add,) "So, you have come before Us all alone, as We created you at first. Now, you have left behind

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all that We gave to you in the world ; and now We do not see with you those intercessors who, you believed, had a share in moulding your destinies ; all the relations between you have been cut off, and all those, in whom you trusted, have left you in the lurch."

Allah is the splitter of the seed and the fruit-stone ;⁶² it is He who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living.⁶³ It is Allah who does all these things : where, then, are you being misled ? He causes the dawn to appear out of the curtain of the night ; it is He who has ordained the night for rest and determined the time of the rising and the setting of the moon and the sun : all these things have been determined by the same All-Powerful and the All-Wise One.

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thinking over the problem of the worship of the stars, the moon and the sun, because this was the religion of his people and on this was based the whole system of the life of that community. Then one night the observation of the star suddenly excited the mental activity that helped him solve the problem. It is also possible that the observation of the star was the starting point of that mental activity.

In this connection, there is another possible doubt that must also be removed. Was Prophet Abraham guilty of *shirk* (even though temporarily), when seeing the star and the moon and the sun severally, he said, "This is my Lord." A little thinking will convince one that he was not at all guilty of *shirk* for in his search for Reality, a seeker-after-truth has, inevitably, to pass through several stages of deliberations about *shirk*. Therefore, what determines his creed is not the temporary deliberation but the direction of one's research and the ultimate destination where he stops. These intervening stages of deliberation have to be made by every seeker-after-truth in his search for Reality. These are made for the sake of research and should not be taken as the final decision. The deliberation about any form of *shirk* is in a questioning manner and is not its practice. When a seeker-after-truth stops to deliberate about anything and says, "It is so," it is not his final judgement. What he means to say is, "Is it so?" That is why he proceeds further in his research as soon as he gets a negative answer at any of these stages.

54. Prophet Abraham asked the *mushriks* to remember the fact that his Lord, whom they also acknowledged to be their Lord, had the knowledge of everything and was fully aware of what they were doing. Then he posed the question in order to rouse them from their

lethargy towards the Message and use their common-sense to consider the reality.

The Arabic word تذكّر (*lazakkur*) contains this sense.

55. Some commentators are of the opinion that the people of Prophet Abraham did not believe in Allah or were ignorant of His existence and regarded their gods to be the sole masters of the universe. Accordingly, they have based on this assumption their comments of this passage and others about Prophet Abraham. Obviously, they are wrong because the whole passage clearly shows that those people did not deny Allah as the Creator of the earth and the heavens, but were guilty of associating others with Allah in His Godhead and Sovereignty. This is clear from these and other words of Prophet Abraham :

“... there is no reason why I should fear those whom you have made partners with Allah.” Moreover, the manner, in which he mentions Allah, while addressing his people, shows that they also believed in Allah but associated other partners with Him as well.

The word ظلم (*dhulm*) that occurs in v. 82 stands for *shirk* as translated. When some Companions mistook it for sinfulness, the Holy Prophet himself removed their misunderstanding saying, “Here it means *shirk*.”

In this connection, it will also be interesting to note that this most important event of the life of Prophet Abraham which has been described in this para and which was the starting point of his great Mission, has not been mentioned at all in the Bible. The Talmud, however, mentions it, but it differs from the Qurān in two things :

(1) In it the order is “from the sun to the stars and to God” but it is the other way round in the Qurān.

(2) It states that, when he said about the sun, “This is my Lord,” he worshipped it also at the same time and did the same with the moon.

56. That is, “Even if the above-mentioned people had been guilty of *shirk* like you, they would never have been exalted to such high ranks. This is because *shirk* is such a heinous sin that it destroys good works. It is just possible that any such person might have won fame as a great conqueror by ruthless destruction or might have amassed fabulous wealth by foul means and become a notorious wealthy man like Corah or done some infamous thing and won name for himself but could never have won the exalted position of being the leader of the pious and the right guided. They won the unique distinction of being the source of virtue and guidance for the whole world because they scrupulously avoided *shirk* and steadfastly followed the way of God-worship.

57. Here it has been stated that three things had been bestowed on the Prophets: (1) The Book, — the Guidance. (2) The Judgement —

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الْعَزِيزُ الْعَلِيمُ ۝ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ
 الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۚ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ
 مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَمُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ ۚ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَفْقَهُونَ ۝
 وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا
 مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ حَبًّا مُتَوَاكِبًا ۚ وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِن طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ
 دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ
 أَنْظَرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ۝
 وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِنَّ وَخَلَقَهُمْ وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ
 عِلْمٍ ۚ سُبْحٰنَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ ۝ بِدِيَعِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ اٰنِ يَكُوْنُ
 لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَّلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صٰحِبَةٌ ۚ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۚ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
 عَلِيمٌ ۝ ذٰلِكُمْ اَللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۚ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۚ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ۚ وَ
 هُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ۝ لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْاَبْصَارُ ۚ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْاَبْصَارَ ۚ وَ
 هُوَ الْوَلِيْفُ الْخَبِيْرُ ۝ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصٰئِرٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ فَمَنْ اَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ
 وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۚ وَمَا اَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيْظٍ ۝ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَصْرَفُ الْاٰيٰتِ
 وَلِيَقُوْلُوْا دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهُ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ اِتَّبِعْ مَا اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ
 رَبِّكَ ۚ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَاعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ۝ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ مَا اشْرَكُوْا
 وَمَا جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيْظًا ۚ وَمَا اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ۝ وَلَا تَسْبُوْا
 الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ فَيَسْبُوْا اللّٰهَ عَدُوًّا ۚ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ
 نَبِّئَا كُلَّ اُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ ۚ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ مَّرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا

And it is He Who has set up the stars for you so that you may find your way in the various sorts of darkness of the land and the sea. Behold! We have made Our Signs clear for those people who possess knowledge.⁶⁴ And it is He Who created you from one Being⁶⁵ and (provided for each of you) a dwelling place and a repository. We have made these Signs clear for those who are men of understanding.⁶⁶ And it is He Who sent down rain-water from the sky and thereby caused every kind of vegetation to grow, and then with it produced green fields and trees and from them brought forth close growing grain and from the blossoms of palm trees brought forth laden sheaths of clustering dates and vineyards and olive-groves and gardens of pomegranates : though their fruit resembles each other yet each has its distinctive quality. Behold! how they bring forth fruit and how their fruits ripen, for there are indeed Signs in these things for those who believe. Yet they set up Jinns as partners with Allah,⁶⁷ whereas He is their Creator ; they have also invented for Him sons and daughters without having any knowledge,⁶⁸ whereas He is absolutely free from and exalted far above the things they say. He is the Originator of the heavens and the earth : how should He have a son, when He has no consort ? He has created each and everything and He has the knowledge of each and everything. This is, then, your Allah, your Lord ; there is no deity but Allah ; He is the Creator of everything : so worship Him alone, for He is the Guardian of all things. No sight can comprehend Him but He comprehends all sorts of sight, for He is All-Comprehensive and All-Aware.

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Behold : Lights of discernment have come to you from your Lord : now, whoso makes use of his sight, he will do so to his own good, and whoso behaves like a blind person will do so to his own harm ; I am not a keeper over you.⁶⁹

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Thus We state Our Revelations over and over again in different ways so that the disbelievers might say, "You have learnt these not from Allah but from some one else ;" and so that We may make the Reality plain to those who have

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knowledge.⁷⁰ Therefore, O Muhammad, go on following what has been sent down to you from your Lord, for there is no deity besides that One Lord, and leave these *mushriks* alone. Had Allah willed (He Himself could have so arranged that), they would not have committed *shirk*. And We have not appointed you a keeper over them, nor have you been made their guardian.⁷¹ And (O Believers), do not revile those whom they invoke besides Allah lest they should, in their ignorance, revile Allah⁷² (besides committing *shirk*). We have thus made the deeds of every people seem fair to them.⁷³ Ultimately they shall have to return to their Lord; then He will let them know what they have been doing.

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the good sense to understand that Guidance and the capability to apply its principles to the affairs of life and the God-given ability to form correct opinions about the problems of life. (3) Prophethood—the office of guiding the people in accordance with the Guidance.

58. It means that it does not matter at all, if these disbelievers and *mushriks* have rejected the Guidance of Allah. We have raised a Community of the Believers, who appreciate fully the worth of this blessing.

59. The context, in which the words, "Allah has not sent down anything to any man," occur and their refutation clearly show that these were the words of the Jews. They uttered these words when the disbelievers and the *mushriks* of Arabia asked them, "Tell us whether the Word of Allah has really been sent down to this man, Muhammad." This question had arisen because the Holy Prophet claimed, "I am a Prophet and the Book is being sent down to me." The Quraish and *mushrik* Arabs turned to the Jews because they possessed the Book and believed in Prophets and could speak with authority. Therefore, their answer provided the opponents with a strong weapon against Islam and they repeated the answer as an argument to dissuade the people from it. That is why their answer has been cited here and refuted.

Here a possible doubt should also be removed: How can a Jew, who believes that the Torah had been sent down by God, say, "Allah has not sent down anything to any man?" A little thinking will show that a person in his obduracy, often utters such things as are against his fundamental principles merely to refute his opponent. As the Jews were bent upon refuting his claim of Prophethood, they had been so blinded by their opposition to the Holy Prophet, that in denying his Prophethood they even denied the very office of Prophethood.

"Those people formed quite a wrong estimate of Allah " means that they committed a great error in evaluating His Powers and Wisdom. For the person who says, "Allah has not sent down the knowledge of the Truth and Guidance for life," makes either of the two wrong estimates : (1) He believes that Allah has no power to send down Revelation. (2) He under-rates the Wisdom of Allah in giving man intelligence and authority to exploit the resources of Nature without making any arrangement for his guidance and leaving him to act indiscriminately in this world.

60. This answer is meant for the Jews, who had furnished the disbelievers and the *mushriks* with the argument that "Allah has not sent down anything to any man . . ." It has particularly been pointed out that the Torah was sent down to Moses by Allah to refute their objection, for they themselves believed and could not deny that the Torah had been sent down to Moses by Allah. Thus it was by itself a refutation of their assertion that "Allah has not sent down anything to any man . . ." It also proved at least that the Word of God can be sent down to a man, as it had been sent down to Moses.

61. After showing in the preceding verse (91) that the Word of God can be sent down to a man and that it had actually been sent down to Moses, a man, the Qurān proceeds in this verse to prove that the Qurān, which has been sent down to Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), is actually the Word of God. Four things have been put forward as a proof thereof :

(1) It is a blessed Book : it presents the best principles for the welfare and true success of man ; it teaches the right creeds and inculcates all kinds of virtues and exhorts the people to follow a high standard of morality for leading a pure life. At the same time, it does not teach in any way whatsoever any vice—selfishness, narrow-mindedness, cruelty, obscenity and the like, which you have interpolated in abundance in your sacred Books.

