

## INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Al-Baqarah, 2

As the Opening Sūra sums up in seven beautiful verses the essence of the Qurān, so this Sūra sums up in 286 verses the whole teaching of the Qurān. It is a closely reasoned argument.

*Summary.*—It begins (verses 1-29) by classifying men into three broad categories, depending on how they receive Allah's message.

This leads to the story of the creation of man, the high destiny intended for him, his fall, and the hope held out to him (ii. 30-39).

Israel's story is then told according to their own records and traditions—what privileges they received and how they abused them (ii. 40-86), thus illustrating again as by a parable the general story of man.

In particular, reference is made to Moses and Jesus and their struggles with an unruly people: how the people of the Book played false with their own lights and in their pride rejected Muhammad, who came in the true line of Prophets (ii. 87-121).

They falsely laid claim to the virtues of Father Abraham: he was indeed a righteous Imam, but he was the progenitor of Ismā'il's line (Arabs) as well as of Israel's line, and he with Ismā'il built the Kā'ba (the House of Allah in Makkah) and purified it, thus establishing a common religion, of which Islam is the universal exponent (ii. 122-141).

The Kā'ba was now to be the centre of universal worship and the symbol of Islamic unity (ii. 142-167).

The Islamic *Ummat* (brotherhood) having thus been established with its definite centre and symbol, ordinances are laid down for the social life of the community, with the proviso (ii. 177) that righteousness does not consist in formalities, but in faith, kindness, prayer, charity, probity, and patience under suffering. The ordinances relate to food and drink, bequests, fasts, *Jihād*, wine and gambling, treatment of orphans and women, etc. (ii. 168-242).

Lest the subject of *Jihād* should be misunderstood, it is taken up again in the story of Saul, Goliath and David, in contrast to the story of Jesus (ii. 243-253).

And so the lesson is enforced that true virtue lies in practical deeds of manliness, kindness, and good faith (ii. 254-283), and Allah's nature<sup>24-A</sup> is called to mind in the sublime *Ayat-ul-Kursī*, the Verse of the Throne (ii. 255).

The Sūra ends with an exhortation to Faith, Obedience, a sense of Personal

---

24-A. By the expression "Allah's nature" it is meant: Allah's attributes.

Responsibility, and Prayer (ii. 284-286).

This is the longest Sūra of the Qur-ān, and in it occurs the longest verse (ii. 282). The name of the Sūra is from the Parable of the Heifer in ii. 67-71, which illustrates the insufficiency of carping obedience. When faith is lost, people put off obedience with various excuses: even when at last they obey in the letter, they fail in the spirit, which means that they get fossilized, and their self-sufficiency prevents them from seeing that spiritually they are not alive but dead. For life is movement, activity, striving, fighting, against baser things. And this is the burden of the Sūra.

This is in the main an early Madinah Sūra.

*Al-Baqarah*, or the Heifer.

*In the name of Allah, Most gracious,  
Most Merciful.*

1. A. L. M.<sup>25</sup>
2. This is the Book;  
In it is guidance sure, without  
doubt.  
To those who fear<sup>26</sup> Allah;
3. Who believe in the Unseen,  
Are steadfast in prayer,  
And spend out of what we  
Have provided for them;<sup>27</sup>
4. And who believe in the Revelation  
Sent to thee,  
And sent before thy time,  
And (in their hearts)  
Have the assurance of the  
Hereafter.<sup>28</sup>



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْأَعْدَاد

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَرَبِّ فِي هُدَىٰ لِتَنْتَقِيرَ

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيَقُولُونَ الصَّلَاةَ

وَمَارِزُّهُمْ سُفْقُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ مَا أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنْزِلَ

مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

25. These are abbreviated letters, the *Muqatta'at*, on which a general discussion will be found in Appendix I (to be printed at the end of this Sūra).

The particular letters, A.L.M., are found prefixed to this Sūra, and Sūras iii, xxix, xxx, xxxi and xxxii (six in all).

Much has been written about the meaning of these letters, but most of it is pure conjecture.

26. *Taqwā*, and the verbs and nouns connected with the root, signify: (1) the fear of Allah, which, according to the writer of Proverbs (i. 7) in the Old Testament, is the beginning of Wisdom; (2) restraint, or guarding one's tongue, hand, and heart from evil; (3) hence righteousness, piety, good conduct. All these ideas are implied: in the translation, only one or other of these ideas can be indicated, according to the context. See also xlvi. 17; and lxxiv. 56, n. 5808.

27. All bounties proceed from Allah. They may be physical gifts, e.g. food, clothing, houses, gardens, wealth, etc. or intangible gifts, e.g., influence, power, birth and the opportunities flowing from it, health, talents, etc. or spiritual gifts, e.g., insight into good and evil, understanding of men, the capacity for love, etc. We are to use all in humility and moderation. But we are also to give out of every one of them something that contributes to the well-being of others. We are to be neither ascetics nor luxurious sybarites, neither selfish misers nor thoughtless prodigals.

28. Righteousness comes from a secure faith, from sincere devotion to Allah, and from unselfish service to Man.

5. They are on (true guidance),  
From their Lord, and it is  
These who will prosper.<sup>29</sup>
6. As to those who reject Faith.<sup>30</sup>  
It is the same to them  
Whether thou warn them  
Or do not warn them;  
They will not believe.
7. Allah hath set a seal<sup>31</sup>  
On their hearts and on their  
hearing.  
And on their eyes is a veil;  
Great is the chastisement  
They (incur).<sup>32</sup>

## SECTION 2.

8. Of the people there are some  
who say:<sup>33</sup>  
“We believe in Allah and the Last  
day;”  
But they do not (really) believe.

أَوْلَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ هُنَّ أَنذَرُهُمْ أَنَّمَا نَنذِرُهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

خَسِّ اللَّهِ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَى  
أَبْصَارِهِمْ غَسْنَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ إِيمَانًا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالنَّيْرِ  
الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُم بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

29. Prosperity must be taken as referring to all the kinds of bounty which we discussed in the note to ii. 3 above. The right use of one kind leads to an increase in that and other kinds, and that is prosperity.

30. *Kafara*, *kufir*, *kafir*, and derivative forms of the word, imply a deliberate rejection of Faith as opposed to a mistaken idea of Allah or faith, which is not inconsistent with an earnest desire to see the truth. Where there is such desire, the grace and mercy of Allah gives guidance. But that guidance is not efficacious when it is deliberately rejected. The consequence of the rejection is that the spiritual faculties become dead or impervious to better influences. See also n. 93 to ii. 88.

31. All actions are referred to Allah. Therefore when we get the penalty of our deliberate sin, and our senses become impervious to good, the penalty is referred to the justice of Allah.

32. The penalty here is the opposite of the prosperity referred to in ii. 5. As we go down the path of sin, our penalty gathers momentum, just as goodness brings its own capacity for greater goodness.

33. We now come to a third class of people, the hypocrites. They are untrue to themselves, and therefore their hearts are diseased (ii. 10). The disease tends to spread, like all evil. They are curable but if they harden their hearts, they soon pass into the category of those who deliberately reject light.

9. Fain would they deceive  
Allah and those who believe,  
But they only deceive themselves,  
And realize (it) not!

10. In their hearts is a disease;  
And Allah has increased their  
disease:<sup>34</sup>  
And grievous is the chastisement  
They (incur),  
Because they lied (to themselves).

11. When it is said to them:  
“Make not mischief on the earth.”  
They say: “We are only ones  
That put things right.”

12. Of a surety, they are the ones  
Who make mischief,  
But they realize (it) not.<sup>35</sup>

13. When it is said to them:  
“Believe as the others believe:”  
They say: “Shall we believe  
As the fools believe?”—  
Nay, of a surety they are the fools,  
But they do not know.<sup>36</sup>

14. When they meet those who believe.<sup>37</sup>

يُخْدِلُهُنَّ أَنَّهُ اللَّهُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدِلُهُنَّ  
إِلَّا أَنفُسُهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ١

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَرَأَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا  
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْنِيُونَ ٢

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا  
إِنَّا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ٣

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ٤

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ عَامِنُوا كَمَا عَامَنَ النَّاسُ  
قَالُوا أَنَّوْنَمُ كَمَّا عَمِنَ السُّفَهَاءُ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ  
السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِنْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ٥

وَإِذَا قَوَأُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَالُوا أَمَّا وَإِذَا

34. The insincere man who thinks he can get the best of both worlds by compromising with good and evil only increases the disease of his heart, because he is not true to himself. Even the good which comes to him he can pervert to evil. So the rain which fills out the ear of corn or lends fragrance to the rose also lends strength to the thorn or adds strength to the poison of the deadly night-shade.

35. Much mischief is caused (sometimes unwittingly) by people who think that they have a mission of peace, when they have not even a true perception of right and wrong. By their blind arrogance they depress the good and encourage the evil.

36. This is another phase of the hypocrite and the cynic. “Faith,” he says, “is good enough to fools.” But his cynicism may be the greatest folly in the eyes of Allah.

37. A deeper phase of insincerity is actual duplicity. But it never pays in the end. If we compare such a man to a trader, he loses in the bargain.

They say: "We believe;"  
But when they are alone  
With their evil ones,  
They say: "We are really with you  
We (were) only jesting."

15. Allah will throw back  
Their mockery on them,  
And give them rope in  
Their trespasses;  
So they will wander like blind ones  
(To and fro).
16. These are they who have bartered  
Guidance for error:  
But their traffic is profitless,  
And they have lost true direction.
17. Their similitude is that of a man<sup>38</sup>  
Who kindled a fire;  
When it lighted all around him,  
Allah took away their light  
And left them in utter darkness.  
So they could not see.
18. Deaf, dumb, and blind,  
They will not return (to the path).
19. Or (another similitude)<sup>39</sup>  
Is that of a rain-laden cloud

خَلُوَإِلَى شَيْطَنِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعْكُمْ إِنَّمَا خَنَّ

مُشَتَّهٌ وَنَ

اللهُ يُشَتَّهِ بِهِمْ وَيَمْدُهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ

يَعْمَهُونَ

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَرُوا أَصْلَاهَ إِلَيْهِمْ فَمَا  
رَحِحَتْ بِخَدْرِهِمْ وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ

مَثَلُهُمْ كَشْلٌ الَّذِي أَسْتَوْدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا  
أَضَاءَتْ مَاحْوَلَهُ ذَهَبَ اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ  
وَرَكَّهُمْ فِي ظُلْمَتِ لَا يُبَصِّرُونَ

صُمُّ بَكْمٌ عُمَّى فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ

أَفَكَصَّبْرٍ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلْمَتٌ وَرَعْدٌ

38. The man wanted light: he only kindled a fire. It produced a blaze, and won the applause of all around. But it did not last long. When the flame went out as was inevitable, the darkness was worse than before. And they all lost their way. So hypocrisy, deception, arrogant compromise with evil, cynicism, or duplicity may win temporary applause. But the true light of faith and sincerity is wanting, and therefore it must mislead and ruin all concerned. In the consternation they cannot speak or hear each other, and of course they cannot see; so they end like the deliberate rejecters of Faith (ii. 7), wildly groping about, dumb, deaf and blind.

39. A wonderfully graphic and powerful simile applying to those who reject Faith. In their self-sufficiency they are undisturbed normally. But what happens when a great storm breaks over them? They cover their ears against thunder-claps, and the lightning =

From the sky: in it are zones  
Of darkness, and thunder and  
Lightning:  
They press their fingers in their ears  
To keep out the stunning  
thunder-clap,  
The while they are in terror of  
death.  
But Allah is ever round  
The rejecters of Faith!

20. The lightning all but snatches away  
Their sight: every time the light  
(Helps) them, they walk therein,  
And when the darkness grows on  
them,  
They stand still,  
And if Allah willed, He could take  
away  
Their faculty of hearing and seeing;  
For Allah hath power over all things.

## SECTION 3.

21. O ye people!  
Worship your Guardian Lord,  
Who created you  
And those who came before you  
That ye may become righteous,<sup>40</sup>

وَرِقٌ يَجْعَلُونَ أَصْنَعَهُمْ فِي مَا ذَاهَبُوهُمْ مِنَ الصَّوَاعِقِ  
حَذَرَ الْمَوْتُ وَاللَّهُ يُحِيطُ بِأَكْفَارِنَّ

يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطُفُ أَبْصَرَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ  
مَشَّا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا لِوَسَاءَ اللَّهُ  
لَذَهَبٌ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ  
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَغْبُدُوا رَبِّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ  
وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُونَ

= nearly blinds them. They are in mortal fear, but Allah encompasses them around—even them, for He at all times encompasses all. He gives them rope. In the intervals of deafening noise and blinding flashes, there are moments of steady light, and these creatures take advantage of them, but again they are plunged into darkness. Perhaps they curse; perhaps they think that the few moments of effective light are due to their own intelligence! How much wiser would they be if they humbled themselves and sought the light of Allah !

40. For Taqwā see ii. 2 n. 26. I connect this dependent clause with “worship” above, though it could be connected with “created.” According to my construction the argument will be as follows. Adoration is the act of the highest and humblest reverence and worship. When you get into that relationship with Allah. Who is your Creator and Guardian, your faith produces works of righteousness. It is a chance given you: will you take it? If you do, your whole nature will be transformed.

22. Who has made the earth your couch,  
And the heavens your canopy;  
And sent down rain from the  
heavens;  
And brought forth therewith  
Fruits for your sustenance;  
Then set not up rivals<sup>41</sup> unto Allah  
When ye know (the truth).

23. And if ye are in doubt  
As to what We have revealed  
From time to time to Our servant  
Then produce a Sūra  
Like thereunto;  
And call your witnesses or helpers  
(If there are any) besides Allah,  
If ye are truthful<sup>42</sup>.

24. But if ye cannot—  
And of a surely ye cannot—  
Then fear the Fire  
Whose fuel is Men and Stones,—  
Which is prepared for those  
Who reject Faith.<sup>43</sup>

25. But give glad tidings  
To those who believe  
And work righteousness,  
That their portion is Gardens.

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَشًا وَالسَّمَاوَاتِ بَنَاءً  
وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاوَاتِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الْأَثْرَاتِ  
رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا تَجْنَبُوا أَنَّهُ أَنَّدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ  
تَعْلَمُونَ

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مَتَازَّلَنَا عَلَى عَبْدِنَا فَأَنُوَا  
بِسُورَةٍ مِنْ مُثْلِهِ وَأَدْعُوكُمْ شَهَادَةَ كُمْ مِنْ دُونِ  
اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأَنْقُوا النَّارَ أَلَّى  
وَقُوْدُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أَعْدَتْ لِلْكُفَّارِ  
وَالْمُنْكَرُ

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ  
أَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَبَغِرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا أَلَانَهَرٌ

41. Further proofs of Allah's goodness to you are given in this verse. Your whole life, physical and spiritual, depends upon Him. The spiritual is figured by the Canopy of Heaven. The truth has been brought plainly before you. Will you still resist it and go after false gods, the creation of your own fancy? The false gods may be idols, superstitions, self, or even great or glorious things like Poetry, Art, or Science, when set up as rivals to Allah. They may be pride of race, pride of birth, pride of wealth or position, pride of power, pride of learning, or even spiritual pride.

42. How do we know that there is revelation, and that it is from Allah? Here is a concrete test. The Teacher of Allah's Truth has placed before you many Sūras. Can you produce one like it? If there is any one besides Allah, who can inspire spiritual truth in such noble language, produce your evidence. Or is it that your doubts are merely argumentative, refractory, against your own inner light, or conscience? All true revelation is itself a miracle, and stands on its own merits.

43. According to commentators the "Stones" mentioned in this verse refer to the idols which the polytheists worshipped. Thus, far from coming to the aid of their worshippers, the false gods would be a means of aggravating their torment.

Beneath which rivers flow.  
Every time they are fed  
With fruits therefrom,  
They say: "Why, this is  
What we were fed with before,"  
For they are given things in  
similitude;  
And they have therein  
Spouses purified<sup>44</sup>;  
And they abide therein (for ever).

26. Allah disdains not to use  
The similitude of things,  
Even of a gnat<sup>45</sup> as well as

كُلَّمَا رَزِقْنَا مِنْهَا مِنْ شَمْرَوْنَ زَفَاقَ الْوَأْنَوْا  
هَذَا الَّذِي رَزَقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِ وَأَتَوْيِهِ، مُتَشَبِّهًـا  
وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُنْ فِيهَا  
خَلِيلُونَ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَخِي إِنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَـا  
بَعْوَدَهُ فَمَا فَوَقَهَا إِنَّمَا الَّذِينَ ءامَنُوا

44. What can be more delightful than a Garden where you observe from a picturesque height a beautiful landscape round you,—rivers flowing with crystal water and fruit trees of which the choicest fruit is before you. The fruit of goodness is goodness, similar, but choicer in every degree of ascent. You think it is the same, but it is because of your past experiences and associations of memory.

45. The word gnat, a byword in the Arabic language for the weakest of creatures. In xxix. 41, which was revealed before this Sūra, the similitude of the Spider was used, and similarly in xxii. 73, there is the similitude of the Fly. For similitudes taken from magnificent forces of nature, expressed in exalted language, see ii. 19 above. To Allah all His creation has some special meaning appropriate to itself, and some of what we consider the lowest creatures have wonderful aptitudes, e.g., the spider or the fly. Parables like these may be an occasion of stumbling to those "who forsake the path"; in other words those who deliberately shut their eyes to Allah's Signs, and their Penalty is attributed to Allah. But lest there should be misunderstanding, it is immediately added that the stumbling and offence only occur as the result of the sinner's own choice of the wrong course. Verses 26 and 27 form one sentence and should be read together. "Forsaking the path" is defined in ii. 27; viz., breaking solemn covenants which the sinner's own soul had ratified, causing division among mankind, who were meant to be one brotherhood, and doing as much mischief as possible in the life on this earth, for the life beyond will be on another plane, where no rope will be given to evil.

The mention of the Covenant (ii. 27) has a particular and a general signification. The particular one has reference to the Jewish tradition that a Covenant was entered into with "Father Abraham" that in return for Allah's favours the seed of Abraham would serve Allah faithfully. But as a matter of fact a great part of Abraham's progeny were in constant spiritual rebellion against Allah, as is testified by their own Prophets and Preachers and by Muhammad Al-Muṣṭafā. The general signification is that a similar Covenant is entered into by every creature of Allah: for Allah's loving care, we at least owe him the fullest gratitude and willing obedience. The Sinner, before he darkens his own conscience, knows this, and yet he not only "forsakes the path" but resists the Grace of Allah which comes to save him. That is why his case becomes hopeless. But the loss is his own. He cannot spoil Allah's design. The good man is glad to retrace his steps from any lapses of which he may have been guilty, and in his case Allah's Message reclaims him with complete understanding.

Anything above it.  
 Those who believe know  
 That it is the truth from their Lord;  
 But those who reject Faith say:  
 "What Means Allah by this  
 similitude?"  
 By it He causes many to stray,  
 And many He leads into the right  
 path;  
 But He causes not to stray,  
 Except those who forsake  
 (the path),-

27. Those who break Allah's Covenant  
 After it is ratified,  
 And who sunder what Allah  
 Has ordered to be joined,  
 And do mischief on earth:  
 These cause loss (only) to  
 themselves.
28. How can ye reject<sup>46</sup>  
 The faith in Allah?—  
 Seeing that ye were without life,  
 And He gave you life;  
 Then will He cause you to die,  
 And will again bring you to life;  
 And again to Him will ye return.
29. It is He Who hath created for you  
 All things that are on earth;  
 Then He turned to the heaven

فَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ  
 كَفَرُوا فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا  
 مَثَلًا يُضُلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ  
 كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضُلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَسِيقُونَ

الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيقَاتِهِ  
 وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ حَانِ يُوَصَّلُ  
 وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ  
 الْخَسِرُونَ

كَيْفَ تَكُفُّرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ أُمَّةً  
 فَأَخْيَدُكُمْ ثُمَّ تُؤْمِنُكُمْ ثُمَّ تُخْيِكُمْ  
 ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَمُونَ

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا  
 ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسُوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ

46. In the preceding verses Allah has used various arguments. He has recalled His goodness (ii. 21-22); resolved doubts (ii. 23); plainly set forth the penalty of wrong-doing (ii. 24); given glad tidings (ii. 25); shown how misunderstandings arise from a deliberate rejection of the light and breach of the Covenant (ii. 26-27). Now (ii. 28-29) He pleads with His creatures and appeals to their own subjective feelings. He brought you into being. The mysteries of life and death are in His hands. When you die on this earth, that is not the end. You were of Him and you must return to Him. Look around you and realize your own dignity: it is from Him. The immeasurable depths of space above and around you may stagger you. They are part of His plan. What you have imagined as the seven firmaments (and any other scheme you may construct) bears witness to His design of order and perfection for His knowledge (unlike yours) is all-comprehending. And yet will you deliberately reject or obscure or deaden the faculty of Faith which has been put into you?

And made them into seven  
firmaments.  
And of all things  
He hath perfect knowledge.

## SECTION 4.

30. Behold, thy Lord said to the angels; "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said: "Wilt Thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood?—Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises And glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not"<sup>47</sup>
31. And He taught Adam the names<sup>48</sup> Of all things; then He placed them

سَمَوَاتٍ وَهُوَ يَكُلُّ شَفَقٍ وَعَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيقَةً قَالُوا أَنَّا بَحْتَرُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيُسْفِدُ كُلَّ الدِّيَمَاءِ وَنَحْنُ نُسَيْخُ حَمْدَكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

وَعَلِمَ مَادِمًا الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا شَمَ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْتُمْ شُوْفِيٰ بِأَسْمَاءَ هَؤُلَاءِ

47. It would seem that the angels, though holy and pure, and endued with power from Allah, yet represented only one side of Creation. We may imagine them without passion or emotion, of which the highest flower is love. If man was to be endued with emotions, those emotions could lead him to the highest and drag him to the lowest. The power of will or choosing would have to go with them, in order that man might steer his own bark. This power of will (when used aright) gave him to some extent a mastery over his own fortunes and over nature, thus bringing him nearer to the God-like nature, which has supreme mastery and will. We may suppose the angels had no independent wills of their own: their perfection in other ways reflected Allah's perfection but could not raise them to the dignity of vicegerency. The perfect vicegerent is he who has the power of initiative himself, but whose independent action always reflects perfectly the will of his Principal. The distinction is expressed by Shakespeare (Sonnet 94) in those fine lines: "They are the lords and owners of their faces. Others but stewards of their excellence." The angels in their one-sidedness saw only the mischief consequent on the misuse of the emotional nature by man; perhaps they also, being without emotions, did not understand the whole of Allah's nature, which gives and asks for love. In humility and true devotion to Allah, they remonstrate: we must not imagine the least tinge of jealousy, as they are without emotion. This mystery of love being above them, they are told that they do not know, and they acknowledge (in ii. 32 below) not their fault (for there is no question of fault) but their imperfection of knowledge. At the same time, the matter is brought home to them when the actual capacities of man are shown to them (ii. 31.33).

48. "The names of things:" according to commentators means the inner nature and qualities of things, and things here would include feelings. The particular qualities or feelings which were outside the nature of angels were put by Allah into the nature of man. Man was thus able to love and understand love, and thus plan and initiate, as becomes the =

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢١﴾

Before the angels, and said: "Tell  
Me  
The names of these if ye are right."

32. They said: "Glory to Thee: of  
knowledge

We have none, save what Thou  
Hast taught us: in truth it is Thou  
Who art perfect in knowledge and  
wisdom."

33. He said: "O Adam! tell them  
Their names." When he had told  
them their names,  
Allah said: "Did I not tell you  
That I know the secrets of heaven  
And earth, and I know what ye  
reveal.  
And what ye conceal?"

34. And behold, We said to the angels:  
"Bow down to Adam:" and they  
bowed down:  
Not so Iblis:<sup>49</sup> he refused and was  
haughty:  
He was of those who reject Faith.

35. And We said: "O Adam! dwell  
thou  
And thy wife in the Garden;<sup>50</sup>

فَالْأُولَاءِ سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَمْنَا إِنَّكَ

أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٢﴾

قَالَ يَقْدِمُ أَئِنَّهُمْ بِإِسْمَاهِمْ فَلَمَّا آتَاهُمْ

بِإِسْمَاهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقْلِمْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَغْنَمُ عَنِّيَّ

السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا بَدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ

تَكْنُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلِئَكَةَ اسْجُدُوا لِلْأَدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا

إِلَّا إِنَّلِيسَ أَبِي وَأَسْتَكَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ ﴿٢٤﴾

وَقُلْنَا يَقْدِمُ أَشْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكَلَّا مِنْهَا

= office of vicegerent. The angels acknowledged this. These things they could only know from the outside, but they had faith, or belief in the Unseen. And they knew that Allah saw all—what others see, what others do not see, what others may even wish to conceal. Man has many qualities which are latent or which he may wish to suppress or conceal, to his own detriment.

49. The Arabic may also be translated: "They bowed down, except Iblis." In that case Iblis (Satan) would be one of the angels. But the theory of fallen angels is not accepted in Muslim theology. In xviii, 50, Iblis is spoken of as a Jinn. We shall discuss later the meaning of this word.

50. Was the Garden of Eden a place on this earth? Obviously not. For, in verse 36 below, it was after the Fall that the sentence was pronounced: "On earth will be your dwelling-place." Before the Fall, we must suppose Man to be on another plane altogether—of felicity, innocence, trust, a spiritual existence, with the negation of enmity, want of faith, and all evil.

And eat of the bountiful things  
therein  
As (where and when) ye will; but  
approach not this tree,  
Or ye run into harm and  
transgression.<sup>51</sup>

36. Then did Satan<sup>52</sup> make them slip  
From the (Garden), and get them  
out  
Of the state (of felicity) in which  
They had been. And We said:  
“Get ye down, all (ye people<sup>53</sup>),  
With enmity between yourselves.  
On earth will be your dwelling  
place  
And your means of livelihood<sup>54</sup>—  
For a time”

37. Then learnt Adam from his Lord  
Certain words<sup>55</sup> and his Lord  
Turned towards him; for He  
Is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

رَعَدَ حَيْثُ شِنْتَمَا وَلَا نَفَرَ يَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ فَتَكُونَا  
مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

فَازَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَنُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا كَانَا فِيهِ  
وَقَنَا أَهْبِطُوا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَذَّرُوكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ  
مُسْتَهْرِرُونَ مُمْتَنَعُونَ

فَلَقِقَنَّ إِدْمُ وَمِنْ زَيْدِهِ كَلَّمَتِ قَنَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ  
النَّوَّابُ لِزَرْحِمٍ

51. “Zulm” in Arabic implies harm, wrong, injustice, or transgression, and may have reference to oneself; when the wrong is done to others it implies tyranny and oppression; the idea of wrong naturally connects itself with darkness, which is another shade of meaning carried with the root word.

52. The word Iblis in the verse 34 above is derived from the root idea of desperation or rebellion whereas “Satan” conveys the idea of perversity or enmity. Note the appropriateness of the term on each occasion. Also, “slipping” from the Garden denotes the idea of evil gradually tempting man from a higher to a lower state.

53. Note the transition in Arabic from the singular number in ii. 33. to the dual in ii. 35, and the plural here, which I have indicated in English by “All ye people.” Evidently Adam is the type of all mankind, and the sexes go together in all spiritual matters. Moreover, the expulsion applied to Adam, Eve, and Satan, and the Arabic plural is appropriate for any number greater than two.

54. Man’s sojourn in this lower state, where he is partly an animal of this earth, is for a time. But he must fulfil his lower duties also, for they too are a part of his spiritual training.

55. As “names” in verse 31 above is used for the “nature of things”, so “words” here mean “inspiration.” The Arabic word used for “learn” here implies some effort on his part, to which Allah’s Grace responded.

38. We said: "Get ye down all from here;

And if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me,<sup>56</sup> whosoever Follows My guidance, on them Shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

39. "But those who reject Faith And belie Our Signs, They shall be Companions of the Fire; They shall abide therein."<sup>57</sup>

## SECTION 5.

40. O Children of Israel! call to mind The (special) favour which I bestowed Upon you, and fulfil your Covenant<sup>58</sup>

قُلْنَا أَهِبْطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَكُمْ مُّنِي

هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبَعَ هُدًى إِلَّا فَلَا خُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزُنُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِمَا يَنْهَا أُولَئِكَ أَضَحَّبُ

أَنَارَّهُمْ فِيهَا خَلِيلُونَ

يَتَبَيَّنُ إِشْرَاعُهُ إِلَيْهِ أَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِي أَلَّيْتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ

وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أُوْفِيَتُكُمْ وَإِنَّمَا فَارَّهُوْنَ

The Arabic word for "Repentance" (*tauba*) means "turning," and the intensive word (*tauwâb*) for Allah's forgiveness ("Oft-Returning" or "Ever-Returning") is from the same root. For repentance, three things are necessary: the sinner must acknowledge his wrong; he must give it up; and he must resolve to eschew it for the future. Man's nature is weak, and he may have to return again and again for mercy. So long as he does it sincerely. Allah is Oft-Returning. Most Merciful. For His grace helps out the sinner's shortcomings.

56. Note the transition from the plural "We" at the beginning of the verse to the singular "Me" later in the same verse. Allah speaks of Himself usually in the first person plural "We": it is the plural of respect and honour and is used in human language in Royal proclamations and decrees. But where a special personal relationship is expressed the singular, "I" or "Me" is used Cf. xxvi. 51. etc.

In spite of Man's fall, and in consequence of it, assurance of guidance is given. In case man follows the guidance he is free from any fear for the present or the future, and any grief or sorrow for the past. The soul thus freed grows nearer to Allah.

57. As their rejection of faith was deliberate and definite, so the consequences must be a punishment of an abiding character.

58. The appeal is made to Israel subjectively in terms of their own tradition. You claim to be a favoured nation: have you forgotten My favours? You claim a special Covenant with Me: I have fulfilled My part of the Covenant by bringing you out of the land of bondage and giving you Canaan, the land "flowing with milk and honey": how have you fulfilled your part of the Covenant? Do you fear for your national existence? If you fear Me, nothing else will matter.

With Me and I shall fulfil My  
Covenant  
With you, and fear none but Me.

41. And believe in what I reveal,<sup>59</sup>  
Confirming the revelation  
Which is with you,  
And be not the first to reject  
Faith therein, nor sell My Signs  
For a small price; and fear Me,  
And Me alone.
42. And cover not Truth  
With falsehood, nor conceal  
The Truth when ye know  
(what it is).
43. And be steadfast in prayer:  
Give Zakat,  
And bow down your heads<sup>60</sup>  
With those who bow down  
(in worship).
44. Do ye enjoin right conduct  
On the people, and forget  
(To practise it) yourselves,  
And yet ye study the Scripture?  
Will ye not understand?
45. Nay, seek (Allah's) help  
With patient perseverance<sup>61</sup>

وَإِمْنَأْبِمَا أَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا  
تَكُونُوا أَوْرَلَ كَافِرِهِ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِإِيمَانِي شَيْئاً فَلِيَا  
وَإِنَّى فَانَّقُونَ

وَلَا تُلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَطْلِ  
وَتُكْنِمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكُورَةَ وَأَرْكَعُوا مَعَ  
الرَّكْعَيْنَ

فَإِنَّمَارُونَ النَّاسَ بِاللِّرِ وَتَسْنَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ  
وَأَنْتُمْ نَتْلُونَ الْكِتَبَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

وَأَسْتَعِنُو بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا كَبِيرَةٌ  
إِلَّا عَلَى الْمُتَّسِعِينَ

59. You received revelations before: now comes one confirming it: its first appeal should be to you: are you to be the first to reject it? And reject it for what? Allah's Signs are worth more than all your paltry considerations. And the standard of duty and righteousness is to be taken from Allah, and not from priests and customs.

60. The argument is still primarily addressed to the Jews, but is of universal application, as in all the teachings of the Qur-an. The chief feature of Jewish worship was and is the bowing of the head.

61. The Arabic word *Šabir* implies many shades of meaning, which it is impossible to comprehend in one English word. It implies (1) patience in the sense of being thorough, not hasty; (2) patient perseverance, constancy, steadfastness, firmness of purpose; (3) systematic as opposed to spasmodic or chance action; (4) a cheerful attitude of resignation and understanding in sorrow, defeat, or suffering, as opposed to murmuring or rebellion, but saved from mere passivity or listlessness, by the element of constancy or steadfastness.

And prayer:  
It is indeed hard, except  
To those who are humble.

46. Who bear in mind the certainty  
That they are to meet their Lord,  
And that they are to return to Him.

## SECTION 6.

47. O Children of Israel! call to mind  
The (special) favour which I  
bestowed  
Upon you,<sup>62</sup> and that I preferred  
you  
To all others.  
48. Then guard yourselves against a day  
When one soul shall not avail  
another  
Nor shall intercession be accepted  
for her,  
Nor shall compensation be taken  
from her.  
Nor shall any one be helped  
(from outside).<sup>63</sup>  
49. And remember, We delivered you  
From the people of Pharaoh: they  
set you  
Hard tasks and chastisement,  
slaughtered

الَّذِينَ يُطْهِنُونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلْقُو أَرْبَابِهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ

رَجِيعُونَ

يَتَبَّعُنِي إِنْرَاءٌ مَلَى أَذْكُرُوا يَغْتَمِي أَلَىٰ أَنْفَسُ عَيْنَكُنْ  
وَأَنِي فَصَلَّيْتُ عَلَى الْغَامِيْنَ

٤٧

وَأَنْقَوْا يَوْمًا لَا يَنْجِرِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ تَفْرِسِ شَيْئًا وَلَا  
يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَدَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا دَلْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ

يُنْصَرُونَ

وَإِذْ جَهَنَّمَ كُمْ مِنْ مَالِ فِرْعَوْنَ  
يَسْوُمُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُذَكِّرُونَ أَبْنَاءَ كُمْ

62. These words are recapitulated from ii. 40, which introduced a general account of Allah's favours to Israel; now we are introduced to a particular account of incidents in Israel's history. Each incident is introduced by the Arabic words "Iz," which is indicated in the translation by "Remember."