(2) It does not present anything different from the Guidance contained in the former Scriptures : nay, it testifies the same thing that has been presented to them.

(3) This Book aims to fulfil that very object for which the former Books had been sent, that is, to shake up and rouse those people who had become forgetful of the noble object for which they had been created, and to warn them of the evil consequences of their wrong ways.

(4) The Message of this Book has not attracted those from among mankind who are the worshippers of this world and the slaves of their lusts, but only such people as are able to see the higher things of life beyond the bounds of their worldliness. Then the most obvious characteristic of the revolution that this Book has brought about in their lives is that they stand out conspicuously among the people

around them for their piety and God-worship. Is it possible for any book invented by an impostor, who has the audacity to say that it is from Allah, to produce such excellent results?

62. That is, "It is Allah who splits open the seed and the fruit-stone under ground and causes these to grow into plants or trees."

63. It means that Allah creates living creatures out of lifeless matter and discharges lifeless matter out of living creatures.

64. That is, "We have made clear the Signs which show conclusively that there is only One Allah and that none else has the attributes of Godhead, nor possesses such powers: therefore none else is entitled to any of the rights inherent in Godhead. However, those who lack knowledge cannot reach the Reality by means of these signs; only those who observe the phenomena of Nature in a rational way can attain this most precious wealth."

65. That is, "Allah has created the whole human race from one single being, Adam, who was the first man."

66. That is, "Men of understanding can find clear Signs of the Reality in the creation of the human race and in the different functions allotted to man and woman for its reproduction at the different stages of human life from birth to death. But those, who live like animals and hanker after the fulfilment of the lusts of the flesh, can see nothing worthwhile even in these Signs."

67. That is, in spite of these clear Signs, some people have set up as His partners some hidden beings that are merely the creations of their own imagination and whims. They have gone so far in their ignorance as to allot different powers and duties to them in the management of the universe and in determining the destiny of man. For instance, one has been made the god of rain and another of vegetation; one is the goddess of wealth and another of disease and absurd things like these. Such "gods" are the imaginary beings that have been created by all the *mushrik* communities of the world under different names.

68. The ignorant Arabs called the angels "daughters" of God. Likewise some *mushrik* communities have invented even a genealogical tree of gods and goddesses descending from God.

69. In the sentence, "I am not a keeper over you," Allah is speaking in the first person on His Prophet's behalf. Just as the second person in the Quran denotes different people at different places, so the first person also denotes different beings at different places. As is well known, in some places, the second person is the Holy Prophet or the Believers or the people of the Book, and at other places it is the disbelievers or the *mushriks* or the Quraish or the Arabs or the human beings in general, though the Quran is meant to be the guidance for the whole of mankind. Likewise at some places, the first person is Allah Himself and at others it is the angel, the bearer of the Revelation, or

a group of angels, or the Prophets or the Believers, though, in every case, the Words are of Allah. However, one can determine the real "person" with the help of the Context. The meaning of the sentence, "I am not a keeper over you," is this: "My only duty is to present it before you. Then it is for you to open your eyes to see it or to keep your eyes shut like a blind man. It is not my duty to force open the eyes of those, who deliberately keep them shut and to make them see what they could not see."

70. The different ways of expression, in which the Revelation has been couched, are a test for the people, because they help to discriminate the counterfeit from the genuine. The same thing has already been stated in II : 26, in connection with the mention of insignificant things in the parables of the Qurān. Just as the mention of insignificant things helps the seekers in finding the Truth, in the same way the different ways of expression help those, who have knowledge and make use of it, to think deeply about their aims and objects and learn lessons for their own good. On the contrary, those people, who are bigoted, do not pay attention to the subject-matter, but begin to think on other lines. For instance, they begin to conjecture how this illiterate man can compose such excellent discourses. Thus, instead of judging the Qurān from its excellent themes to be the Revelation from Allah, they turn to every other possible source and say, "You have learnt this from such and such a one." Then in the "light" of this so-called successful "research" into the source of the Qurān, they conclude that it could not be the Book of God.

71. It means this: "You have been appointed to invite the people to the Message and not to keep watch over them like a police inspector. Therefore your only duty is to present the Message to the people and try to convince them of the Truth. After that, I leave it to them to accept the Truth or to reject it. You have not been appointed to force the people to accept it so as to leave no worshipper of falsehood within the range of your Prophethood. Therefore you should not worry yourself and try to make them open their eyes which they have deliberately shut. If Allah had, in His Wisdom, willed that there should remain no worshipper of falsehood, He would not have entrusted you with this task. He could have made each and every human being a follower of the Truth, merely by a single word of His Command. But this is not at all the object of the creation of man. The real object is that man be granted the freedom of choice between the Truth and falsehood. And then by presenting the light of the Truth before him, he be tested which one of the two he chooses. Now the right course for you is to follow the Right Way yourself and invite others to follow it. Then you should make those, who accept it, your friends and should not forsake them in any case, even though they

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يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِن جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لَيُؤْمِنُنَّ
بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعِرُكُمْ أَنَّهَا إِذَا جَاءَتْ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَنُقَلِّبُ أَفْئِدَتَهُمْ وَأَبْصَارَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ
وَنَذَرُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

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ع ١٠
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الجزء ٨

وَلَا يَكْفُرُ الْيَهُودُ بِاللَّهِ وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْفِيُّ وَحَسَنَتُهُمْ سَابِقُهُمْ كُلُّ

شَيْءٍ قَبْلًا مَا كَانُوا لَيُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ
يَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيْطِينِ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ
يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ زُخْرَفَ الْقَوْلِ عُرُورًا وَكَوْشَاءَ رَبِّكَ مَا
فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرُهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَلِتَصْغَى إِلَيْهِ أَفْئِدَةُ الَّذِينَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَلِيَرْضَوْهُ وَلِيَقْتَرِفُوا مَا هُمْ مُّقْتَرِفُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ أَفَعَيَّرَ اللَّهُ
أَبْتَنِي حَكَمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا وَالَّذِينَ أُتَيْتَهُمُ
الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنْزَلٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُتَسْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾
وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَإِنْ تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَن فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ
يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ إِنْ رَبُّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَن
يُضِلُّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ فَكُلُوا مِنَّمَا ذَكَرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ
عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ بِآيَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذَكَرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ
عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرَّرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ ۗ وَإِنْ
كَثِيرًا لَيُضِلُّونَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنْ رَبُّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

They declare with solemn oaths by Allah that if a Sign⁷⁴ comes before them, they will believe in it (your Prophethood). O Muhammad, tell them, "Allah alone can show Signs."⁷⁵ And, what will make you (O Muhammad) realize that, even if Signs come, they will not believe?⁷⁶ And We are turning away their hearts and eyes from the Truth because of that attitude of theirs which prompted them to disbelieve in the first instance,⁷⁷ so We leave them to wander about in their rebellion. Even if We had sent down the angels to them and made the dead to speak with them and ranged all the things of the world before them (as a proof thereof), they would still have not believed unless Allah willed that they should believe,⁷⁸ but most of them talk nonsense. And so it has always been that We set against every Prophet enemies from among satans of men and satans of jinns, who have been inspiring one another with charming things in order to delude the minds.⁷⁹ But, had your Lord willed so, they would never have done it.⁸⁰ So leave them alone to continue their false allegations. (We have been allowing them to do all this) so that the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter might be allured (by this charming delusion) and they be well pleased with it, and that they might earn the evils they wish to earn.—

This being so, should I seek a judge other than Allah, whereas He has sent down to you the Book with full details?⁸¹ And the people whom We gave the Book (before you) know that this Book has been sent down to you with Truth from your Lord ; so you should not be of those who have doubts.⁸² The Word of your Lord is perfect in regard to Truth and justice ; there is none who can make any change in His decrees, for He hears everything and knows everything.

And, O Muhammad, if you obey most of the dwellers of the earth, they will lead you astray from Allah's Way, for they follow nothing but guess-work and indulge in mere conjectures.⁸³ In fact, your Lord knows best those who have gone astray from His Way and also He knows those who are on the Right Path.

Then, you should eat the flesh of the animal over which Allah's name has been mentioned, if you sincerely

believe in His Revelations.⁸⁴ And why should you not eat that thing over which Allah's name has been mentioned, when He has already given you explicit knowledge of those things which have been declared to be unlawful for you, except in a case of extreme helplessness?⁸⁵ As regards the majority of the people, they, following their caprices, say misleading things without any knowledge. Your Lord knows very well these transgressors.

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might be very insignificant in the eyes of the worldly people. On the other hand, you should leave those alone who do not accept it and let them go to the evil end to which they themselves want to go and persist in doing so."

72. The followers of the Holy Prophet have been fore-warned to be on their guard against the use of abusive language in regard to the creeds or the leaders or the objects of worship of the non-Muslims. They have been advised to remain within proper limits when engaged in discussions and polemics with them and to refrain from reviling their sacred objects and persons, for such things will alienate them all the more from the Truth.

73. Allah has ascribed to Himself their wrong attitude towards their evil deeds : this is because everything that takes place in accordance with the Laws of Nature does, in fact, happen by the Command of Allah. (Please refer to E.N. 17). As He is the Author of all the Laws of Nature, everything happens by His Command : therefore, Allah says, "We have made the deeds of each people look fair to them." The human beings would, however, express the same thing, saying, "This has happened according to the Law of Nature."

74. Here "Sign" stands for such a tangible miracle seeing which they should have no alternative left but to acknowledge that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was a true Prophet appointed by Allah.

75. That is, "I have no power to bring about and present Signs for these are entirely in the power of Allah and He may or may not show them."

76. These words are addressed to those Muslims, who ardently wished (and sometimes expressed their wish) that such a Sign should be shown to their mis-guided brethren as might bring them to the Right Way. To this Allah has answered, "You should realize that they would not believe even if a Sign were shown to them, for this demand is merely a pretext for their disbelief."

77. That is, "There has been no change in their mentality since the first time they heard and rejected the Message of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) They are still following the same crooked

and perverted way of looking at the Message and, therefore, are unable to see and understand it rightly."

78. That is, "As they are going to reject falsehood and accept the Truth by making a free and deliberate choice, the only alternative left for making them follow it is that Allah should force it upon them. He should, therefore, change their nature so as to deprive them of the freedom of thought and freedom of action like other species which have not been made responsible for what they do. But this is against the wisdom of the object for which man has been created. You should not, therefore, expect that Allah would make them believers by His supernatural intervention."

79. Allah is consoling His Messenger, saying, "You should not worry at all about the united and active antagonism of the satans amongst men and jinns against your Mission. This is not a new thing that is happening to you for it has always been happening like this to the Messengers. Whenever a Messenger came to show the Right Way, all the satanic powers girded up their loins to make his Mission a failure."

"Charming things" are all those devices, schemes, suspicions, objections etc., that are employed by the satans to excite and incite the common people against the Message and the Messenger who invites them to the Truth. Then all these things have been called the means of deceit and delusion as a whole, for all the weapons that are used against the Truth are, in fact, deceptions for others and for the deceivers themselves, though they appear to be very useful and effective weapons.

80. We have already explained (E.N. 73) the fact of this matter, but the fine distinction between Allah's *مشیت* ("will") and His *رضا* ("approval") should also be kept in mind, otherwise there might arise very serious misunderstandings. It must be clearly understood that nothing whatsoever can ever happen without the "will" and permission of God, for no incident can happen, unless Allah makes room for it in His vast scheme and provides means for its happening. But it does not mean at all that for this reason, Allah approves of and is pleased with that incident. For instance, no thief can commit theft and no murderer can kill and no tyrant can be tyrannical and no breaker of peace can cause disorder and no unbeliever can disbelieve and no *mushrik* can commit *shirk*, etc., etc., without the "will" of Allah. Likewise, no believer can have Faith and no pious person can be pious unless it is the "will" of Allah, yet He is not pleased with the first kind of bad deeds, whereas He is pleased with and approves of and likes the second kind of good deeds. It is true that the "will" of Allah is working for an ultimate great good, but that can only come about by means of a conflict between light and darkness, good and bad, peace and disorder. Therefore, He allows, for the sake of His great designs, the necessary freedom both to the powers of obedience and to

those of disobedience, piety and sin, Prophethood and forces of evil, so that both might be allowed to perform the deeds of their own choice between good and bad and to those of His creatures (men and jinns) who have been delegated with a limited authority and the consequent responsibility. Everyone is free to make a choice of good deeds or of bad deeds for himself in this world. Both the good and the bad people are allowed to have the necessary means, as far as it suits and fits into the Divine Design, but only those who make a choice of good works merit His pleasure and approval, for Allah likes it, though He does not force His servants to make a choice of either good or bad. He allows them to make use of the freedom of choice that has been granted to them in any way they like.

In this connection, it will be worthwhile to understand why Allah mentions over and over again that it is by His "Will" that the enemies of the Truth have been allowed to carry on their nefarious activities. This is to impress upon the Holy Prophet, and through him on his followers, that the nature of their work is different from that of the angels, who carry out the Commands of Allah without meeting with any opposition. Their Mission, however, required that in their conflict with the wicked and rebellious people, they should exert their utmost to make the Way of Allah dominant over their ways. That is why it is the "Will" of Allah to allow such people as have deliberately chosen the way of rebellion against Allah to exert their worst in pursuance of their choice. Likewise He allows the Believers full opportunity to exert their utmost in the service of Allah that they have deliberately chosen. Though He is pleased with and gives His help and succour to the Believers and guides them to the Right Way because they do the deeds He likes them to do, yet they should not expect that Allah will force, by His supernatural intervention, the unbelievers to believe, if they do not want to believe by their free choice; or that He will remove by force from their way those satans amongst men and jinns who have deliberately chosen to use all the powers of their hearts and minds and bodies against the Truth in order to block its way. They should note it well that, if they sincerely intend to work for the cause of truth, virtue and righteousness, they will have to prove this by putting up hard struggle and exerting their utmost in their conflict with the worshippers of falsehood. If Allah had willed to demolish falsehood and make the Truth dominate by miracles, there was no need to entrust this work to the Believers, for in that case He Himself could have arranged the things so as to leave no satan in the world and no room for *shirk* and disbelief to make their appearance.

81. Obviously, in this sentence the 'speaker' is the Holy Prophet and the addressees are his followers, who desired that a Sign should be shown for the conversion of the disbelievers. They have been told that no Sign will be shown, for Allah had made all the realities plain

in the Qurān. As regards their conflict with falsehood, He has decreed that the followers of the Truth will have to exert for its domination in the natural way without expecting any supernatural intervention from Him. The Holy Prophet has, therefore, been asked to declare, "Should I, then, seek some authority higher than Allah to revise His decree and to send down such a miracle as should force them to believe?" (Please refer also to E.N. 76).

82. That is, "These principles, that have been laid down for the domination of the Truth, are not new ones which have been invented today to explain away the difficulties and obstacles of the Way. All those people, who possess the knowledge of the Book and are acquainted with the Mission of the Prophets, will bear testimony that this has always been the case with the former Prophets, who had also to struggle for the Truth in the face of opposition in the natural way."

83. The right thing for a seeker-after-truth is not to consider what way the majority of the people are following because that is based on guess-work instead of knowledge. Their beliefs, theories, philosophies, principles of life and laws are the result of guess-work and are, therefore, sure to mislead. In contrast to this, the way of life with which Allah is pleased, can only be that Way which has been taught by Allah Himself. Therefore, the seeker-after-truth should adopt that way and steadfastly follow it, even though he might be left alone on the Way of Allah.

84. Among the many wrong things which the people have adopted as religious laws without any Divine sanction are the restrictions they have imposed on the articles of food. That is why some people have made certain things lawful whereas they are unlawful, in the sight of God and certain other things unlawful, though Allah has declared them to be lawful. In this connection, it may also be noted that the most absurd thing on which some of the former people insisted and on which some of the modern people also insist, is that if Allah's name is pronounced at the slaughter of an animal, it is unlawful and if it is slaughtered without mentioning Allah's name over it, it is quite lawful. In this verse Allah has refuted such ideas and commanded the Muslims to discard all such whims and superstitions which have been invented by the unbelievers and the *mushriks* and break all such restrictions which the people have imposed on themselves against the Guidance of Allah, if they sincerely believe in it. They should, therefore, make unlawful only that which Allah has made unlawful and *vice versa*.

85. Please see vv. 114-116, *An-Nahl* Incidentally. this reference also shows that *An-Nahl* was revealed before *Al-An'am*.

وَذَرُّوا ظَاهِرَ الْأَشْيَاءِ وَبَاطِنَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ
 بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ
 لَفِسْقٌ وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لِيُوحِّوْنَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَٰهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ
 إِنَّكُمْ لَشُرَكَاءٌ لَهُمْ ﴿١٤٦﴾ أَوْ مَنْ كَانَ مِيثًا فَأَخْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَشِيءُ بِهِ
 فِي النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ
 لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا مُّجْرِمِيهَا
 لِيُنكَرُوا فِيهَا وَمَا يَمْكُرُونَ إِلَّا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ
 آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّىٰ نُؤْتَىٰ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ رُسُلُ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعْلَمُ
 حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَ
 عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ يَشْرَحْ
 صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ يَجْعَلْ صَدْرَهُ ضَيِّقًا حَرَجًا كَانُوا
 يَصْعَدُونَ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾
 وَهَذَا صِرَاطٌ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾
 لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ وَلِيُّهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ وَيَوْمَ
 يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَبِعًا يَمَعَشَرَ الْجِنِّ قَدْ اسْتَكْرَمْتُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ وَقَالَ
 أَوْلِيُّهُمْ مِنَ الْإِنْسِ رَبَّنَا اسْتَنْتِعْ بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ وَبَلَّغْنَا أَجَلَنَا الَّذِي
 أَجَلْتَ لَنَا قَالَ النَّارُ مَثْوَاكُمْ خُلْدِينَ فِيهَا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ
 حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نُوحِي بَعْضَ الظُّلَمِينَ بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾
 يَمَعَشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي وَ

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وقف منزلة

١٥٤

And refrain from open sins as well as secret sins : surely those who earn sin shall get the recompense of what they have earned. And do not eat the flesh of the animal over which Allah's name has not been mentioned at the time of slaughter ; this is indeed sinful. The satans put doubts and objections into the minds of their friends, so that they should dispute with you,⁸⁶ but if you obey them, you are surely *mushriks*.⁸⁷ 120-12

Can that person, who was first dead, and then We gave life⁸⁸ to him and bestowed upon him the light by which he is able to walk on the right way among the people, be regarded like the one who is blundering about in the various sorts of darkness⁸⁹ and will not come out of it ? Thus has been made seem fair⁹⁰ to the disbelievers what they are doing and thus We have placed in every habitation the ring-leaders of the wicked people to spread the snare of their vile schemes ; in fact, they themselves get entangled in the snare of their vile devices but they do not perceive it. 122-123

When a Revelation comes before them, they say, "We will not believe in it unless we are given the like of what has been given to the Messengers of Allah."⁹¹ Allah knows best whom to entrust with His Mission and how to get it conducted. Near is the time when these criminals ~~shall~~ meet with disgrace and grievous torture from Allah for the evil schemes they were devising. 124

So (the fact is that) whomever Allah wills to guide aright, He makes his breast wide open to Islam,⁹² and whomever He wills to let go astray, He makes his breast narrow and squeezes it so tightly that (at the very idea of Islam) he begins to feel as if his soul were climbing up towards the sky. Thus Allah sets the impurity (caused by their deviation from the Way of Islam) over those who do not believe, whereas this Way is the Straight Way of your Lord, and We have made its signs quite clear for those who are amenable to advice. There is abode of peace⁹³ for them with their Lord, and He is their Protector because of the good works they are doing. 125-127

On the Day when He will encircle and muster them all together, addressing the jinns,⁹⁴ He will say, "O race of 128-129

jinns, you have exploited fully the human race." And their associates from among the human race will answer, "Our Lord, we both have exploited each other fully,⁹⁵ and now we have reached the end of our term which You had fixed for us." Then Allah will say, "Well! now the Fire shall be your abode where you shall abide for ever." Only those, whom Allah will deliver, shall escape from it. No doubt your Lord is All-Wise, All-Knowing.⁹⁶ Behold, in this way We will make (in the Hereafter) the wrong doers the comrades of one another, because of what they earned (in the world with mutual co-operation).⁹⁷

86. This is with reference to the different kinds of doubts and objections with which the Jewish scholars used to poison the minds of ignorant Arabs against Islam. According to a tradition of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, one of the objections taught by the Jews against Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was this: How is it that the one killed by Allah (by natural death) should be unlawful, while the other killed by us (mentioning the name of Allah) should be lawful? This is an instance of the crooked attitude of these so-called people of the Book. They would invent and pose questions like this before the common people so as to poison their minds with doubts and to arm them with weapons to fight with the Truth.