63. Before passing to particular incidents, the conclusion is stated. Be on your guard: do not think that special favours exempt you from the personal responsibility of each soul.

Your sons and let your women-folk live;<sup>64</sup>

Therein was a tremendous trial from your Lord.

50. And remember We divided The Sea for you and saved you And drowned Pharaoh's people Within your very sight.<sup>65</sup>

51. And remember We appointed Forty nights for Moses,<sup>66</sup> And in his absence ye took The calf (for worship), And ye did grievous wrong.

52. Even then We did forgive you,<sup>67</sup> There was a chance for you To be grateful.

وَيَسْتَخِيُونَ نَسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكُمْ بَلَاءً

٦٤ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ

وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ الْبَرْ قَاتَلْتُمْ كُمْ

وَأَغْرَقْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَشْهَدْنَاهُوْنَ

وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَى أَزْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ أَخْذَنَمْ

الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَشْهَدْنَاهُمُوْنَ

ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعْلَكُمْ

تَشْكِرُوْنَ

64. The bondage of Egypt was indeed a tremendous trial. Even the Egyptians' wish to spare the lives of Israel's females when the males were slaughtered, added to the bitterness of Israel. Their hatred was cruel, but their "love" was still more cruel. About the hard tasks, see Exod. i. 14: "They made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour." Pharaoh's taskmasters gave no straw, yet ordered the Israelites to make bricks without straw: Exod. v. 5-19. Pharaoh's decree was: "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive": Exod. i. 22. It was in consequence of this decree that Moses was hidden three months after he was born, and when he could be hidden no longer, he was put into an ark of bulrushes and cast into the Nile, where he was found by Pharaoh's daughter and wife (xxviii. 9), and adopted into the family: Exod. ii. 2-10 Cf. xx. 37-40. Thus Moses was brought up by the enemies of his people. He was chosen by Allah to deliver his people, and Allah's wisdom made the learning and experience and even cruelties of the Egyptian enemies themselves to contribute to the salvation of his people.

65. When the Israelites at last escaped from Egypt, they were pursued by Pharaoh and his host. By a miracle the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, but the host of Pharaoh was drowned: Exod. xiv. 5-31.

66. This was after the Ten Commandments and the Laws and Ordinances had been given on Mount Sinai: Moses was asked up into the Mount, and he was there forty days and forty nights: Exod. xxiv. 18. But the people got impatient of the delay, made a calf of melted gold, and offered worship and sacrifice to it: Exod. xxxii. 1-8.

67. Moses prayed for his people, and Allah forgave them. This is the language of the Qur-an. The Old Testament version is rougher: "The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people": Exod. xxxii. 14. The Muslim position has always been that the Jewish (and Christian) scriptures as they stand cannot be traced direct to

53. And remember We gave Moses the Scripture and the Criterion<sup>68</sup> (Between right and wrong), there was A chance for you to be guided aright

54. And remember Moses said To his people: "O my people! Ye have indeed wronged Yourselves by your worship of the calf: So turn (in repentance) to your Maker, And slay yourselves (the wrong-doers);<sup>69</sup> That will be better for you In the sight of your Maker." Then He turned towards you (in forgiveness): For He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

وَإِذْ أَتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَبَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهتَدُونَ

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَقُولُونَ إِنَّكُمْ طَلَقْنُتُمْ  
أَنفُسَكُمْ يَا تَخَادُوكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوا إِلَيَّ  
بَارِيْكُمْ فَأَقْتُلُو أَنفُسَكُمْ ذَلِكُمْ خَرْ لَكُمْ عِنْدَ  
بَارِيْكُمْ فَنَابَ عَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ النَّوَابُ الرَّحِيمُ

Moses or Jesus, but are later compilations. Modern scholarship and Higher Criticism has left no doubt on the subject. But the stories in these traditional books may be used in an appeal to those who use them: only they should be spiritualized, as they are here, and especially in ii. 54 below.

68. Allah's revelation, the expression of Allah's Will, is the true standard of right and wrong. It may be in a Book or in Allah's dealings in history. All these may be called His Signs or Miracles. In this passage some commentators take the Scripture and the Criterion (Furqān) to be identical. Others take them to be two distinct things: Scripture being the written Book and the Criterion being other Signs. I agree with the latter view. The word Furqān also occurs in xxi. 48 in connection with Moses and Aaron and in the first verse of Sūra xxv. as well as in its title, in connection with Muhammad. As Aaron received no Book, Furqān must mean the other Signs. Al-Muṣṭafa had both the Books and the other Signs: perhaps here too we take the other Signs as supplementing the Book. Cf. Wordsworth's "Arbiter undisturbed of right and wrong." (Prelude, Book 4).

69. Moses's speech may be construed literally, as translated, in which case it reproduces Exod. xxxii. 27-28 but in a much softened form, for the Old Testament says: "Go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour... and there fell of the people that day 3,000 men."

The word here translated Maker (*Būri*) has also in it a touch of the root-meaning of "liberator,"—an apt word as referring to the Israelites, who had just been liberated from bondage in Egypt.

55. And remember ye said:<sup>70</sup> "O Moses! We shall never believe in thee Until we see Allah manifestly," Thereupon thunderbolt Seized you.
56. Then We raised you up After your death; Ye had the chance To be grateful.
57. And We gave you the shade of clouds And sent down to you Manna<sup>71</sup> and quails, saying: "Eat of the good things We have provided for you:" (But they rebelled); To Us they did no harm, But they harmed their own selves
58. And remember We said: "Enter this town,<sup>72</sup> and eat

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ نَمُوسَى لَنْ تُؤْمِنَ لَكَ حَتَّى تَرَى اللَّهَ  
جَهَنَّمَ فَأَخَذْتُكُمُ الصَّيْعَةَ وَأَنْتُمْ

تَنْظُرُونَ ٦٦

ثُمَّ بَعْتَنَّكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَتَلَّكُمْ  
تَشْكُرُونَ ٦٧

وَظَلَّنَا عَيْتَكُمُ الْغَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَى  
وَأَسْنَوْيَ كُلُّا مِنْ طَبِيبَتِ مَارِزَقْتُكُمْ

وَمَاظَلَّمُونَا وَلِكِنْ كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ٦٨

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا أَذْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْمَرْيَةَ فَكَلُّوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ  
شِئْتُمْ رَغْدًا وَإِذْ خُلُوا أَبْتَابَ سَجَدًا وَقُولُوا

70. We have hitherto had instances from the Jewish traditional *Taurat* (or Pentateuch). Now we have some instances from Jewish traditions in the Talmud, or body of exposition in the Jewish theological schools. They are based on the Jewish scriptures, but add many marvellous details and homilies. As to seeing Allah, we have in Exod. xxxiii. 20: "And He said, Thou canst not see My face; for there shall no man see Me and live." The punishment for insisting on seeing Allah was therefore death; but those who rejected faith were forgiven, and yet they were ungrateful.

71. Manna = Hebrew, *Man-hu*: Arabic *Mā-huwa?* = What is it? In Exod. xvi. 14 it is described as "a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." It usually rotted if left over till next day; it melted in the hot sun; the amount necessary for each man was about an Omer, a Hebrew measure of capacity equal to about 2½ quarts. This is the Hebrew account, probably distorted by traditional exaggeration. The actual Manna found to this day in the Sinai region is a gummy saccharine secretion found on a species of Tamarisk. It is produced by the puncture of a species of insect like the cochineal, just as lac is produced by the puncture of the lac insect on certain trees in India. As to quails, large flights of them are driven by winds in the Eastern Mediterranean in certain seasons of the year, as War witnessed during the Great War of 1914-1918.

72. This probably refers to Shittim. It was the "town of acacias," just east of the Jordan, where the Israelites were guilty of debauchery and the worship of and sacrifices to false gods. (Num. xxv. 1-2, also 8-9); a terrible punishment ensued, including the plague, of which 24,000 died. The word which the transgressors changed may have been =

Of the plenty therein  
As ye wish; and enter  
The gate prostrating,  
And say: Forgive (us)  
We shall forgive you your faults  
And increase (the portion of)  
Those who do good."

59. But the transgressors  
Changed the word from that  
Which had been given them;  
So We sent on the transgressors  
A plague from heaven,  
For that they infringed  
(Our command) repeatedly.

## SECTION 7.

60. And remember Moses prayed  
For water for his people;  
We said: "Strike the rock  
With thy staff." Then gushed forth  
Therefrom twelve springs.  
Each group <sup>73</sup> knew its own place  
For water. So eat and drink  
Of the sustenance provided by Allah,  
And do no evil nor mischief  
On the (face of the) earth.

حَطَّةٌ تُنْفِرُكُمْ خَطَّبَنَا وَسَزَيْدٌ

الْمُخْسِنِينَ

﴿٦﴾

فَبَدَلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ

لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِنَ

السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُدُونَ

﴿٧﴾

﴿٨﴾ وَإِذَا سَتَقَ مُوسَى لِرَبِّهِ فَقُلْنَا أَضِرِّبْ

بِعَصَالَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْجَرَثَ مِنْهُ أَثْنَاعْشَرَةَ

عَيْنًا ثَدْعَلَةَ كُلُّ أَنَّاسٍ مَشْرِبُهُمْ كُلُّهُ

وَأَشْرِبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْنَوْا

أَلْأَرْضَ مُقْسِدِينَ

﴿٩﴾

= a pass-word. In the Arabic text it is "*Hittatun*" which implies humility and a prayer of forgiveness, a fitting emblem to distinguish them from their enemies. From this particular incident a more general lesson may be drawn: in the hour of triumph we are to behave humbly as in Allah's sight, and our conduct should be exemplary according to Allah's word: otherwise our arrogance will draw its own punishment.

These verses 58-59, may be compared with vii. 161-162. There are two verbal differences. Here (ii. 58) we have "enter the town" and in vii. 161 we have "dwell in this town." Again in ii. 59 here we have "infringed (Our command)," and in vii. 162, we have "transgressed." The verbal differences make no difference to the sense.

73. Here we have a reference to the tribal organization of the Jews, which played a great part in their forty years' march through the Arabian deserts (Num. i and ii) and their subsequent settlement in the land of Canaan (Josh. xiii. and xiv.). The twelve tribes were derived from the sons of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (soldier of Allah) after he had wrestled, says Jewish tradition, with Allah (Genesis xxxii. 28). Israel had twelve sons (Gen. xxxv. 22-26), including Levi and Joseph. The descendants of these

## 61. And remember ye said:

"O Moses! we cannot endure  
One kind of food (always);  
So beseech thy Lord for us  
To produce for us of what the earth  
Groweth,—its pot-herbs, and  
cucumbers,  
Its garlic, lentils, and onions."

He said: "Will ye exchange  
The better for the worse?  
Go ye down to any town,<sup>74</sup>  
And ye shall find what ye want!"

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَسْمُونَ لَنْ تَصِرُّ عَلَى طَعَامٍ وَاجِدِ  
فَادْعُ لِنَارَبَكَ يُخْرِجَ لَنَا مَا أَتَيْنَا الْأَرْضَ مِنْ  
بَقِيلَهَا وَقَاتِلَهَا وَفُومَهَا وَعَدَ سَهَا وَيَصِلَهَا  
قَالَ أَتَشَبَّهُوْنَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَذْنَى بِالَّذِي  
هُوَ حَيْدَرٌ أَفَيُطَوْا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ مَا سَأَلْتُمْ  
وَصَرِيبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَنْزَلُهُ وَالْمَسْكَنَهُ وَبَاءَهُ  
يَغْسِبُهُمْ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ

= twelve sons were the "Children of Israel." Levi's family got the priesthood and the care of the Tabernacle; they were exempted from military duties, for which the census was taken (Num. i. 47-53), and therefore from the distribution of Land in Canaan (Josh. xiv. 3); they were distributed among all the Tribes, and were really a privileged caste and not numbered among the Tribes; Moses and Aaron belonged to the house of Levi. On the other hand Joseph, on account of the high position to which he rose in Egypt as the Pharaoh's minister, was the progenitor of two tribes, one in the name of each of his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Thus there were twelve Tribes in all, as Levi was cut out and Joseph represented two tribes. Their having fixed stations and watering places in camp and fixed territorial areas later in the Promised Land prevented confusion and mutual jealousies and is pointed to as an evidence of the Providence of Allah acting through His Prophet Moses. Cf. also vii. 160.

The gushing of twelve springs from a rock evidently refers to a local tradition well known to Jews and Arabs in Al-Muṣṭafā's time. Near Horeb close to Mount Sinai, where the Law was given to Moses, is a huge mass of red granite, twelve feet high and about fifty feet in circumference, where European travellers (e.g., Breydenbach in the 15th Century after Christ) saw abundant springs of water twelve in number (see Sale's notes on this passage). It existed in Al-Muṣṭafā's time and may still exist to the present day, for anything we know to the contrary. The Jewish tradition would be based on Exod. xvii. 6: "Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink."

The story is used as a parable, as is clear from the latter part of the verse. In the desolation and among the rocks of this life people grumble. But they will not be left starving or thirsty of spiritual life. Allah's Messenger can provide abundant spiritual sustenance even from such unpromising things as the hard rocks of life. And all the nations can be grouped round it, each different, yet each in perfect order and discipline. We are to use with gratitude all spiritual food and drink provided by Allah, and He sometimes provides from unexpected places. We must restrain ourselves from mischief, pride, and every kind of evil, for our higher life is based on our probation on this very earth.

74. The declension of the word *Misr* in the Arabic text here shows that it is treated as a common noun meaning any town, but this is not conclusive, and the reference may be to the Egypt of Pharaoh. The *Tanwin* expressing indefiniteness may mean "any Egypt", i.e., any country as fertile as Egypt. There is here a subtle reminiscence as well =

They were covered with  
humiliation<sup>75</sup>  
And misery: they drew  
On themselves the wrath of Allah.  
This because they went on  
Rejecting the Signs of Allah  
And slaying His Messengers  
Without just cause.  
This because they rebelled  
And went on transgressing.

## SECTION 8.

62. Those who believe (in the Qur-ān).  
And those who follow the Jewish  
(scriptures).

يُنَاهِيْنَ اللَّهَ وَيَقْتُلُوْنَ النَّبِيْكُنَّ يَعْنِيْنَ الْحَقَّ  
ذَلِكَ مَا عَصَمُوا وَكَانُوْا يَعْتَدُوْنَ ٧٦

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ إِمَّا آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالظَّاهِرَى  
وَالصَّابِرِينَ مَنْ إِمَّا آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

= as a severe reproach. The rebellious children of Israel murmured at the sameness of the food they got in the desert. They were evidently hankering after the delicacies of the Egypt which they had left, although they should have known that the only thing certain for them in Egypt was their bondage and harsh treatment. Moses's reproach to them was twofold: (1) Such variety of foods you can get in any town: would you, for their sake, sell your freedom? Is not freedom better than delicate food? (2) In front is the rich Promised Land, which you are reluctant to march to; behind is Egypt, the land of bondage. Which is better? Would you exchange the better for the worse?

75. From here the argument becomes more general. They got the Promised Land. But they continued to rebel against Allah. And their humiliation and misery became a national disaster. They were carried in captivity to Assyria. They were restored under the Persians, but still remained under the Persian yoke, and they were under the yoke of the Greeks, the Romans, and Arabs. They were scattered all over the earth, and have been a wandering people ever since, because they rejected faith, slew Allah's messengers, and went on transgressing.

The slaying of the Prophets begin with the murder of Abel, who was in the ancestry of Israel. The elder sons of Jacob attempted the murder of Joseph when they dropped him into the well, and if he was afterwards rescued by strangers, their blood-guilt was none the less. In later history they attempted to slay Jesus, in as much as they got the Roman Governor to crucify one in his likeness, and they attempted to take the life of Al-Mustafā.

But the moral goes wider than the Children of Isreal. It applies to all nations and all individuals. If they are stiff-necked, if they set a greater value on perishable goods than on freedom and eternal salvation, if they break the law of Allah and resist His grace, their portion must be humiliation and misery in the spiritual world and probably even on this earth if a long view is taken.

And the Christians and the

Sabians,<sup>76</sup>

Any who believe in Allah

And the Last Day,

And work righteousness,

Shall have their reward

With their Lord on them

Shall be no fear, nor shall they

grieve.<sup>77</sup>

وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ هُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

76. Latest researches have revealed a small remnant of a religious community numbering about 2,000 souls in Lower Irāq, near Basra. In Arabic they are called *Subbi* (plural *Subbā*). They are also called Sabians and Nasoraeans, or Mandaens, or Christians of St. John. They claim to be Gnostics, or Knowers of the Great Life. They dress in white, and believe in frequent immersions in water. Their Book *Ginza* is in a dialect of Aramaic. They have theories of Darkness and Light as in Zoroastrianism. They use the name *Yardan* (Jordan) for any river. They live in peace and harmony among their Muslim neighbours. They resemble the Sābi-ūn mentioned in the Qur-ān, but are not probably identical with them.

The pseudo-Sabians of Harrān, who attracted the attention of Khalifa Māmūn-al-Rashid in 830 A.D. by their long hair and peculiar dress probably adopted the name as it was mentioned in the Qur-ān, in order to claim the privileges of the People of the Book. They were Syrian Star-worshippers with Hellenistic tendencies, like the Jews contemporary with Jesus.

There was another people called the Sabaens, who played an important part in the history of early Arabia, and are known through their inscriptions in an alphabet allied to the Phoenician and the Babylonian. They had a flourishing kingdom in the Yemen tract in South Arabia about 800-700 B.C., though their origin may have been in North Arabia. They worshipped the planets and stars (Moon, Sun, Venus). Probably the Queen of Sheba is connected with them. They succumbed to Abyssinia about 350 A.D. and to Persia about 579 A.D. Their capital was near San'ā. They had beautiful stone buildings, in which the pointed arch is noticeable. Cf. v. 69 and n. 779. (See E.B. on Sabaeans.).

77. Cf. ii. 38, where the same phrase occurs. And it recurs again and again afterwards.

The point of the verse is that Islam does not teach an exclusive doctrine, and is not meant exclusively for one people. The Jews claimed this for themselves, and the Christians in their origin were a sect of the Jews. Even the modern organized Christian churches, though they have been, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by the Time-spirit, including the historical fact of Islam, yet cling to the idea of Vicarious Atonement, which means that all who do not believe in it or who lived previously to the death of Christ are at a disadvantage spiritually before the Throne of Allah. The attitude of Islam is entirely different. Islam existed before the preaching of Muhammad on this earth: the Qur-ān expressly calls Abraham a Muslim (iii. 67). Its teaching (submission to Allah's will) has been and will be the teaching of Religion for all time and for all peoples.

63. And remember We took  
Your Covenant  
And We raised above you  
The Mount (Sinai)<sup>78</sup>  
(Saying): "Hold firmly  
To what We have given you  
And bring (ever) to remembrance  
What is therein:  
Perchance ye may fear Allah."
64. But ye turned back thereafter:  
Had it not been for the Grace  
And Mercy of Allah to you  
Ye had surely been  
Among the lost.
65. And well ye knew  
Those amongst you  
Who transgressed  
In the matter of the Sabbath:  
We said to them:  
"Be ye apes.  
Despised and rejected."<sup>79</sup>
66. So We made it an example  
To their own time  
And to their posterity,  
And a lesson  
To those who fear Allah.
67. And remember Moses said  
To his people: "Allah commands

وَإِذْ أَخْذَنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ الظُّلُّور  
خُدُودًا مَاءً اتَّيَّنَكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَذْكَرُوا مَا فِيهِ  
لَعْلَكُمْ تَنَفَّعُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّنَمُّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ قُلُّوا لَفَضُلُّ اللَّهِ  
عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَنِ الَّذِينَ أَعْتَدَنَا مِنْكُمْ فِي الْسَّبَبِ  
فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُوُّا قَرَدَةُ خَسِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾

فَعَلَّمْنَاهُنَّا كُلَّا لَمَابَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا  
وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ

78. The Mountain of Sinai (*Tûr-u-Sinîn*), a prominent mountain in the Arabian desert, in the peninsula between the two arms of the Red Sea. Here the Ten Commandments and the Law were given to Moses. Hence it is now called the Mountain of Moses (*Jabal Mûsa*). The Israelites encamped at the foot of it for nearly a year. The Covenant was taken from them under many portents (Exod. xix. 5, 8, 16, 18), which are described in Jewish tradition in great detail.

79. The punishment for breach of the Sabbath under the Mosaic law was death. "Every one that defileth it (the Sabbath) shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people": (Exod. xxxi. 14). There must have been a Jewish tradition about a whole fishing community in a seaside town, which persisted in breaking the Sabbath and were turned into apes: cf. vii. 163-166.

That ye sacrifice a heifer.”<sup>٨٠</sup>  
 They said: “Makest thou  
 A laughing-stock of us?”  
 He said: “Allah save me  
 From being an ignorant (fool)!”

68. They said: “Beseech on our behalf  
 Thy Lord to make plain to us  
 What (heifer) it is!”  
 He said: “He says: the heifer  
 Should be neither too old  
 Nor too young, but of middling  
 Age: now do what ye are  
 commanded!”

69. They said: “Beseech on our behalf  
 Thy Lord to make plain to us  
 Her colour.” He said: “He says:  
 A fawn-coloured heifer,  
 Pure and rich in tone,  
 The admiration of beholders!”

70. They said: “Beseech on our behalf  
 Thy Lord to make plain to us  
 What she is: to us are all heifers  
 Alike: we wish indeed for guidance  
 If Allah wills.”

تَذَبَّحُوا بَقْرَةً قَالُوا أَنْتَ خُذْنَا هُنَّا وَأَقَالْ أَعُوذُ  
 بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ

قَالُوا أَذْعُ لَنَارِيَكَ يُبَيِّنَ لَنَامَاهِيٍّ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ  
 إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَا فَارِضٌ وَلَا يَكُرْعَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ  
 فَافْعُلُوا مَا تُؤْمِنُونَ

قَالُوا أَذْعُ لَنَارِيَكَ يُبَيِّنَ لَسَامَاتُونَهَا قَالَ  
 إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ صَفَرَاءٌ فَاقِعٌ لَوْنَهَا  
 تَسْرُّ أَنْتَطِيرِينَ

قَالُوا أَذْعُ لَنَارِيَكَ يُبَيِّنَ لَنَامَاهِيٍّ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ شَبَهَ  
 عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمْهَتِدُونَ

80. This story or parable of the heifer in ii. 67-71 should be read with the parable of the dead man brought to life in ii. 72-73. The stories were accepted in Jewish traditions, which are themselves based on certain sacrificial directions in the Old Testament. The heifer story of Jewish tradition is based on Num. xix. 1-10, in which Moses and Aaron ordered the Israelites to sacrifice a red heifer without spot or blemish; her body was to be burnt and the ashes were to be kept for the purification of the congregation from sin. The parable of the dead man we shall refer to later.

The lesson of the heifer parable is plain. Moses announced the sacrifice to the Israelites, and they treated it as a jest. When Moses continued solemnly to ask for the sacrifice, they put him off on one pretext and another, asking a number of questions which they could have answered themselves if they had listened to Moses's directions. Their questions were carping criticisms rather than the result of a desire for information. It was a mere thin pretence that they were genuinely seeking for guidance. When at last they were driven into a corner, they made the sacrifice, but the will was wanting, which would have made the sacrifice efficacious for purification from sin. The real reason for their prevarications was their guilty conscience, as we see in the parable of the dead man (ii. 72-73).

71. He said: "He says: a heifer  
Not trained to till the soil  
Or water the fields; sound  
And without blemish." They said:  
"Now hast thou brought  
The truth." Then they offered  
Her in sacrifice,  
And they scarcely did it.

## SECTION 9.

72. Remember ye slew a man<sup>81</sup>  
And fell into a dispute  
Among yourselves as to the crime:  
But Allah was to bring forth  
What ye did hide.
73. So We said: "Strike the (body)  
With a piece of the (heifer)." Thus Allah bringeth the dead  
To life and sheweth you His Signs:  
Perchance ye may understand.
74. Thenceforth were your hearts  
Hardened: they became  
Like a rock and even worse  
In hardness. For among rocks

قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَاذْلُولٌ شَيْرُ الْأَرْضَ  
وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةً لَا شَيْئَةَ فِيهَا فَأَلَوْا  
الْفَنَنَ حِتَّىٰ بِالْحَقِّ فَدَبَّحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا  
يَفْعَلُونَ

(٦)

وَإِذْ قُتِلْتُمْ نُفَسًا فَأَذْرَرْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللهُ يُغْرِي  
مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْنِيُونَ

فَقُلْنَا أَضْرِبُوهُ بِعَصْبَانَهَا كَذَلِكَ يُخْيِي اللهُ الْمُوْتَنَ

وَيُرِيكُمْ مَا يَنْهَا لَعْلَكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهُنَّ كَالْجَارَةِ  
أَوْ أَشَدَّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْجَارَةِ لَمَا يَنْفَعُ

81. In Deut. xxi. 1-9 it is ordained that if the body of a slain man be found in a field and the slayer is not known, a heifer shall be beheaded, and the elders of the city next to the slain man's domicile shall wash their hands over the heifer and say that they neither did the deed nor saw it done, thus clearing themselves from the blood-guilt.

The Jewish story based on this was that in a certain case of this kind, every one tried to clear himself of guilt and lay the blame at the door of others. In the first place they tried to prevaricate and prevent a heifer being slain as in the last parable. When she was slain, Allah by a miracle disclosed the really guilty person. A portion of the sacrificed heifer was ordered to be placed on the corpse, which came to life and disclosed the whole story of the crime.

The lesson of this parable is that men may try to hide their crimes individually or collectively, but Allah will bring them to light in unexpected ways. Applying this further to Jewish national history, the argument is developed in the following verses that the Children of Israel played fast and loose with their own rites and traditions, but they could not thus evade the consequences of their own sin.

There are some from which  
Rivers gush forth; others  
There are which when split  
Asunder send forth water;  
And others which sink  
For fear of Allah, And Allah is  
Not unmindful of what ye do.<sup>x2</sup>

75. Can ye (O ye men of Faith)  
Entertain the hope that they  
Will believe in you?—  
Seeing that a party of them  
Heard the Word of Allah,  
And perverted it knowingly  
After they understood it.
76. Behold! when they meet<sup>83</sup>  
The men of Faith, they say:  
“We believe”: but when  
They meet each other in private,  
They say: “Shall you tell them  
What Allah hath revealed to you,  
That they may engage you  
In argument about it  
Before your Lord?”—  
Do ye not understand (their aim)?

مِنْهُ أَلَا نَهْرٌ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لِمَا يَسْقُطُ فَيَخْرُجُ  
مِنْهُ أَلْبَاءٌ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لِمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ حَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ  
وَمَا أَلَّهُ بِغَنِيلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ

أَفَظَّلَمُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا كُلُّمَا وَقَدْ كَانَ قَرِيبٌ  
مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلَمَنَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّقُونَهُ  
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

وَإِذَا قَوَى الَّذِينَ أَمْسَأْفَالُوا مَا مَنَّا وَإِذَا حَلَّا  
بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ قَالُوا أَتَحْكِمُ لَنَا وَهُمْ بِمَا  
فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجِجُوكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ  
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ

82. The sinner's heart gets harder and harder. It is even harder than rocks, of which a beautiful poetical allegory is placed before us. In nature we think there is nothing harder than rocks. But there are rocks that weep voluntarily, like repentant hearts that come to Allah of their own accord: such are the rocks from which rivers and springs flow spontaneously, sometimes in small trickles, sometimes in big volumes. Then there are rocks which have to be split or dug into or blown up with dynamite, and underneath we find abundant waters, as in wells beneath rocky soil. Such are the hearts of a less degree of fineness, which yet melt into tears when some great blow or calamity calls the mind to higher things.

83. The immediate argument applies to the Jews of Madinah, but the more general argument applies to the people of Faith and the people without Faith, as we shall see below. If the Muslims of Madinah ever entertained the hope that the Jews in their city would as a body welcome Muhammad Al-Muṣṭafā as the Prophet prophesied in their own books, they were mistaken. In Deut. xviii. 18. they read: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee.” (i.e. like unto Moses): which was interpreted by some of their doctors as referring to Muhammad, and they came into Islam. The Arabs are a kindred branch of the Semitic family, and are correctly described in relation to the =

77. Know they not that Allah  
Knoweth what they conceal  
And what they reveal?
78. And there are among them<sup>84</sup>  
Illiterates, who know not the Book,  
But (see therein their own) desires,  
And they do nothing but conjecture.
79. Then woe to those who write  
The Book with their own hands,  
And then say: "This is from Allah,"  
To traffic with it  
For a miserable price!—  
Woe to them for what their hands  
Do write, and for the gain  
They make thereby.

أَوْلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُبَرِّوْنَ

وَمَا يَعْلَمُونَ

وَمِنْهُمْ أُمَّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ

إِلَّا أَمَانَىٰ وَإِنَّهُمْ إِلَّا يَظْنُونَ

وَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ

يَقُولُونَ هَذَا إِنْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ لِيَشْرُوْبِي،

ثُمَّ نَأْقِلُ لَا فَوْلٌ لَهُمْ مَمْكُنَتٌ

أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مَمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ

= Jews as, "their brethren"; and there is no question that there was not another Prophet "like unto Moses" until Muhammad came: in fact the postscript of Deuteronomy, which was written many centuries after Moses, says: "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord Knew face to face." But the Jews as a body were jealous of Muhammad, and played a double part. When the Muslim community began to grow stronger they pretended to be of them, but really tried to keep back any knowledge of their own Scriptures from them, lest they should be beaten by their own arguments.

The more general interpretation holds good in all ages. Faith and Unfaith are pitted against each other. Faith has to struggle against power, position, organization, and privilege. When it gains ground, Unfaith comes forward insincerely and claims fellowship. But in its own mind it is jealous of the armoury of science and knowledge which Faith brings into the service of Allah. But Allah knows all, and if the people of Faith will only seek knowledge sincerely wherever they can find it,—even as far afield as China, as Muhammad said, they can defeat Unfaith on its own ground. [Even though the directive that Muslims should derive knowledge regardless of its location is an acceptable proposition from the Islamic viewpoint, the tradition to which the author refers here is not authentic].

84. The argument of i. 76 is continued. The Jews wanted to keep back knowledge, but what knowledge had they? Many of them, even if they could read, were no better than illiterates, for they knew not their own true Scriptures, but read into them what they wanted, or at best their own conjectures. They palmed off their own writings for the Message of Allah. Perhaps it brought them profit for the time being: but it was a miserable profit if they "gained the whole world and lost their own souls" (Matt. xvi. 26). "Writing with their own hands" means inventing books themselves, which had no divine authority.

The general argument is similar. Unfaith erects its own false gods. It attributes things to causes which only exist in its own imagination. Sometimes it even indulges in actual dishonest traffic in the ignorance of the multitude. It may pay for a time, but the bubble always bursts.

80. And they say: "The Fire<sup>85</sup>  
Shall not touch us  
But for a few numbered days:"  
Say: "Have ye taken a promise  
From Allah, for He never  
Breaks His promise?  
Or is it that ye say of Allah  
What ye do not know?"
81. Nay, those who seek gain<sup>86</sup>  
In Evil, and are girt round  
By their sins,-  
They are Companions of the Fire:  
Therein shall they abide  
(For ever).
82. But those who have faith  
And work righteousness,  
They are Companions of the Garden:  
Therein shall they abide  
(For ever).
83. And remember We took<sup>87</sup>  
A Covenant from the Children

وَقَالُوا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَتَيْنَا  
مَغْدُودَةً قُلْ أَخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ  
يَخْلُفَ اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ وَمَمْنُونُ عَلَى اللَّهِ  
مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

بَلْ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَاتٍ وَلَحْظَاتٍ يُهْرَكُ  
خَطِيرٌ تَمَهُّدُ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ  
فِيهَا حَلِيلُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَئِكَ  
أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا حَلِيلُونَ

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ بَعْضًا إِنْ شَاءَ مِنْ  
إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَى

85. The Jews in their arrogance might say: Whatever the terror of Hell may be for other people, our sins will be forgiven, because we are the children of Abraham: at worst, we shall suffer a short definite punishment and then be restored to the "bosom of Abraham." This bubble is pricked here. Read this verse with ii. 81-82.

The general application is also clear. If Unfaith claims some special prerogative, such as race, "civilization," political power, historical experience, and so on, these will not avail in Allah's sight. His promise is sure, but His promise is for those who seek Allah in Faith, and show it in their conduct.