87. It is also *shirk* to acknowledge the Godhead of Allah and at the same time to follow the decrees and ways of those who have turned away from Allah. The acknowledgement of the One-ness of Allah demands that one should obey Allah in all the aspects of one's life. So much so that if a person believes that someone else should also be obeyed along with Allah, he would be guilty of committing *shirk* in his creed. And if a person obeys such people as arrogate to themselves the authority of making things lawful and unlawful, in utter disregard of the Guidance of Allah, he would be guilty of practical *shirk*.

Now let us consider the connection in which vv. 118-121 occur in the context. In the preceding verses (116-117), the Muslims were warned through the Holy Prophet to guard against those who misled others by following and preaching their wrong ways which were based on guess-work and caprices. In this passage a very common and appropriate instance of the same has been cited to illustrate that abstract teaching.

88. Here "..... who was first dead" means, "..... who was first in a state of ignorance and lacked understanding;" likewise, "..... then (he) was given life" means "then he was given knowledge and understanding and was restored to that mental state which can recognise the Truth." And the fact is that one who cannot distinguish

between right and wrong and does not know the Right Way, might be regarded as alive from the physical point of view, but he does not enjoy that life which makes him a real human being. He is no doubt a living animal, but he is not a living man. A living man is only that person who can distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad, righteous and unrighteous.

89. That is, "How can you expect that a man, who has got real understanding of life and recognises clearly, by the light of knowledge, the Straight Way from among the countless crooked ways, would live a life like those who lack understanding and blunder blindly into the darkness of ignorance and folly?"

90. It is the Law of Allah that He makes their deeds seem fair to those who refuse to be guided by the Light which is offered to them and who prefer to tread on the crooked paths, even though they are invited to the Right Way. Then they begin to love darkness and like groping their way through it like the blind people and to be knocked about throughout their lives. Accordingly, every vice appears to them worth enjoying and every piece of folly to be a gem of wisdom. After the failure of such experiment that produces mischief, they get ready for another in the hope that the first failure was due to some "accidental" mistake that will be avoided in future experiments.

91. They mean to say, "We are not going to believe in the claim of the Messengers that an angel came to them with a Message from God, unless the angel comes to deliver the Message of Allah directly to us."

92. "He makes his breast wide open to Islam" means, "Allah makes him fully convinced of the truth of Islam by removing from his mind and heart every kind of doubt, suspicion, hesitation and indecision about Islam."

93. The "Abode of peace" is Heaven, the place of perfect peace and happiness, where the dwellers will be immune from every kind of calamity and misery.

94. Here by "jinns" are meant the "satans of jinns."

95. That is, "Every one of us made an unfair use of the other and cheated him for selfish ends."

96. As Allah is All-Wise and All-Knowing, both punishment and forgiveness will be based on wisdom and knowledge and, therefore, will be reasonable and just. Though He is All-Powerful and can punish and forgive anyone He wills, yet He will forgive only that wrong-doer, whom He knows not to be personally responsible for his crime and liable to punishment.

97. Such wicked persons who were accomplices in their sins and crimes in the world, shall also have their share of the punishment in the Hereafter.

[Contd. on p. 152]

يَذُرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا قَالُوا شَهِدْنَا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِنَا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ
الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾ ذَلِكَ أَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ
رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلُهَا غَفْلُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَ لِكُلِّ دَرَجَةٍ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا
وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَ رَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ إِن يَشَأْ
يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَخْلِفْ مِنْ بَعْدِكُمْ مَا يَشَأْ كَمَا أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنْ ذُرِّيَةِ
قَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِنَّ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لَأَيُّ لَاتٍ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾ قُلْ
يَقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ لِمَنْ تَكُونُ
لَهُ عَاقِبَةُ الدَّارِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَ جَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ
الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِرَعِيهِمْ وَهَذَا لِشُرَكَائِنَا
فَمَا كَانَ لِشُرَكَائِهِمْ فَلَا يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ إِلَى
شُرَكَائِهِمْ ۗ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ
قَتْلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ لِيُرِدُّوهُمْ وَلِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ ۗ وَ لَوْ
شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرَهُمْ وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَ قَالُوا هَذِهِ أَنْعَامٌ
وَ حَرْثٌ حِجْرٌ ۗ لَا يَطْعَمُهَا إِلَّا مَنْ نَشَأَ بِرَعِيهِمْ وَ أَنْعَامٌ حُرِّمَتْ
ظُهُورُهَا وَ أَنْعَامٌ ۗ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا افْتِرَاءً عَلَيْهِ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَ قَالُوا مَا فِي بُطُونِ هَذِهِ الْأَنْعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ
لِذِكْرِنَا وَ مَحْرَمٌ عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِنَا ۗ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِثَّةً فَهَمَّ فِيهِ شُرَكَاءُ
سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصَفَّهُمْ ۗ إِنَّهُ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَدْ خَيْرَ الَّذِينَ قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ
سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَ حَرَّمُوا مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ افْتِرَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا

(On that occasion Allah will ask them this question 130-131 also :) "O race of jinns and O mankind, did not the Messengers come to you from among yourselves and recite My Revelations to you and warn you of the consequences you shall meet with on this Day?" They will reply, "Yes, they did. We bear witness against ourselves."⁹⁸ Today this worldly life has deluded them, but at the time, they themselves will bear witness against their selves that they were disbelievers.⁹⁹ (This testimony will be taken from them in order to prove that) your Lord would not destroy the habitations unjustly, while their dwellers were ignorant of the Reality.¹⁰⁰

The grade of everyone (for recompense) is determined 132-135 in accordance with one's deeds : and your Lord is not unaware of the deeds of the people. Your Lord is All-Sufficient and is full of compassion.¹⁰¹ If He will, He may remove you and replace you by whomever He will, just as He has raised you from the offspring of other people. Indeed, the thing which you were promised shall most surely come ;¹⁰² and you have no power to frustrate Allah. O Muhammad, say, "O people, you may do whatever you like in your own way and I am doing whatever I deem right ;¹⁰³ but you shall soon know who comes out successful in the end ; anyhow the fact is that the workers of iniquity can never attain true success."

And these people¹⁰⁴ have assigned a portion to Allah 136 out of the tillage and the cattle He Himself has created, and say, "This is for Allah,"—so presume they—"and this is for the partners¹⁰⁵ we have set up with Him." Then the portion assigned to the partners of their own making does not reach Allah, but that assigned to Allah reaches the partners set up by them.¹⁰⁶ What evil decisions they make !

And likewise those whom the *mushriks* believe to have 137 a share in Allah's Godhead have made the killing of their own children seem fair to them¹⁰⁷ in order to lead them to ruin¹⁰⁸ and confuse them in their religion.¹⁰⁹ Had Allah willed, they would not have done so ; therefore, leave them busy in their false accusations.¹¹⁰

They say, these cattle and these crops are reserved ; 138

only those people can eat them whom we will to do so. In fact, this is a restriction they themselves have imposed.¹¹¹ Then there are some animals which have been forbidden for riding and carrying loads, and there are still other animals over which they do not pronounce the name of Allah.¹¹² They have falsely attributed all these things to Him ;¹¹³ before long Allah will recompense them for all that they have falsely attributed to Him.

And they say, "Whatever is within the bellies of these cattle is reserved for our males and forbidden to our females, but if it is dead, both may partake of it."¹¹⁴ Allah will surely recompense them for the things they have fabricated ; indeed, He is All-Wise, All-Knowing.

Contd. from p. 149]

98. That is, "We confess that one Messenger after the other came from You and informed us of the Truth but it was our own fault that we did not believe in what they said."

99. They themselves would confess that they were not ignorant of the Truth : it did reach them but they deliberately rejected it.

100. It means that Allah does not desire to allow the guilty ones the opportunity to protest and say, "You did not inform us of the Truth, nor did You send anyone to show us the Right Way. But now when, in our ignorance we have adopted the wrong way, You are going to punish us for it." In order to refute this argument, Allah sent down His Messengers and Books to fore-warn mankind and jinns, prior to the execution of His Judgements. If, in spite of this, people choose wrong ways and are punished for this, they themselves are to blame and not Allah.

101. "Your Lord is All-Sufficient," that is, "He does not stand in need of any kind of help from you, nor does He need anyone to look after His interests. Therefore, you can do Him no harm by your disobedience, nor can you do Him any good by your obedience. Even if all of you rebel against Him, you cannot detract an iota from His Kingdom ; nor can you add an iota to it, if all of you obey Him and worship Him. He needs neither your obedience nor your offering. As a matter of fact, He is showering His countless blessings on you without desiring anything in return from you."

In the context in which the sentence, "He is All-Compassionate", occurs, it implies two things : First, "It is only out of compassion for you that Allah is showing you the Right Way and not for His own interest. It will not serve any interest of His if you follow the Right Way and keep away from the wrong ways : nor will it do Him any harm, if you swerve from it. As a matter of fact, you will be serving

your own interest and avoiding harm to yourselves by following it. Therefore, it is His kindness that He teaches you the right conduct to enable you to attain higher ranks and refrains you from wrong behaviour that will throw you to the lowest depths of degeneration." Second, "Your Lord is not ruthless and does not enjoy punishing you for trifling offences and errors. As a matter of fact, He is very kind and sympathetic to all His creatures and rules over them with great compassion. That is why He forgives and forbears your shortcomings over and over again and shows compassion and leniency to you even though you become guilty of disobedience, sins and crimes. You impudently discard His Commandments, knowing well that He is your Providence ; yet He forgives and forbears and gives you respite over and over again so that you may understand the Reality and mend your ways. Had He been ruthless He could have destroyed you instantly and raised up other people to replace you, or He could have destroyed the whole human race and created some new species."

102. That is, "Resurrection," when all human beings from the first to the last, shall be brought back to life and presented before their Lord for the final judgement.

103. That is, "If you do not take warning from Me and give up your wrong ways, then you may go on following the ways of your choice, and let me follow my way. Ultimately both you and I will see the consequences."

104. The preceding discourse ended with these words (v. 135) : "If these people are not willing to accept your Admonition and insist on their ignorance, tell them to act in their own way and that you will act according to your own way. The Day of Judgement will surely come one day and they will know the consequences of their conduct. Anyhow, this is certain that the workers of iniquity will not be successful there." Now from here (vv. 136-146), instances of their ignorance are being cited to tell them what their iniquity was in which they persisted and which would not lead them to success.