86. This is many degrees worse than merely falling into evil: it is going out to "earn evil," as the Arabic text has it, i.e., to seek gain in evil. Such a perverse attitude means that the moral and spiritual fortress erected around us by the Grace of Allah is voluntarily surrendered by us and demolished by Evil, which erects its own fortress, so that access to Good may be more and more difficult.

87. So far from the Covenant being of the kind you suggest in ii. 80, the real Covenant is about the moral law, which is set out in ii. 83. This moral law is universal, and if you break it, no privileges will lighten your punishment or help you in any way (ii. 86). "Speak fair to the people" not only means outward courtesy from the leaders =

Of Israel (to this effect):  
 Worship none but Allah;  
 Treat with kindness  
 Your parents and kindred,  
 And orphans and those in need;  
 Speak fair to the people;  
 Be steadfast in prayer;  
 And Give Zakat,  
 Then did ye turn back,  
 Except a few among you,  
 And ye backslide (even now).

84. And remember We took<sup>88</sup>  
 Your Covenant (to this effect):  
 Shed no blood amongst you,  
 Nor turn out your own people  
 From your homes: and this  
 Ye solemnly ratified.  
 And to this ye were witness.

85. After this it is ye, the same people,  
 Who slay among yourselves,  
 And banish a party of you  
 From their homes; assist  
 (Their enemies) against them,  
 In guilt and transgression;  
 And if they come to you  
 As captives, ye ransom<sup>89</sup> them,

وَالْيَتَمَّ وَالْسَّكِينَ وَقُولُولَ النَّاسِ  
 حُسْنَا وَأَقْسُمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَمَا نَوْأَ الزَّكَوَةَ  
 ثُمَّ تَوَلَّنَمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْكُمْ  
 وَآشَرُ مُغَرِّضُونَ

وَإِذَا أَخْذَنَا مِسْكَنَمْ لَا سَفِكُونَ دَمَاءَ كُنْ  
 وَلَا تُخْرِجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ دِيْرِكُمْ ثُمَّ  
 أَفْرَزْتُمْ وَآشَرْتُ شَهَدُونَ

ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ  
 وَتُخْرِجُونَ فَرِيقًا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ دِيْرِهِمْ  
 تَظَاهِرُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعَدْوَانِ  
 وَإِنْ يَأْتُوكُمْ أُسْرَى تُفَدِّوْهُمْ وَهُوَ مَحْرَمٌ

= to the meanest among the people, but the protection of the people from being exploited, deceived, defrauded, or doped with things to lull their intelligence.

88. Verse 83 referred to the universal moral law. This verse 84 refers to its application under a special Covenant entered into with the Jews of Madinah by the newborn Muslim Commonwealth under its Guide and teacher Muhammad. This Covenant is given in Ibn Hishām's *Sīrat-ur-Rasūl*. It was entered into in the second year of the Hijra, and was treacherously broken by the Jews almost immediately afterwards.

89. They fought and slew each other and not only banished those who were obnoxious to them but intrigued with their enemies. If by any chance they came back into their hands as captives, they demanded ransom for them to return to their homes although they had no right to banish them at all. If we understand by "ransom them" pay "ransom for them to release them from the hands of their enemies," it would mean that they did this pious act for show, although they were themselves the authors of their unlawful banishment.

Though it was not lawful  
For you to banish them.  
Then is it only a part of the Book  
That ye believe in,  
And do ye reject the rest?  
But what is the reward for those  
Among you who behave like this  
But disgrace in this life?—  
And on the Day of Judgment  
They shall be consigned  
To the most grievous chastisement  
For Allah is not unmindful  
Of what ye do.

86. These are the people who buy  
The life of this world at the price  
Of the Hereafter: their chastisement  
Shall not be lightened  
Nor shall they be helped.

## SECTION 11.

87. We gave Moses the Book  
And followed him up  
With a succession of Messengers;  
We gave Jesus the son of Mary<sup>٩٠</sup>  
Clear (Signs) and strengthened him  
With the holy spirit. Is it  
That whenever there comes to you  
A Messenger with what ye  
Yourselves desire not, ye are  
Puffed up with pride?—

عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ  
الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ فَمَا جَرَأَ  
مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خَرَقَ  
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى  
أَشَدِ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا لِلَّهِ بِغَيْرِهِ عَامَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَرُوا أَلْحَيْوَةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْأَجْزَاءِ  
فَلَا يُحْكَفُ عَنْهُمُ الْمَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ

وَلَقَدْ أَتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ  
بَعْدِهِ بِإِلَرْسَلٍ وَأَتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ  
الْبَشِّرَتِ وَأَيَّدَنَاهُ رُوحُ الْفُدُّونِ أَفَكُلَّمَاجَاءَكُمْ  
رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا يَهُوَ أَنْفُسُكُمْ أَسْتَكْبِرُتُمْ فَقَرِبَأَ  
كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا قَاتَلُونَ

90. As to the birth of Jesus, cf. xix. 16-34. Why is he called the "Son of Mary"? What are his clear signs? What is the "holy spirit" by which he was strengthened? We reserve to a later stage a discussion of the Quranic teaching on these questions. See iii. 62 n. 401.

Some ye called impostors,  
And others ye slay<sup>91</sup>

88. They say, "Our hearts  
Are the wrappings<sup>92</sup> (which  
preserve  
Allah's Word: we need no more)"  
Nay, Allah's curse is on them  
For their blasphemy:<sup>93</sup>  
Little is it they believe.

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلَفٌ بِلَّأَعْنَمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفَّرِهِنَّ

فَقَلِيلًا مَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

91. Notice the sudden transition from the past tense in "some ye *called* impostors" to the present tense in "others ye slay." There is a double significance. First, reviewing the long course of Jewish history, we have come to the time of Jesus: they have often given the lie to Allah's Prophets, and even now they are trying to slay Jesus. Secondly, extending the review of that history to the time of Muhammad, they are even now trying to take the life of that holy Prophet. This would be literally true at the time the words were promulgated to the people. And this transition leads on naturally to the next verse, which refer to the actual conditions before Muhammad in Madinah in the second year of the Hijra.

Sections 11-13 (ii. 87-121) refer to the People of the Book generally, Jews and Christians. Even where Moses and the Law of Sinai are referred to, those traditions are common to both Jews and Christians. The argument is about the people who ought to have learnt from previous Revelations and welcomed Muhammad's teaching, and yet they both took up an attitude of arrogant rejection.

92. The Jews in their arrogance claimed that all wisdom and all knowledge of Allah were enclosed in their hearts. But there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in their philosophy. Their claim was not only arrogance but blasphemy. In reality they were men without Faith. (I take *Gulfun* here to be the plural of *Gilafun* the wrapping or cover of a book, in which the book is preserved.).

As usual, there is a much wider meaning. How many people at all times and among all nations close their hearts to any extension of knowledge or spiritual influence because of some little fragment which they have got and which they think is the whole of Allah's Truth? Such an attitude shows really want of faith and is a blasphemous limitation of Allah's unlimited spiritual gifts to His creatures. [According to another view, the verse refers to the Jewish claim that a covering had been placed over their hearts which prevented them from grasping the message of the Prophet (peace be on him). See Ibn Kathir's commentary on the verse. See also verse iv, 155.]

93. The root *kafara* has many shades of meaning: (1) to deny Allah's goodness, to be ungrateful, (2) to reject Faith, deny His revelation, (3) to blaspheme, to ascribe some limitation or attribute to Allah which is derogatory to His nature. In a translation, one shade or another must be put forward according to the context, but all are implied.

89. And when there comes; to them  
A Book<sup>٩٤</sup> from Allah, confirming  
What is with them,—although  
From of old they had prayed  
For victory against those  
Without Faith,—when there comes  
To them that which they  
(Should) have recognized,  
They refuse to believe in it  
But the curse of Allah  
Is on those without Faith.
90. Miserable is the price  
For which they have sold  
Their souls, in that they  
Deny (the revelation)  
Which Allah has sent down,  
In insolent envy that Allah  
Of His Grace should send it  
To any of His servants He pleases:<sup>٩٥</sup>  
Thus have they drawn  
On themselves Wrath upon Wrath.  
And humiliating is the Chastisement  
Of those who reject Faith.
91. When it is said to them,  
“Believe in what Allah

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

يُنَسِّمُ أَشَدَّ رَأْبَةً أَنْفُسُهُمْ أَنْ يَكُنْ فَرُوا  
بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بَعْنَاهُ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ  
عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ بِهِمْ وَيُغَضِّبُ  
عَلَى عَصَبَتِهِ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِمٌّ

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ إِيمَنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَاتِلُوا  
نَّفْسَهُمْ مِّنْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا

94. The Jews, who pretended to be so superior to the people without Faith—the Gentiles—should have been the first to recognize the new Truth—or the Truth renewed—which it was Muhammad's mission to bring because it was so similar in form and language to what they had already received. But they had more arrogance than faith. It is this want of faith that brings on the curse, i.e., deprives us (if we adopt such an attitude) of the blessings of Allah.

Again the lesson applies to a much wider circle than the Jews. We are all apt, in our perverseness, to reject an appeal from our brother even more summarily than one from an outsider. If we have a glimmering of the truth, we are apt to make ourselves impervious to further truth, and thus lose the benefit of Allah's Grace.

95. Racial arrogance made the Jews averse to the reception of Truth when it came through a servant of Allah, not of their own race. Again the lesson is wider. Is that averseness unknown in our own times, and among other races? Yet how can a race or a people set bounds to Allah's choice? Allah is the Creator and Cherisher of all races and all worlds.

Hath sent down," they say,  
"We believe in what was sent down  
To us": yet they reject  
All besides, even if it be Truth  
Confirming what is with them.  
Say: "Why then have ye slain  
The prophets of Allah in times  
Gone by, if ye did indeed  
Believe?"<sup>96</sup>

92. There came to you Moses  
With clear (Signs); yet  
Ye worshipped the Calf  
(Even) after that, and ye  
Did behave wrongfully.
93. And remember We took  
Your Covenant and We raised  
Above you the mount (Sinai):  
(Saying): "Hold firmly  
To what We have given you,  
And hearken (to the Law)"<sup>97</sup>  
They said: "We hear,  
And we disobey":<sup>98</sup>  
And their hearts<sup>99</sup>

وَرَآءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا عَاهَمُوكُمْ قُلْ فَلَمْ  
تَقْتُلُونَ أَئِيْكَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
مُؤْمِنِينَ

﴿ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ  
ثُمَّ أَخْذَنَا مِنَ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ  
وَأَنَّكُمْ ظَلَمُونَ ﴾

وَإِذَا أَخَذْنَا مِنْكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ  
الظُّورَ حُذِّرْنَا مَمَّا تَبَيَّنَتْكُمْ بِهَوَّةِ  
وَأَسْمَعْنَا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا عَصَيْنَا وَأَشْرَبْنَا  
فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْمُجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ

96. Even the race argument is often a flimsy and hollow pretext. Did not the Jews reject Prophets of their own race who told them unpleasant truths? And do not other nations do likewise? The real trouble is selfishness, narrowness, a mean dislike of anything which runs counter to habits, customs or inclinations.

97. Cf. the introductory words of ii. 63, which are the same as the introductory words here, but the argument is developed in a different direction in the two places. In ii. 63, after they are reminded of the solemn Covenant under the towering height of Mount Sinai they are told how they broke the Covenant in after ages. Here, after they are reminded of the same solemn Covenant, they are told that even then they never meant to observe it. Their thought is expressed in biting words of sarcasm. They said in words: "All that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." But they said in their hearts: "We shall disobey."

98. What they should have said was: "We hear and we obey": this is the attitude of the true men of Faith (ii. 285).

99. After the Commandments and the Law had been given at Mount Sinai, and the people had solemnly given their Covenant, Moses went up to the Mount, and in his absence, the people made the golden calf. [The word *ashribū* which occurs in the verse seems to suggest, as the noted Tābi'i Qatādah is reported to have said, that their hearts were saturated with the love for the calf. See Ibn Kathīr, Commentary on the verse ii. 93.

Were filled  
 (With the love) of the Calf  
 Because of their Faithlessness.  
 Say: "Vile indeed  
 Are the behests of your Faith  
 If ye have any faith!"

94. Say: "If the last Home,  
 With Allah, be for you specially,  
 And not for anyone else,  
 Then seek ye for death,  
 If ye are sincere."
95. But they shall never seek  
 For death, on account of the (sins)  
 Which their hands have sent  
 On before them.<sup>100</sup>  
 And Allah is well-acquainted  
 With the wrong-doers.
96. Thou wilt indeed find them,  
 Of all people, most greedy  
 Of life,—even more  
 Than the idolaters:  
 Each one of them wishes  
 He could be given a life  
 Of a thousand years:  
 But the grant of such life  
 Will not save him  
 From (due) chastisement  
 For Allah sees well  
 All that they do.

قُلْ يَنْسَمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِهِ  
 إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ٤٧

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمُ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
 خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنُوا الْمَوْتَ  
 إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ٤٨  
 وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًا إِذَا قَدِمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ  
 وَأَلَّهُ عَلَيْهِ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ٤٩

وَلَنْ يَجِدُوهُمْ أَخْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاةٍ وَمَنْ  
 الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا بِوَدَّ أَحَدِهِمْ لَوْيَسَرَ أَلَفَ  
 سَكَنَوْمَا هُوَ مُرَخِّجُهُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ أَنْ يُسَرِّ  
 وَأَلَّهُ بِصَدِّيقٍ لِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ٥٠

100. The phrase "What their hands have sent on before them" frequently occurs in the Qur-an. Here, and in many places, it refers to sins. In such passages as lxxviii. 40, or lxxxi. 14, it is implied that both good and bad deeds go before us to the judgment-seat of Allah before we do ourselves. In ii. 110, it is the good that goes before us. Our deeds are personified. They are witnesses for or against us, and they always go before us. Their good or bad influence begins to operate before we even know it. This is more general than the New Testament idea in the First Epistle of St. Paul to Timothy, v. 24: "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after."

## SECTION 12.

97. Say: Whoever is an enemy<sup>101</sup>  
To Gabriel—for he brings down  
The (revelation) to thy heart  
By Allah's will, a confirmation  
Of what went before,  
And guidance and glad tidings  
For those who believe,—
98. Whoever is an enemy to Allah  
And His angels and prophets,  
To Gabriel and Michael,—  
Lo! Allah is an enemy to those  
Who reject Faith.
99. We have sent down to thee  
Manifest Signs (*āyāt*);  
And none reject them  
But those who are perverse.
100. Is it not (the case) that  
Every time they make a Covenant,  
Some party among them  
Throw it aside?— Nay,  
Most of them are faithless.
101. And when there came to them  
A Messenger from Allah,  
Confirming what was with them,  
A party of the People of the Book

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّمَا زَرَّهُ  
عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ  
يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَشَرِيْفٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

(١٧)

مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِّلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ  
وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَلَ  
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوُّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ

(١٨)

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ  
وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الظَّفِيفُونَ

(١٩)

أَوْ كُلُّ مَا عَاهَدُوا عَاهَدًا بَدَأُهُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ  
بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَتَوَمَّنُونَ

(٢٠)

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ  
مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ بَسَدَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ

101. A party of the Jews in the time of Muhammad ridiculed the Muslim belief that Gabriel brought down revelations to Muhammad Al-Muṣṭafā. Michael was called in their books "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people": (Daniel, xii. 1). The vision of Gabriel inspired fear (Daniel, viii. 16-17). But this pretence—that Michael was their friend and Gabriel their enemy—was merely a manifestation of their unbelief in angels, Prophets and Allah Himself; and such unbelief could not win the love of Allah. In any case it was disingenuous to say that they believed in one angel and not in another. Muhammad's inspiration was through visions of Gabriel. Muhammad had been helped to the highest spiritual light, and the message which he delivered and his spotless integrity and exemplary life were manifest Signs which every one could understand except those who were obstinate and perverse. Besides, the verses of the Qur-ān were in themselves reasonable and clear.

Threw away the Book of Allah<sup>102</sup>  
Behind their backs,  
As if (it had been something)  
They did not know!

102. They followed what the Satans<sup>103</sup>  
Recited over  
Solomon's Kingdom.  
Solomon did not disbelieve  
But Satans disbelieved, teaching men.  
Magic, and such things  
As came down at Babylon  
To the angels Hārūt and Mārūt.<sup>104</sup>

أُوْثَوْا الْكِتَبَ كَيْتَبَ اللَّهُ وَرَأَهُ  
ظَهُورُهُمْ كَانُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ  
(١١)

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَنَوَّى السَّيْطَرُونُ عَلَىٰ مُلَكِ سُلَيْمَانَ  
وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانٌ وَلَكِنَّ السَّيْطَرُونَ  
كَفَرُوا بِإِيمَانِ النَّاسِ السِّحْرُ وَمَا أَنْزَلُ  
عَلَى الْمَلَكَيْنِ بِبَأْلٍ هَرُوتَ وَمَرُوتَ

102. I think that by "the Book of Allah" here is meant, not the Qur-ān, but the Book which the People of the Book had been given, viz., the previous Revelations. The argument is that Muhammad's Message was similar to Revelations which they had already received, and if they had looked into their own Books honestly and sincerely, they would have found proofs in them to show that the new Message was true and from Allah. But they ignored their own Books or twisted or distorted them according to their own fancies. Worse, they followed something which was actually false and mischievous and inspired by the evil one. Such was the belief in magic and sorcery. These are described in the next verse in terms referring to the beliefs and practices of the "People of the Book".

103. This is a continuation of the argument in ii. 101. The People of the Book, instead of sticking to the plain Books of Revelations, and seeking to do the will of Allah, ran after all sorts of occult knowledge, most of which was false and evil. Many wonderful tales of occult power attributed the power of Solomon to magic. But Solomon dealt in no arts of evil. It was the powers of evil that pretended to force the laws of nature and the will of Allah; such a pretence is plainly blasphemy.

104. Hārūt and Mārūt lived in Babylon, a very ancient seat of science, especially the science of astronomy. The period may be supposed to anywhere about the time when the ancient Eastern Monarchies were strong and enlightened: probably even earlier, as Mā-rū-tu or Madruk was a deified hero afterwards worshipped as a god of magic in Babylon. Being good men, Hārūt and Mārūt of course dabbled in nothing evil, and their hands were certainly clean of fraud. But knowledge and the arts, if learned by evil men, can be applied to evil uses. The evil ones, besides their fraudulent magic, also learnt a little of this true science and applied it to evil uses. Hārūt and Mārūt did not withhold knowledge, yet never taught anyone without plainly warning them of the trial and temptation of knowledge in the hands of evil men. Being men of insight, they also saw the blasphemy that might rise to the lips of the evil ones puffed up with science and warned them against it. Knowledge is indeed a trial or temptation: if we are warned, we know its dangers: if Allah has endowed us with free will, we must be free to choose between the benefit and the danger.

Among the Jewish traditions in the Midrash (Jewish *Tafsīrs*) was a story of two angels who asked Allah's permission to come down to earth but succumbed to temptation, and were hung up by their feet at Babylon for punishment. Such stories about sinning angels who were cast down to punishment were believed in by the early Christians also. (See the Second Epistle of Peter, ii. 4, and the Epistle of Jude, verse 6).

But neither of these taught anyone  
(Such things) without saying:  
“We are only for trial;  
So do not blaspheme.”  
They learned from them<sup>105</sup>  
The means to sow discord  
Between man and wife.  
But they could not thus  
Harm anyone except  
By Allah’s permission.  
And they learned what harmed  
them,  
Not what profited them.  
And they knew that the buyers  
Of (magic) would have  
No share in the happiness  
Of the Hereafter. And vile  
Was the price for which  
They did sell their souls,  
If they but knew!

103. If they had kept their Faith  
And guarded themselves from evil,  
Far better had been  
The reward from Allah  
If they but knew!

وَمَا يَعْلَمَانِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَخْنُ  
فِتْنَةً فَلَا تَكْفُرُنَّ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا  
مَا يُفْرِقُونَ بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمُرِّ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا هُمْ  
يُضَارِّيْنَ بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ  
وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا يَصْرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْقُعُهُمْ  
وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمِنْ أَشَرَّهُمْ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ  
مِنْ خَلْقِهِ وَلَيَسْ كَمَا شَرَّفَ أَيْهُ  
أَنْفَسُهُمْ لَوْكَائُونَ يَتَعَلَّمُونَ

١٠٣

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَمْنَوْا وَأَنْقَوْا لِمَتْوَبَةٍ مِنْ  
عِنْدِ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَوْ كَانُوا يَتَعَلَّمُونَ

١٠٣

105. What the evil ones learnt from Hârût and Mârût (see last note) they turned to evil. When mixed with fraud and deception, it appeared as charms and spells and love potions. They did nothing but cause discord between the sexes. But of course their power was limited to the extent to which Allah permitted the evil to work, for His grace protected all who sought His guidance and repented and returned to Him. But apart from the harm that these false pretenders might do to others, the chief harm which they did was to their own souls. They sold themselves into slavery to the Evil, as is shown in the allegory of Goethe’s *Faust*. That allegory dealt with the individual soul. Here the tragedy is shown to occur not only to individuals but to whole groups of people, for example, the People of the Book. Indeed the story might be extended indefinitely.

## SECTION 13

- 104 O ye of Faith!  
Say not (to the Prophet)  
Ra'ina, but say, 'Unzurnā<sup>106</sup>  
And hearken (to him):  
To those without Faith  
Is a grievous punishment.
105. It is never the wish  
Of those without Faith  
Among the People of the Book  
Nor of the polytheists.  
That anything good  
Should come down to you  
From your Lord.  
But Allah will choose  
For His special Mercy  
Whom He will—for Allah is  
Lord of grace abounding.
106. None of Our revelations<sup>107</sup>  
Do We abrogate  
Or cause to be forgotten,  
But We substitute  
Something better or similar:  
Knowest thou not that Allah  
Hath power over all things?

يَتَأَيَّهَا الَّذِينَ لَا مُؤْمِنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا أَرَأَيْتَ  
وَقُولُوا اأَنْظُرْنَا وَأَسْمَعْنَا وَلَا كَفَرْنَا  
عَذَابُ اللَّهِ

مَا يَوْدُدُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَبِ  
وَلَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ  
مِنْ رِزْقِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَخْصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ  
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

\* مَانَسَخَ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُسِّهَا ثُمَّ بَخَسَرَ  
مِنْهَا أَرْيَالِهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ  
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

106. The word disapproved is *Rā'inā*, which as used by the Muslims meant, "Please look at us, attend to us." But it was ridiculed by enemies by a little twist to suggest some insulting meaning. So an unambiguous word "Unzurnā," with the same meaning is suggested. The general lesson is that we must guard ourselves against the cynical trick of using words which sound complimentary to the ear but have a hidden barb in them. Not only must we be plain and honest in our words. We must respectfully hearken to the words of a Teacher whom we have addressed. Thoughtless people use vain words or put foolish questions, and straightaway turn their minds to something else.

107. The word which I have translated by the word "revelations" is *Āyat*. See n. 15. It is not only used for verses of the Qur-ān, but in a general sense for Allah's revelations, as in ii. 39 and for other Signs of Allah in history or nature, or miracles, as in ii. 61. It has even been used for human signs and tokens of wonder, as, for example, monuments or landmarks built by the ancient people of 'Ad (xxvi. 128). What is the meaning here? If we take it in a general sense, it means that Allah's Message from age to age is always =

107. Knowest thou not  
That to Allah belongeth  
The dominion of the heavens  
And the earth?  
And besides Him ye have  
Neither patron nor helper.

108. Would ye question  
Your Messenger as Moses<sup>108</sup>  
Was questioned of old?  
But whoever changeth  
From Faith to Unbelief,  
Hath strayed without doubt  
From the even way.<sup>109</sup>

109. Quite a number of the People  
Of the Book wish they could  
Turn you (people) back  
To infidelity after ye have  
believed.  
From selfish envy,  
After the Truth hath become

أَنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ  
وَلَا نَصِيرٌ

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ بِكُمْ أَنْ تَسْتَأْوِرُوا إِلَيْكُمْ كَمَا سُبِّلَ  
مُؤْسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلٍ وَمَنْ يَتَبَدَّلْ إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ بِالْإِيمَانِ  
فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّكِينِ

وَذَكَرَ شِيرِقٌ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابَ  
لَوْزِرُ دُونَكُمْ مِنْ أَبْعَدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا  
مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنفُسِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَ لَهُمْ  
الْحَقُّ فَاغْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ

= the same, but that its form may differ according to the needs and exigencies of the time. That form was different as given to Moses and then to Jesus and then to Muhammad. Some commentators apply it also to the Ayât of the Qur-ân. There is nothing derogatory in this if we believe in progressive revelation. In iii. 7 we are told distinctly about the Qur-ân, that some of its verses are clear (and of established meaning), and others are not entirely clear, and it is mischievous to treat the verses that are not entirely clear and to follow them (literally). On the other hand, it is absurd to treat such a verse as ii. 115 as if it were abrogated by ii. 144 about the Qibla.

There may be express abrogation, or there may be "causing or permitting to forget." How many good and wise institutions gradually become obsolete by afflux of time? Then there is the gradual process of disuse or forgetting in evolution. This does not mean that eternal principles change. It is only a sign of Allah's infinite Power that His creation should take so many forms and shapes not only in the material world but in the world of man's thought and expression.

108. Moses was constantly harassed with foolish, impertinent, or disingenuous questions by his own people. We must not follow that bad example. Questions should be asked only for real instruction.

109. "Even way": the Arabic word *sawâa* signifies smoothness as opposed to roughness; symmetry as opposed to want of plan; equality or proportion as opposed to want of design; rectitude as opposed to crookedness; a mean as opposed to extremes; and fitness for the object held in view as opposed to faultiness.

Manifest unto them:  
But forgive and overlook,<sup>110</sup>  
Till Allah brings about  
His command;<sup>111</sup> for Allah  
Hath power over all things.<sup>112</sup>

110. And be steadfast in prayer  
And give Zakat:  
And whatever good  
Ye send forth for your souls<sup>113</sup>  
Before you, ye shall find it  
With Allah: for Allah sees  
Well all that ye do.
111. And they say: "None  
Shall enter Paradise unless  
He be a Jew or a Christian"  
Those are their (vain) desires.  
Say: "Produce your proof  
If ye are truthful."
112. Nay,-whoever submits  
His whole self<sup>114</sup> to Allah

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاءِلَّا لَرَكْزَةً  
وَمَا نَفِدُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِنْ حَيْثِ يَحْدُوُهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا  
أَوْ نَصَارَى تِلْكَ أَمَانِيَّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا  
بِرْهَنَتُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

بَلَّ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ فَلَهُ

110. Three words are used in the Qurân, with a meaning akin to "forgive", but each with a different shade of meaning. *Afâ* (here translated "forgive") means to forget, to obliterate from one's mind. *Safâha* (here translated "overlook") means to turn away from, to ignore, to treat a matter as if it did not affect one. *Gafara* (which does not occur in this verse) means to cover up something as Allah does to our sins with His grace: this word is particularly appropriate in Allah's attribute to *Gaffâr*, the One who forgives again and again.

111. The word *Amr*, is comprehensive, and includes (1) an order or command as in xcvi. 12; or (2) a purpose, design, will, as in xviii. 82; or (3) affairs, working, doing, carrying out or execution of a design, as in lxxxix. 5. In many cases some of these meanings run together.

112. Note how this phrase, seemingly repeated from ii. 106, and occurring in many other places, has an appropriate signification in each place. In ii. 106 we were told about progressive revelation, how the same thing may take different forms, and seeming human infirmity contribute to the fulfilment of Allah's design, for Allah's power is unlimited. Here we are told to be patient and forgiving against envy and injustice; this too may be fulfilling Allah's purpose, for His power is infinite.

113. Cf. ii 95 n. 100.

114. The word translated "self" is *Wajh*, a comprehensive Arabic word.

And is a doer of good,—  
He will get his reward  
With his Lord;  
On such shall be no fear,  
Nor shall they grieve.<sup>115</sup>

## SECTION 14.

113. The Jews say: “The Christians  
Have naught (to stand) upon;  
And the Christians say:  
“The Jews have naught  
(To stand) upon.” Yet they  
(Profess to) study the (same) Book.  
Like unto their word  
Is what those say who know  
not;<sup>116</sup>  
But Allah will judge  
Between them in their quarrel  
On the Day of Judgment.

114. And who is more unjust  
Than he who forbids<sup>117</sup>  
That in places for the worship  
Of Allah, His name should be

أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ، وَلَا حَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

۱۱۵

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصْرَى عَلَى شَيْءٍ  
وَقَالَتِ النَّصْرَى لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَهُنْ  
يَثْلُوْنَ الْكِتَابَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ  
مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ وَمِنَ الْقِيمَةِ  
فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِنْ مَنْ مَعَ مَسَعِدِ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُدْكِرْ فِيهَا  
أَسْمَهُ وَسَعَى فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَئِكَ مَا كَانَ لَهُمْ

115. This phrase comes in aptly in its own context many times. In this Sūra it occurs in ii. 38, 62, 112, 262, 274 and 277.

116. It is a sure sign of ignorance and prejudice when you study the same book as another or a similar one and yet are absolutely intolerant of the meaning which the other draws from it. You should know better, but you speak like the ignorant. In this case the primary reference in the word “ignorant” may be to the Pagan Arabs.

117. There were actually Pagans in Makkah who tried to shut out the Muslim Arabs from the Ka'ba, the universal place of Arab worship. The Pagans themselves called it the House of Allah. With what face could they exclude the Muslims, who wanted to worship the true Allah instead of worshipping idols? If these Pagans had succeeded, they would only have caused violent divisions among the Arabs and destroyed the sanctity and the very existence of the Ka'ba.

This verse, taken in a general sense, establishes the principle of freedom of worship in a public mosque or place dedicated to the worship of Allah. This is recognized in Muslim law.

Celebrated?—whose zeal  
Is (in fact) to ruin them?  
It was not fitting that such  
Should themselves enter them  
Except in fear. For them  
There is nothing but disgrace  
In this world, and in the world  
To come, an exceeding torment.

115. To Allah belong the East  
And the West: whithersoever  
Ye turn, there is Allah's Face.<sup>118</sup>  
For Allah is All-Embracing,  
All-Knowing.

116. They say: "Allah hath begotten  
A son": Glory be to Him.—Nay,  
To Him belongs all  
That is in the heavens  
And on earth: everything  
Renders worship to Him.<sup>119</sup>

117. The Originator  
Of the heavens and the earth:<sup>120</sup>  
When He decreeth a matter,  
He saith to it: "Be,"  
And it is.

أَن يَدْحُلُوهَا إِلَّا حَآيَفِيتَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا  
خَرَزٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

وَلِلَّهِ الْمُسْرِفُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَإِنَّمَا تُولُوا فَشَمَّ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلَيْهِمْ

وَقَالُوا أَنْحَدَ اللَّهُ وَلَدٌ أَسْبَحْتَنَا بَلَّ اللَّهُ  
مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلُّ لَهُ قَدِينُونَ

بَدِيعُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَإِذَا قَضَى أَنْرَأَ فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ

118. That is, you will face Allah whichever direction you turn your face. See note to ii. 112 above.

119. It is a derogation from the glory of Allah—in fact it is blasphemy—to say that Allah begets sons, like a man or an animal. The Christian doctrine is here emphatically repudiated. If words have any meaning, it would mean an attribution to Allah of a material nature, and of the lower animal functions of sex.

120. The previous verse told us that everything in heaven and earth celebrates the glory of Allah. Lest anyone should think that the heavens and the earth were themselves primeval and eternal, we are now told that they themselves are creatures of Allah's will and design. Cf. vi. 102, where the word *bada'a* is used as here for the creation of the heavens and the earth, and *khalaqa* is used for the creation of all things. *Bada'a* goes back to the very primal beginning, as far as we can conceive it. The materialists might say that primeval matter was eternal; other things, i.e. the forms and shapes as we see them now, were called into being at some time or other, and will perish. When they perish, they dissolve into primeval matter again, which stands as the base of all existence. We go further back. We say that if we postulate such primeval matter, it owes its origin =

118. Say those without knowledge:  
 "Why speaketh not Allah  
 Unto us? Or why cometh not  
 Unto us a Sign?  
 So said the people before them  
 Words of similar import.  
 Their hearts are alike.  
 We have indeed made clear  
 The Signs unto any people  
 Who hold firmly  
 To Faith (in their hearts).

119. Verily We have sent thee  
 In truth as a bearer  
 Of glad tidings and a warner:  
 But of thee no question  
 Shall be asked of the Companions  
 Of the Blazing Fire.