105. They assigned a portion of the agricultural produce to Allah as a mark of their gratitude because they believed that all land belonged to Allah Who caused the crops to grow ; likewise they set apart for Allah a portion of the animals which were of great use to them because He was their Creator as well. But at the same time, they also assigned a portion as offerings to the gods of their family or clan, represented by their idols, for they believed that Allah showed His kindness to them, because their gods, goddesses, angels, jinns, stars and the souls of their dead ancestors interceded with God in their behalf. They also expected that in this way they would continue their kindness to them. That is why Allah is first of all taking them to task for the iniquity they were committing, so as to say, "It is sheer ingratitude that you are making offerings to others of the things that I have

created and given you with My own mercy and grace. How is it, then, that you are making others partners in the offerings of your gratitude to Me? Do you think that I give these things to you because of the intercession of others?" Then by implication, Allah has rebuked them for dividing the shares between Him and the partners set up by them with Him in accordance with their own presumptions. This is because they have become their own law-makers and assign to Allah and to others whatever share they deem proper, when, in fact, Allah is the real giver of everything. Therefore He should be acknowledged as the Law-giver and the portion to be assigned to Him in gratitude should be determined by His Law, which should also decide the titles and the shares of the other rightful claimants to it. It is thus clear that even that share, which they arbitrarily set apart for Allah and distribute to the poor and indigent, does not merit any worth and there is no reason why it should be accepted by Allah.

106. This implies a fine sarcasm. They have been rebuked for the evil practices to which they resorted in order to reduce even that portion which they themselves ear-marked for Allah, so as to increase the portion set apart for their gods. This showed that they were far more interested in the shares of their self-made gods. For instance, they would not mind if any fruit or grain out of the share assigned to Allah happened to go to the other side, but would return it, if anything happened to go to the share of Allah from the share of their gods. Besides this, in case of drought, if they were forced to make use of the consecrated grain, they would use the share ear-marked for Allah but would not touch the share of their gods for fear lest any misfortune should befall them on account of its desecration. Moreover, if there happened to be a deficiency in the share of their gods, they would make it up from that of Allah's share, but in the reverse case, they would not take even the smallest thing from the share of their gods to make up the deficiency in Allah's share. Obviously they would invent very plausible excuses for this. For instance, they would say, "God is rich and can afford to forgo any decrease in His share, but the case of gods is different because they are not rich like Allah: therefore they inflict punishment even at the slightest decrease in their share."

The root cause of these practices was the different uses to which the two consecrated shares were put. Allah's share was given to the beggars, the indigent, the way-farers, the orphans etc., but the share consecrated to the gods went to the priests directly or indirectly when it was offered to the gods in their temples. That is why their selfish religious leaders had been, for centuries, impressing on their ignorant followers that there was no harm, if any decrease occurred in the share of Allah, but on no account should there be any decrease in the share of their gods, the beloved of God. On the other hand, it was rather commendable should their share continue to swell.

107. The word شركاء ("associates") has been used in a different sense from the one employed in verse 136. There it meant: "The associates set up with God and deities worshipped and made partners with Him in offerings." But here it means: "Those partners of theirs from human beings and satans, who had made the killing of their own children lawful and praiseworthy for them." In the preceding verse they were guilty of *shirk* because they associated others with Allah in His worship and devotion. Here they were guilty of *shirk* because they accepted others besides Allah as law-givers and made others besides Him as judges for deciding the lawful and the unlawful. According to Islam, a person who accepts any law made by anyone other than Allah as authoritative and follows it and considers himself subject to the limits prescribed by it, is guilty of making that being partner with Allah. Anyhow both of these things are *shirk*: one is guilty of *shirk* whether one gives the title of lord or god to those whom the offerings are consecrated or accepts and obeys laws made by any one other than Allah.

As regards the killing of their children, the Arabs committed this sin with three objects in view and the Qurān has condemned all the three:

(1) They killed their daughters in order to avoid the disgrace of having a son-in-law or they feared lest they should fall into the hands of the enemy during the clannish wars or they should become a means of disgrace for them in any other way.

(2) They killed their children for economic reasons. They feared lest the burden of their nourishment should become unbearable for them.

(3) They sacrificed their children at the altar of their gods to please them.

108. Here the word "ruin" is very meaningful. It implies moral "ruin." The killing of one's own children hardens the heart so much that the culprit becomes utterly pitiless and loses all the tender qualities of humanity, nay, even those of animals. It also causes the destruction of the human race; for it reduces the population of one's own nation and consequently of the world as a whole. Obviously, that nation which prevents the birth of its future supporters and builders of its civilization and heirs of its heritage or, itself kills its newborn children, most surely falls into the abyss of destruction. Above all, this inhuman cruelty to innocent children destroys all the chances of success in the life-after-death because such a one who kills his own humanity, nay, even his own animal instinct of love for offspring, and shows such enmity with the human race and with one's own nation, most surely incurs the most painful torture from Allah.

109. Their religious leaders, their chiefs and the elders of the

[Contd. on p. 158]

وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ جَنَّتٍ مَّعْرُوشَةٍ وَغَيْرِ
 مَّعْرُوشَةٍ وَالتَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أَكْلُهُ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ
 مُتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ ۗ كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَآتُوا حَقَّهُ
 يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ ۗ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَمِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ
 حَمُولَةٌ وَفَرَشَاتٌ ۗ كُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۗ
 إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٥٨﴾ ثَمِينَةٌ ۗ أَزْوَاجٌ ۗ مِنَ الضَّانِّ اثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ
 الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ ۗ قُلْ ءَالِدَاكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْاُنْثِيَيْنِ أَمَا اشْتَمَكَ عَلَيْهِ
 اِرْحَامُ الْاُنْثِيَيْنِ ۗ نَبِيُّنِي يَعْلَمُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ وَمِنَ الْاِبِلِ
 اِثْنَيْنِ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ اِثْنَيْنِ ۗ قُلْ ءَالِدَاكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْاُنْثِيَيْنِ أَمَا
 اشْتَمَكَ عَلَيْهِ اِرْحَامُ الْاُنْثِيَيْنِ ۗ اَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ اِذْ وَصَّيْتُكُمْ اللهُ
 بِهَذَا ۗ فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللهِ كَذِبًا لِيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ
 عِلْمٍ ۗ اِنَّ اللهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ قُلْ لَا اَجِدُ فِي مَا اُوْحِيَ اِلَيَّ
 مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ يَطْعَمُهُ اِلَّا اَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً اَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُوحًا
 اَوْ لَحْمَ خِنْزِيرٍ فَاِنَّهٗ رِجْسٌ اَوْ فِسْقًا اَهْلًا لِغَيْرِ اللهِ بِهِ ۗ فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ
 غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٦١﴾ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا
 حَرَمْنَا كُلَّ ذِي ظُفْرٍ ۗ وَمِنَ الْبَقَرِ وَالْغَنَمِ حَرَمْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ شَحُومَهُمَا
 اِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ ظُهُورُهُمَا اَوْ الْحَوَايَا اَوْ مَا اخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ ۗ ذَلِكَ جَزَيْنَاهُمْ
 بِبَغْيِهِمْ ۗ وَاِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ فَاِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقُلْ رَبُّكُمْ ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَّاسِعَةٍ
 لَا يُرَدُّ بَأْسُهٗ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ اَشْرَكُوا لَوْ

Most surely they became losers, who, in their folly and ignorance killed their own children, and made unlawful what Allah had provided them as sustenance falsely ascribing prohibitions to Allah. Surely they went astray and were not at all rightly guided.¹¹⁵ 140

It is Allah, Who has produced gardens of upright trees and vineyards¹¹⁶ and date-palm trees ; Who has made the crops grow, which yield different kinds of edibles ; Who has produced olive and pomegranate trees, whose fruits are similar in shape yet differing in taste. Eat of their fruits, when they bear fruit, and give away Allah's due at the harvest time, but do not transgress the limits, for Allah does not like the transgressors. And it is He Who has created from among the cattle, beasts of burden and beasts for riding, and also those whose flesh you eat and whose skins you use for making beds ;¹¹⁷ therefore eat of those provisions that Allah has given you and do not follow in the foot-steps of Satan for he is your open enemy.¹¹⁸ 141-14

Here are eight kinds of cattle—males and females. Take first a pair of the sheep family and a pair of the goat family, and O Muhammad, ask them, "Has He of these forbidden you (to partake of) the males or the females or the young ones that are in the wombs of the sheep and the goats ? Tell me with knowledge, if you are men of truth."¹¹⁹ Likewise take a pair of the camel family and a pair of the cow family and ask them, "Has He of these forbidden the males or the females or the young ones that are in the wombs of the she-camel and the cow ?"¹²⁰ Were you present at the time when Allah prescribed these prohibitory laws ? (If not), who can then be more wicked than the one, who invents a falsehood and ascribes it to Allah so that he should, without knowledge, mislead the people ? Indeed Allah does not show guidance to such transgressors as these. 143-14

O Muhammad, say to them, "I do not find in what has been revealed to me anything forbidden to an eater to eat except that it be carrion or the blood that has been shed or the flesh of swine, for it is unclean, or flesh of an animal that has become profane because of having been slaughtered in any other name than that of Allah.¹²¹ But if one 145-14

is forced in a case of certain helplessness (to eat any of these) without any intention of disobedience, and without transgressing the limit of absolute necessity, (he will find that) your Lord is Forgiving and Merciful." And We prohibited to those people, who had adopted Judaism, all animals with claws and the fat of oxen and goats except what is on their backs or their entrails or what is attached to their bones; this was the punishment We had inflicted on them for their rebellion.¹²² And We are telling the truth. Now if they disbelieve in you, say to them, "Your Lord has limitless mercy: but His punishment cannot be warded off from the criminals."¹²³

Contd. from p. 155]

clans and others who exercised any influence on them and who claimed to be the followers of Prophets Abraham and Isma'il, had been adding different creeds, rites and practices to the pure religion, taught by the Prophets and causing confusion in the minds of the people about it. Yet the common Arabs of the pre-Islamic period believed that they were following the religion of their Prophets. They were so confused by their associates that they imagined that the religion they were following was the chosen religion of Allah, though it had been utterly polluted. This was because no record of the real religion of the Prophets had been preserved in their traditions or history or in any other book and none could sift it from the additions and changes that had been made in it afterwards.

110. That is, "O Messenger, you need not worry about them, if, in spite of your admonitions, they insist on following the false ways they have invented. All this has come to pass because it is the will of God that they should be allowed to follow the way of their choice; otherwise they would not have been able to do what they are doing."

111. Here another self-made religious regulation of the *mushrik* Arabs has been refuted. They used to make vows to reserve certain cattle or the products of certain fields for some particular temple or saint or deity and had made set rules for their use. Accordingly, the right of the use of different kinds of offerings was reserved for a particular kind of people. Allah has declared these to be acts of *shirk* and warned them against these self-made laws, as if to say, "We will punish you for making vows concerning offerings to others from provisions provided by Us, because We have neither commanded you to make such vows nor prescribed restrictions for their use. All these things have been invented by the rebellious and arrogant people who shall be dealt with severely."