120. Never will the Jews  
 Or the Christians be satisfied  
 With thee unless thou follow  
 Their form of religion. Say:

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا يَكْلِمُنَا اللَّهُ  
 أَوْتَأْتَنَا آيَةً كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ  
 مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ شَبَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ  
 قَدْ بَيَّنَاهُ آلَيْنَتِ لِغَزِيرِ يُوقِنُونَ

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا  
 وَلَا تُنْسَلْ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيدِ

وَلَنْ تَرْضَى عَنْكَ أَيْهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَى حَتَّى تَتَبَيَّنَ  
 مِلَّهُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَلَنْ

= itself to Allah. If this is conceded, we proceed to argue that the process of Creation is not then completed. "All things in the heavens and on the earth" are created by gradual processes. In "things" we include abstract as well as material things. We see the abstract things and ideas actually growing before us. But that also is Allah's creation, to which we can apply the word *khalqa*, for in it is involved the idea of measuring, fitting it into a scheme of other things. Cf. liv. 49; also xxv. 59. On the other hand, the "*amr*" (= Command, Direction, Design) is a single thing, unrelated to Time, "like the twinkling of an eye" (liv. 50). Another word to note in this connection is *ja'ala* "making" which seems to imply new shapes and forms, new dispositions, as the making of the Signs of the Zodiac in the heavens, or the setting out of the sun and moon for light, or the establishment of the succession of day and night (xxv. 61-62). A further process with regard to the soul is described in the word *sawwa*, bringing it to perfection (xci. 7) but this we shall discuss in its place. *Fatara* (xlvi. 11) implies, like *bada'a*, the creating of a thing out of nothing and after no pre-existing similitude, but perhaps *fatara* implies the creation of primeval matter to which further processes have to be applied later, as when one prepares dough but leaves the leavening to be done after. *Badaa* (without the 'ain), xxx. 27, implies beginning the process of creation: this is made further clear in xxxii. 7 where the beginning of the creation of pristine man from clay refers to his physical body, leaving the further processes of reproduction and the breathing in of the soul to be described in subsequent verses. Lastly, *baraa* is creation implying liberation from pre-existing matter or circumstance, e.g., man's body from clay (lix. 24) or a calamity from previously existing circumstances (lvii. 22). See also vi. 94, n. 916; vi. 98, n. 923; lix. 24, nn. 5405-6.

"The Guidance of Allah,—that  
Is the (only) Guidance."  
Wert thou to follow their desires  
After the knowledge  
Which hath reached thee,  
Then wouldst thou find  
Neither Protector nor Helper  
Against Allah.

121. Those to whom We have given  
The Book study it as it  
Should be studied: they are  
The ones that believe therein:  
Those who reject faith therein,—  
The loss is their own.

## SECTION 15.

- 121  
122. O Children of Israel! call to mind  
The special favour which I bestowed  
Upon you, and that I preferred you  
To all others.
123. Then guard yourselves against a Day  
When one soul shall not avail  
another,  
Nor shall compensation be  
accepted from her  
Nor shall intercession profit her  
Nor shall anyone be helped  
(from outside)<sup>122</sup>

124. And remember that Abraham  
Was tried by his Lord

أَتَبْعَثُ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَ لَهُ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ  
مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

الَّذِينَ إِذَا تَنَاهُمُ عَنِ الْكِتَابِ يَتَلَوَّهُ حَقًّا يَلَوَّهُ  
أُولَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ  
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

يَسْأَلُ إِنْسَانًا أَذْكُرُوا نَعْمَلَيْهِ أَتَعْمَلُ عَلَيْكُمْ  
وَأَنِي فَضَلَّكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمَيْنَ

وَأَنْقُوا يَوْمًا لَا يَنْجِزُ نَفْسٌ عَنْ قَسْ شَيْئًا وَلَا  
يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا تَنْفَعُهَا كَاشَفَةٌ وَلَا هُمْ  
يُنْصَرُونَ

وَإِذْ أَبْشَرَتِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبِّهِ بِكَبِيرَتِ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي

121-122. Verses 122-123 repeat verses 47-48 (except for a slight verbal variation in ii. 123, which does not affect the sense). The argument about the favours to Israel is thus beautifully rounded off, and we now proceed to the argument in favour of the Arabs as succeeding to the spiritual inheritance of Abraham.

With certain Commands,<sup>123</sup>  
Which he fulfilled:  
He said: "I will make thee  
An Imām<sup>124</sup> to the people.  
He pleaded: "And also  
(Imāms) from my offspring!"  
He answered: "But My Promise  
Is not within the reach  
Of evil-doers."

125. Remember We made the House<sup>125</sup>  
A place of assembly for men  
And a place of safety;  
And take ye the Station  
Of Abraham as a place  
Of prayer; and We covenanted

جَاءُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا قَالَ وَمَنْ ذَرَيْتَ فَقَالَ لَا

يَسَّأَلُ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ

وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَأَمَّا وَآتَيْنَا وَآتَيْنَاهُ  
مِنْ مَقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلٍّ وَعَهْدَنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
وَإِنْ سَعَيْلَ أَنْ طَهِرَ أَيْتَ لِلطَّاطِيْغَنَ

123. *Kalimat*: literally "words": here used in the sense of Allah's Will or Decree or Purpose. This verse may be taken to be the sum of the verses following. In everything Abraham fulfilled Allah's wish: he purified Allah's house: he built the sacred refuge of the Ka'ba; he submitted his will to Allah's, and thus became the type of Islam. He was promised the leadership of the world; he pleaded for his progeny, and his prayer was granted, with the limitation that if his progeny was false to Allah, Allah's promise did not reach the people who proved themselves false.

124. *Imām*: the primary sense is that of being foremost: hence it may mean: (1) leader in religion; (2) leader in congregational prayer; (3) model, pattern, example; (4) a book of guidance and instructions (xi. 17); (5) a book of evidence or record (xxxvi 12). Here, meanings 1 and 3 are implied. In ix. 12 the word is applied to leaders of Unbelief or Blasphemy.

125. The Ka'ba, the House of Allah. Its foundation goes back by Arab tradition to Abraham. Its fourfold character is here referred to (1) It was the centre to which all the Arab tribes resorted for trade; for poetic contests, and for worship. (2) It was sacred territory, and was respected by friend and foe alike. At all seasons, all fighting was and is forbidden within its limits, and even arms are not allowed to be carried, and no game or other thing is allowed to be killed. Like the Cities of Refuge under the Mosaic Dispensation, to which manslayers could flee (Num. xxxv. 6), or the Sanctuaries in Mediaeval Europe, to which criminals could not be pursued. Makkah was recognized by Arab custom as inviolable for the pursuit of revenge or violence. (3) It was a place of prayer: even to-day there is a Station of Abraham. (4) It must be held pure and sacred for all purposes.

Though the verse as a whole is expressed in the First Person Plural, the House is called "My House," to emphasize the personal relation of Allah, the One True God, to it, and repudiate the Polytheism which defiled it before it was purified again by Muhammad.

With Abraham and Ismā'īl,  
That they should sanctify  
My House for those who  
Compass it round, or use it  
As a retreat, or bow, or  
Prostrate themselves (therein<sup>126</sup>  
In prayer).

126. And remember Abraham said:  
"My Lord, make this a City  
Of Peace,<sup>127</sup> and feed its People  
With fruits,<sup>128</sup>—such of them  
As believe in Allah and the Last  
Day."

He said: "(Yea), and such as  
Reject Faith,—for a while  
Will I grant them their pleasure,  
But will soon drive them  
To the torment of Fire,—  
An evil destination (indeed)!"

127. And remember Abraham  
And Ismā'īl raised  
The foundations of the House  
(With this prayer): "Our Lord!  
Accept (this service) from us;  
For Thou art the All-Hearing,  
The All-Knowing.

وَالْمُكْفِينَ وَالرُّكْعَةَ السَّجُودُ

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَهِيمُ رَبِّي أَجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا إِنَّا وَأَرْزُقْ  
أَهْلَهُ مِنَ النَّمَاءِ مَنْ مِنْهُمْ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ  
قَالَ وَمَنْ فَقَرَ فَأَمْتَعْهُ فَلَمَّا كَانُوا أَضْطَرْهُ  
إِلَى عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَنِسَ الْحَمِيرُ

وَإِذْ تَرْفَعُ إِبْرَهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ  
وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَاقْبَلَ  
مَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْغَلِيسُ

126. Four rites are here enumerated, which have now acquired a technical meaning.  
(1) Going round the Ka'ab: *Tawāf*. (2) Retiring to the place as a spiritual retreat, for contemplation and prayer: *I'tikāf*. (3) The posture of bending the back in prayer: *Rukū'*. (4) The posture of prostrating oneself on the ground in prayer: *Sujūd*. The protection of the holy territory is for all, but special cleanliness and purity is required for the sake of the devotees who undertake these rites.

127. The root *salama* in the word *Islam* implies (among other ideas) the idea of Peace and therefore when Makkah is the city of *Islam*, it is also the City of Peace. The same root occurs in the latter part of the name Jerusalem, the Jewish City of Peace. When the day of Jerusalem passed (see verse 134 or 141 below), Makkah became the "New Jerusalem"—or rather the old and original "City of Peace" restored and made universal.

128. The territory of Makkah is barren and rocky, compared with, say, Tāif, a city to the east of Makkah. A prayer for the prosperity of Makkah therefore includes a prayer for the good things of material life.

128. "Our Lord! make of us  
Muslims, bowing to Thy (Will),  
And of our progeny a people  
Muslim, bowing to Thy (Will);  
And show us our places for  
The celebration of (due) rites;  
And turn unto us (in Mercy);  
For Thou art the Oft-Relenting  
Most Merciful.

129. "Our Lord! send amongst them  
A Messenger of their own,  
Who shall rehearse Thy Signs  
To them and instruct them  
In Scripture and Wisdom,  
And purify them:  
For Thou art the Exalted in Might  
The Wise."<sup>129</sup>

## SECTION 16.

130. And who turns away  
From the religion of Abraham  
But such as debase their souls  
With folly? Him We chose<sup>130</sup>

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لِكَ وَمِنْ ذِرَيْتَنَا أَمَّةً  
مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرْنَا مَنَا سَكَنَوْبَ عَلَيْنَا  
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَابُ الرَّحِيمُ



رَبَّنَا وَأَبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَنْذُلُ عَلَيْهِمْ  
إِيمَانِكَ وَيَعْلَمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ  
وَرِزْكَهُمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْغَنِيُّ بِالْحَكِيمُ



وَمَنْ يَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَفَهَ  
نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ أَضْطَفَيْتَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا

129. How beautiful this prayer is, and how aptly it comes in here in the argument! Such Paganism or star-worship or planet-worship as there was in Abraham's time was first cleared out of Makkah by Abraham. This is the chief meaning of "sanctification" or "purification" in ii. 125, although of course physical cleanliness is (in physical conditions) a necessary element of purification in the higher sense. Abraham and his elder son Ismā'il then built the Ka'ba and established the rites and usages of the sacred city. He was thus the founder of the original Islam (which is as old as mankind) in Arabia. As becomes a devout man, he offers and dedicates the work to Allah in humble supplication, addressing Him as the All-Hearing and the All-Knowing. He then asks for a blessing on himself and his progeny generally, both the children of his eldest-born Ismā'il and his younger son Isaac. With prophetic vision he foresees that there will be corruption and backsliding in both branches of his family: Makkah will house 360 idols, and Jerusalem will become a harlot city (Ezekiel xvi. 15), a city of abomination. But the light of Islam will shine, and reclaim the lost people in both branches and indeed in all the world. So he prays for Allah's mercy, addressing Him as the Oft-Relenting, Most Merciful. And finally he foresees in Makkah a Prophet teaching the people as one "of their own" and in their own beautiful Arabic language: he asks for a blessing on Muhammad's ministry, appealing to the Power and Wisdom of Allah.

130. *Istafā*: chose; chose because of purity; chose and purified. It is the same root from which *Al-Mustafā* is derived, one of the titles of Muhammad.

And rendered pure in this world:  
And he will be in the Hereafter  
In the ranks of the Righteous.

131. Behold! his Lord said  
To him: Submit (thy will to Me):"  
He said: "I submit (my will)  
To the Lord and Cherisher  
Of the Universe."
132. And Abraham enjoined  
Upon his sons  
And so did Jacob;  
"Oh my sons! Allah hath chosen  
The Faith for you; then die not  
Except in the state of submission  
(to Me).
133. Were ye witnesses<sup>131</sup>  
When Death appeared before  
Jacob?  
Behold, he said to his sons:  
"What will ye worship after me?"  
They said: "We shall worship  
Thy God and the God of thy  
fathers,"<sup>132</sup>  
Of Abraham, Ismā'il, and Isaac,—  
The One (True) God;  
To Him do we submit."
134. That was a People that hath  
Passed away. They shall reap  
The fruit of what they did,  
And ye of what ye do!

وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمَنِ الْصَّالِحِينَ

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَسْلِمُمْ  
فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَلَمْنَا لِرَبِّ الظَّالِمِينَ

وَوَصَّنِي بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بْنِهِ وَيَعْقُوبَ بْنَهُ  
أَضَطَّفْنَ لَكُمُ الَّذِينَ فَلَمْ تُمُّوْذِنْ إِلَّا  
وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شَهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ إِذْ  
قَالَ لِبْنَيْهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي فَالْوَافِقُونَ  
إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِلَهَ أَبَابِيلَكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمُ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ  
وَإِسْحَاقُ إِلَهًا وَحْدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَكُمْ

131. The whole of the Children of Israel are called to witness one of their slogans, that they worshipped "the God of their fathers." The idea in their minds got narrowed down to that of a tribal God. But they are reminded that their ancestors had the principle of Islam in them,—the worship of Allah, the One True and Universal God. The death-bed scene is described in Jewish tradition.

132. "Fathers" means ancestors, and includes uncles, grand-uncles, as well as direct ascendants.

Ye shall not be asked  
About what they did.<sup>133</sup>

135. They say: "Become Jews  
Or Christians if ye would be guided  
(To salvation)." Say thou:  
"Nay! (I would rather) the Religion  
Of Abraham the True,<sup>134</sup>  
And he joined not gods with Allah."

136. Say ye: "We believe  
In Allah, and the revelation  
Given to us, and to Abraham,  
Ismā'il, Isaac, Jacob,  
And the Tribes, and that given  
To Moses and Jesus, and that given  
To (all) Prophets from their Lord:  
We make no diffrence  
Between one and another of them:  
And we submit to Allah.<sup>135</sup>

137. So if they believe  
As ye believe, they are indeed  
On the right path; but if  
They turn back, it is they  
Who are in schism; but Allah will

مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا سُنُّتُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ [١٧٦]

وَقَالُوا كُوَّا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا

فَلَمَّا لَمَّا إِرْهَمَ حَنِيفًا

وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ [١٧٧]

قُولُوا إِمَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى

إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِنْتَعِيلَ وَإِنْحَقَ وَيَقْوُبَ

وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَى وَعِيسَى وَمَا

أُوتِيَ الْتَّيْبُوكَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا فَرْقَ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ

مِنْهُمْ وَخَنْ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ [١٧٨]

فَإِنَّمَا مَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا أَمْنَتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ أَهْتَدَوْا

وَإِنْ تَوَلُّوا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيَهُمْ

اللهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ [١٧٩]

133. On the Day of Judgment each soul would have to answer for its own deeds: it cannot claim merit from others, nor be answerable for the crimes or sins of others. Here the argument is: if the Jews or Christians claim the merits of Father Abraham and the Patriarchs or of Jesus, we cannot follow them. Because there were righteous men in the past, it cannot help us unless we are ourselves righteous. The doctrine of personal responsibility is a cardinal feature of Islam.

134. *Hanif*: inclined to right opinion, orthodox (in the literal meaning of the Greek words), firm in faith, sound and well-balanced, true. Perhaps the last word, True, sums up most of the other shades.

The Jews, though taught Unity, went after false gods, and the Christians invented the Trinity or borrowed it from Paganism. We go back to the pure, *hanif* doctrine of Abraham, to live and die in faith in the One True God.

135. Here we have the Creed of Islam: to believe in (1) the One Universal God, (2) the Message to us through Muhammad and the Signs (*āyāt*) as interpreted on the basis of personal responsibility, (3) the Message delivered by other Teachers in the past. These are mentioned in three groups: (1) Abraham, Ismā'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes: of these Abraham had apparently a Book (lxxvii. 19) and the others followed his tradition: (2) Moses and Jesus, who each left a scripture: these scriptures are still extant, though =

Suffice thee as against them,<sup>١٣٦</sup>  
And He is the All-Hearing,  
The All-Knowing.

138. (Our religion)  
Takes its hue from Allah<sup>١٣٧</sup>  
And who can give a better hue  
Than Allah. It is He.  
Whom we worship.
139. Say: Will ye dispute  
With us about Allah, seeing  
That He is our Lord  
And your Lord; that we  
Are responsible for our doings  
And ye for yours; and that  
We are sincere (in our faith)  
In Him?
140. Or<sup>١٣٨</sup> do ye say that  
Abraham, Ismā'īl, Isaac,  
Jacob and the Tribes were  
Jews or Christians?  
Say: Do ye know better  
Than Allah? Ah! who  
Is more unjust than those  
Who conceal the testimony

صَبْرَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَخْسَنَ مِنْ اللَّهِ صَبْرَةً  
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَيْدُونَ

قُلْ أَتَحَاجُّنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ بَيْنَ أَرْبَعَكُمْ وَلَنَا  
أَعْنَلَنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْنَلُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُمْ غَلَصُونَ

أَرْتَنُوكُمْ إِنَّا إِزَهَمْنَا وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ  
وَيَسْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى  
قُلْ أَتَأْتَمْ أَغْلَمَ أُمَّةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِنْ كَثَمَ  
شَهَدَةَ عِنْدَهُ مِنْ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ  
يَعْلِمُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

= not in their pristine form; and (3) other scriptures, Prophets, or Messengers of Allah, not specifically mentioned in the Qur-ān (xi. 78). We make no difference between any of these. Their Message (in essentials) was one, and that is the basis of Islam.

136. We are thus in the true line of those who follow the one and indivisible Message of the One Allah, wherever delivered. If others narrow it or corrupt it, it is they who have left the faith and created a division or schism. But Allah sees and knows all. And He will protect His own, and His support will be infinitely more precious than the support which men can give.

137. *Sibgat*: the root-meaning implies a dye or colour.

138. The alternative is with the question in the last verse. Do you dispute with us although we worship the same God as you and claim that ours is the same religion as that of your ancestors? Or do you really assert that Abraham and his son and his sons' sons, who founded the Tribes long before Moses, followed your Jewish religion as you know it? History of course proves that claim absurd. If the Christians claim that these Patriarchs knew of and followed the teaching of Jesus, the claim is still more absurd,—except in the sense of Islam that Allah's teaching is one in all ages.

They have from Allah?  
But Allah is not unmindful  
Of what ye do!

141. That was a people that hath  
Passed away. They shall reap  
The fruit of what they did,  
And ye of what ye do!  
Ye shall not be asked!—  
About what they did.<sup>139</sup>

## SECTION 17.

142. The Fools among the people<sup>140</sup>  
Will say: "What hath turned  
Them from the Qibla<sup>141</sup> to which  
They were used?" Say:  
To Allah belong both East and West:

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

سَيَقُولُ الْفُسَدُهُمْ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَهُمْ عَنْ  
قِبْلِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرُقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ  
يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَطًا مُسْتَقِيمٍ

139. Verse 134 began a certain argument, which is now rounded off in the same words in this verse. The argument is that it is wrong to claim a monopoly for Allah's Message; it is the same for all peoples and in all ages; if it undergoes local variations or variations according to times and seasons those variations pass away. This leads to the argument in the remainder of the Sūra that with the renewal of the Message and the birth of a new People, a new ordinances become appropriate, and they are now expounded.

140. *Nās* =People, the unthinking multitude that sway to and fro, instead of being firm in Allah's Way. The reference here is to the idolaters, the Hypocrites, and the party of Jews who were constantly seeking to "entangle in their talk," Al-Muṣṭafā and his disciples in Madinah even as the Pharisees and the Sadducees of Jesus's day tried to entangle Jesus (Matt. xxii, 15, 23).

141. *Qibla* = the direction to which Muslims turn in prayer. Islam lays great stress on social prayer in order to emphasise our universal Brotherhood and mutual co-operation. For such prayer, order, punctuality, precision, symbolical postures, and a common direction are essential, so that the Imām (leader) and all his congregation may face one way and offer their supplications to Allah. In the early days, before they were organised as a people, they followed as a symbol for their Qibla the sacred city of Jerusalem, sacred both to the Jews and the Christians, the people of the Book. This symbolised their allegiance to the continuity of Allah's revelation. When, despised and persecuted, they were turned out of Makkah and arrived in Madinah, Al-Muṣṭafā under divine direction began to organise its people as an *Ummat*, an independent people, with laws and rituals of their own. At that stage the Ka'ba was established as Qibla, thus going back to the earliest centre, with which the name of Abraham was connected, and traditionally also the name of Adam. Jerusalem still remained (and remains) sacred in the eyes of Islam on account of its past, but Islam is a progressive religion, and its new symbolism enabled it to shake off the tradition of a dead past and usher in the era of untrammelled freedom dear to the spirit of Arabia. The change took place about [16½] months after Hijrat.

He guideth whom He will  
To a Way that is straight.

143. Thus<sup>142</sup> have We made of you  
An *Ummat* justly balanced.<sup>143</sup>  
That ye might be witnesses<sup>144</sup>  
Over the nations,  
And the Messenger a witness  
Over yourselves;  
And We appointed the Qibla  
To which thou wast used,  
Only to test those who followed  
The Messenger from those  
Who would turn on their heels<sup>145</sup>  
(From the Faith). Indeed it was  
(A change) momentous, except  
To those guided by Allah.  
And never would Allah

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتُكَوِّفُوا  
شَهِدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونُ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ  
شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا  
لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ يَنْقُلِبُ عَلَى عَقِيقَتِهِ  
وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكِبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا  
كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ  
لَّهُوَ فَرَحِيمٌ

142 *Thus*: By giving you a Qibla of your own, most ancient in history, and most modern as a symbol of your organisation as a new nation (*Ummat*).

143. *Justly balanced*: The essence of Islam is to avoid all extravagances on either side. It is a sober, practical religion. But the Arabic word (*wasal*) also implies a touch of the literal meaning of Intermediacy. Geographically Arabia is in an intermediate position in the Old World, as was proved in history by the rapid expansion of Islam, north, south, west and east.

144. *Witnesses*: When two persons dispute, they advance extravagant claims. A just witness comes between them, and brings the light of reason to bear on them, pruning all their selfish extravagances. So the mission of Islam is to curb, for instance, the extreme formalism of the Mosaic law and the extreme "other-worldliness" professed by Christianity. The witness must be unselfish, equipped with first-hand knowledge, and ready to intervene in the cause of justice. Such is the position claimed by Islam among rival systems. Similarly, within Islam itself, the position of witness to whom disputants can appeal is held by Muhammad Al-Muṣṭafā.

145. The Qibla of Jerusalem might itself have seemed strange to the Arabs, and the change from it to the Ka'ba might have seemed strange after they had become used to the other. In reality one direction or another, or east or west, in itself did not matter. What mattered was the sense of discipline, on which Islam lays so much stress: which of us is willing to follow the directions of the chosen Prophet of Allah? Mere quibblers about non-essential matters are tested by this.

Make your faith of no effect.<sup>146</sup>  
 For Allah is to all people  
 Most surely full of Kindness,  
 Most Merciful.

144. We see the turning  
 Of thy face (for guidance)  
 To the heavens:<sup>147</sup> now  
 Shall We turn thee  
 To a Qibla that shall  
 Please thee. Turn then  
 Thy face in the direction  
 Of the Sacred Mosque:<sup>148</sup>  
 Wherever ye are, turn  
 Your faces in that direction.

قَدْ رَأَى تَعْلُبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ فَلَنُؤْلِنَّكَ  
 قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوْلَ وَجْهَكَ شَطَرَ الْمَسْجِدِ  
 الْحَرَامِ وَحِيثُ مَا كُنْتَ فَوْلًا وَجْهَكَمْ شَطَرًا  
 وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَوْفُوا الْكِتَابَ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ

146. What became of prayer with the Jerusalem Qibla? It was equally efficacious before the new Qibla was ordained. Allah regards our faith: every act of true and genuine faith is efficacious with Him, even if formalists pick holes in such acts.

147. This shows the sincere desire of Al-Muṣṭafā to seek light from above in the matter of the Qibla. Until the organisation of his own People into a well-knit community, with its distinctive laws and ordinances, he followed a practice based on the fact that the Jews and Christians looked upon Jerusalem as a sacred city. But there was no universal Qibla among them. Some Jews turned towards Jerusalem, especially during the Captivity, as we shall see later. At the time of our Prophet, Jerusalem was in the hands of the Byzantine Empire, which was Christian. But the Christians oriented their churches to the East (hence the word "orientation"), which is a point of the compass, and not the direction of any sacred place. The fact of the altar being in the East does not mean that every worshipper has his face to the east; for, according at least to modern practice, the seats in a church are so placed that different worshippers may face in different directions. The Preacher of Unity naturally wanted, in this as in other matters, a symbol of complete unity, and his heart was naturally delighted when the Qibla towards the Ka'ba was settled. Its connection with Abraham gave it great antiquity: its character of being an Arab centre made it appropriate when the Message came in Arabic, and was preached through the union of the Arabs: at the time it was adopted, the little Muslim community was shut out of it, being exiles in Madinah but it became a symbol of hope and eventual triumph, of which Muhammad lived to see the fulfilment; and it also became the centre and gathering ground of all peoples in the universal pilgrimage, which was instituted with it.

148. *The Sacred Mosque*: i.e. the mosque wherein the Ka'ba is located, in the sacred city of Makkah. It is not correct to suggest that the command making the Ka'ba the Qibla abrogates ii. 115, where it is stated that East and West belong to Allah. This is perfectly true at all times, before and after the institution of the Qibla. As if to emphasise this, the same words about East and West are repeated in this very passage; see ii. 142 above. Where the *Itqān* mentions *mansūkh* in this connection. I am sorry I cannot follow that opinion, unless *mansūkh* is defined in a special way, as some of the commentators do.

The people of the Book<sup>149</sup>  
Know well that that is  
The truth from their Lord,  
Nor is Allah unmindful  
Of what they do.

145. Even if thou wert to bring  
To the people of the Book  
All the Signs (together),  
They would not follow  
Thy Qibla; nor art thou  
Going to follow their Qibla;  
Nor indeed will they follow<sup>150</sup>  
Each other's Qibla. If thou  
After the knowledge hath reached  
thee,
- Wert to follow their (vain)  
Desires,—then wert thou  
Indeed (clearly) in the wrong.

146. The people of the Book  
Know this as they know

مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُنَهِّ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ

وَلَيْنَ أَتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا الْكِتَبَ بِكُلِّهَا يَةً مَّا  
تَعْمَلُوا قَبْلَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قَبْلَهُمْ وَمَا  
يَعْصُمُهُمْ يَتَابِعُونَ قَبْلَهُمْ بَعْضٌ وَلَيْنَ أَتَبَعْتَ  
أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ  
إِنَّكَ إِذَا لَمْ يَأْتِكَ الظَّلَالِمُونَ

الَّذِينَ أَتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَبَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ

149. Glimmerings of such a Qibla were already foreshadowed in Jewish and Christian practice but its universality was only perfected in Islam.

150. See n. 147 to ii. 144 above.

The Jews and Christians had a glimmering of the Qibla idea, but in their attitude of self-sufficiency they were not likely to welcome the Qibla idea as perfected in Islam. Nor is Islam, after the fuller knowledge which it has received, likely to revert to the uncertain, imperfect, and varying ideas of orientation held previously.

A very clear glimpse of the old Jewish practice in the matter of the Qibla and the importance attached to it is found in the book of Daniel, vi. 10. Daniel was a righteous man of princely lineage and lived about 606-538 B.C. He was carried off to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrian, but was still living when Assyria was overthrown by the Medes and Persians. In spite of the "captivity" of the Jews, Daniel enjoyed the highest offices of state at Babylon, but he was ever true to Jerusalem. His enemies (under the Persian monarch) got a penal law passed against any one who "asked a petition of any god or man for 30 days" except the Persian King. But Daniel continued true to Jerusalem. "His windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."

Their own sons,<sup>151</sup> but some  
Of them conceal the truth  
Which they themselves know.

147. The Truth is from thy Lord;<sup>152</sup>  
So be not at all in doubt.

## SECTION 18.

148. To each is a goal  
To which Allah<sup>153</sup> turns him;  
Then strive together (as in a race)  
Towards all that is good.  
Wheresoever ye are,  
Allah will bring you  
Together. For Allah  
Hath power over all things.
149. From whencesoever  
Thou startest forth,<sup>154</sup> turn

أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَلَنْ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لِيَكُنُّوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَهُمْ

يَعْلَمُونَ

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُمْتَنَّينَ

وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ مُوْلَاهَا فَاسْتِقْوَذُ الْخَيْرَاتِ أَيْنَ  
مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَيِّعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ  
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

وَمَنْ حَيَثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوْلِ وَجْهَكَ شَطَرٌ

151. The People of the Book should have known all this as well as "they knew their own sons," as their past traditions and teaching should have made them receptive of the new Message. Some commentators construe the demonstrative pronoun "this" to refer to the Prophet. In that case the interpretation would be: The People of the Book know Muhammad as well as they know their own sons: they know him to be true and upright; they know him to be in the line of Abraham: they know him to correspond to the description of the prophet foretold among themselves: but selfishness induces some of them to act against their own knowledge and conceal the truth.

152. Truth only comes from Allah, and it remains truth, however men might try to conceal it or throw doubts on it.

153. The question is how we are to construe the pronoun *huwa* in the original. The alternative translation would be: "To each is a goal to which he turns".

The simile of life being a race in which we all zealously run forward to the one goal, *viz.*, the goal of good, may be applied individually and nationally. This supplies another argument of the Ka'ba Qibla, *viz.*, the unity of goal, with diversity of races, traditions and temperaments.

154. The simile of a race is continued, and so the Qibla command is repeated from that point of view. In ii. 144 it was mentioned as the new symbol of the new nation (Muslim); now it is shown as the symbol of Good, at which we should all aim, from whichever point we started, *e.g.* as Jews or Christians, or our individual point of view; the Qibla will unite us as a symbol of the Goal of the Future. In ii. 150 below, it is repeated: first for the individual, on the ground of uniformity and the removal of all occasions of dispute and argument; and secondly for the Muslim people, on the same ground, as a matter of discipline. There is another little harmony in the matter of the =

Thy face in the direction  
Of the Sacred Mosque;  
That is indeed the truth  
From thy Lord. And Allah  
Is not unmindful  
Of what ye do.

150. So from whencesoever  
Thou startest forth, turn  
Thy face in the direction  
Of the Sacred Mosque;  
And wheresoever ye are,  
Turn your face thither:  
That there be no ground  
Of dispute against you  
Among the people.  
Except those of them that are  
Bent on wickedness; so fear  
Them not, but fear Me;  
And that I may complete  
My favours on you, and ye  
May (consent to) be guided;
151. A similar (favour  
Have ye already received)<sup>155</sup>  
In that We have sent  
Among you a Messenger  
Of your own, rehearsing to you

الْمَسْجِدُ الْعَرَامُ وَإِنَّهُ لِلْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا

اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ عَمَانَعْمَلُونَ

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ مَرَّجْتَ قَوْلَ وَجْهَكَ شَطَرَ الْمَسْجِدِ  
الْعَرَامِ وَحِينَ مَا كُنْتَ فَوْلَأُ وَجْهَكَ  
شَطَرَهُ لِتَلَاءِكَوْنَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا  
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَخْشُوْهُمْ وَأَخْشُوْنِي  
وَلَا تَمْسِيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ

١٥١

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيْكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتَلَوَّ  
عَلَيْكُمْ مَا إِنْتُمْ بِهِ كَيْفَ كُنْتُمْ وَيَعْلَمُكُمْ

= repetitions. Note that the race and starting point argument begins at ii. 149 and is rounded off in the first part of ii. 150; while the national and general argument beginning at ii. 144 is rounded off in the latter part of ii. 150. The latter argument includes the former, and is more widely worded: "wheresoever ye are": which in the Arabic expression would imply three things: in whatever circumstances ye are, or at whatever time ye are, or in whatever place ye are. I have spoken before of a sort of musical harmony in verbal repetitions: here there is a sort of pictorial harmony, as of a larger circle symmetrically including smaller concentric circles.

155. This verse should be read with ii. 150, of which the sentence is here completed. The argument is that in the grant of the Ka'ba Qibla, God was perfecting religion and fulfilling the prayer for the future made by Abraham. That prayer was threefold: (1) That Makkah should be made a sacred Sanctuary (ii. 126); (2) that a truly believing (Muslim) nation should be raised, with places of devotion there (ii. 128); and (3) that an Apostle should be sent among the Arabs with certain qualities (ii. 129), which are set out there and again repeated here to complete the argument.

Our Signs, and purifying  
You, and instructing you  
In Scripture and Wisdom,  
And in new Knowledge.

152. Then do ye remember<sup>156</sup>  
Me; I will remember  
You. Be grateful to Me,  
And reject not Faith.

## SECTION 19.

153. O ye who believe! seek help  
With patient Perseverance<sup>157</sup>  
And Prayer: for God is with those  
Who patiently persevere.
154. And say not of those  
Who are slain in the way<sup>158</sup>  
Of Allah: "They are dead."  
Nay, they are living,  
Though ye perceive (it) not.
155. Be sure we shall test you  
With something of fear

الْكِتَبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَا لَمْ تَكُونُوا

تَعْلَمُونَ

فَإِذْكُرُوهُنَّ أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوأَلِّي وَلَا

تَكُفُّرُونَ

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ إِمَّا أَمْنَأُوا أَسْتَعْنُوا بِالصَّابِرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

وَلَا نَقُولُ أَلَمْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتٌ بَلْ

أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَكِنَ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

وَلَنَبْلُوْنَكُمْ بِئْنَىٰ مِنَ الْخُوفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصِ

156. The word “remember” is too pale a word for *zikr*, which has now acquired a large number of associations in our religious literature. In its verbal signification it implies: to remember: to praise by frequently mentioning: to rehearse; to celebrate or commemorate: to make much of: to cherish the memory of as a precious possession.

157. See ii. 45 and n. An additional meaning implied in *sabr* is self-restraint. Haqqāni defines it in his *Tafsīr* as following Reason and restraining Fear, Anger, and Desire. What can be a higher reward for patience, perseverance, self-restraint and constancy than that Allah should be with us? For this promise opens the door to every kind of spiritual well-being.

158. The “patient perseverance and prayer” mentioned in the last verse is not mere passivity. It is active striving in the way of Truth, which is the way of Allah. Such striving is the spending of one’s self in Allah’s way, either through our property or through our own lives, or the lives of those nearest and dearest to us, or it may be the loss of all the fruits of a lifetime’s labour not only in material goods but in some intellectual or moral gain, some position which seemed in our eyes to be eminently desirable in itself, but which we must cheerfully sacrifice if necessary for the Cause. With such sacrifice; our apparent loss may be our real gain: he that loses his life may really gain it; and the rewards or “fruits” that seem lost were mere impediments on our path to real inward progress.

And hunger, some loss  
In goods, lives and the fruits  
(Of your toil), but give  
Glad tidings<sup>159</sup> to those  
Who patiently persevere,-

156. Who say, when afflicted  
With calamity: "To Allah  
We belong, and to Him  
Is our return":-
157. They are those on whom  
(Descend) blessings from their Lord,  
And Mercy.  
And they are the ones  
That receive guidance.
158. Behold! Safa and Marwa  
Are among the Symbols<sup>160</sup>  
Of Allah. So if those who visit  
The House<sup>161</sup> in the Season  
Or at other times,

١٥٩. مِنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْثُرِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَتَسْرِيرُ  
الصَّبَرِينَ

الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمْ مُّصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ  
رَجُعُونَ

أَوْلَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ  
وَأَوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهَنَّدُونَ

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَارِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ  
أَبْيَنَ أَوْ أَعْتَمَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطْرُفَ

159. The glad tidings are the blessings of Allah in ii. 157 or (which is the same thing) the promise in ii. 153 that Allah will be with them.

160. The virtue of patient perseverance in faith leads to the mention of two symbolic monuments of that virtue. These are the two little hills of Safā and Marwā now absorbed in the city of Makkah and close to the well of Zam-zam. Here, according to tradition, the lady Hajar, mother of the infant Ismā'il, prayed for water in the parched desert, and in her eager quest round these hills, she found her prayer answered and saw the Zam-zam spring. Unfortunately the Pagan Arabs had placed a male and a female idol here, and their gross and superstitious rites caused offence to the early Muslims. They felt some hesitation in going round these places during the Pilgrimage. As a matter of fact they should have known that the Ka'ba (the House of Allah) had been itself defiled with idols, and was sanctified again by the purity of Muḥammad's life and teaching. The lesson is that the most sacred things may be turned to the basest uses; that we are not therefore necessarily to ban a thing misused; that if our intentions and life are pure. Allah will recognise them even if the world cast stones at us because of some evil associations which they join with what we do, or with the people we associate with, or with the places which claim our reverence.

161. *The House* = the Sacred Mosque, the Ka'ba. The Season of regular Hajj culminates in the visit to Arafāt on the ninth day of the month of Zul-hijja, followed by the circumambulation of the Ka'ba. A visit to the Sacred Mosque and the performance of the rites of pilgrimage at any other time is called an '*Umra*'. The rites are the same in either case, except that the 'Arafāt rites are omitted in the '*Umra*'. The Safā and Marwā are included among the Monuments, as pointing to one of the highest of Muslim virtues.

Should compass them round,  
It is no sin in them.  
And if any one obeyeth his own  
Impulse to Good,<sup>162</sup>  
Be sure that Allah  
Is He Who recogniseth  
And knoweth.

159. Those who conceal  
The clear (Signs) We have  
Sent down, and the Guidance,  
After We have made it  
Clear for the People  
In the Book,—on them  
Shall be Allah's curse,  
And the curse of those  
Entitled to curse.—<sup>163</sup>

160. Except those who repent  
And make amends  
And openly declare (the Truth):  
To them I turn;  
For I am Oft-Returning,  
Most Merciful.

161. Those who reject Faith.  
And die rejecting,—  
On them is Allah's curse,  
And the curse of angels,  
And of all mankind;

بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَطَعَّعَ حَذَرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلَيْهِ

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنزَلَنَا مِنَ الْبِيِّنَاتِ  
وَالْمَدْعَى مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَكُنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ  
أُولَئِكَ يَأْلَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَأْلَمُهُمُ الْعَذَابُ

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُوا فَأُولَئِكَ  
أَوْبَأْتُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا التَّوَابُ الرَّحِيمُ

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ مَا تُؤْمِنُ هُمْ كُفَّارٌ أُولَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ  
لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالنَّجَّابَةُ وَالنَّاسُ أَجْمَعُونَ

162. The impulse should be to Good; if once we are sure of this, we must obey it without hesitation, whatever people may say.

163. *Those entitled to curse:* i.e., angels and mankind (see ii. 161 below): the cursed ones will deprive themselves of the protection of Allah and of the angles, and of the good wishes of mankind, because by contumaciously rejecting Faith, they not only sin against Allah but are false to their own manhood, which Allah created in the "best of moulds" (Q. xciv. 4). The terrible curses denounced in the Old Testament are set out in Deut. xxviii. 15-68. There is one difference. Here it is for the deliberate rejection of Faith, a theological term for the denying of our higher nature. There it is for a breach of the least part of the ceremonial Law.

162. They will abide therein:<sup>164</sup>  
 Their penalty will not  
 Be lightened, nor will  
 Respite be their (lot).

163. And your God  
 Is One God:  
 There is no god  
 But He,  
 Most Gracious,  
 Most Merciful.<sup>165</sup>

## SECTION 20.

164. Behold! In the creation  
 Of the heavens and the earth;  
 In the alternation  
 Of the Night and the Day;  
 In the sailing of the ships  
 Through the Ocean  
 For the profit of mankind;  
 In the rain which Allah  
 Sends down from the skies,  
 And the life which He gives  
 therewith  
 To an earth that is dead;  
 In the beasts of all kinds  
 That He scatters  
 Through the earth;  
 In the change of the winds,  
 And the clouds which they

خَلِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُنْهَى عَنْهُمُ الْمَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ

يُنْظَرُونَ

وَإِلَهُكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَحْدَهُ لَا إِلَهٌ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ

الْأَجِيمُ

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَآخِلَافِ  
 أَيْنِلَ وَأَنْهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ أُلَّا تَجْعَلْ فِي الْأَبْرَارِ  
 بِمَا يَنْعَمُ النَّاسُ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَا  
 فَأَنْجَى بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَ فِيهَا مِنْ  
 كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَنَصْرِيفُ الرِّيحَ وَالشَّاحِبَ  
 الْمُسَحَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَيَدِنْتِ  
 لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

164. *Therein* = in the curse. A curse is not a matter of words: it is a terrible state, opposite to the state of Grace. Can man curse? Not of course in the same sense in which we speak of the curse of Allah. A mere verbal curse is of no effect. Hence the English saying: "A causeless curse will not come." But if men are oppressed or unjustly treated, their cries can ascend to Allah in prayer, and then it becomes Allah's "wrath" or curse, the deprivation of Allah's Grace as regards the wrong-doer.

165. Where the terrible consequences of Evil, i.e., the rejection of Allah, are mentioned, there is always stress laid on Allah's attributes of Grace and Mercy. In this case Unity is also stressed, because we have just been told about the Qibla symbol of unity and are about to pass the theme of unity in diversity, in Nature and in the social laws of human society.

Trail like their slaves  
Between the sky and the earth;—  
(Here) indeed are Signs  
For a people that are wise.<sup>166</sup>

165. Yet there are men  
Who take (for worship)  
Others besides Allah,  
As equal (with Allah):  
They love them  
As they should love Allah.  
But those of Faith are  
Overflowing in their love  
For Allah. If only  
The unrighteous could see,  
Behold, they would see  
The Punishment: that to Allah  
Belongs all power, and Allah

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَتَعَجَّلُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا  
يُجْبِيْهُمْ كَعْبَتِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءامَنُوا أَشَدُ حُبًّا  
لِلَّهِ وَلَنَرِى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ  
الْقُوَّةُ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَكِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ١٦٦

166. This magnificent Nature passage stands out like a hill in a landscape, enhancing the beauty of our view, and preparing us for the every-day laws and ordinances which follow.

Note its literary architecture. Allah is one: and among His wondrous Signs is the unity of design in the widest diversity of Nature. The Signs are taken from the features of beauty, power, and utility to man himself, and lead up to an appeal to Man's own intelligence and wisdom. We begin with the glory of the heavens and the earth, the wide spaces covered by man's imagination, remote and yet so near to his own life. The most striking every-day phenomenon resulting from the interrelations of the heavens and the earth is the alternation of day and night, regular and yet changing in duration with the Seasons and the latitudes of our globe. The night for rest, and the day for work: and we can think of the work in terms of nature's beauty; the stately ships "flowing" (as the original text has it) across the seas, for communications and merchandise as between men and men. The seas thus serve us no less than land, and the give-and-take as between sea, sky, and land, is further exemplified by the rain. The rain leads to the fertility of land, and here we are reminded of the contrast between the Winter's death of Nature and her revivification in the Spring. Here we are reminded of agriculture and the use we make of cattle and all kinds of living creatures. The word translated "beasts" has a wide meaning, including crawling creatures, insects, etc.—all contributing to the round of Nature's operations. This leads us on to the wonderful winds, the region of the air, which man is just beginning to explore and navigate. The personified winds drive the clouds in the sky like "slaves." Here is another aspect of clouds besides that of giving rain. The fleecy clouds are things of sunset beauty; at mid-day they temper the glare of the sun; at all times they affect radiation and other processes going on in the sky. So we come back to the sky, rounding off the argument, and correlating our human life with the Will and Power of Allah, if we had the wisdom to see!

Will strongly enforce  
The Punishment.<sup>167</sup>

166. Then would those  
Who are followed  
Clear themselves of those  
Who follow (them):  
They would see the Chastisement  
And all relations  
Between them would be cut off.
167. And those who followed  
Would say: "If only  
We had one more chance,  
We would clear ourselves  
Of them, as they have  
Cleared themselves of us."  
Thus will Allah show them  
(The fruits of) their deeds  
As (nothing but) regrets.  
Nor will there be a way  
For them out of the Fire.<sup>168</sup>

إذْ تَبَرَّأُ الَّذِينَ أَتَيْعُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَتَبَعُوا وَرَأَوْا

الْكَذَابَ وَنَقَطَعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أَتَبَعُوا لَوْلَا كَرِهَ لَنَا كَرِهٌ فَنَتَرَأَ مِنْهُمْ  
كَمَا تَبَرَّءُ وَأَمِنَّا كَذَلِكَ يُرِيهُمُ اللَّهُ أَغْمَانَهُمْ

حَسَرَتِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِحَزِيرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ

167. Everything around and within us points to unity of purpose and design,—points to Allah. Yet there are foolish persons (unrighteous = those who deliberately use the choice given them to go wrong). They think something else is equal to Allah. Perhaps they even do lip service to Allah, but their heart is in their fetish,—unlike the heart of the righteous, who are wholly devoted and absorbed in the love of Allah. If only the unrighteous could see the consequences, they would see the terrible Penalty, and that all Power is in Allah's hands, not in that of any one else. Who are these others who are used as fetishes by the misguided? It may be: (1) creatures of their own imagination, or of their faculties misused; the idea lying behind idols is akin to this, for no intelligent idol-worshipper owns to worshipping stocks and stones; or (2) good leaders whose names have been misused out of perversity to erect them to a position of equality with Allah; or (3) Powers of evil that deliberately mislead. When it comes to the inevitable consequences of blasphemy and the rejection of Allah, the eyes of all are opened and these false and artificial relations dissolve. The idea which was created into a fetish disowns its follower, i.e. is seen to have no reasonable basis in the life of the follower, and the follower is forced to renounce it as false. The good leaders whose names were misused would of course disown the misuse of their names, and the evil ones would take an unholy delight in exposing the facts. The Reality is now irresistible, but alas! at what cost?

168. Cf. iii. 156, viii 36, xix. 39, lxix. 50, xxv. 23.

## SECTION 21.

168. O ye people!

Eat of what is on earth,  
Lawful and good;<sup>169</sup>  
And do not follow  
The footsteps of Satan  
For he is to you  
An avowed enemy.

169. For he commands you  
What is evil  
And shameful,  
And that ye should say  
Of Allah that of which  
Ye have no knowledge.

170. When it is said to them:  
“Follow what Allah hath revealed.”  
They say: “Nay! we shall follow  
The ways of our fathers.”  
What! even though their fathers  
Were void of wisdom and guidance?

171. The parable of those  
Who reject Faith is  
As if one were to shout  
Like a goat-herd, to things

يَأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوْمَاتِيْنِ الْأَرْضِ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا  
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوْتَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ

مَيْنَ

إِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُم بِالسَّوْءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا  
عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَتَيْعُوْمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا إِنَّنِي شَيْعَ  
مَا أَفْلَقَنَا عَلَيْهِ إِنَّا نَأْتُ بِأَنْوَكَاتَ مَآبَاتِهِمْ  
لَا يَعْقِلُونَ سَيِّئًا لَا يَهْتَدُونَ

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلُ الَّذِي يَسْعِيْ بِمَا  
لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَنِذَاءً صَمْ بِكُمْ عَمَّى فَهُمْ  
لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

169. We now come to the regulations about food. First (ii. 168-71) we have an appeal to all people, Muslims, Pagans, as well as the People of the Book; then (ii 172-73) to the Muslims specially; then (ii. 174-76) to the sort of men who then (as some do now) either believe in too much formalism or believe in no restrictions at all. Islam follows the Golden Mean. All well-regulated societies lay down reasonable limitations. These become incumbent on all loyal members of any given society, and show what is "lawful" in that society. But if the limitations are reasonable, as they should be, the "lawful" will also coincide more and more with what is "good."

*Good: Taiyib* = Pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing, pleasing to the taste.

The general principle then would be: what is lawful and what is good, should be followed, not what is evil, or shameful, or foisted on by false ascription to divine injunctions, or what rests merely on the usage of ancestors, even though the ancestors were ignorant or foolish. An example of a shameful custom would be that among the Pagan Arabs of taking congealed blood and eating it fried.

That listen to nothing  
But calls and cries;<sup>170</sup>  
Deaf, dumb, and blind.<sup>171</sup>  
They are void of wisdom.

172. O ye who believe!  
Eat of the good things  
That We have provided for you.  
And be grateful to Allah,  
If it is Him ye worship.<sup>172</sup>
173. He hath only forbidden you  
Dead meat,<sup>173</sup> and blood,  
And the flesh of swine,  
And that on which  
Any other name hath been invoked  
Besides that of Allah.<sup>174</sup>  
But if one is forced by necessity,  
Without wilful disobedience,

يَتَأْكِلُونَ مَا لَمْ يُنَاهَىٰ إِذْنَنَا مَا كُلُّواٰ مِنْ طِبَّتِ مَا  
رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ مَا كُنْتُمْ بِإِيمَانِ  
تَبَدُّلُونَ

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَنْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ  
الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أَهْلَكَ لِيَغْنِي اللَّهُ عَنْ قَنْدَلِ  
غَيْرِ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

170. If you reject all faith, the highest wisdom and the most salutary regulations are lost on you. You are like "dumb driven cattle" who can merely hear calls, but cannot distinguish intelligently between shades of meaning or subtle differences of values.

171. Cf. ii. 18, where we are told that the rejectors of faith are "deaf, dumb and blind: they will not return to the path." Here the consequence of their not using their senses is that they have no wisdom. In each context there is just the appropriate deduction.

172. Gratitude for Allah's gifts is one form of worship.

173. Dead meat: *maitat*: carrion: animal that dies of itself: the original Arabic has a slightly wider meaning given to it in *Fiqh* (Religious Law): anything that dies of itself and is not expressly killed for food with the *Takbir* duly pronounced on it. But there are exceptions, e.g., fish and locusts are lawful, though they have not been made specially *halal* with the *Takbir*.

174. For prohibited foods, cf. Also Q. v. 3-4 vi. 121, 138-146: etc. The teachers of *Fiqh* (Religious Law) work out the details with great elaboration. My purpose is to present general principles, not technical details. Carrion or dead meat and blood as articles of food would obviously cause disgust to any refined person. So would swine's flesh where the swine live on offal. Where swine are fed artificially on clean food, the objections remain: (1) that they are filthy animals in other respects, and the flesh of filthy animals taken as food affects the eater; (2) that swine's flesh has more fat than muscle-building material; and (3) that it is more liable to disease than other kinds of meat; e.g., trichinosis, characterised by hair-like worms in the muscular tissue. As to food dedicated to idols or false gods, it is obviously unseemly for the Children of Unity to partake of it.

Nor transgressing due limits,--  
Then is he guiltless.  
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving  
Most Merciful.

174. Those who conceal  
Allah's revelations in the Book,  
And purchase for them  
A miserable profit,--  
They swallow into themselves<sup>١٧٥</sup>  
Naught but Fire;  
Allah will not address them  
On the Day of Resurrection,  
Nor purify them:  
Grievous will be  
Their Chastisement.
175. They are the ones  
Who buy Error  
In place of Guidance  
And Torment in place  
Of Forgiveness.  
Ah! what boldness  
(They show) for the Fire!
176. (Their doom is) because  
Allah sent down the Book  
In truth but those who seek  
Causes of dispute in the Book

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ  
الْكِتَابِ وَيَشْرُونَ بِهِ مُنَافِلًا لَا أُولَئِكَ  
مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا أَثَارَوْلَا  
يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيُهُمْ  
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

١٧٥

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَشَرَّوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ  
وَالْعَذَابَ بِالْغَفْرَةِ قَمَّا أَصْبَرُهُمْ  
عَلَى النَّارِ

١٧٦

ذَلِكَ يَأْنَ اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ  
الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَوْ شَاقَ بَعْدِهِ

١٧٧

175. "They eat nothing but fire into their bellies" is a literal translation that produces an effect of rude inelegance which is not in the Arabic words. Even in the matter of food and drinks, the mission of Islam is to avoid the extremes of lawlessness on the one hand and extreme formalism on the other. It has laid down a few simple and very reasonable rules. Their infraction causes loss of health or physical powers in any case. But if there is further a spirit of subjective rebellion or fraud-passing off in the name of religion something which is far from the purpose,-the consequences become also moral and spiritual. Then it becomes a sin against Faith and Spirit. Continuing the physical simile, we actually swallow fire into ourselves. Imagine the torments which we should have if we swallowed fire into our physical body! They would be infinitely worse in our spiritual state, and they would go on to the Day of Resurrection, when we shall be deprived even of the words which the Judge speaks to a reasonable culprit, and we shall certainly not win His Grace and Mercy.

Are in a schism<sup>176</sup>  
Far (from the purpose).

## SECTION 22.

177. It is not righteousness  
That ye turn your faces  
Towards East or West;  
But it is righteousness<sup>177</sup>  
To believe in Allah<sup>178</sup>  
And the Last Day,  
And the Angels,  
And the Book,  
And the Messengers;  
To spend of your substance,<sup>179</sup>  
Out of love for Him,  
For your kin,  
For orphans,  
For the needy,  
For the wayfarer,

لَيْسَ الْإِيمَانُ تُولُوا أُجُوهَكُمْ قَبْلَ الْمَشْرِقِ  
وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَلَكِنَّ الْإِيمَانُ مَنْ أَمَنَ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
الْآخِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالثَّيْمَنَ  
وَإِنَّ الْمَالَ عَلَى حُكْمِهِ دَوِيَ الْفُرْقَادِ  
وَالْيَتَامَى وَالسَّكِينَ وَأَبْنَ السَّبِيلِ  
وَالسَّالِيَّةِ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ  
وَإِنَّ الزَّكُوةَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يَعْهِدُهُمْ إِذَا

176. From the mere physical regulation we are at once lifted up into the sphere of morals and faith. For the one acts and reacts on the other. If we are constantly carping at wholesome regulations, we shall do nothing but cause division and schisms among the people, and ordered society would tend to break up.

177. As if to emphasise again a warning against deadening formalism, we are given a beautiful description of the righteous and God-fearing man. He should obey salutary regulations, but he should fix his gaze on the love of Allah and the love of his fellow-men. We are given four heads: (1) our faith should be true and sincere; (2) we must be prepared to show it in deeds of charity to our fellow-men; (3) we must be good citizens, supporting social organisation; and (4) our own individual soul must be firm and unshaken in all circumstances. They are interconnected, and yet can be viewed separately.

178. Faith is not merely a matter of words. We must realise the presence and goodness of Allah. When we do so, the scales fall from our eyes: all the falsities and fleeting nature of the Present cease to enslave us, for we see the Last Day as if it were to-day. We also see Allah's working in His world and in us: His angles, His Messengers and His Message are no longer remote from us, but come within our experience.

179. Practical deeds of charity are of value when they proceed from love, and from no other motive. In this respect, also, our duties take various forms, which are shown in reasonable gradation: our kith and kin; orphans (including any persons who are without support or help); people who are in real need but who never ask (it is our duty to find them out, and they come before those who ask); the stranger, who is entitled to laws of hospitality; the people who ask and are entitled to ask, i.e., not merely lazy beggars, but those who seek our assistance in some form or another (it is our duty to respond to them); and the slaves (we must do all we can to give or buy their freedom). Slavery has many insidious forms, and all are included.

For those who ask,  
And for the ransom of slaves;  
To be steadfast in prayer,<sup>180</sup>  
And give Zakat,  
To fulfil the contracts  
Which ye have made;  
And to be firm and patient,<sup>181</sup>  
In pain (or suffering)  
And adversity,  
And throughout  
All periods of panic.  
Such are the people  
Of truth, the God-fearing.

178. O ye who believe!  
The law of equality<sup>182</sup>

عَنْهُدُوا وَأَلْصَابِرُ فِي الْأَسَاءَ وَالضَّرَاءِ وَجِنَانَ  
أَبْنَاسٌ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ  
الْمُنَّفِّعُونَ

يَتَاهُ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا كُثُبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِسْطَاصُ فِي

180. Charity and piety in individual cases do not complete our duties. In prayer and charity, we must also look to our organised efforts: where there is a Muslim State, these are made through the State, in facilities for public prayer, and public assistance, and for the maintenance of contracts and fair dealing in all matters.

181. Then come the Muslim virtues of firmness and patience. They are to "preserve the dignity of man, with soul erect" (Burns). Three sets of circumstances are specially mentioned for the exercise of this virtue: (1) bodily pain or suffering, (2) adversities or injuries of all kinds, deserved and undeserved, and (3) periods of public panic, such as war, violence, pestilence, etc.

182. Note first that this verse and the next make it clear that Islam has much mitigated the horrors of the pre-Islamic custom of retaliation. In order to meet the strict claims of justice, equality is prescribed, with a strong recommendation for mercy and forgiveness. To translate *qisâs*, therefore, by retaliation, is I think incorrect. The Latin legal term *Lex Talionis* may come near it, but even that is modified here. In any case it is best to avoid technical terms for things that are very different. "Retaliation" in English has a wider meaning, equivalent almost to returning evil for evil, and would more fitly apply to the blood-feuds of the Days of Ignorance. Islam says: if you *must* take a life for a life, at least there should be some measure of equality in it, the killing of the slave of a tribe should not involve a blood feud where many free men would be killed; but the law of mercy, where it can be obtained by consent, with reasonable compensation, would be better.

Our law of equality only takes account of three conditions in civil society: free for free, slave for slave, woman for woman. Among free men or woman, all are equal: you cannot ask that because a wealthy, or high-born, or influential man is killed, his life is equal to two or three lives among the poor or the lowly. Nor, in cases of murder, can you go into the value or abilities of a slave. A woman is mentioned separately because her position as a mother or an economic worker is different. She does not form a third class, but a division in the other two classes. One life having been lost, do not waste =

Is prescribed to you  
In cases of murder:<sup>183</sup>  
The free for the free,  
The slave for the slave,  
The woman for the woman.  
But if any remission  
Is made by the brother<sup>184</sup>  
Of the slain, then grant  
Any reasonable demand,<sup>185</sup>  
And compensate him  
With handsome gratitude.  
This is a concession  
And a Mercy  
From your Lord.  
After this whoever  
Exceeds the limits  
Shall be in grave chastisement.

179. In the Law of Equality  
There is (saving of) Life  
To you. O ye men of  
understanding;  
That ye may  
Restrain yourselves.
180. It is prescribed,  
When death approaches  
Any of you, if he leave  
Any goods, that he make a bequest

الْفَنَلُ الْخَرِبُ يَا الْخَرِبُ وَالْمَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأَبْنَى يَا الْأَبْنَى  
فَمَنْ عَفَى لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَإِلَيْهِ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ  
وَأَدَاءٌ إِلَيْهِ يَا حَسَنِي ذَلِكَ تَحْفِيفٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ  
وَرَحْمَةً فَمَنْ أَعْنَدَهُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ

آلِيمٌ

وَكُمْ فِي الْفَصَادِ حَيَّةٌ يَأْتُولِي الْأَنْبَتِ  
لَمَّا كُمْ شَقُونَ

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدُكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ  
رَأَكُمْ خَيْرًا أَوْ صِيَّةً لِلْوَالِدِينِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ

= many lives in retaliation: at most, let the Law take one life under strictly prescribed conditions, and shut the door to private vengeance or tribal retaliation. But if the aggrieved party consents (and this condition of consent is laid down to prevent worse evils), forgiveness and brotherly love is better, and the door of Mercy is kept open. In Western law, no felony can be compounded.

183. The jurists have carefully laid down that the law of *qisas* refers to murder only. *Qisas* is not applicable to manslaughter, due to a mistake or an accident. There, there would be no capital punishment.

184. *The brother*: the term is perfectly general: all men are brothers in Islam.

185. The whole penalty can be remitted if the aggrieved party agrees, out of brotherly love. In meeting that demand the culprit or his friends should equally be generous and recognise the good-will of the other side.

To parents and next of kin.<sup>186</sup>  
According to reasonable usage;  
This is due  
From the God-fearing.

بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًا عَلَى الْمُنْقَيْرِ

فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ، فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ

وَمَرْجِعُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ عَلَيْهِمْ  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

181. If anyone changes the bequest  
After hearing it,  
The guilt shall be on those  
Who make the change.  
For Allah hears and knows  
(All things).
182. But if anyone fears  
Partiality or wrong-doing<sup>187</sup>  
On the part of the testator.  
And brings about a settlement among  
(The parties concerned),  
There is no wrong in him:  
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving,  
Most Merciful.

فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مُؤْصِدٍ جَنَاحًا أَوْ إِثْمًا فَأَصْلِحْ  
بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

186. There are rules of course for the disposal of intestate property. But it is a good thing that a dying man or woman should, of his own free-will, think of his parents and his next of kin, not in a spirit of injustice to others, but in a spirit of love and reverence for those who have cherished him. He must, however, do it "according to reasonable usage": the limitations will be seen further on.

187. A verbal will is allowed but it is expected that the testator will be just to his heirs and not depart from what is considered equitable. For this reason definite shares were laid down for heirs later (see. Q. iv. 11. etc). These define or limit the testamentary power, but do not abrogate it. For example, amongst kin there are persons (e.g., an orphan grandson in the presence of surviving sons) who would not inherit under the intestate scheme, and the testator might like to provide for them. Again, there may be outsiders for whom he may wish to provide, and jurists have held that he has powers of disposition up to one-third of his property. But he must not be partial to one heir at the expense of another, or attempt to defeat lawful creditors. If he tries to do this, those who are witnesses to his oral disposition may interfere in two ways. One way would be to persuade the testator to change his bequest before he dies. The other way would be, after death, to get the interested parties together and ask them to agree to a more equitable arrangement. In such a case they are acting in good faith, and there is no fraud. They are doing nothing wrong. Islam approves of every lawful device for keeping brethren at peace, without litigation and quarrels. Except for this, the changing of the provisions of a Will is a crime, as it is under all Law.

## SECTION 23.

183. O ye who believe!  
Fasting is prescribed to you  
As it was prescribed<sup>188</sup>  
To those before you,  
That ye may (learn)  
Self-restraint.-
184. (Fasting) for a fixed<sup>189</sup>  
Number of days;  
But if any of you is ill,  
Or on a journey,<sup>190</sup>  
The prescribed number  
(Should be made up)  
From days later.  
For those who can do it<sup>191</sup>

يَتَأْمِنُهَا الَّذِينَ أَمْنَوْا كُلَّ بَعْدٍ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ  
كَمَا كُلِّبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَمْ يَكُنْ  
تَنَعُونَ

أَيَّامًا مَعْدُوداتٍ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مُّرِيضًا  
أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعَذَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخْرَى وَعَلَى  
الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فَذِيَّةٌ طَعَامٌ وَسَكِينٌ  
فَمَنْ تَطْوعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَمَنْ نَصُومُوا

188. *As it was prescribed:* this does not mean that the Muslim fast is like the other fasts previously observed, in the number of days, in the time or manner of the fast, or in other incidents; it only means that the principle of self-denial by fasting is not a new one.

189. This verse should be read with the following verses, 185-88, in order that the incidents of the physical fast may be fully understood with reference to its spiritual meaning.

The Muslim fast is not meant for self-torture. Although it is stricter than other fasts, it also provides alleviations for special circumstances. If it were merely a temporary abstention from food and drink, it would be salutary to many people, who habitually eat and drink to excess. The instincts for food, drink, and sex are strong in the animal nature, and temporary restraint from all these enables the attention to be directed to higher things. This is necessary through prayer, contemplation and acts of charity, not of the showy kind, but by seeking out those really in need. Certain standards are prescribed, but much higher standards are recommended.

190. For journeys, a minimum standard of three marches is prescribed by some Commentators: others make it more precise by naming a distance of 16 farsakhs, equivalent to 48 miles. A journey of 8 or 9 miles on foot is more tiring than a similar one by bullock cart. There are various degrees of fatigue in riding a given distance on horseback or by camel or in a comfortable train or by motor car or by steamer, aeroplane, or airship. In my opinion the standard must depend on the means of locomotion and on the relative resources of the traveller. It is better to determine it in each case according to circumstances.

191. Those who can do it with hardship: such as aged people, or persons specially circumstanced. The Shāfi'is would include a woman expecting a child, or one who is nursing a baby, but on this point opinion is not unanimous, some holding that they ought to put in the fasts later, when they can.

(With hardship), is a ransom,  
The feeding of one  
That is indigent.  
But he that will give  
More, of his own free will,-  
It is better for him.  
And it is better for you  
That ye fast.  
If ye only knew.

185. Ramadhan is the (month)  
In which was sent down  
The Qur-an, as a guide  
To mankind, also clear (Signs)  
For guidance and judgment<sup>192</sup>  
(Between right and wrong).  
So every one of you  
Who is present (at his home)  
During that month  
Should spent it in fasting.  
But if any one is ill,  
Or on a journey,  
The prescribed period  
(Should be made up)  
By days later.  
Allah intends every facility  
For you; He does not want  
To put you to difficulties.  
(He wants you) to complete  
The prescribed period,  
And to glorify Him<sup>193</sup>  
In that He has guided you;  
And perchance ye shall be  
grateful.

حَمْرَأَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ  
هُدًى لِلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ  
وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَنْ شَهِدَ مِنْكُمُ الشَّهْرَ فَلَيَصُنْهُ  
وَمَنْ كَانَ مِرْيَضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعَذَّةٌ  
مِّنْ أَيْمَانِكُمْ أُخْرَىٰ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ  
وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلَتُكَثِّفُوا الْعِذَّةَ  
وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَى نَفْكُمْ  
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

192. Judgment (between right and wrong): *Furqan* = the criterion or standard by which we judge between right and wrong. See ii. 53 n.

193. The regulations are again and again coupled with an insistence on two things: (a) the facilities and concessions given, and (b) the spiritual significance of the fast, without which it is like an empty shell without a kernel. If we realise this, we shall look upon Ramadhan, not as a burden, but as a blessing, and shall be duly grateful for the lead given to us in this matter.

186. When My servants  
Ask thee concerning Me,  
I am indeed  
Close (to them): I respond  
To the prayer of every  
Suppliant when he calleth on Me:  
Let them also, with a will,  
Listen to My call,  
And believe in Me:  
That they may walk  
In the right way.<sup>194</sup>

187. Permitted to you  
On the night of the fasts,  
Is the approach to your wives.  
They are your garments  
And ye are their garments.<sup>195</sup>  
Allah knoweth what ye  
Used to do secretly among  
yourselves:  
But He turned to you  
And forgave you;  
So now associate with them,  
And seek what Allah  
Hath ordained for you,<sup>196</sup>  
And eat and drink,  
Until the white thread

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكُ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ  
أُجِيبُ دُعَوةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَنِي فَلَيْسَ تَحِيلُّوا  
لِي وَلَيَقُولُوا إِنَّا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشِدُونَ

أَخْلَقْتُمْ لَيْلَةَ الصِّيَامِ الْرَّفِثَ إِلَى نِسَاءِكُمْ  
هُنَّ لِيَسِّرُ لَكُمْ وَأَسْمِلَيَّاً لَهُنَّ  
عِلْمَ اللَّهِ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَخْتَالُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ  
مَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَّا عَنْكُمْ فَإِنَّمَا تَبَرُّوهُنَّ  
وَلَا تَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَكُمْ وَآتُرُوهُنَّ  
حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكُمُ الْخِطْرُ أَلَا يَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ  
الْأَسْوَدُ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ تَقْمِلُ الْصِّيَامَ إِلَى الْأَيَّلِ  
وَلَا تَبْشِّرُوهُنَّ وَأَسْمِلُ عَنْكُمُونَ فِي الْمَسْدِيدِ

194. These verses 186 and 188 are not foreign to the subject of Ramadhān, but emphasise its spiritual aspect. Here we are told of Prayer and the nearness of Allah, and in 188 we are asked not to "eat up" other people's substance.