112. We learn from traditions that in certain forms of vows and offerings, it was not considered right to pronounce the name of Allah over cattle. It was also forbidden to ride on them during the Haj journey, because one has to pronounce the name of Allah during it : "I am present, O my Allah, I am present." Likewise, they insisted that Allah's name should not be mentioned while milching them or riding them or slaughtering them or eating them.

113. That is, "These regulations were not prescribed by Allah, but were the false inventions of their own. Nevertheless they were following these with the conviction that they had really been prescribed by Allah, though they had no authority from Allah for this thing. The only authority, they had, was that it had been the practice of their forefathers."

114. According to another article of the self-made law of the Arabs about the cattle, consecrated by vows and offerings, the males alone were allowed to eat of the flesh of the young ones born from their wombs and the females were forbidden to eat of it. However, if the young one was born dead or it died immediately after its birth, both the males and the females could partake of it.

115. That is, "Although those people, who invented these rituals and customs, were your forefathers, your religious leaders and your chiefs; yet the fact is that they were wrong and had gone astray. Also it is a fact that those ways were wrong and they cannot become right and sacred simply because these were invented by your forefathers and your religious leaders, who permitted the inhuman slaughter of one's own children, who made unlawful, without rhyme or reason, the pure provisions given by Allah and who introduced innovations in religion and ascribed them to Allah. They cannot be regarded as rightly guided by any stretch of imagination, even though they be your forefathers and leaders; they were certainly misguided and shall bear the consequences of their evil ways."

116. The original Arabic words *جنت معروشات* literally mean gardens of creepers, trellised, and has been translated into vineyards; *وغير معروشات* literally means gardens of plants that are un-trellised and has been translated into gardens of up-right trees.

117. The original Arabic word *فرشا* refers to animals (like sheep, etc.,) in the sense that they are of small size and almost touch the ground while they are moving about or in the sense that they are laid on the ground at the time of slaughter, or in these sense that beds are made of their skins and hair.

118. From the context in which this verse (142) occurs, it is obvious that Allah wills to impress three things : (1) "The gardens, the fields and the animals you possess, have all been bestowed by Allah, and none else has any share in this favour and, therefore, none else is entitled to any gratitude for this." (2) "As none else has any share in

this favour, these should be used in accordance with the Law of Allah, and none else has any right to prescribe limits for their use. Therefore the one who observes the rituals prescribed by any one other than Allah, transgresses the limits prescribed by Allah and follows the ways of Satan." (3) "All these things have been created by Allah for food and other uses for mankind and none has any right to make these unlawful without "knowledge." Therefore Allah does not approve of these restrictions that have been imposed on these things, as a result of superstitions and presumptions."

119. That is, "Your answer should be based on knowledge and not on mere presumptions nor on superstitions nor on the traditions of your forefathers."

120. The question whether some animals of the same family are lawful and others unlawful, has been posed with such a detail so that the absurdity of their superstitions may become obvious even to them. It is absurd on the face of it that the male of the same family should be lawful and the female unlawful, or conversely, the female should be lawful and the male unlawful, or the animal should be lawful, but the young one of the same be unlawful. This is such a nonsensical thing that no right thinking person, nay, no man in his senses, can imagine that Allah could ever impose such unreasonable restrictions. It should be noted that the method applied by the Qurān to show the absurdity of the superstitious practices of the Arabs can also be applied with equal force to expose the folly of the superstitious practices of the other nations of the world, which have imposed unreasonable restrictions on food and adopted inhuman indiscriminations against other human beings.

121. This subject has already been dealt with in v. 173, Al-Baqarah, and in v. 3, Al-Mā'idah, and will be further discussed in v. 115, An-Nahl.

There appears to be a little difference in the wording of this verse and that of v. 173, Al-Baqarah. In the latter verse it is merely 'blood' that is forbidden, but in this verse it is the 'blood' that has been shed, that is the blood that pours out, when an animal is wounded or slaughtered. The addition of the word *مَسْفُوح* *masfūh* (that has been shed) merely explains the nature of the 'blood' and does not make any difference in the "Commandment" itself. Likewise in v. 3, Al-Mā'idah, some other things besides these four have also been mentioned—the animals that have been strangled or beaten to death, or killed by a fall or mangled by a beast of prey. This, too, does not make any difference in the "Commandment" in the two verses, because this is an explanation which shows that the animals which are killed in that way should also be considered as "carrion."

Now let us consider the various opinions of the Jurists. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah were of the opinion that,

out of the animal food, only these four were unlawful and all others were lawful. But there are Traditions to the effect that the Holy Prophet prohibited other animals besides these four or held them in detestation, e.g., domestic donkeys and fanged beasts of prey and birds with claws. Therefore the jurists do not consider the prohibition to be confined to these four things only, but extend it to others; then there is also a difference of opinion among the jurists about the prohibition or otherwise of certain animals. For instance, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Mālik and Imām Shafi'ī declare the domestic donkey to be unlawful, but there are others who assert that the domestic donkey is lawful and say that it was prohibited by the Holy Prophet on one occasion only for some special reason. Besides this, the Ḥanafīs consider the carnivorous beasts and birds of prey and the animals that live on dead flesh to be absolutely unlawful, but according to Imām Mālik and Auzā'ī, the birds of prey are lawful and Laith considers the cat to be lawful. According to Imām Shafi'ī, only those carnivorous beasts are unlawful that (like the lion, the wolf, the tiger) attack man. According to 'Ikrimah, the crow and the badger are both lawful. Then according to the Ḥanafīs, all crawling creatures are unlawful, whereas Ibn Abī-Laila, Imām Mālik and Auzā'ī consider the snake to be lawful.

A careful and critical study of the above makes it quite clear that, in reality, only these four things mentioned in the Qurān are unlawful and that there are certain other animal foods that are detestable in various degrees. Therefore those things, which according to authentic Traditions were held in detestation by the Holy Prophet, are almost unlawful, but those things about which there is a difference of opinion among the jurists, their detestation is doubtful. As far as personal detestation of certain things by some people is concerned, the Islamic Law does not compel anyone to eat what one dislikes. The same applies to the detestation of certain things by some groups or nations. Conversely, the Law does not allow any person or community or nation to force others to consider as unlawful anything that they detest, or to prohibit its use to those who consider them as unlawful.

122. That certain things were made unlawful for them as punishment for their rebellion has been mentioned in the Qurān at three places :

(1) "All the articles of food, which are lawful in the Muhammadan Law, were also lawful for the children of Israel, except those which Israel had forbidden for himself before the Torah was sent down. Say to them, 'Bring the Torah and read out any passage from it (in support of your objection), if you are in the right,' (II : 93).

(2) "It is because of the criminal attitude of those who became Jews . . . that We had made unlawful many pure things which were formerly lawful for them". (IV : 160). *Contd. on p. 164*

شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ
 الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّى ذَاقُوا بَأْسَنَا قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ
 فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾ قُلْ
 فِي اللَّهِ الحُجَّةُ البَالِغَةُ فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨٩﴾ قُلْ هَلْ مِنْكُمْ
 شُهَدَاءُ كُمُ الَّذِينَ يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ هَذَا فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَلَا
 تَشْهَدُ مَعَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَالَّذِينَ لَا
 يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ
 رَبِّي عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَ بِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا
 أَوْلَادَكُمْ مِنْ إِمْلَاقٍ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الفَوَاحِشَ
 مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَنَ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا
 بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ وَصَّيْتُكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٩١﴾ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ
 إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا الكَيْلَ وَ الْبِيزَانَ
 بِالْقِسْطِ لَا تُكَلِّفْ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا قُلْتُمْ فَاعْدِلُوا وَلَوْ كَانَ
 ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَ يَعْهَدِ اللَّهُ أَوْفُوا ذَلِكَ وَصَّيْتُكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٩٢﴾
 وَأَنَّ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ
 عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ذَلِكَ وَصَّيْتُكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٩٣﴾ ثُمَّ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ
 تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ وَ تَفْصِيلًا لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَ هُدًى وَ رَحْمَةً
 لِعَلَّهُمْ يَلْقَاءُ رَبَّهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ وَ هَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مُبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ
 وَ اتَّقُوا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٩٥﴾ أَنْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ عَلَى طَائِفَتَيْنِ

(In reply to these things of yours) the *mushriks* will surely say, "Had Allah willed, neither we nor our forefathers would have committed *shirk*, nor would we have declared anything to be unlawful."¹²⁴ Likewise the people before them had treated the truth as falsehood by such (absurd) excuses until they tasted Our scourge. Say to them, "Have you any knowledge that you can put forward before Us in support thereof? You are following nothing but conjecture and making false presumptions." Then say, ("In contrast to your lame excuse,) Allah's argument is conclusive : had Allah so willed, He would have surely shown guidance to all of you."¹²⁵

Say to them, "Produce your witnesses who can testify that Allah has forbidden all this." But, even if they testify, you should not bear witness with them.¹²⁶ And you should never follow the desires of those, who have treated Our Revelations as false and who do not believe in the Hereafter and who set up others as equals with their Lord.

O Muhammad, say to them, "Come, I will recite what limits your Lord has set for you."¹²⁷ (He has enjoined :)

(1) That you should not set up anything as Partner with Him,¹²⁸

(2) and you should treat your parents kindly,¹²⁹

(3) and you should not kill your children for fear of poverty, for We provide sustenance for you and will provide sustenance for them also,

(4) and you should not go near indecent things¹³⁰ whether they be open or hidden,

(5) and you should not kill any living being whom Allah has forbidden to kill except by right.¹³¹

These are the things which He has enjoined on you: it may be you use your common sense.

And He has enjoined :

(6) that you should not go near the property of an orphan except in the best way,¹³² until he reaches his maturity,

(7) and you should use a full measure and a just balance. We charge one only with that much responsibility that one can bear,¹³³

(8) and whatever you say should be just, even though it is concerning your own relatives,

(9) and you should fulfil your Covenant with Allah.¹³⁴

Allah has enjoined these things on you so that you may follow the admonition.

(10) And Allah also enjoins : "This way alone is My Right Way ; therefore you should follow this Way and should not follow other ways lest they lead you astray from His Way.¹³⁵ This is what Allah has enjoined on you so that you may avoid crooked ways."

Then^{135a} (note this also that) We had given to Moses the Book to complete the blessing for those who adopted the righteous attitude ; it contained details about all important things, and was a perfect guidance and mercy. (And it had been given to the children of Israel so that) the people might believe in the (ultimate) meeting with their Lord.¹³⁶ And likewise now We have sent down this Book, which is a perfect blessing ; so follow this and adopt the God-fearing attitude so that mercy may be shown to you.