195. Men and women are each other's garments: *i.e.*, they are for mutual support, mutual comfort, and mutual protection, fitting into each other as a garment fits the body. A garment also is both for show and concealment. The question of sex is always delicate to handle: here we are told that even in such matters a clear, open, and honest course is better than fraud or self-deception. The sex instinct is classed with eating and drinking, an animal thing to be restrained, but not to be ashamed of. The three things are prohibited during the fast by day, but permitted after the fast is broken at night till the next fast commences.

196. There is difference of opinion as to the exact meaning of this. I would connect this as a parallel clause with the clause "eat and drink", which follows, all three being governed by "until the white thread", etc. That is, all three things must stop when the fast begins again in the early morning. Or it may mean: What is permitted is well enough, but seek the higher things ordained for you.



## SECTION 24.

189. They ask thee  
Concerning the New Moons.<sup>202</sup>  
Say: They are but signs  
To mark fixed periods of time  
In (the affairs of) men.  
And for Pilgrimage.  
It is no virtue if ye enter  
Your houses from the back:  
It is virtue if ye fear Allah.  
Enter houses  
Through the proper doors.<sup>203</sup>  
And fear Allah:  
That ye may prosper.
190. Fight in the cause of Allah  
Those who fight you<sup>204</sup>  
But do not transgress limits;  
For Allah loveth not transgressors.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلَةِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِعُ  
النَّاسِ وَالْحَجَّ وَلَا يَسْأَلُكَ أَنْ تَأْتُوا  
الْبُشُورَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْرِّمَانَ أَنْقَرُ  
وَأَنْوَى الْبُشُورَ مِنْ آنِفَاهُكُمْ وَأَنْقُوا اللَّهَ  
لِمَكَّكُمْ نُفْلِحُونَ

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ  
وَلَا تَعْسُدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ  
الْمُعْسِدِينَ

202. There were many superstitions connected with the New Moon, as there are to the present day. We are told to disregard such superstitions. As a measure of time, where the lunar calendar is used; the New Moon is one great sign, for which people watch with eagerness. Muslim festivals, including the Pilgrimage, are fixed by the appearance of the New Moon. The Arabs, among other superstitions, had one which made them enter their houses by the back door during or after the Pilgrimage. This is disapproved, for there is no virtue in any such artificial restrictions. All virtue proceeds from the love and fear of Allah.

203. This is a Muslim proverb now, and much might be written about its manifold meanings. A few may be noted here. (1) If you enter a society, respect its manners and customs. (2) If you want to achieve an object honourably, go about it openly and not "by a backdoor." (3) Do not beat about the bush. (4) If you wish success in an undertaking, provide all the necessary instruments for it.

The subject of the New Moon provides a good transition between the Ramadhan fast, which begins and ends with the New Moon, the Pilgrimage, whose ten days commence with the New Moon, and the War which Islam had to wage in self-defence against the Pagans, who wanted to exclude them from the Pilgrimage after they had driven them out of house and home.

204. War is permissible in self-defence, and under well-defined limits. When undertaken, it must be pushed with vigour, but not relentlessly, but only to restore peace and freedom for the worship of Allah. In any case strict limits must not be transgressed: women, children, old and infirm men should not be molested, nor trees and crops cut down, nor peace withheld when the enemy comes to terms.

## 191. And slay them

Wherever ye catch them,  
And turn them out  
From where they have  
Turned you out;  
For Persecution  
Is worse than slaughter;  
But fight them not<sup>205</sup>  
At the Sacred Mosque,  
Unless they (first)  
Fight you there;  
But if they fight you,  
Slay them.  
Such is the reward  
Of those who reject faith<sup>206</sup>

192. But if they cease,  
Allah is Oft-Forgiving,  
Most Merciful.193. And fight them on  
Until there is no more  
Persecution

وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِلُوكُمْ وَأَخْرُجُوهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ  
أَخْرُجُوكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تُقْتِلُوهُمْ عِنْدَ  
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقْتَلُوكُمْ فِيهِ  
فَإِنْ قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ فَاقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّاجِنِينَ

فَإِنْ أَنْهَرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

وَقْتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونُ فِتْنَةٌ وَيَكُونُ الَّذِينُ لَلَّهُ

205. This passage is illustrated by the events that happened at Hudaibiya in the sixth year of the Hijra, though it is not clear that it was revealed on that occasion. The Muslims were by this time a strong and influential community. Many of them were exiles from Makkah, where the Pagans had established an intolerant autocracy, persecuting Muslims, preventing them from visiting their homes, and even keeping them out by force from performing the Pilgrimage during the universally recognised period of truce. This was intolerance, oppression, and autocracy to the last degree, and the mere readiness of the Muslims to enforce their rights as Arab citizens resulted without bloodshed in an agreement which the Muslims faithfully observed. The Pagans, however, had no scruples in breaking faith, and it is unnecessary here to go into subsequent events.

In general, it may be said that Islam is the religion of peace, goodwill, mutual understanding, and good faith. But it will not acquiesce in wrong-doing, and its men will hold their lives cheap in defence of honour, justice, and the religion which they hold sacred. Their ideal is that of heroic virtue combined with unselfish gentleness and tenderness, such as is exemplified in the life of the Prophet. They believe in courage, obedience, discipline, duty, and a constant striving by all the means in their power, physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, for the establishment of truth and righteousness.

206. *SUPPRESS FAITH:* in the narrower as well as the larger sense! If they want forcibly to prevent you from exercising your sacred rites, they have declared war on your religion, and it would be cowardice to ignore the challenge or to fail in rooting out the tyranny.

And the religion becomes Allah's.<sup>207</sup>  
 But if they cease,<sup>208</sup>  
 Let there be no hostility  
 Except to those  
 Who practise oppression.

194. The prohibited month<sup>209</sup>  
 For the prohibited month,-  
 And so for all things prohibited,-  
 There is the law of equality.  
 If then any one transgresses  
 The prohibition against you,  
 Transgress ye likewise  
 Against him.  
 But fear Allah, and know<sup>210</sup>  
 That Allah is with those  
 Who restrain themselves.

195. And spend of your substance  
 In the cause of Allah,  
 And make not your own hands

فَإِنْ أَنْهَاوُا فَلَا عُذْنَوْا إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ [١٩٧]

الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ يَا شَهْرُ الْقَرْبَاءِ وَالْحُرُمَتُ قَصَاصٌ  
 فَمَنْ أَعْنَدَهُ عَنِّكُمْ فَأَعْنَدُهُ وَاعْلَمُهُ بِمَا أَعْنَدَهُ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ [١٩٨]

وَأَنْفَقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُنْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى الْتَّهْلِكَةِ

207. The Arabic word is *Din*, which is comprehensive. It implies the ideas of indebtedness, duty, obedience, judgment, justice, faith, religion, customary rites, etc. The clause means: "until there is *Din*, for Allah."

208. If the opposite party cease to persecute you, your hostility ends with them as a party, but it does not mean that you become friends to oppression. Your fight is against wrong: there should be no rancour against men.

209. *Harām* = prohibited, sacred. The month of Pilgrimage (*Zul-hijja*) was a sacred month, in which warfare, was prohibited by Arab custom. The month preceding (*Zul-qad'a*) and the month following (*Muharram*) were included in the prohibition, and *Muharram* was specially called *al-Harām*. In Rajab, also, war was prohibited. If the pagan enemies of Islam broke that custom and made war in the prohibited months, the Muslims were free also to break that custom but only to the same extent as the others broke it. Similarly the territory of Makkah was sacred, in which war was prohibited. If the enemies of Islam broke that custom, the Muslims were free to do so to that extent. Any convention is useless if one party does not respect it. There must be a law of equality. Or perhaps the word reciprocity may express it better.

210. At the same time the Muslims are commanded to exercise self-restraint as much as possible. Force is a dangerous weapon. It may have to be used for self-defence or self-preservation, but we must always remember that self-restraint is pleasing in the eyes of Allah. Even when we are fighting, it should be for a principle, not out of passion

Contribute to (your) destruction;<sup>211</sup>  
 But do good;  
 For Allah loveth those  
 Who do good.

196. And complete  
 The *Hajj* or '*umra*<sup>212</sup>  
 In the service of Allah,  
 But if ye are prevented  
 (From completing it),  
 Send an offering  
 For sacrifice,  
 Such as ye may find,  
 And do not shave your heads  
 Until the offering reaches  
 The place of sacrifice.  
 And if any of you is ill,<sup>213</sup>

وَأَخْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

وَأَتِمُوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أَخْرَجْتُمْ فَمَا أَسْتَيْسِرَ  
 مِنَ الْهَدَىٰ وَلَا تُخْلِقُوا مَرْءًا وَسَكُونَتِي بِثَلَاثَ الْهَدَىٰ حَمْلَهُ  
 فَنَّ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذَىٰ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَقَدْ يَدِيهُ  
 مِنْ حَيَّاتِهِ أَوْ صَدَقَةً أَوْ سُلْكٍ فَإِذَا أَمْنَتُمْ فَنَّ تَمَّنَعَ  
 بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجَّ فَمَا أَسْتَيْسِرَ مِنَ الْهَدَىٰ فَنَّ لَمْ يَحْدَدْ  
 فَصِيَامٌ مُلْكَةٌ أَيَّامٌ فِي الْحَجَّ وَسَبْعَةٌ إِذَا جَعَشُ

211. Every fight requires the wherewithals for the fight, the "sinews of war." If the war is just and in the cause of Allah, all who have wealth must spend it freely. That may be their contribution to the Cause, in addition to their personal effort, or if for any reason they are unable to fight. If they hug their wealth, perhaps their own hands are helping in their own self-destruction. Or if their wealth is being spent, not in the Cause of Allah, but in something which pleases their fancy, it may be that the advantage goes to the enemy, and they are by their action helping their own destruction. In all things, their standard should be, not selfishness, but the good of their brethren, for such good is pleasing to Allah.

212. See. ii. 158, n. 161. The *Hajj* is the complete pilgrimage, of which the chief rites are performed during the first twelve or thirteen days of the month of *Zul-hijja*. The '*Umra* is a less formal pilgrimage at any time of the year. In either case, the intending pilgrim commences by putting on a simple garment of unsewn cloth in two pieces when he is some distance yet from Makkah. The putting on of the pilgrim garb (*ihrām*) is symbolical of his renouncing the vanities of the world. After this and until the end of the pilgrimage he must not wear other clothes, or ornaments, anoint his hair, use perfumes, hunt, or do other prohibited acts. The completion of the pilgrimage is symbolised by the shaving of the head for men and the cutting off of a few locks of the hair of the head for women, the putting off of the *ihrām* and the resumption of the ordinary dress.

Here we are told: (1) that having once undertaken the pilgrimage, we must complete it; (2) that we must do it not for worldly ends, but as a symbol of our service and worship to Allah; (3) that if we are prevented, for any reason, from completing the rites, a sacrifice should be offered where the prevention took place.

213. If any one is taken ill after putting on the *ihrām*, so that he has to put on other clothes, or if he has trouble or skin disease in his head or insects in his hair, and he has to shave his head before completion, he should fast (three days, say the Commentators), or feed the poor, or offer sacrifice.

Or has an ailment in his scalp,  
(Necessitating shaving).  
(He should) in compensation  
Either fast, or feed the poor,  
Or offer sacrifice;  
And when ye are  
In peaceful conditions (again),<sup>214</sup>  
If any one wishes  
To continue the 'umra  
On to the *hajj*,  
He must make an offering  
Such as he can afford,  
But if he cannot afford it,  
He should fast  
Three days during the *hajj*.  
And seven days on his return,  
Making ten days in all.  
This is for those  
Whose household  
Is not in (the precincts<sup>215</sup>  
Of) the Sacred Mosque.  
And fear Allah.  
And know that Allah.  
Is strict in punishment.<sup>216</sup>

يَنِكَ عَشَرَةً كَامِلَةً ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَكُنْ أَهْلَهُ حَاخِرِي

الْمَسْجِدُ الْحَرَامُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ

الْعِقَابِ

214. When this was revealed, the city of Makkah was in the hands of the enemies of Islam, and the regulations about the fighting and the pilgrimage came together and were interconnected. But the revelation provides, as always, for the particular occasion, and also for normal conditions, Makkah soon passed out of the hands of the enemies of Islam. People sometimes came long distances to Makkah before the Pilgrimage season began. Having performed the '*Umra*', they stayed on for the formal *Hajj*. In case the pilgrim had spent his money, he is shown what he can do, rich or poor, and yet hold his head high among his fellows, as having performed all rites as prescribed.

215. For residents in Makkah, the question does not arise. They are there every day, and there is no question of '*Umra*' for them.

216. This closes the section about the duties of fighting and introduces the connected question of pilgrimage in a sort of transition. Fighting is connected with fear, and while it is meritorious to obey Allah, we are warned that we must not allow our selfish passions to carry us away, because it is in such times of stress that our spirit is tested. Verse 195 ended with a benediction for those who do good. This verse ends with a warning to those who take advantage of Allah's cause to transgress the limits, for the punishment is equally sure. The next verse shows us the pitfalls we must avoid in a large concourse of people.

## SECTION 25.

197. For *Hajj*

Are the months well known.<sup>217</sup>  
 If any one undertakes  
 That duty therein,  
 Let there be no obscenity,  
 Nor wickedness,  
 Nor wrangling  
 In the *Hajj*.  
 And whatever good  
 Ye do, (be sure)  
 Allah knoweth it.  
 And take a provision<sup>218</sup>  
 (With you) for the journey,  
 But the best of provisions

الْحَجَّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَاتٍ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهَا  
 الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَأْثَ وَلَا قُسْوَكَ وَلَا جِدَارَ فِي الْحَجَّ  
 وَمَا نَفَقُوا مِنْ حَيْرٍ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ  
 وَتَكَبَّرُوا فَإِنَّ حَيْرَ الْأَزَادِ الْقَوْمُ  
 وَأَنَّقُونِ يَتَأْفِلُ الْأَتْبَابِ



217. *The months well known:* the months of *Shawwāl*, *Zul-qa'da*, and *Zul-hijja* (up to the 10th or the 13th) are set apart for the rites of *Hajj*. That is to say, the first rites may begin as early as the beginning of *Shawwāl*, with a definite approach to Makkah but the chief rites are concentrated on the first ten days of *Zul-hijja*, and specially on the 8th, 9th and 10th of that month, when the concourse of pilgrims reaches its height. The chief rites may be briefly enumerated: (1) The wearing of the pilgrim garment (*iḥrām*) from certain points definitely fixed on all the roads to Makkah after this the pilgrimage prohibitions come into operation and the pilgrim is dedicated to worship and prayer and the denial of vanities; (2) the going round the Ka'ba seven times (*tawāf*), typifying activity, with the kissing of the little Black Stone built into the wall, the symbol of concentration in the love of Allah; (3) after a short prayer at the Station of Abraham (Q. ii. 125), the pilgrim goes to the hills *Safā* and *Marwā* (Q. ii. 158), the symbols of patience and perseverance; (4) the great Sermon (*Khuṭba*) on the 7th of *Zul-hijja*, when the whole assembly listens to an exposition of the meaning of *Hajj*; (5) the visit on the eighth, of the whole body of pilgrims to the Valley of *Minā* (about six miles north of Makkah, where the pilgrims halt and stay the night, proceeding on the ninth to the plain and hill of 'Arafāt, about five miles further north, which is also called the Mount of Mercy; (5) the tenth day, the 'Id Day, the day of Sacrifice, when the sacrifice is offered in the Valley of *Minā*, the head is shaved or the hair trimmed, the *ṭawāf al-fada* and the symbolic ceremony of casting seven pebbles at the *Jamarat* is performed on the first occasion: it is continued on subsequent days, both rites are connected with the story of Abraham: this is the 'Id-ul-Adh̄hā; note that the ceremony is connected with the rejection of evil in thought, word, and deed. A stay of two or three days after this is prescribed: these three days are called *Tashriq* days.

218. It is recommended that pilgrims should come with provisions, so that they should not be compelled to resort to begging. But, as usual, our thought is directed at once from the physical to the spiritual. If provisions are required for a journey on earth, how much more important to provide for the final journey into the future world? The best of such provisions is right conduct, which is the same as the fear of Allah.

Is right conduct.  
So fear Me,  
O ye that are wise.

198. It is no crime in you  
If ye seek of the bounty  
Of your Lord (during pilgrimage).<sup>219</sup>  
Then when ye pour down  
From (Mount) 'Arafât,  
Celebrate the praises of Allah  
At the Sacred Monument,<sup>220</sup>  
And celebrate His praises  
As He has directed you,  
Even though, before this,  
Ye went astray.<sup>221</sup>
199. Then return from the place  
Whence it is usual  
For the multitude<sup>222</sup>  
So to do, and ask  
For Allah's forgiveness.  
For Allah is Oft-forgiving,  
Most Merciful.
200. So when ye have  
Accomplished your rites,  
Celebrate the praises of Allah,

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا  
فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَفَضْلَمْتُمْ  
مِنْ عَرَفَتِي فَإِذَا كُرُوا إِلَهَهُمْ عِنْدَ  
الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِذَا كُرُوا كَمَا  
هَذَنِّكُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ  
لِمِنَ الظَّالَمِينَ

ثُمَّ أَفْيِضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفْكَارُ أَنْشَأَ  
وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لِلَّهِ أَنْ يَعْفُوَ رَجِيمٌ

فَإِذَا أَفْضَلَيْتُمْ مَنْتَسِكَكُمْ فَإِذَا كُرُوا

219. Legitimate trade is allowed, in the interests both of the honest trader, who can thus meet his own expenses, and of the generality of pilgrims, who would otherwise be greatly inconvenienced for the necessities of life. But the profit must be sought as from the "bounty of Allah." There should be no profiteering, or trade "tricks." Good honest trade is a form of service to the community, and therefore to Allah.

220. About midway between 'Arafât and Minâ (see n. 217 to ii. 197) is a place called Muzdalifa where the Holy Prophet offered up a long prayer. It has thus become a Sacred Monument and pilgrims are directed to follow that example on their return. A special reason for this is given in the note following.

221. Certain arrogant tribes living in Makkah used not to go to 'Arafât with the crowd but to stop short at Muzdalifa. They are rebuked for their arrogance and told that they must perform all the rites like the rest of the pilgrims. There is equality in Islam.

222. See the last note. Towards the end of the Pilgrimage the crowd is very great, and if any people loitered after 'Arafât, it would cause great confusion and inconvenience. The pace has therefore to be quick for every one, a very salutary regulation. Every member of the crowd must think of the comfort and convenience of the whole mass.

As ye used to celebrate  
The praises of your fathers,<sup>223</sup>  
Yea, with far more  
Heart and soul.  
There are men who say:  
“Our Lord! Give us  
(Thy bounties) in this world!”  
But they will have  
No portion in the Hereafter.<sup>224</sup>

201. And there are men who say:  
“Our Lord! Give us  
Good in this world  
And good in the Hereafter.  
And save us  
From the torment  
Of the Fire!”
202. To these will be allotted<sup>225</sup>  
What they have earned;  
And Allah is quick in account.
203. Remember Allah  
During the Appointed Days,<sup>226</sup>  
But if any one hastens  
To leave in two days,  
There is no blame on him,

اللَّهُ أَكْرَمُ كُلَّ بَآءَ كُلُّمَا أَشَدَّ ذِنْبًا  
فَمَنِ الْكَافِرُ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا إِنْ كَا فِي  
الْدُّنْيَا وَمَا الْمُهِيفُ إِلَّا خَرَقَ مِنْ خَلْقِي

وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا إِنْ كَا فِي الدُّنْيَا  
حَسَنَةٌ وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةٌ وَقِنَاعَدَابَ  
النَّارِ

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مَمَّا كَسَبُوا  
وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ

وَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَقْدُودَاتٍ

223. After the Pilgrimage, in Pagan times, the pilgrims used to gather in assemblies in which the praises of ancestors were sung. As the whole of the pilgrimage rites were purified in Islam, so this aftermath of the Pilgrimage was also purified. It was required from pilgrims to stay on two or three days after the Day of Sacrifice, but they must use them in prayer and praise to Allah. See ii. 203 below.

224. If you hasten to get all the good things of the world, and only think of them and pray for them, you would lose the higher things of the future. The proper Muslim attitude is neither to renounce this world nor to be so engrossed in it as to forget the future life.

225. Our spiritual account is mounting up, both on the debit and credit side. In worldly accounts, both our profits and our losses may be delayed. But in Allah's books there is no delay. Our actions go before us. (See ii. 95. n.)

226. *The Appointed Days:* the three days after the tenth, when the Pilgrims stay on in the Valley of Minâ for prayer and praise. They are the days of *Tashriq* (see ii. 200, n. 223). It is optional for pilgrims to leave on the second or third day.

And if any one stays on,  
There is no blame on him,  
If his aim is to do right.  
Then fear Allah, and know  
That ye will surely  
Be gathered unto Him.

204. There is the type of man<sup>227</sup>  
Whose speech  
About this world's life  
May dazzle thee,  
And he calls Allah to witness  
About what is in his heart;  
Yet is he the most contentious  
Of enemies.
205. When he turns his back,  
His aim everywhere  
Is to spread mischief  
Through the earth and destroy  
Crops and progeny  
But Allah loveth not mischief.
206. When it is said to him,  
"Fear Allah,"  
He is led by arrogance  
To (more) crime.  
Enough for him is Hell;—  
An evil bed indeed  
(To lie on)!<sup>228</sup>
207. And there is the type of man  
Who gives his life

فَمَنْ تَعْجَلَ فِي يَوْمِنْ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ  
تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنْ أَنْقَى وَأَنْقُوا اللَّهُ  
وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُخْشِرُونَ

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعِجِّلُكَ قُولُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ  
الَّذِيَا وَيُشَهِّدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ  
وَهُوَ أَذَلُّ الْخَصَامِ

وَإِذَا قُولَنَ سَكَنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِفَسَادِ فِيهَا  
وَنَهَلَكَ الْحَرَثُ وَالشَّنْلُ وَاللَّهُ  
لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَسَادَ

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ أَنِّي اللَّهُ أَخْذَنَهُ الْعِرَةَ بِالْأَشِيرِ  
فَحَسِبَهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلِئَنَسَ الْمَهَادُ

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ أَبْغَاهَ

227. The two contrasted types of men mentioned in ii. 200 and 201 are here further particularised: the glib hypocrite who appears worldly-wise but plans harm, contrasted with the sincere believer who is prepared to suffer martyrdom for his faith. The Commentators give names of people who exemplified these types. The mischief-maker has a smooth tongue and indulges in plausible talk with many oaths. He appears to be worldly-wise, and though you may despise him for his worldliness, you may not realise his frauds. Behind your back he is an implacable enemy. He stirs up quarrels, and causes all sorts of mischief to you or your friends. He can never win Allah's love, and we are warned against his tricks.

228. According to the English saying, "As you have made your bed, so you must lie in it."

To earn the pleasure of Allah;  
And Allah is full of kindness  
To (His) devotees.<sup>229</sup>

208. O ye who believe!  
Enter into Islam  
Whole-heartedly;  
And follow not  
The footsteps  
Of the Satan  
For he is to you  
An avowed enemy.
209. If ye backslide  
After the clear (Signs)  
Have come to you,  
Then know that Allah  
is Exalted in Power, Wise.<sup>230</sup>

210. Will they wait  
Until Allah comes to them  
In canopies of clouds.  
With angels (in His train)  
And the question  
Is (thus) settled?  
But to Allah  
Do all questions  
Go back (for decision).<sup>231</sup>

مَرْضَاكَتِ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ مَا كُنُوا أَذْلَوْا فِي السِّلْفِ  
كَافَةً وَلَا تَأْتِيَعُوا خُطُوبَتِ الشَّيْطَانِ  
إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ

فَإِنْ زَلَّتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكُمْ  
الْبِيَتْنَ فَأَعْلَمُو أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي طَلْلٍ مِنَ  
النَّمَاءِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقَضَى الْأَمْرُ  
وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ

229. This second type of man,—firm, sincere, devoted, willing to give his life for the faith that is in him—was common in early Islam. Such men were its pillars. Through persecution, obloquy, torture, threat to their own lives or the lives of those dear to them, they stood by their leader and many of them gave their lives. That is what established Islam. We are asked in the next verse to follow this type and shun the other or evil type. If we do that, our Cause is safe.

230. If you backslide after the conviction has been brought home to you, you may cause some inconvenience to the Cause, or to those who counted upon you, but do not be so arrogant as to suppose that you will defeat Allah's Power and Wisdom. The loss will be your own.

231. If faith is wanting, all sorts of excuses are made to resist the appeal of Allah. They might and do say: "Oh yes! we shall believe if Allah appears to us with His angels in His glory!" In other words they want to settle the question in their way, and not in Allah's way. That will not do. The decision in all questions belongs to Allah. If we are true to Him, we wait for His times and seasons, and do not expect Him to wait on ours.

## SECTION 26

211. Ask the Children of Israel<sup>232</sup>  
How many Clear (Signs)  
We have sent them.  
But if any one,  
After Allah's favour  
Has come to him,  
Substitutes (something else),  
Allah is strict in punishment.<sup>233</sup>

212. The life of this world  
Is alluring to those  
Who reject faith,  
And they scoff at those  
Who believe.  
But the righteous  
Will be above them  
On the Day of Resurrection;  
For Allah bestows His abundance  
Without measure  
On whom He will.<sup>234</sup>

213. Mankind was one single nation.  
And Allah sent Messengers  
With glad tidings and warnings;  
And with them He sent  
The Book in truth,  
To judge between people  
In matters wherein  
They differed;  
But the People of the Book,

سَلِّمْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كُمْ مَا أَتَيْنَاهُمْ مِنْهُ أَيْمَنَ يَنْشَأُ  
وَمَنْ يُبَرِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ

رُّونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا وَسَخَرُونَ مِنْ  
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ آتَقْوَا فَوْهَمُوا يَوْمَ  
الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يُرْزِقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابِ

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ الْبَيْتَنَ  
مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ مِنْهُمُ الْكِتَابَ  
بِالْعِقْلِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ  
وَمَا أَخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ  
مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيْتَنَ بِغَيْرِ يَنْهَمُ فَهَذِهِ اللَّهُ

232. The Israelites under Moses were shown Allah's glory and many clear Signs and yet they went after their own ways, and preferred their own whims and fancies. So do people in all ages. But let them not deceive themselves. Allah's justice is sure, and when it comes, it will be strict and unmistakable to those who reject His grace.

233. Cf. ii. 196 (end) where the question was of those who do not fear Allah. Here the question is of those who reject Allah's Signs.

234. Allah's gifts in this world seem unequal, and sometimes those get them who seem to deserve them least. Allah's bounty is unlimited to the just as well as the unjust. In His wisdom He may give to whomever He pleases. The account is not taken now, but will be taken in the end, when the balance will be redressed.

After the clear Signs  
Came to them, did not differ  
Among themselves,  
Except through selfish contumacy.  
Allah by His Grace  
Guided the Believers  
To the Truth,  
Concerning that  
Wherein they differed.  
For Allah guides  
Whom He will  
To a path  
That is straight.

214. Or do ye think  
That ye shall enter  
The Garden (of Bliss)  
Without such (trials)  
As came to those  
Who passed away  
Before you?  
They encountered  
Suffering and adversity,  
And were so shaken in spirit  
That even the Messenger  
And those of faith  
Who were with him  
Cried: "When (will come)  
The help of Allah"  
Ah! Verily, the help of Allah  
Is (always) near!
215. They ask thee  
What they should spend  
(In charity). Say: Whatever wealth  
Ye spend that is good,<sup>235</sup>

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَا أَخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ يَأْذِنُهُ  
وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

أَنْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ  
مَّثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلُوُا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَّا سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ  
وَالصَّرَاطُ وَزُلْزَلُوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ  
آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَمْنَعَ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ  
قَرِيبٌ

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنِفِّعُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ  
خَيْرٍ فَلِلَّهِ الْدِيْنُ وَالْأَقْرَبُينَ وَإِلَيْنَا وَالْمُسْكِنُ

235. Three questions arise in charity: (1) What shall we give? (2) to whom shall we give? and (3) how shall we give? The answer is here. Give anything that is good, useful, helpful, valuable. It may be property or money; it may be a helping hand; it may be advice; it may be a kind word; "whatever ye do that is good" is charity. On the other hand, if you throw away what is useless, there is no charity in it. Or if you give something =

Is for parents and kindred  
And orphans  
And those in want  
And for wayfarers.  
And whatever ye do  
That is good,—Allah  
Knoweth it well.

216. Fighting is prescribed  
Upon you, and ye dislike it.<sup>236</sup>  
But it is possible  
That ye dislike a thing  
Which is good for you,  
And that ye love a thing  
Which is bad for you.  
But Allah knoweth,  
And ye know not.

## SECTION 27

217. They ask thee  
Concerning fighting  
In the Prohibited Month.<sup>237</sup>  
Say: “Fighting therein  
Is a grave (offence);  
But graver is it  
In the sight of Allah

وَأَنِ الْسَّبِيلُ وَمَا نَفَعُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ

عَلَيْهِمْ

كُتُبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْبَةٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى  
أَن تَكُرْهُوا شَيْئاً وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى  
أَن تُحِبُّوا شَيْئاً وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ  
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ



يَسْتَأْلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قَاتِلٌ فِيهِ قُلْ  
قَاتِلٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدُّعَنْ سَبِيلَ اللَّهِ  
وَكُفُّرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدُ الْحَرَامُ وَالْخَرَاجُ أَهْلُهُ  
مِنْهُ أَكْبَرٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ

= with a harmful intent, e.g., a sword to a madman, or a drug or sweets or even money to some one whom you want to entrap or corrupt, it is no charity but a gift of damnation. To whom should you give? It may be tempting to earn the world's praise by a gift that will be talked about, but are you meeting the needs of those who have the first claim on you? If you are not, you are like a person who defrauds creditors: it is no charity. Every gift is judged by its unselfish character: the degree of need or claim is a factor which you should consider: if you disregard it, there is something selfish behind it. How should it be given? As in the sight of Allah; this shuts out all pretence, show, and insincerity.

236. To fight in the cause of Truth is one of the highest forms of charity. What can you offer that is more precious than your own life? But here again the limitations come in. If you are a mere brawler, or a selfish aggressive person, or a vainglorious bully, you deserve the highest censure. Allah knows the value of things better than you do.

237. *Prohibited Month:* See ii. 194, n. 209.

To prevent access  
 To the path of Allah  
 To deny Him,  
 To prevent access  
 To the Sacred Mosque,  
 And drive out its members.<sup>238</sup>  
 Tumult and oppression<sup>239</sup>  
 Are worse than slaughter.  
 Nor will they cease  
 Fighting you until  
 They turn you back  
 From your faith  
 If they can.  
 And if any of you  
 Turn back from their faith  
 And die in unbelief,  
 Their works will bear no fruit  
 In this life  
 And in the Hereafter;  
 They will be  
 Companions of the Fire  
 And will abide therein.

218. Those who believed  
 And those who suffered exile  
 And fought (and strove and  
 struggled)  
 In the path of Allah.—  
 They have the hope

وَلَا يَرَوْنَ يُقْتَلُونَكُمْ حَقَّ بِرِدْوَكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ  
 إِنْ أَنْسَطَلْمُوا وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ  
 فَيَمْتُ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ حَاطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ  
 فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ  
(٢١٨)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهُوا  
 فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَةَ اللَّهِ

238. The intolerance and persecution of the Pagan clique at Makkah caused untold hardships to the holy Messenger of Islam and his early disciples. They bore all with meekness and long-suffering patience until Allah permitted them to take up arms in self-defence. Then they were twitted with breach of the custom about Prohibited Month, though they were driven to fight during that period against their own feeling in self-defence. But their enemies not only forced them to engage in actual warfare, but interfered with their conscience, persecuted them and their families, openly insulted and denied Allah, kept out the Muslim Arabs from the Sacred Mosque, and exiled them. Such violence and intolerance are deservedly called worse than slaughter.

239. Cf. ii. 191, 193, where a similar phrase occurs. *Fitna* = trial, temptation, as in ii. 102; or tumult, sedition, oppression, as here; M.M.A., H.G.S., and M.P. translate "persecution" in this passage, which is also legitimate, seeing that persecution is the suppression of some opinion by violence, force, or threats.

Of the Mercy of Allah:  
And Allah is Oft-forgiving,  
Most Merciful.

219. They ask thee  
Concerning wine<sup>240</sup> and gambling.<sup>241</sup>  
Say: "In them is great sin,  
And some profit, for men;  
But the sin is greater  
Than the profit."  
They ask thee how much  
They are to spend;  
Say: "What is beyond<sup>242</sup>  
Your needs."  
Thus doth Allah  
Make clear to you  
His signs: in order that  
Ye may consider-
220. (Their bearings) on  
This life and the Hereafter.<sup>243</sup>  
They ask thee

وَاللَّهُ عَفْوُرِ رَحِيمٌ

يَسْأَلُوكُمْ عَنِ الْحَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ  
قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِنْ هُمْ مَا  
آتَيْتُمْ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُوكُمْ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ  
قُلِ الْمَفْوُضُ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَتِ  
لَمَّا كُمْ تَنْفَكُرُونَ

فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُوكُمْ عَنِ الْيَتَمِّ

240. Wine: *Khamir*: literally understood to mean the fermented juice of the grape; applied by analogy to all fermented liquor, and by further analogy to any intoxicating liquor or drug. There may possibly be some benefit in it, but the harm is greater than the benefit, especially if we look at it from a social as well as an individual point of view.

241. Gambling: *maisir*: literally a means of getting, something too easily, getting a profit without working for it; hence gambling. The form most familiar to the Arabs was gambling by casting lots by means of arrows, on the principle of a lottery: the arrows were marked and served the same purpose as a modern lottery ticket. Something, e.g., the carcass of a slaughtered animal, was divided into unequal parts. The marked arrows were drawn from a bag. Some were blank and those who drew them got nothing. Others indicated prizes, which were big or small. Whether you got a big share or a small share, or nothing, depended on pure luck. The principle on which the objection is based is: that, you gain what you have not earned, or lose on a mere chance. Dice and wagering are rightly held to be within the definition of gambling.

242. Hoarding is no use either to ourselves, or to any one else. We should use the wealth we need; any superfluities we must spend in good works or in charity.

243. Gambling and intemperance are social as well as individual sins. They may ruin us in our ordinary every-day worldly life. In case it is suggested that there is no harm in a little indulgence, we are asked to think over all its aspects, social and individual, worldly and spirititally.

Concerning orphans.<sup>244</sup>

Say: "The best thing to do  
Is what is for their good;  
If ye mix  
Their affairs with yours,  
They are your brethren;  
But Allah knows  
The man who means mischief  
From the man who means good.  
And if Allah had wished,  
He could have put you  
Into difficulties: He is indeed  
Exalted in Power, Wise."<sup>245</sup>

221. Do not marry  
Unbelieving<sup>245-A</sup> woman  
Until they believe:  
A slave woman who believes  
Is better than an unbelieving<sup>245-A</sup>  
woman.  
Even though she allure you.  
Nor marry (your girls)  
To unbelievers until  
They believe:  
A man slave who believes  
Is better than an unbeliever<sup>245-A</sup>

قُلْ إِاصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَلَا تُخَالِطُوهُمْ فَإِنْ خَوَّنُكُمْ  
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَمْقِسَدَهُمْ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ  
وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَا يَعْنِتُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

وَلَا تَنكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنْنَ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَاتِ  
مُشْرِكُهُمْ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مُشْرِكَاتِهِ وَلَا أَعْجَبَنَكُمْ  
وَلَا تَنكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا وَلَمَّا  
مُؤْمِنُونَ خَيْرٌ مِنْ مُشْرِكِهِ وَلَا أَعْجَبَنَكُمْ أَرْهَابُكُمْ  
يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُ إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ

244. For Orphans the best rule is to keep their property, household, and accounts separate, lest there should be any temptation to get a personal advantage to their guardian by mixing them with the guardian's property, household or accounts,—also to keep clear of any ideas of marriage, where this fiduciary relation exists. Q. vi. 152 may possibly suggest complete separation. But it may be an economy and an advantage to the orphan to have his property and accounts administered with the guardian's property and accounts and to have him live in the guardian's household, or to marry into the guardian's family, especially where the orphan's property is small and he or she has no other friend. The test is: what is best in the orphan's interests? If the guardian does fall into temptation, even if human law does not detect him, he is told he is sinning in Allah's sight and that should keep him straight.

245. The idea in Islam is not to make Allah's Law a burdensome fetter, but to ease a man's path in all kinds of difficult situations by putting him on his honour and trusting him. The strictest probity is demanded of him, but if he falls short of it, he is told that he cannot escape Allah's punishment even though he may evade human punishment.

245-A. Literally "pagan".

Even though he allure you.<sup>246</sup>  
 Unbelievers do (but)  
 Beckon you to the Fire.  
 But Allah beckons by His Grace  
 To the Garden (of Bliss)  
 And forgiveness.  
 And makes His Signs  
 Clear to mankind:  
 That they may  
 Receive admonition.

## SECTION 28

222. They ask thee  
 Concerning women's courses.  
 Say: They are  
 A hurt and a pollution:<sup>247</sup>  
 So keep away from women  
 In their courses, and do not  
 Approach them until  
 They are clean.  
 But when they have  
 Purified themselves,  
 Ye may approach them

وَالْمَعْفُورَةِ يَاذِنْهُ وَبَيْنَ أَيْتَهُ لِلنَّاسِ  
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ

وَسَأَلُوكُنَّكُ عنِ الْمَحِيطِ فَلْ هُوَذَى  
 فَاعْتَرُلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيطِ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ  
 حَتَّى يَطْهُرُنَّ فَإِذَا نَطَهَرْنَ فَأُتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ  
 أَمْرَكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُؤْمِنَينَ

246. Marriage is a most intimate communion, and the mystery of sex finds its highest fulfilment when intimate spiritual harmony is combined with the physical link. As religion is a real influence in life to both parties or to either party, a difference in this vital matter must affect the lives of both more profoundly than differences of birth, race, language, or position in life. It is therefore only right that the parties to be married should have the same spiritual outlook. If two persons love each other, their outlook in the highest things of life must be the same. Note that religion is not here a mere label or a matter of custom or birth. The two persons may have been born in different religions, but if, by their mutual influence, they come to see the truth in the same way, they must openly accept the same rites and the same social brotherhood. Otherwise the position will become impossible individually and socially.

247. *Azan*: hurt, pollution. Both aspects must be remembered. Physical cleanliness and purity make for health, bodily and spiritual. But the matter should be looked at from the woman's point of view as well as the man's. To her there is danger of hurt, and she should have every consideration. In the animal world, instinct is a guide which is obeyed. Man should in this respect be better: he is often worse.

As ordained for you by Allah<sup>248</sup>  
 For Allah loves those  
 Who turn to Him constantly  
 And He loves those  
 Who keep themselves pure and  
 clean.

223. Your wives are  
 As a tilth<sup>249</sup> unto you  
 So approach your tilth  
 When or how ye will;  
 But do some good act  
 For your souls beforehand;  
 And fear Allah,  
 And know that ye are  
 To meet Him (in the Hereafter),  
 And give (these) good tidings<sup>250</sup>  
 To those who believe.
224. And make not  
 Allah's (name) an excuse

وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ

يُسَاوِكُمْ حَرثٌ لَكُمْ فَأُتُوا حَرثَكُمْ أَنَّ شَيْئًا  
 وَقَدِيمًا لَا تُنْسِكُوا وَأَنْقُوا اللَّهُ وَأَعْلَمُوا  
 أَنَّكُمْ مُلَفُّوهُ وَبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

وَلَا جُنُونَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ ذِيْلَهُ لَا يَمْنَعُكُمْ

248. *Haithu*: A comprehensive word referring to manner, time, or place. The most delicate matters are here referred to in the most discreet and yet helpful terms. In sex morality, manner, time, and place are all important: and the highest standards are set by social laws, by our own refined instinct of mutual consideration, and above all, by the light shed by the highest Teachers from the wisdom which they receive from our Maker, Who loves purity and cleanliness in all things.

249. Sex is not a thing to be ashamed of, or to be treated lightly, or to be indulged to excess. It is as solemn a fact as any in life. It is compared to a husbandman's tilth; it is a serious affair to him: he sows the seed in order to reap the harvest. But he chooses his own time and mode of cultivation. He does not sow out of season nor cultivate in a manner which will injure or exhaust the soil. He is wise and considerate and does not run riot. Coming from the simile to human beings, every kind of mutual consideration is required, but above all, we must remember that even in these matters there is a spiritual aspect. We must never forget our souls, and that we are responsible to Allah.

It was carnal-minded men who invented the doctrine of original sin: "Behold," says the Psalmist. "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalms li. 5). This is entirely repudiated by Islam, in which the office of father and mother is held in the highest veneration. Every child is born pure. Celibacy is not necessarily a virtue, and may be a vice.

250. Our highest spiritual ambition should be the hope of meeting Allah. To uphold such a hope is to give glad tidings to people of faith. It would only be unrepentant sinners who would fear the meeting. Note how the most sensuous matters are discussed frankly, and immediately taken up into the loftiest regions of spiritual upliftment.

In your oaths against  
Doing good, or acting rightly,  
Or making peace  
Between persons;  
For Allah is One  
Who heareth and knoweth<sup>251</sup>  
All things.

225. Allah will not  
Call you to account  
For thoughtlessness  
In your oaths,  
But for the intention  
In your hearts,<sup>252</sup>  
And He is  
Oft-forgiving  
Most Forbearing.
226. For those who take  
An oath for abstention  
From their wives,  
A waiting for four months  
Is ordained;  
If then they return,  
Allah is Oft-forgiving,  
Most Merciful
227. But if their intention  
Is firm for divorce,  
Allah heareth

أَنْ تَبُرُّوا وَتَسْقُفُوا وَتَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ  
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلَيْهِ

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِالْغَيْفَةِ إِنْ تَنْهَاكُمْ وَلَا كُنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ  
إِنْ أَكَسَبْتُمْ قُلُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

لِلَّذِينَ يُؤْلِمُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ تِبْرُعٌ أَرْبَعَةُ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِنْ  
فَأَمُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

وَإِنْ عَزَّمُوا الظَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلَيْهِ

251. The Arabs had many special kinds of oaths, for each of which they had a special name in their language. Some of them related to sex matters, and caused misunderstanding, alienation, division, or separation between husband and wife. This and the following three verses refer to them. In ii. 224 we are first of all told in perfectly general terms that we are not to make an oath in the name of Allah an excuse for not doing the right thing when it is pointed out to us, or for refraining from doing something which will bring people together. If we were swayed by anger or passion or mere caprice. Allah knows our inmost hearts, and right conduct, and not obstinacy or quibbling is what He demands from us.

252. It has been held that thoughtless oaths, if there is no intention behind them, can be expiated by an act of charity.

And knoweth all things<sup>253</sup>

228. Divorced women

Shall wait concerning themselves  
For three monthly periods.  
And it is not lawful for them  
To hide what Allah  
Hath created in their wombs,  
If they have faith  
In Allah and the Last Day.  
And their husbands  
Have the better right  
To take them back  
In that period, if  
They wish for reconciliation.<sup>254</sup>  
And women shall have rights  
Similar to the rights  
Against them, according  
To what is equitable;  
But men have a degree

وَالْمُطْلَقَتُ يَرْبَصُ بِأَنفُسِهِنَ فَلَذَّةٌ فِي قُرْبَةٍ  
وَلَا يَجِدُ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمُنَ مَا حَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ  
إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَوْمَهُنَّ أَعْنَى  
بِرَدَّهُنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنَّ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ مُشْلُّ  
الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِرِجَالٍ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرْجَةٌ  
وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالْحَكْمِ



253. Verses 225-27 should be read together with verse 224. The latter, though it is perfectly general, leads up to the other three.

The Pagan Arabs had a custom very unfair to women in wedlock, and this was suppressed by Islam. Sometimes, in a fit of anger or caprice, a husband would take an oath by Allah not to approach his wife. This deprived her of conjugal rights, but at the same time kept her tied to him indefinitely, so that she could not marry again. If the husband was remonstrated with, he would say that his oath by Allah bound him. Islam in the first place disapproved of the thoughtless oaths, but insisted on proper solemn intentional oaths being scrupulously observed. In a serious matter like that affecting a wife, if the oath was put forward as an excuse, the man is told that it is no excuse at all. Allah looks to intention, not mere thoughtless words. The parties are allowed a period of four months to make up their minds and see if an adjustment is possible. Reconciliation is recommended, but if they are really determined against reconciliation, it is unfair to keep them tied indefinitely.

254. Islam tries to maintain the married state as far as possible, especially where children are concerned, but it is against the restriction of the liberty of men and women in such vitally important matters as love and family life. It will check hasty action as far as possible, and leave the door to reconciliation open at many stages. Even after divorce a suggestion of reconciliation is made, subject to certain precautions (mentioned in the following verses) against thoughtless action. A period of waiting (*'iddat*) for three monthly courses is prescribed, in order to see if the marriage conditionally dissolved is likely to result in issue. But this is not necessary where the divorced woman is a virgin: Q. xxxiii. 49. It is definitely declared that women and men shall have similar rights against each other.

Over them<sup>255</sup>

And Allah is Exalted in Power,  
Wise.

## SECTION 29.

229. A divorce is only<sup>256</sup>

Permissible twice; after that,

The parties should either hold  
Together on equitable terms,  
Or separate with kindness.<sup>257</sup>

It is not lawful for you,

(Men), to take back

Any of your gifts (from your wives).

Except when both parties

Fear that they would be

Unable to keep the limits

Ordained by Allah<sup>258</sup>

If ye (judges) do indeed

أَطْلَقَنَّ مَرْتَابَنِ فَإِمْسَاكًا بِمُعْرِوفٍ أَوْ تَشْرِيفٍ  
بِإِحْسَنٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا  
أَتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافُ الْأَذَى يُمَسِّيْهَا حُدُودًا  
اللَّهُوْ فَإِنْ خَفْتُمُ الْأَيْقِنَّا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ  
عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا أَفْنَدْتُمْ بِهِ تِلْكَ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا يَعْتَدُوهَا

255. The difference in economic position between the sexes makes the man's rights and liabilities a little greater than the woman's. Q. iv. 34 refers to the duty of the man to maintain the woman, and to a certain difference in nature between the sexes. Subject to this, the sexes are on terms of equality in law, and in certain matters the weaker sex is entitled to special protection.

256. Where divorce for mutual incompatibility is allowed, there is danger that the parties might act hastily, then repent, and again wish to separate. To prevent such capricious action repeatedly, a limit is prescribed. Two divorces (with a reconciliation between) are allowed. After that the parties must definitely make up their minds, either to dissolve their union permanently, or to live honourable lives together in mutual love and forbearance—to "hold together on equitable terms." neither party worrying the other nor grumbling nor evading the duties and responsibilities of marriage.

257. If a separation is inevitable, the parties should not throw mud at each other, but recognise what is right and honourable on a consideration of all the circumstances. In any case a man is not allowed to ask back for any gifts or property he may have given to the wife. This is for the protection of the economically weaker sex. Lest that protective provision itself work against the woman's freedom, an exception is made in the next clause.

258. All other prohibitions and limits prescribed here are in the interests of good and honourable lives for both sides, and in the interests of a clean and honourable social life, without public or private scandals. If there is any fear that in safeguarding her economic rights, her very freedom of person may suffer, the husband refusing the dissolution of marriage, and perhaps treating her with cruelty, then, in such exceptional cases, it is permissible to give some material consideration to the husband, but the need and equity of this should be submitted to the judgment of impartial judges, i.e., properly constituted courts. A divorce of this kind is called *Khula'*.

Fear that they would be  
Unable to keep the limits  
Ordained by Allah,  
There is no blame on either  
Of them if she give  
Something for her freedom  
These are the limits  
Ordained by Allah;  
So do not transgress them  
If any do transgress  
The limits ordained by Allah.  
Such persons wrong  
(Themselves as well as others).<sup>259</sup>

230. So if a husband  
Divorces his wife (irrevocably),<sup>260</sup>  
He cannot, after that,  
Re-marry her until  
After she has married  
Another husband and  
He has divorced her.  
In that case there is  
No blame on either of them  
If they re-unite, provided  
They feel that they  
Can keep the limits  
Ordained by Allah.  
Such are the limits  
Ordained by Allah,  
Which He makes plain  
To those who know

وَمَن يَنْعَدِّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

فَإِن طَلَقَهَا فَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ حَيَّتِهِ تَرْكِحَ زَوْجًا  
غَيْرَهُ فَإِن طَلَقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَن يَرَاجِعَا إِن  
ظَنَّا أَن يُقْسِمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ بِسِينَاهَا  
لِلْقَوْمِ يَعْلَمُونَ

259. Wrong (themselves as well as others): *Zālimūn*: for the root meaning of *zulm* see n. 51. ii. 35.

260. This is in continuation of the first sentence of ii. 229. Two divorces followed by re-union are permissible; the third time the divorce becomes irrevocable, until the woman marries some other man and he divorces her. This is to set an almost impossible condition. The lesson is: if a man loves a woman he should not allow a sudden gust of temper or anger to induce him to take hasty action. What happens after two divorces, if the man takes her back? See n. 261 to ii. 231.

231. When ye divorce<sup>261</sup>

Women, and they (are about to) fulfil  
The term of their ('Iddat),  
Either take them back  
On equitable terms  
Or set them free  
On equitable terms:  
But do not take them back  
To injure them, (or) to take  
Undue advantage;<sup>262</sup>  
If any one does that,  
He wrongs his own soul.  
Do not treat Allah's Signs  
As a jest,<sup>263</sup>  
But solemnly rehearse<sup>264</sup>  
Allah's favours on you,  
And the fact that He  
Sent down to you  
The Book  
And Wisdom,  
For your instruction.  
And fear Allah,

وَإِذَا طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَنْ أَجْلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ  
يُعْرَفُ أَوْ سَرِحُوهُنَّ يُعْرَفُ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ  
ضَرَارًا لِتَعْنِدُوهُنَّ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ  
وَلَا تَنْخُذُوهُنَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُرُوكَ وَأَذْرُوكَ فَمَنْ  
اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَرْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ  
وَالْحِكْمَةُ يَعْظُمُكُمْ بِمَا وَأَنْقَوْلَهُ  
وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلَيْمٌ



261. If the man takes back his wife after two divorces, he must do so only on equitable terms, i.e., he must not put pressure on the woman to prejudice her rights in any way, and they must live clean and honourable lives, respecting each other's personalities. There are here two conditional clauses: (1) when ye divorce women, and (2) when they fulfil their 'Iddat: followed by two consequential clauses, (3) take them back on equitable terms, or (4) set them free with kindness. The first is connected with the third and the second with the fourth. Therefore if the husband wishes to resume the marital relations, he need not wait for 'Iddat. But if he does not so wish, she is free to marry some one else after 'Iddat. For the meaning of 'Iddat see n. 254 above.

262. Let no one think that the liberty given to him can be used for his own selfish ends. If he uses the law for the injury of the weaker party, his own moral and spiritual nature suffers.

263. These difficult questions of sex relations are often treated as a joke. But they profoundly affect our individual lives, the lives of our children, and the purity and-well-being of the society in which we live. This aspect of the question is reiterated again and again.

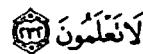
264. *Rehearse: zikr.* Cf. ii. 151 and n. 156. We are asked to remember in our own minds, and to proclaim and praise, and be proud of Allah's favours on us. His favours are immeasurable: not the least are His Revelations, and the wisdom which He has given to us to enable us to judge and act up to His guidance.

And know that Allah  
Is well acquainted  
With all things.

## SECTION 30

232. When ye divorce  
Women, and they fulfil  
The term of their (*Iddat*),  
Do not prevent them<sup>265</sup>  
From marrying  
Their (former) husbands,  
If they mutually agree  
On equitable terms.  
This instruction  
Is for all amongst you,  
Who believe in Allah  
And the Last Day.  
That is (the course  
Making for) most virtue  
And purity amongst you.  
And Allah knows,  
And ye know not.
233. The mothers shall give suck<sup>266</sup>  
To their offspring

وَإِذَا أَطْلَقْتُمُ الْإِنْسَانَ فَلَمْ يَجْلِهِنَّ فَلَا تَعْصِلُوهُنَّ  
أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَضُوا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ  
ذَلِكَ يُوَظِّبُهُمْ مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّوْمِ  
أَلَّا يَرِدُكُمْ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُهُنَّ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ  
لَا تَعْلَمُونَ



وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرضِّعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ

265. The termination of a marriage bond is a most serious matter for family and social life. And every lawful device is approved which can equitably bring back those who have lived together, provided only there is mutual love and they can live on honourable terms with each other. If these conditions are fulfilled, it is not right for outsiders to prevent or hinder re-union. They may be swayed by property or other considerations. This verse was occasioned by an actual case that was referred to the holy Prophet in his life-time.

266. As this comes in the midst of the regulations on divorce, it applies primarily to cases of divorce, where some definite rule is necessary, as the father and mother would not, on account of the divorce, probably be on good terms, and the interests of the children must be safeguarded. As, however, the wording is perfectly general, it has been held that the principle applies equally to the father and mother in wedlock: each must fulfil his or her part in the fostering of the child. On the other hand, it is provided that the child shall not be used as an excuse for driving a hard bargain on either side. By mutual consent they can agree to some course that is reasonable and equitable, both as regards the period before weaning (the maximum being two years) and the engagement of a wet-nurse, or (by analogy) for artificial feeding. But the mother's privileges must =

For two whole years,  
For him who desires  
To complete the term.  
But he shall bear the cost  
Of their food and clothing<sup>266-A</sup>  
On equitable terms.  
No soul shall have  
A burden laid on it  
Greater than it can bear.  
No mother shall be  
Treated unfairly  
On account of her child.  
Nor father  
On account of his child,  
An heir shall be chargeable  
In the same way.  
If they both decide  
On weaning,  
By mutual consent,  
And after due consultation.  
There is no blame on them,  
If ye decide  
On a foster-mother  
For your offspring  
There is no blame on you,  
Provided ye pay (the foster mother)  
What ye offered,  
On equitable terms.  
But fear Allah and know  
That Allah sees well  
What ye do.

234. If any of you die  
And leave widows behind;  
They shall wait concerning  
themselves

لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُتَمَّ الْرَّضَاعَةُ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْوِلِهِ رِزْقُهُ  
وَكُسوَّهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ لَا تُكَلِّفَ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا  
لَا تُنْصَارَ وَلِدَهُ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مُؤْلِدَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ  
وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ فَإِنْ أَرَادَ أَفْصَالَ عَنْ  
رَّاضِيَتِهِمَا وَشَأْوِرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا لَنَ أَرَدْتُمْ  
أَنْ تُنْرَضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا  
سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا أَمْأَأَتُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَنْهُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْمَمُوا

أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَقَّنُونَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَدْرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَرِبَّصُنَّ  
بِأَنْشِئُهُنَّ أَرْبَعَةً أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا فَإِذَا بَلَغُنَّ

= not be curtailed simply because by mutual consent she does not nurse the baby. In a matter of this kind the ultimate appeal must be to godliness, for all legal remedies are imperfect and may be misused.

266-A. i.e. in case of divorce.

Four months and ten days<sup>267</sup>  
When they have fulfilled  
Their term, there is no blame  
On you if they dispose  
Of themselves in a just  
And reasonable manner.  
And Allah is well acquainted  
With what ye do.

235. There is no blame  
On you if ye make  
An indirect offer of betrothal  
Or hold it in your hearts.<sup>268</sup>  
Allah knows that ye  
Cherish them in your hearts:  
But do not make a secret contract  
With them except  
That you speak to them  
In terms honourable, nor resolve  
on the tie  
Of marriage till the term  
Prescribed is fulfilled.  
And know that Allah  
Knoweth what is in your hearts,  
And take heed of Him;  
And know that Allah is  
Oft-forgiving. Most Forbearing.

أَجَهْنَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي  
أَنفُسِهِنَّ إِنَّ الْمَعْرُوفَ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَمْلُوْنَ حَيْرٌ

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خَطْبَةِ  
النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَنْكَنْتُمْ فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ عِلْمَ اللَّهِ  
أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذَكَّرُونَ هُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ  
سِرًا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا وَلَا مَقْرُوفًا وَلَا تَعْرِمُوا  
عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ  
وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنفُسِكُمْ  
فَأَخْذُرُوهُ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

267. The 'Iddat of widowhood (four months and ten days) is longer than the 'Iddat of divorce (three monthly courses. ii. 228). In the latter the only consideration is to ascertain if there is any unborn issue of the marriage dissolved. This is clear from xxxiii. 49, where it is laid down that there is no 'Iddat for virgin divorcees. In the former there is in addition the consideration of mourning and respect for the deceased husband. In either case, if it is proved that there is unborn issue, there is of course no question of remarriage for the woman until it is born. Meanwhile her maintenance on a reasonable scale is chargeable to the late husband's estate.

268. A definite contract of remarriage for the woman during her period of 'Iddat of widowhood is forbidden as obviously unseemly, as also any secrecy in such matters. It would bind the woman at a time when she is not fitted to exercise her fullest judgment. But circumstances may arise when an *offer* (open for future consideration but not immediately decided) may be to her interests, and this is permissible.

## SECTION 31

236. There is no blame on you  
 If ye divorce women  
 Before consummation  
 Or the fixation of their dower;  
 But bestow on them  
 (A suitable gift),  
 The wealthy  
 According to his means,  
 And the poor  
 According to his means;—  
 A gift of a reasonable amount  
 Is due from those  
 Who wish to do the right thing.

237. And if ye divorce them  
 Before consummation,  
 But after the fixation  
 Of a dower for them,  
 Then the half of the dower  
 (Is due to them), unless  
 They remit it  
 Or (the man's half) is remitted<sup>269</sup>  
 By him in whose hands  
 Is the marriage tie;<sup>270</sup>  
 And the remission  
 (Of the man's half)  
 If the nearest to righteousness.  
 And do not forget  
 Liberality between yourselves.  
 For Allah sees well  
 All that ye do.

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا أَنْتُمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ  
 أَوْ نَفِرْضُوا لَهُنَّ فِرِضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمُؤْسِعِ  
 قَدْرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُفْتَرِ قَدْرُهُ مَتَّعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًا  
 عَلَى الْمُخْسِنِينَ

وَإِنْ طَلَقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ  
 فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فِرِضَةً فَنِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمُ إِلَّا  
 أَنْ يَعْقُوبُوكُمْ أَوْ يَعْقُوبُ الَّذِي يَدْرِهُ عَقْدَهُ  
 أَتَتْكَاجُ وَأَنْ تَعْفُوَا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ  
 وَلَا تَنْسَوْا الْفَضْلَ بِيَتْكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يِمَانِعُ الْمُمْلُونَ

بَصِيرٌ

269. The law declares that in such a case half the dower fixed shall be paid by the man to the woman. But it is open to the woman to remit the half due to her or to the man to remit the half which he is entitled to deduct, and thus pay the whole.

270. *Him in whose hands is the marriage tie:* According to Hanafi doctrine this is the husband himself, who can ordinarily by his act dissolve the marriage. It therefore behoves him to be all the more liberal to the woman and pay her the full dower even if the marriage was not consummated.

238. Guard strictly

Your (habit of) prayers.

Especially the Middle Prayer,<sup>271</sup>  
And stand before Allah  
In a devout (frame of mind).

239. If ye fear (an enemy),<sup>272</sup>

Pray on foot, or riding,  
(As may be most convenient),  
But when ye are  
In security, celebrate  
Allah's praises in the manner  
He has taught you,  
Which ye knew not (before).

240. Those of you

Who die and leave widows  
Should bequeath  
For their widows  
A year's maintenance  
Without expulsion,<sup>273</sup>  
But if they leave  
(The residence),  
There is no blame on you  
For what they do  
With themselves,  
Provided it is reasonable.  
And Allah is Exalted in Power,  
Wise.

حَفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَاةِ وَالصَّلَاةُ الْوُسْطَى

وَقُومُوا لِللهِ قَانِتِينَ

فَإِنْ خَفْتُمْ فِرَجًا لَا أَزْكِنَا فَإِذَا أَمْسَتُمْ  
فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَمْتُمْ مَالَمْ

تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَقَّنُ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذْرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا  
وَصِيهَةً لِأَرْوَاحِهِمْ مَتَّلِعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ عَيْنَ  
لَا خَرَاجٌ فَإِنْ خَرَجَنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي  
مَا فَلَنَتْ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ بِمِنْ مَفْرُوفٍ وَاللَّهُ  
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

271. *The Middle Prayer:* *Salātul-wustā*: may be translated "the best or the most excellent prayer." Authorities differ as to the exact meaning of this phrase. The weight of authorities seems to be in favour of interpreting this as the 'Asr prayer (in the middle of the afternoon). This is apt to be most neglected, and yet this is the most necessary, to remind us of Allah in the midst of our worldly affairs.

272. Verses 238-239 are parenthetical, introducing the subject of prayer in danger. This is more fully dealt with in iv. 101-03.

273. Opinions differ whether the provision (of a year's maintenance, with residence), for a widow is abrogated by the share which the widow gets (one-eighth or one-fourth) as an heir (Q. iv. 12). I do not think it is. The bequest (where made) takes effect as a charge on the property, but the widow can leave the house before the year is out, and presumably the maintenance then ceases.

241. For divorced women  
Is a suitable Gift  
This is a duty  
On the righteous.

242. Thus doth Allah  
Make clear His Signs  
To you: in order that  
Ye may understand.

## SECTION 32.

243. Didst thou not  
Turn by vision to those  
Who abandoned their homes,  
Though they were thousands  
(In number), for fear of death?  
Allah said to them: "Die":  
Then He restored them to life.<sup>274</sup>  
For Allah is full of bounty  
To mankind, but  
Most of them are ungrateful.

244. Then fight in the cause  
Of Allah, and know that Allah  
Heareth and knoweth all things.<sup>275</sup>

وَلِمُطْلَقِنَتِ مَعَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَفَاعَلَيْهِ  
الْمُسْتَقِرَّاتِ

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَتِهِ  
لَمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِن دِيَرِهِمْ  
وَهُمُ الْأَوْلَى حَذَرَ الْمَوْتَ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُؤْمِنًا  
ثُمَّ أَخْبَثَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ  
وَلَا كُنَّ أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ

وَقَاتَلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَيِّعُ  
عَلَيْهِ

274. We now return to the subject of *Jihād*, which we left at ii. 214-216. We are to be under no illusion about it. If we are not prepared to fight for our faith, with our lives and all our resources, both our lives and our resources will be wiped out by our enemies. As to life, Allah gave it, and a coward is not likely to save it. It has happened again and again in history that men who tamely submitted to be driven from their homes although they were more numerous than their enemies, had the sentence of death pronounced on them for their cowardice, and they deserved it. But Allah gives further and further chances in His mercy. This is a lesson to every generation. The Commentators differ as to the exact episode referred to, but the wording is perfectly general, and so is the lesson to be learnt from it.

275. For Allah's cause we must fight, but never to satisfy our own selfish passions or greed, for the warning is repeated: "Allah heareth and knoweth all things": all deeds, words, and motives are perfectly open before Him, however we might conceal them from men or even from ourselves. See ii. 216, n. 236.

245. Who is he

That will loan to Allah  
 A beautiful loan,<sup>276</sup> which Allah  
 Will double unto his credit  
 And multiply many times?  
 It is Allah that giveth (you)  
 Want or Plenty.  
 And to Him shall be  
 Your return.

246. Has thou not

Turned thy vision to the Chiefs  
 Of the Children of Israel  
 After (the time of) Moses<sup>277</sup>  
 They said to a Prophet<sup>278</sup>  
 (That was) among them:

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيُضَعِّفُهُ  
 لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْصُنُ وَيَبْصُطُ  
 وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ

أَنَّمَا تَرَى إِلَى الْمَلِإِ مِنْ بَنِي إِنْسَانٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ  
 مُوْسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لَنِّي لَهُمْ أَبْعَثْتَ لَنَا مِلِكًا

276. Spending in the cause of Allah is called metaphorically "a beautiful loan". It is excellent in many ways: (1) it shows a beautiful spirit of self-denial; (2) in other loans there may be a doubt as to the safety of your capital or any return thereon; here you give to the Lord of All, in Whose hands are the keys of want or plenty; giving you may have manifold blessings, and withholding, you may even lose what you have. If we remember that our goal is Allah, can we turn away from His cause?

277. The next generation after Moses and Aaron was ruled by Joshua, who crossed the Jordan and settled the tribes in Palestine. His rule lasted for 25 years, after which there was a period of 320 years when the Israelites had a chequered history. They were not united among themselves, and suffered many reverses at the hands of the Midianites, Amalekites, and other tribes of Palestine. They frequently lapsed into idolatry and deserted the worship of the true God. From time to time a leader appeared among them who assumed dictatorial powers. Acting under a sort of theocratic commission from Allah, he pointed out their backslidings, re-united them under His banner, and restored, from time to time and place to place, the power of Israel. These dictators are called Judges in the English translation of the Old Testament. The last of their line was Samuel, who marks the transition towards the line of Kings on the one hand and of the later Prophets on the other. He may be dated approximately about the 11th century B.C.