Contd. from p. 161]

(3) Here in this Sūrah, in verse 146.

From the above three verses, we conclude that the difference between the Muhammadan and the Jewish Laws in regard to the legality or otherwise of animal food is based on two things. First, centuries before the revelation of the Torah, Prophet Jacob (Israil) had given up the use of several things, and after him, his offspring also did the same. This went on for such a long time that the jurists of the Jewish Law began to believe that those things were unlawful in their religion. Accordingly they inserted the prohibition of those things in the Torah, the three of which were the camel, the hare and the coney. That is why the Torah and the existing Bible prohibit their eating. (Levit. 11 : 46 and Deut. 14 : 7). But, the open challenge of the Qurān to them to bring the Torah in proof thereof shows that the commandments referred to above did not exist in the Torah at that time and were inserted afterwards ; otherwise the Jews would have at once accepted the challenge of the Qurān and presented the Commandments thereof.

The second difference between the two laws was caused by the rebellious attitude of the Jews against the Divine Law. They became their own law-makers and made many things unlawful by their hair-splitting and Allah let them remain involved in that misunderstanding as a punishment. These things comprise two categories : (1) Animals

with claws such as the ostrich, the cuckoo, the swan etc., and (2) the fat of the cow and the goat etc. Afterwards both kinds of "prohibitions" were incorporated in the existing Torah. (Levit. 11 : 16-18, Dent. 14 : 15-17, Levit. 3 : 17, 7 : 22-23). But it is obvious from IV : 160 that at first these things were not unlawful in the Torah, but were made so after Prophet Jesus Christ. History bears witness to the fact that the existing Jewish Law was formulated by Rabbi Judas at the end of the second century of the Christian Era.

Now let us consider the objection that might arise regarding the above explanation. If these things were made unlawful in the manner explained above, why has, then, Allah used the word *حَرَمْنَا* ("We prohibited") here in verse 130 and in verse 160 in An-Nisa? In considering the objection, we should keep in mind the two ways in which things are made unlawful by Allah. (1) He prohibits a thing through a Messenger and a Book, and this is the blessing from Him. (2) He sets false religious law-givers and counterfeit law-makers over His rebellious servants and they declare pure things as unlawful. As such a 'prohibition' is the curse of God and a punishment from Him, it has been attributed to Him.

123. That is, "Your Lord has limitless Mercy and if even now you repent of your disobedience and adopt the right way of obedience, He will forgive you. But if you persist in your criminal and rebellious attitude, you should note it well that none will be able to ward off His wrath and punishment from you."

124. That is to say, "The *mushriks* will put forward the same old excuses to justify their crime and wrong conduct which have always been put forward by the criminals and wrong-doers of every age and say, 'It is the will of Allah that we should commit *shirk* and make some lawful things unlawful ; for, if Allah had not willed so, it would not have been possible for us to commit such acts. As we are doing these things in accordance with the will of Allah, we are doing the right thing. And if what we are doing is not right, Allah is to blame for it and not we. We are bound by the will of Allah to do what we are doing because anything other than this is beyond our power.'"

125. In order to understand the significance of this decisive answer to their lame excuse, let us analyse it : (1) It warns : "The 'will of God' has always been made an excuse by the criminals of all ages to justify their wicked acts and erroneous conduct. This misled them so much that they rejected the Truth and consequently met with ruin that overtakes those who fight against the Truth." (2) "The excuse which you are putting forward is not based on knowledge but conjecture and guess-work. The whole of your argument is based on hearsay about the will of Allah. You do not understand the meaning of 'the will of Allah' in regard to man. Therefore you wrongly believe that if a thief commits theft he is not to be regarded as a thief, be-

cause he had done this by 'the will of Allah.'—Its real meaning is this : Allah will open for a man whatever way he would choose for himself—the way of gratitude or ingratitude, guidance or deviation, obedience or disobedience. Then Allah will let the man do anything, good or bad, he chooses, and will provide for its fulfilment the means that fit in His vast universal designs. Therefore if you and your forefathers were allowed to commit *shirk* and declare lawful things unlawful under the will of Allah, they had to bear its consequences, for it does not mean that Allah approved of these things. Likewise you shall be responsible and accountable for your wrong choice and for your evil intentions and wicked deeds."

The last sentence, ". . . had Allah willed so, He would have shown guidance to all of you," settles the issue decisively. It implies : "Your argument, 'had Allah willed, we would not have committed *shirk*,' is incomplete. The complete thing will be this : 'Had Allah willed, He would have shown guidance to all of you'." In other words, "You yourselves do not intend to choose the right way, but you desire that Allah should make you inherently righteous like angels. You should, however, note it well, that Allah could have done so if He had willed. But this is not His will. Therefore He will let you go astray on the wrong way that you yourselves have chosen to follow."

126. That is, "If they understand the grave responsibility of bearing witness and realize that one should bear witness to that thing only of which one has knowledge, they will never testify that all their self-imposed restrictions on food, that are current among them and according to which such and such a one should not eat such and such a thing, have been prescribed by Allah. But if these people do not realize the responsibility of bearing witness and impudently give false evidence in the name of Allah, you should not associate yourself with their falsehood. As a matter of fact, the real object of challenging them to bear witness is to sort out the righteous people, if any, from among them, and not that you should accept their false testimony. It is expected that in response to the challenge to bear witness, those, who have any righteousness left in them, will consider very seriously whether the rituals they were following were really prescribed by Allah and if they find no proof that these were sent down by Allah, they will give them up."

127. That is, "The limits set by your Lord are not those which you have imposed on yourselves, but they are the following which Allah has set for the regulation of human life and which have always been the fundamental basis of all Divine Laws." (Please compare these precepts with those contained in chapter 20, Exodus).

128. One is guilty of *shirk* (setting up a partner with Allah), if (a) one sets up anyone else besides Allah as god, or if (b) one attributes to anyone else any of those attributes that naturally and exclusively

belong to Allah, or if (c) one sets up a partner with Allah in His powers, or (d) in His rights.

According to (a), all those creeds which set up partners with Allah in the essence of His Godhead shall be *shirk*, e.g., the creed of Trinity of the Christians, the creed of *mushrik* Arabs to believe the angels to be the daughters of God and to attribute "Godhead" to their gods and goddesses and the members of the royal families.

According to (b), all those, who believe that someone other than Allah also possesses one or some or all of the attributes which exclusively belong to Allah, shall be guilty of *shirk*. For instance, it will be *shirk* if one believes that someone knows all about everything including the "unseen" or hears everything or is completely free from each and every defect and weakness, and is infallible like Allah.

According to (c), one shall be guilty of *shirk*, if one believes that someone else besides Allah is able to wield any one or all of those powers that exclusively belong to Him. For instance, one shall be committing *shirk*, if one believes that someone else besides Allah can, in a supernatural way, benefit or harm or fulfil needs or help or protect or defend, or hear prayers or make or mar destinies or can set the limits of lawful or unlawful, proper or improper or prescribe laws (*shar'a*) for human life. These shall be *shirk* for all these things are the exclusive characteristics of Godhead.

It shall be *shirk* under (d) if one surrenders to anyone else any or all of those rights to which Allah alone is entitled. For instance, Allah alone has the right on mankind that they should stand with bound hands, bow and prostrate before Him, or they should make vows and give offerings in His name alone or make sacrifices as a mark of gratitude in acknowledgement of His greatness; He alone has the right that He should be invoked to ward off troubles etc. Likewise Allah alone is entitled to all forms of worship, devotion and glory and He alone has the right to be loved more than anyone or anything else and all other affections should be sacrificed for His love. He alone should be feared so that one would not dare displease or disobey Him openly and secretly. He alone has the right to be obeyed unconditionally and unreservedly; and His Guidance alone should be made the sole standard of judging right from wrong and none else should be obeyed except in accordance with the obedience of Allah. If ever one of these rights is surrendered to someone other than Allah, it will be setting that one as a partner with Him, whether that one is given the title of god or not.

129. "Kind treatment" includes respect and honour, obedience and the desire to please and serve parents etc., etc. This right of parents has been stated in the Qur'an at several places immediately after the rights of Allah. This is a clear proof that this right of parents is only next to the right of Allah and has priority over all human rights.

[Contd. on p. 170]

مِنْ قَبْلِنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا عَنْ دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَفِيلِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ أَوْ تَقُولُوا لَوْ أَنَّا أُنزِلَ
 عَلَيْنَا الْكِتَابُ لَكُنَّا أَهْدَىٰ مِنْهُمْ ۗ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَ
 هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ ۗ فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَصَدَفَ عَنْهَا
 سَنَجْزِي الَّذِينَ يَصْدِفُونَ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَصْدِفُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ أَوْ
 يَأْتِيَ بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ ۗ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا
 إِيْمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ أَمَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا خَيْرًا ۗ قُلِ
 انْتَضَرُوا إِنَّا مُنْتَظِرُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ فَتَقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِيعًا
 لَسْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ ۗ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا
 يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا ۗ وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ
 فَلَا يُجْزَىٰ إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ قُلِ إِنِّي هَدَيْتُ رَبِّي إِلَىٰ
 صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ۗ دِينًا قِيَمًا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ۗ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ
 الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ قُلِ إِنْ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ
 الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ ۗ وَبِذَلِكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾
 قُلِ أَعِدَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ رِيبًا ۗ وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۗ وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ
 نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا ۗ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۗ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
 فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ خَلِيفَ
 الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ
 إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ ۗ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٥٤﴾

Now you cannot say, "The Book was sent down to the two 156-158
Communities before us,¹³⁷ and we were unaware of what they
studied and taught." And now you cannot put forward even
this excuse: "If the Book had been sent down to us, we would
have proved ourselves more righteous than they." Now
that a clear proof, a Guidance and Blessing, has come to
you from your Lord, who can be more unjust than the one
who treats Our Revelations as false and turns away from
them?¹³⁸ We will inflict the severest torment on those who
turn away from Our Signs because of their aversion. Do
the people now wait that the angels should come down
before them or that your Lord may Himself come down or
that manifest Signs¹³⁹ of your Lord should appear? On the
Day when some clear Signs of your Lord will appear, his
faith shall not profit the man who did not believe before or
who, while professing to believe, did not do good deeds.¹⁴⁰
O Muhammad, say to them, "Well, you may wait if you
will: We, too, will wait."

You have nothing to do with those, who have split up 159-160
their religion and became sects.¹⁴¹ Their case rests with
Allah, and He Himself will let them know what they have
been doing. He, who will bring a good deed before Allah,
will receive a tenfold reward for it, and he, who will bring
an evil deed, shall receive only that much punishment
which he deserves, and no one will be treated unjustly.

O Muhammad, say, "As for me, my Lord has most 161-165
certainly guided me on the Straight Way, the ever True
Faith, Abraham's Way,¹⁴² which he had adopted exclusive-
ly and whole heartedly and he was not of *mushriks*." And
declare, "My Ṣalāt and my rites of worship¹⁴³ and my life
and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the universe,
Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been
enjoined, and I am the first to surrender to Him." Say,
"Should I seek another Lord besides Allah when He is the
Lord of everything?¹⁴⁴ Every person is himself accountable
for what he earns, for no bearer of burden bears the burden
of another.¹⁴⁵ Ultimately you shall all have to return to
your Lord: then He will tell you the reality of that about
which you differ. It is He, Who has made you the vice-

gerents on the earth, and raised some of you above others in ranks so that He may test you in what He has given you.¹⁴⁰ Indeed your Lord is swift in inflicting punishment ; yet He is also very Forgiving and Merciful."

Contd from p. 167]

130. The Arabic word فواحش ("indecencies") applies to all kinds of impure acts, whose obscenity is absolutely obvious. The Qurān declares adultery, sodomy, nudism, calumny, marriage with father's wife as "indecencies." Besides these, theft, drinking and beggary are also included in the list of indecencies in the Traditions. Likewise, all other obscene acts are also indecencies and the Divine Commandment demands that such acts should not be committed openly or secretly.

131. This is the declaration of the sanctity of human life by Allah Who has made it inviolable as a basic principle. As regards its destruction "by right", the Qurān allows this in three cases and the Holy Prophet added two more to these. The Qurān makes it lawful to take the life of the one :

- (1) who is proved guilty of the intentional murder of another person, or
- (2) who opposes Islam and obstructs its establishment so as to leave no other alternative than to fight with him, or
- (3) who spreads disorder within the Islamic territory or exerts to overthrow the established Islamic government.

Besides these, the Holy Prophet has made it lawful to take the life of the one :

- (4) who, in spite of being married, is proved guilty of adultery, or
- (5) who becomes an apostate and deserts the Islamic Community.

These five are the only cases in which it becomes lawful to take human life and there is no other case besides these in which human life may be taken, be it that of a Muslim or of a Zimmi, or of an unbeliever.

132. "The best way" will be the one which is based on selflessness, good intentions and the welfare of the concerned orphan, and which is not objectionable in the sight of God or man.

133. This is a fundamental principle of the Divine Law : "You shall use full measure and a just balance." Allah has added, "We charge one . . . one can bear," to assure people that whoso tries his very best to be just and right in measuring, weighing and carrying out other trade transactions, he will be absolved of his responsibility and will not be taken to account, if in spite of his best efforts, there happens to be an unintentional error. It has been particularly mentioned here to reassure Muslims that they should not worry about such errors.

134. "Covenant" with Allah is (i) that solemn agreement which man makes with Allah, and (ii) that solemn pledge which he makes with another man in the name of Allah, and also (iii) the natural compact that comes into force as soon as one is born in the human society on Allah's earth.

The first two kinds of compacts are intentional and optional, but the third is a moral obligation. Though man has no option in the choice of the third compact, yet it is as binding as the first two and should be honoured as much. This is because Allah has given him life with extraordinary physical and mental faculties and furnished the earth for his habitation and provided nourishment, limitless resources etc., etc., for him. Naturally all this entails some right of Allah on him. Likewise it entails some rights of the mother who gives birth to and nourishes him and of the father who brings him up and of the society that affords him many kinds of facilities and opportunities. All these rights become, by their very nature, obligatory on him in varying degrees. It is true that this "Covenant" of man with God and society has not been written in any statute book, nevertheless it has been ingrained by Nature in each and every particle of his body, which itself owes its very existence to this Covenant. A reference to this has been made in II : 27 : "... who break Allah's Covenant after ratifying it : who cut asunder what Allah has ordered to be joined and who produce chaos on the earth." It has again been mentioned in VII : 172 to this effect : At the time of the creation of Adam, Allah brought forth all his would-be descendants up to the Last Day, from the loins of mankind, and made them stand witnesses to the Covenant that He is their Lord.

135. "... you should follow this way because this is the Right Way." The above mentioned "Natural Covenant" demands that man should follow the Way shown by Allah, because any deviation from it into the paths of rebellion or independence or in the worship of someone other than Allah will be the first violation against that Covenant, and will mislead one into other violations one after the other. Besides this no man can fulfil the obligation of this most delicate and vast and intricate Covenant unless one accepts the Divine Guidance and follows it in every aspect of life. "... you should not follow other ways" because they will turn you away from His Right Way which is the only Way which leads to His nearness, pleasure and approval. Moreover, when the people deviate from His High Way, each man has to make his own choice out of the hundreds of other ways. Thus all the people are scattered in all directions and there is bewilderment, confusion and disorder among all mankind and this becomes a hindrance in the way of all real progress and development (Please see also E.N 35, Al-Ma'idah.)

135a. A casual reader of the Qurān might be misled into imagining that "there is a very abrupt transition to Jewish history which indicates that a passage between this and the preceding verse is lost." And careful study of the preceding passage (vv. 145-153) will show that it is closely connected with it. That passage marks out the distinction between the Divine Law and the man-made laws. In vv. 146-48, the Jews and the *mushriks* have been rebuked for the laws made by themselves about the lawful and the unlawful, and in the succeeding verses the Divine Law has been enunciated to mark the distinction between the two. Then v. 154, in continuation of verse 153, declares that the same Divine Law was also given to Prophet Moses as has been given to Prophet Muhammad, "... therefore you should follow it ..."

As regards the word *ثم* (*thumma*), it does not always mean 'after that' or 'afterwards' which has given rise to the above-mentioned objection, but it is also used to resume a narration as in v. 154 and means 'note this also ...', especially in spoken Arabic. In this verse it means, "Then note this that Divine Law was sent down to Moses..."

136. "... to believe in meeting with one's Lord" means that one should believe that one shall have to render an account to one's Lord; therefore one should live a life of responsibility. Here it may imply that the Torah was sent (1) to produce a sense of responsibility among the Israelites themselves, and (2) to induce the other people to make a study of its high moral system of life, and to observe the noble effects of its guidance and blessing on those who adopted its teachings so that they may be convinced that a life of responsibility based on the belief in the life of the Hereafter is far better than an irresponsible life based on its rejection and this observation may convince them to believe in the Hereafter.

137. That is, "The Jews and the Christians."

138. Here "*Ayāt*" are Allah's Revelations presented in the Holy Qurān, and His Messenger's noble character and the pure lives of the Believers which clearly distinguished them from the unbelievers, and those wonderful phenomena of Nature which the Qurān puts forward as proofs of the truth of its Message.

139. "Manifest Signs" are the signs of the Day of Resurrection or some imminent scourge or some other Sign that may unveil the Reality in such a way as to leave no doubt about it and after which no more chance for test and trial might be left.

140. It means that if after seeing these "Manifest Signs" a disbeliever repents of his disbelief and professes faith, such a conversion of his shall be meaningless; likewise the one who professes to believe but adopts the way of disobedience, shall be deemed to have no faith at all, because Faith and Obedience can have any value only up to the time the reality remains hidden behind the curtain, and the prospect of a long life is ahead and the world with all its allurements

is deluding one that there is no Allah and no Hereafter and is tempting one with "Eat, drink and be merry."

141. Though this has been addressed to the Holy Prophet, yet all the followers of the True Religion are, through him, included in the address. It means that the righteous people should not follow the ways of those who became sects by causing divisions in the True Religion, which has always been the same and is the same today. Its basic principles are that (1) Allah alone is the Deity and the Lord of the whole Universe, (2) None should be set up as His equal or partner in His attributes or His powers or His rights, (3) There shall be the Other World, in which all human beings shall have to render the account of what they do in this world. It teaches that they should mould their lives in accordance with those broad fundamental principles that have been taught by Allah through His Messengers and Books. This is the True Religion that had been given to mankind from the very first day of Man's birth. As regards the different religions and sects that came into existence afterwards, they were the result of the changes that were made in the True Religion by different people at different times. Some of them added new things to it to show their "originality"; others made changes in it to suit their lusts; still others mixed things in it because of their exaggerated reverence. Then they tampered with its creed by mixing with it their whims, their speculations and their philosophies. They changed it also by adding to its Commandments their innovations and their self-made laws and by corrupting its regulations by hair-splitting and exaggerating the differences in its details and by rendering important things unimportant and *vice versa*. They went to two extremes: they adored some Prophets too much and hated and rejected others. In this way numerous new religions and new sects came into existence and divided humanity into fighting groups. Therefore it is essential for a follower of the True Religion to have nothing to do with any of these sects and to keep his own path clear of them.

142. "Abraham's Way": This is another distinctive characteristic of "the ever-True Faith." This has been given preference to "Moses' Way" or "Christ's Way" because the followers of Moses and Jesus had applied the misnomers of "Judaism" and "Christianity" to that "Way." Moreover, the term "Abraham's Way" has been used because both the Jews and the Christians acknowledged Abraham as a true Prophet. They also knew it well that he died long before the births of Judaism and Christianity. The Arab *mushriks* also could not deny that his "Way" was the Right Way, for they believed that he was a righteous man and in spite of their ignorance, they had to acknowledge that the founder of the Ka'abah was a pious worshipper of Allah and not an idolater.

143. The Arabic word *سك* ("rites of worship") may mean animal sacrifice and also all other forms of prayer or worship.

144. That is, "When, in fact, Allah is the Lord of everything in the universe, how can any other be my Lord? When I see that the whole of the universe submits to His Law and I, too, being a part of the universe, have to submit to Him in my physical life, how can then it be rational that I should seek another Lord for the guidance of that part of my life for the conduct of which I have been given common-sense and option?"

145. It means that everyone is responsible and accountable for one's own deeds and this responsibility can, on no account, be shifted from one to the other.

146. In this verse three realities have been stated ;

(1) It is a reality that each and every thing in the universe belongs to Allah and all human beings are His vicegerents on the earth in the sense that He has entrusted many of His things to them and delegated powers to exploit them.

(2) Allah has ascribed different ranks to His vicegerents in regard to trusts. He has entrusted some with a large number of His things, while others with a small number and endowed some with a greater capacity for work than others. Likewise there is a difference in the powers He has delegated to them : nay, He has even given powers to some human beings over other human beings.

(3) Lastly, He has made it quite clear that this worldly life is merely a test and all the above-mentioned things and powers that have been given as trusts are the means by which man is being tested. An accurate record is being kept of how each one is making use of his trust and how far one is exploiting these things in accordance with the terms of the trust and how one is using his abilities, capabilities, etc. The result of this test will determine man's rank in the Next World.

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