278. This was Samuel. In his time Israel had suffered from much corruption within and many reverses without. The Philistines had made a great attack and defeated Israel with great slaughter. The Israelites, instead of relying on Faith and their own valour and cohesion, brought out their most sacred possession, the Ark of the Covenant, to help them in the fight. But the enemy captured it, carried it away, and retained it for seven months. The Israelites forgot that wickedness cannot screen itself behind a sacred relic. Nor can a sacred relic help the enemies of faith. The enemy found that the Ark brought nothing but misfortune for themselves, and were glad to abandon it. It apparently remained twenty years in the village (*qarya*) of Ya'ārim (Kirjath-jearim): I, Samuel, vii. 2. Meanwhile the people pressed Samuel to appoint them a king. They thought that a king would cure all their ills, whereas what was wanting was a spirit of union and discipline and a readiness on their part of fight in the cause of Allah.

"Appoint for us a King, that we  
May fight in the cause of Allah,"  
He said; "Is it not possible,<sup>279</sup>  
If ye were commanded  
To fight, that ye  
Will not fight?" They said:  
"How could we refuse  
To fight in the cause of Allah,  
Seeing that we were turned out  
Of our homes and our families?"  
But when they were commanded  
To fight, they turned back.  
Except a small band  
Among them. But Allah  
Has full knowledge of those  
Who do wrong.

247. Their Prophet said to them;  
"Allah hath appointed  
Tälüt<sup>280</sup> as king over you,"  
They said: "How can he  
Exercise authority over us  
When we are better fitted  
Than he to exercise authority,  
And he is not even gifted,  
With wealth in abundance?"  
He said: Allah hath  
Chosen him above you,  
And hath gifted him  
Abundantly with knowledge

نَفْتَلِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسِيْنَا إِنْ  
كَثَيْرٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ لَا نُقْتَلُوْنَا قَاتِلُواْ  
وَمَا نَا لَا نُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ  
أَخْرَجْنَا مِنْ دِيْرَنَا وَأَبْنَاءِنَا فَلَمَّا كَتَبَ  
عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَى الْفِلَامِنْهُمْ  
وَاللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ بِالظَّالِمِينَ

وَقَالَ أَهْمَدٌ تَبَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَثَ لَكُمْ  
طَائُولَتَ مَلِكًا قَاتِلُواْ أَنَّ يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ  
عَلَيْنَا وَمَنْعَنْ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ  
سَعْكَةً مِنْ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَضْفَانَهُ  
عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ

279. Samuel knew as a Prophet that the people were fickle and only wanted to cover their own want of union and true spirit by asking for a king. They replied with spirit in words, but when it came to action, they failed. They hid themselves in caves and rocks, or ran away, and even those who remained "followed him trembling": I. Samuel. xiii. 6-7.

280. Tälüt is the Arabic name for Saul, who was tall and handsome, but belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel. His worldly belongings were slender, and it was when he went out to search for some asses which had been lost from his father's house that he met Samuel and was anointed king by him. The people's fickleness appeared immediately he was named. They raised all sorts of petty objections to him. The chief consideration in their minds was selfishness: each one wanted to be leader and king himself, instead of desiring sincerely the good of the people as a whole, as a leader should do.

And bodily prowess: Allah  
Granteth His authority to whom  
He pleaseth; Allah is  
All-embracing, and He knoweth  
All things."

248. And (further) their Prophet  
Said to them: "A Sign  
Of his authority  
Is that there shall come  
To you the Ark of the Covenant,<sup>281</sup>  
With (an assurance) therein  
Of security<sup>282</sup> from your Lord,  
And the relics left  
By the family of Moses  
And the family of Aaron,  
Carried by angels.<sup>283</sup>  
In this is a Symbol  
For you if ye indeed  
Have faith."

## SECTION 33.

249. When Tālūt set forth  
With the armies, he said:<sup>284</sup>

وَالْجِسْمٌ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ  
وَاللَّهُ وَسِعٌ عَلَيْهِ

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ أَيَّةً مُّلْكِيَّهِ  
أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ الْكَابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ  
مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبِقِيمَةٍ مَسَارِكَ إِلَّا مُوسَى  
وَإِلَّا هُنُّ رُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ  
لَا يَةً لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَلَوْتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ

281. *Ark of the Covenant: Tābūt:* a chest of acacia wood covered and lined with pure gold, about 5ft. X 3ft. X 3ft. See Exod. xxv. 10-22. It was to contain the "testimony of Allah", or the Ten Commandments engraved on stone, with relics of Moses and Aaron. Its Gold lid was to be the "Mercy Seat." This was a sacred possession to Israel. It was lost to the enemy in the early part of Samuel's ministry: see n. 278 to ii. 246: when it came back, it remained in a village for twenty years, and was apparently taken to the capital when kingship was instituted. It thus became a symbol of unity and authority.

282. *Security: sakina* = safety, tranquillity, peace. Later Jewish writings use the same word for a symbol of Allah's Glory in the Tabernacle or tent in which the Ark was kept, or in the Temple when it was built by Solomon.

283. *Carried by angels:* these words refer to the Tābūt or Ark.

284. A Commander is hampered by a large force if it is not in perfect discipline and does not whole-heartedly believe in its Commander. He must get rid of all the doubtful ones, as did Gideon before Saul, and Henry V. in Shakespeare's story long afterwards. Saul used the same test as Gideon: he gave a certain order when crossing a stream: the greater part disobeyed, and were sent back. Gideon's story will be found in Judges, vii. 2-7.

"Allah will test you  
At the stream; if any  
Drinks of its water,  
He goes not with my army:  
Only those who taste not  
Of it go with me:  
A mere sip out of the hand  
Is excused." But they  
Drank of it, except a few.  
When they crossed the river,-  
He and the faithful ones with him,-  
They said: "This day<sup>285</sup>  
We cannot cope  
With Goliath and his forces."  
But those who were convinced  
That they must meet Allah,  
Said: "How oft, by Allah's will,  
Hath a small force  
Vanquished a big one?  
Allah is with those  
Who steadfastly persevere."

250. When they advanced  
To meet Goliath and his forces.  
They prayed: "Our Lord!  
Pour out constancy on us  
And make our steps firm:  
Help us against those  
That reject faith."
251. By Allah's will,  
They routed them;  
And David<sup>286</sup> slew Goliath;

مُبْتَلِكُمْ يَنْهَا رِيقْمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ  
مِنِّي وَمِنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنْ أَعْرَفَ  
غَرْفَهُ يَدِيهِ فَسَرِّبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ  
فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ هُوَ وَالذِينَ كَانُوا مَعَهُ  
قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَاهُولَتِ  
وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَطْلُبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ  
مُلْقُوَاللهِ كَمْ مِنْ فِشَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَبَّتِ  
وَفَتَةً كَثِيرَةً يَأْذِنُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ



وَلَمَّا بَرَزَ وَالْجَاهُولَتِ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا  
رَبِّنَا أَفْرَغَ عَلَيْنَا صَبَرًا وَتَكَبَّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا  
وَأَنْصَرَنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ



فَهَزَّ مُؤْمِنُهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقُتِلَ دَاؤُهُ

285. Even in the small band that remained faithful, there were some who were appalled by the number of the enemy when they met him face to face, and saw the size and strength of the enemy Commander, the giant Goliath (Jälüt). But there was a very small band who were determined to face all odds because they had perfect confidence in Allah and in the cause for which they were fighting. They were for making a firm stand and seeking Allah's help. Of that number was David: see next note.

286. Note how the whole story is compressed into a few words as regards narration, but its spiritual lessons are dwelt upon from many points of view. The Old Testament is mainly interested in the narrative, which is full of detail, but says little about the =

And Allah gave him  
Power and wisdom  
And taught him  
Whatever (else) He willed.<sup>287</sup>  
And did not Allah  
Check one set of people  
By means of another,  
The earth would indeed  
Be full of mischief:  
But Allah is full of bounty  
To all the worlds.<sup>288</sup>

252. These are the signs  
Of Allah: we rehearse them  
To thee in truth: verily  
Thou art one of the Messengers.

جَالُوكَ وَأَتَكَهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ  
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَمَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَلَوْلَا  
دَفَعَ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ بِعَصْبَرِهِمْ يَبْغِضُونَ  
لَفْسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكَنَّ اللَّهَ  
ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَنَمِينَ  
(١٥)  
تِلْكَ أَيْمَانُ اللَّهِ تَنْلُو هَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ  
وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

= universal truths of which every true story is a parable. The Qur-ān assumes the story, but tells the parable.

David was a raw youth, with no arms or armour. He was not known even in the Israelite camp, and the giant Goliath mocked him. Even David's own elder brother chid him for deserting his sheep, for he was a poor shepherd lad to outward appearance, but his faith had made him more than a match for the Philistine hosts. When Saul offered his own armour and arms to David, the young hero declined, as he had not tried them, while his shepherd's sling and staff were his well-tried implements. He picked up five smooth pebbles on the spot from the stream, and used his sling to such effect that he knocked down Goliath. He then used Goliath's own sword to slay him. There was consternation in the Philistine army: they broke and fled, and were pursued and cut to pieces.

Apart from the main lesson that if we would preserve our national existence and our faith it is our duty to fight with courage and firmness, there are other lessons in David's story: (1) numbers do not count, but faith, determination and the blessing of Allah; (2) size and strength are of no avail against truth, courage, and careful planning; (3) the hero tries his own weapons, and those that are available to him at the time and place, even though people may laugh at him; (4) if Allah is with us, the enemy's weapon may become an instrument of his own destruction; (5) personality conquers all dangers, and puts heart into our own wavering friends; (6) pure faith brings Allah's reward, which may take many forms: in David's case it was Power, Wisdom, and other gifts; see next note.

287. David was not only a shepherd, a warrior, a king, a wise man, and a prophet, but was also endowed with the gifts of poetry and music.

288. Allah's plan is universal. He loves and protects *all* His creatures and His bounties are for all the worlds (i. 2 n.). To protect one He may have to check another, but we must never lose faith that His love is for all in boundless measure.

253. Those Messengers  
 We endowed with gifts,  
 Some above others:<sup>289</sup>  
 To some of them Allah spoke;<sup>290</sup>  
 Others He raised  
 To degrees (of honour);<sup>291</sup>  
 To Jesus the son of Mary  
 We gave Clear (Signs),<sup>292</sup>  
 And strengthened him  
 With the Holy Spirit.<sup>292-A</sup>  
 If Allah had so willed,  
 Succeeding generations  
 Would not have fought  
 Among each other, after  
 Clear (Signs) had come to them  
 But they (chose) to wrangle  
 Some believing and others  
 Rejecting. If Allah had so willed,  
 They would not have fought

٤٧٦ تَلَكَ الرَّسُولُ فَضَلَّنَا بِعَضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ  
 مَّنْ كَلَمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بِعَضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ وَّأَتَيْنَا  
 عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرِيمَ الْبَيْتَ وَأَيَّدَنَاهُ بِرُوحِ  
 الْقُدُّسِ وَلَوْشَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَفْتَلَ الَّذِينَ  
 مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مَنِ يَعْدِ مَا جَاءَ نَهْمَ الْبَيْتَ  
 وَلَكُنْ أَخْلَقُوا فِيهِمْ مَنْ أَمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَفَرَ  
 وَلَوْشَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَفْتَلَنَا وَلَكُنَّ اللَّهُ يَقْعُلُ  
 مَا يُرِيدُ



289. Different gifts and different modes of procedure are prescribed to Allah's Messengers in different ages, and perhaps their degrees are different though it is not for us mortals, with our imperfect knowledge, to make any difference between one and another of Allah's Messengers (ii. 136). As this winds up the argument about fighting, three illustrations are given from the past, how it affected Allah's Messengers. To Moses Allah spoke directly: he led his men for forty years through the wilderness, mainly fighting against the unbelief of his own people; he organised them to fight with the sword for Palestine, but was raised to Allah's mercy before his enterprise ripened, and it fell to Joshua to carry out his plan. David was chosen by Allah. He overthrew the greatest warrior of his time, became a king, a Prophet and waged successful wars. Jesus was "strengthened with the holy spirit": he was given no weapons to fight, and his mission was of a more limited character. In Muhammad's mission these and other characters were combined. Gentler than Jesus, he organised on a vaster scale than Moses, and from Madinah he ruled and gave laws, and the Qur'ân has a vaster scope than the Scriptures before.

290. Moses: see note above.

291. There is a two-fold sense: they were raised to high posts of honour, and they rose by degrees.

292. Cf. ii. 87. See n. 401 to iii. 62.

292-A. "Holy spirit," according to commentators signifies Gabriel.

Each other; but Allah  
Does what He wills.<sup>293</sup>

## SECTION 34.

254. O ye who believe!  
Spend out of (the bounties)<sup>294</sup>  
We have provided for you,  
Before the Day comes  
When no bargaining  
(Will avail), nor friendship  
Nor intercession.<sup>295</sup>  
Those who reject Faith—they  
Are the wrong-doers
255. Allah! There is no god  
But He,—the Living,  
The Self-subsisting, Supporter of all<sup>296</sup>

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ  
مَنْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَأْتِي يَوْمٌ لَا يَجِدُ فِيهِ وَلَا حَلَةً  
وَلَا شَفَعَةً وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُ الْقَيُومُ لَا تَأْخُذْهُ دِسْنَةٌ

293. If some power of choice was to be given to man, his selfishness inevitably caused divisions. It must not be supposed that it frustrates Allah's Plan. He carries it out as He will.

294. *Spend*, i.e., give away in charity, or employ in good works, but do not hoard. Good works would in Islam include everything that advances the good of one that is in need whether a neighbour or a stranger or that advances the good of the community, or even the good of the person himself to whom Allah has given the bounty. But it must be real good and there should be no admixture of baser motives, such as vainglory, or false indulgence, or encouragement of idleness, or playing off one person against another. The bounties include mental and spiritual gifts as well as wealth and material gifts.

295. Cf. ii. 123 and ii. 48.

296. This is the *Āyat-ul-Kursi*, the "Verse of the Throne" Who can translate its glorious meaning, or reproduce the rhythm of its well-chosen and comprehensive words. Even in the original Arabic the meaning seems to be greater than can be expressed in words.

The attributes of Allah are different from anything we know in our present world: He lives, but His life is self-subsisting and eternal: it does not depend upon other beings and is not limited to time and space. The attribute of *Qayūm* includes not only the idea of "Self-subsisting" but also the idea of "Keeping up and maintaining all life." His life being the source and constant support of all derived forms of life. Perfect life is perfect activity, in contrast to the imperfect life which we see around us, which is not only subject to death but to the need for rest or slowed-down activity, (something which is between activity and sleep, for which I in common with other translators have used the word "slumber") and the need for full sleep itself. But Allah has no need for rest or sleep. His activity, like His life, is perfect and self-subsisting. Contrast with this the expression used in Psalms lxxviii. 65. "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine."

No slumber can seize Him  
Nor sleep. His are all things  
In the heavens and on earth.  
Who is there can intercede  
In His presence except  
As He permitteth? He knoweth  
What (appeareth to His creatures  
As) Before or After  
Or Behind them.<sup>297</sup>  
Nor shall they compass  
Aught of His knowledge  
Except as He willeth.  
His Throne doth extend<sup>298</sup>  
Over the heavens  
And the earth, and He feeleth  
No fatigue in guarding  
And preserving them<sup>299</sup>  
For He is the Most High,  
The Supreme (in glory).

256. Let there be no compulsion<sup>300</sup>  
In religion: Truth stands out

وَلَا نُوْمَّ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا  
الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ وَلَا يَأْذِنُهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ  
آيَدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ  
مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَنْعُودُ حِفْظَهُمَا وَهُوَ أَعْلَى

الْعَظِيمُ

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْبَيْنَ الرُّسُدُ مِنَ الْغَيْرِ فَمَنْ

297. After we realise that His Life is absolute Life, His Being is absolute Being, while others are contingent and evanescent, our ideas of heaven and earth vanish like shadows. Such reality as our heavens and our earth possess is a reflection of His absolute Reality. The pantheist places the wrong accent when he says that everything is He. The truth is better expressed when we say that everything is His. How then can any creatures stand before Him as of right, and claim to intercede for a fellow-creature? But He in His Wisdom and Plan may grade His creatures and give one superiority over another. Then by His will and permission such a one may intercede or help according to the laws and duties laid on him. Allah's knowledge is absolute, and is not conditioned by Time or Space. To us, His creatures, these conditions always apply. His knowledge and our knowledge are therefore in different categories, and our knowledge only gets some reflection of Reality when it accords with His Will and Plan.

298. *Throne*: seat. In our thoughts we exhaust everything when we say "the heavens and the earth". Well, then, in everything is the working of Allah's power, and will, and authority. Everything of course includes spiritual things as well as things of sense.

299. A life of activity that is imperfect or relative would not only need rest for carrying on its own activities, but would be in need of double rest when it has to look after and guard, or cherish, or help other activities. In contrast with this is the Absolute Life, which is free from any such need or contingency. For it is supreme above anything that we can conceive.

300. Compulsion is incompatible with religion: because (1) religion depends upon faith and will, and these would be meaningless if induced by force: (2) Truth and Error =

Clear from Error: whoever  
Rejects Tagut<sup>300-A</sup> and believes  
In Allah hath grasped  
The most trustworthy  
Hand-hold, that never breaks.<sup>301</sup>  
And Allah heareth  
And knoweth all things.

257. Allah is the Protector  
Of those who have faith:  
From the depths of darkness  
He leads them forth  
Into light. Of those  
Who reject faith the patrons  
Are the Tagut from light  
They will lead them forth  
Into the depths of darkness.  
They will be Companions  
Of the fire, to dwell therein  
(For ever).

## SECTION 35.

258. Hast thou not  
Turned thy thought to one  
Who disputed with Abraham<sup>302</sup>  
About his Lord, because  
Allah had granted him

يَكْفُرُ بِالظَّلَّعُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ  
أَسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْمُرْوَةِ الْوُنْقَ لَا أَنْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَالله  
سَيِّعُ عِلْمَهُ

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلْمَاتِ  
إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَفَلَا وَهُمْ  
الظَّلَّعُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ  
إِلَى الظُّلْمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَضَحَبُ  
النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَلِيلُونَ

أَنَّمَ تَرَى إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ  
أَنَّمَّا تَأَنَّهُ اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّي

= have been so clearly shown up by the mercy of Allah that there should be no doubt in the minds of any persons of goodwill as to the fundamentals of faith; (3) Allah's protection is continuous, and His Plan is always to lead us from the depths of darkness into the clearest light.

300-A. 'Tagut' here means; anything worshipped beside Allah.

301. *Hand-hold*: something which the hands can grasp for safety in a moment of danger. It may be a loop or a handle, or anchor. If it is without flaw, so that there is no danger of breaking our safety is absolutely assured so long as we hold fast to it. Our safety then depends on our own will and faith: Allah's help and protection will always be unfailing if we hold firmly to Allah and trust in Him.

302. The three verses 258-260 have been the subject of much controversy as to the exact meaning to be attached to the incidents and the precise persons alluded to, whose names are not mentioned. In such matters, where the Qur-an has given no names and the Holy Prophet has himself given no indication, it seems to me useless to speculate, and still worse to put forward positive opinions. In questions of learning, speculations are =

Power? Abraham said:  
"My Lord is He Who  
Giveth life and death."  
He said: "I give life and death."  
Said Abraham: "But it is Allah  
That causeth the sun  
To rise from the East:  
Do thou then cause it  
To rise from the West."  
Thus was he confounded  
Who (in arrogance) rejected  
Faith. Nor doth Allah  
Give guidance  
To a people unjust.<sup>303</sup>

259. Or (take) the similitude  
Of one who passed  
By a hamlet, all in ruins<sup>304</sup>

الَّذِي يُخْيِي، وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أَحْيِي، وَأَمِيتُ  
قَالَ إِنَّ رَبَّهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّفَاعَةِ  
مِنَ الْمُشْرِقِ فَلَمَّا يَهْمَمُ مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهْتَ الَّذِي  
كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قُرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ حَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشَهَا

= often interesting. But it seems to me that the meaning of the Qur-ān is so wide and universal that we are in danger of missing the real and eternal meaning if we go on disputing about minor points. All three incidents are such as may happen again and again in any prophet's life-time, and be seen in impersonal vision at any time. Here they are connected with Al-Muṣṭafā's vision as shown by the opening words of verse 258.

303. The first point illustrated is the pride of power, and the impotence of human power as against Allah's power. The person who disputed with Abraham may have been Nimrod or some ruler in Babylonia, or indeed elsewhere. I name Babylonia as it was the original home of Abraham (Ur of the Chaldees), and Babylon prided herself on her arts and sciences in the ancient world. Science can do many wonderful things: it could then: it can now. But the mystery of Life baffled science then, as it continues to baffle science now, after many centuries of progress. Abraham had faith, and referred back everything to the true Creator. A sceptical ruler might jestingly say: "I have the power of life and death." A man of science might say: "We have investigated the laws of life and death." Different kinds of powers lie in the hands of kings and men of knowledge. The claim in both cases is true in a very limited sense. But Abraham confounded the claimer by going back to fundamentals. "If you had the ultimate power, why could you not make the sun rise from the West?"

304. This incident is referred variously (1) to Ezekiel's vision of dry bones (Ezekiel. xxvii 1-10); (2) to Nehemiah's visit to Jerusalem in ruins after the Captivity, and to its re-building (Nehemiah, i. 12-20); and (3) to 'Uzair, or Ezra, or Esdras, the scribe, priest, and reformer, who was sent by the Persian King after the Captivity to Jerusalem, and about whom there are many Jewish legends. As to (1), there are only four words in this verse about bones. As to (2) and (3), there is nothing specific to connect this verse with either. The wording is perfectly general, and we must understand it as general. I think it does refer not only to individual, but to national, death and resurrection.

To its roots. He said:  
 "Oh! how shall Allah  
 Bring it (ever) to life,  
 After (this) its death?"  
 But Allah caused him  
 To die for a hundred years,  
 Then raised him up (again).  
 He said: "How long  
 Didst thou tarry (thus)?"  
 He said: "(Perhaps) a day  
 Or part of a day." He said:  
 "Nay, thou hast tarried  
 Thus a hundred years:  
 But look at thy food  
 And thy drink; they show  
 No signs of age; and look  
 At thy donkey; and that  
 We may make of thee  
 A Sign unto the people.  
 Look further at the bones,  
 How We bring them together  
 And clothe them with flesh."<sup>305</sup>  
 When this was shown clearly  
 To him, he said: "I know  
 That Allah hath power  
 Over all things."

260. Behold! Abraham said:  
 "My Lord! Show me how

قَالَ أَنِّي يُحِبُّ هَذِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَامَّا تَهُدِي مِائَةً عَامٍ شَمَّ بَعْشَهُ قَالَ كُمْ لِيَشَّ قَالَ لِيَشَّ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لِيَشَّ مِائَةً عَامٌ فَانْظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسْهَّ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِيَعْتَدِلَكَ إِذَا كَتَلْ لِلنَّاسِ وَانْظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ تُنْشِرُهَا ثُمَّ تَكْسُوُهَا لَحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

وَإِذَا قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبِّ أَرْبِنِ كَيْفَ تُنْعِي

305. A man is in despair when he sees the destruction of a whole people, city, or civilisation. But Allah can cause resurrection as He has done many times in history, and as He will do at the final Resurrection. Time is nothing before Allah. The doubter thinks that he has been dead or "tarried thus" a day or less when the period has been a century. On the other hand, the food and drink which he left behind is intact, and as fresh as it was when he left it. But the donkey is not only dead, but nothing but bones is left of it. And before the man's eyes, the bones are reunited, clothed with flesh and blood, and restored to life. Moral: (1) Time is nothing to Allah; (2) It affects different things in different ways; (3) The keys of life and death are in Allah's hand; (4) Man's power is nothing; his faith should be in Allah.

Thou givest life to the dead.”<sup>306</sup>  
 He said: “Dost thou not  
 Then believe?” He said:  
 “Yea! but to satisfy  
 My own heart.”<sup>307</sup>  
 He said: “Take four birds;  
 Tie them (cut them into pieces),  
 Then put a portion<sup>308</sup> of them:  
 On every hill, and call to them:  
 They will come to thee  
 (Flying) with speed.  
 Then know that Allah  
 Is Exalted in Power, Wise.”

## SECTION 36

261. The parable of those  
 Who spend their wealth  
 In the way of Allah is that  
 Of a grain of corn: it groweth  
 Seven ears, and each ear  
 Hath a hundred grains.  
 Allah giveth manifold increase  
 To whom He pleaseth:  
 And Allah careth for all  
 And He knoweth all things.
262. Those who spend  
 Their wealth in the cause  
 Of Allah, and follow not up

آلَّمْ يَرَى قَالَ أَوْلَمْ تَؤْمِنُ قَالَ بَلَى وَلَكِنْ  
 لِتَطْمِئِنَ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَنَحْذِدْ أَرْبَعَةَ مِنَ الظَّاهِرِ  
 فَصَرَّهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ أَجْعَلْنَ عَلَى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِنْهُنَّ  
 جُزْءَهُنَّ أَثَمَّ أَدْعُهُنَّ يَا نَبِيَّنَا سَعَيْتَ وَأَعْلَمَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ  
 عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
 كَمَثَلَ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ  
 سَبْلَةٍ مِائَةُ حَبَّةٍ وَاللَّهُ يُصَدِّقُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ  
 وَاسِعٌ عَلَيْهِ

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَبِّعُونَ

306. Verse 258, we saw, illustrated Allah's power over Life and Death, contrasted with man's vain boasts or imaginings. Verse 259 illustrated how Time is immaterial to Allah's working; things, individuals and nations are subject to laws of life and death, which are under Allah's complete control, however much we may be misled by appearances.

307. Abraham had complete faith in Allah's power, but he wanted, with Allah's permission, to give an explanation of that faith to his own heart and mind.

308. *A portion* of them: *Juz-an*. The Commentators understand this to mean that the birds were to be cut up and pieces of them were to be put on the hills. The cutting up or killing is not mentioned but they say that it is implied by an ellipsis, as the question is how Allah gives life to the dead.

Their gifts with reminders  
Of their generosity  
Or with injury,—for them  
Their reward is with their Lord:  
On them shall be no fear,  
Nor shall they grieve.

263. Kind words<sup>309</sup>  
And covering of faults  
Are better than charity  
Followed by injury.  
Allah is Free of all wants,  
And He is most Forbearing.

264. O ye who believe!  
Cancel not your charity  
By reminders of your generosity  
Or by injury-like those  
Who spend their wealth  
To be seen of men,  
But believe neither  
In Allah nor in the Last Day.<sup>310</sup>  
They are in Parable like a hard,  
Barren rock, on which  
Is a little soil: on it

مَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَذْى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزُنُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

﴿ قَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ ﴾

يَتَبَعُهَا أَذْىٌ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾

يَتَابِعُهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يُنْهِلُوا أَصْدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِ  
وَالْأَذْى كَالَّذِي يُنْهِي مَا لَهُ بِرَبَّهُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ  
وَلَا يَوْمَنْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرِ فَمِثْلُهُ كَمِثْلِ  
صَفْوَانَ عَلَيْهِ تَرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَأَبْلَى فَرَكَّمَ  
صَلَدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَئِنِ مَسَاكَةٍ سَبُوا

309. A very high standard is set for charity. (1) It must be in the way of Allah. (2) It must expect no reward in this world. (3) It must not be followed by references or reminders to the act of charity. (4) Still less should any annoyance or injury be caused to the recipient, e.g., by boasting that the giver relieved the person in the hour of need. Indeed, the kindness and the spirit which turns a blind eye to other people's faults or short-comings is the essence of charity: these things are better than charity if charity is spoilt by tricks that do harm. At the same time, while no reward is to be *expected*, there is abundant reward from Allah—material, moral, and spiritual—according to His own good pleasure and plan. If we spend in the way of Allah, it is not as if Allah was in need of our charity. On the contrary our short-comings are so great that we require His utmost forbearance before any good that we can do can merit His praise or reward. Our motives are so mixed that our best may really be very poor if judged by a very strict standard.

310. False charity, “to be seen of men,” is really no charity. It is worse, for it betokens a disbelief in Allah and the Hereafter. “Allah seeth well whatever ye do” (ii. 265). It is compared to hard barren rock on which by chance has fallen a little soil. Good rain, which renders fertile soil more fruitful, washes away the little soil which this rock had, and exposes its nakedness. What good can hypocrites derive even from the little wealth they may have amassed?

Falls heavy rain,  
Which leaves it  
(Just) a bare stone.  
They will be able to do nothing  
With aught they have earned.  
And Allah guideth not  
Those who reject faith.

265. And the likeness of those  
Who spend their wealth  
Seeking to please Allah  
And to strengthen their souls,  
Is as a garden, high  
And fertile: heavy rain<sup>311</sup>  
Falls on it but makes it yield  
A double increase  
Of harvest, and if it receives not  
Heavy rain, light moisture  
Sufficeth it, Allah seeth well  
Whatever ye do.
266. Does any of you wish  
That he should have a garden<sup>312</sup>  
With date-palms and vines  
And streams flowing  
Underneath, and all kinds

وَأَنَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي النَّاسَ إِلَّا قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفَعُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ أَبْيَكَاهُ  
مَرْضَاتٍ لِلَّهِ وَتَشْيِتاً مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ  
جَنَّكُمْ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَإِلَّا فَتَانَتْ أَكْلَهَا  
ضِيقَتِينَ فَإِنْ لَمْ يُصْبِحَا وَإِلَّا فَطَلَّ  
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

أَيُّوْدَ أَحَدُكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ  
وَأَعْنَابٌ تَغْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ،

311. True charity is like a field with good soil on a high situation. It catches good showers of rain, the moisture penetrates the soil, and yet its elevated situation keeps it well-drained, and healthy favourable conditions increase its output enormously. But supposing even that the rain is not abundant, it catches dew and makes the most of any little moisture it can get, and that is sufficient for it. So a man of true charity is spiritually healthy; he is best situated to attract the bounties of Allah, which he does not hoard selfishly but circulates freely. In lean times he still produces good works, and is content with what he has. He looks to Allah's pleasure and the strengthening of his own soul.

312. The true nature of charity having been explained in three parables (ii. 261, 264, 265) a fourth parable is now added, explaining its bearing on the whole of our life. Suppose we had a beautiful garden well-watered and fertile, with delightful views of streams, and a haven of rest for mind and body; suppose old age were creeping in on us, and our children were either too young to look after themselves or too feeble in health: how should we feel if a sudden whirlwind came with lightning or fire in its train, and burnt it up, thus blasting the whole of our hopes for the present and for the future, and destroying the result of all our labour and savings in the past? Well, this life of ours is a probation. We may work hard, we may save, we may have good luck. We may make ourselves a goodly pleasure, and have ample means of support for ourselves and our =

Of fruit, while he is stricken  
With old age, and his children  
Are not strong (enough<sup>313</sup>  
To look, after themselves)-  
That it should be caught  
In a whirlwind,  
With fire therein,  
And be burnt up?  
Thus doth Allah make clear  
To you (His) Signs;  
That ye may consider.

## SECTION 37

267. O ye who believe!  
Give of the good things  
Which ye have (honourably)  
earned,<sup>314</sup>  
And of the fruits of the earth  
Which We have produced

فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ الشَّرَبَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكَبَرُ  
وَلَهُ دُرْيَةٌ صَعْقَادٌ فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ  
فَأَخْرَقْتَ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَتِ  
لَمْلَكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ



يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طِبِّيتِ  
مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ  
وَلَا تِيمِمُوا الْخَيْثَ مِنْهُ شَنِفُونَ وَلَا سُمْ

= children. A great whirlwind charged with lightning and fire comes and burns up the whole show. We are too old to begin again: our children are too young or feeble to help us to repair the mischief. Our chance is lost, because we did not provide against such a contingency. The whirlwind is the "wrath to come"; the provision against it is a life of true charity and righteousness, which is the only source of true and lasting happiness in this world and the next. Without it we are subject to all the vicissitudes of this uncertain life. We may even spoil our so-called "charity" by insisting on the obligation which others owe to us or by doing some harm, because our motives are not pure.

313. *Not strong (enough): dhu'afā-u:* literally weak, decrepit, infirm, possibly referring to both health and will or character.

314. According to the English proverb "Charity covers a multitude of sins". Such a sentiment is strongly disapproved in Islam. Charity has value only if (1) something good is given, (2) which has been honourably earned or acquired by the giver, or (3) which can be referred to as a bounty of Allah, (1) may include such things as are of use and value to others though they may be of less use to us or superfluous to us on account of our having acquired something more suitable for our station in life; for example, discarded clothes, or an old horse or a used motor car; but if the horse is vicious, or the car engine so far gone that it is dangerous to use, then the gift is worse than useless; it is positively harmful, and the giver is a wrong doer. (2) applies to fraudulent company-promoters, who earn great credit by giving away in charity some of their ill-gotten gains, or to robbers (even if they call themselves by high-sounding names) who "rob Peter to pay Paul". Islam will have nothing to do with tainted property. Its economic code requires that every gain should be honest and honourable. Even "charity" would not cover or destroy the taint, (3) lays down a test in cases of a doubtful gain. Can we refer to it =

For you, and do not aim<sup>315</sup>  
 At anything  
 Which is bad,  
 Out of it ye may give away  
 Something, when ye yourselves  
 Would not receive it  
 Except with closed eyes.<sup>316</sup>  
 And know that Allah  
 Is Free of all wants,  
 And Worthy of all praise.<sup>317</sup>

268. Satan threatens  
 You with poverty  
 And bids you to conduct  
 Unseemly. Allah promiseth  
 You His forgiveness  
 And bounties.<sup>318</sup>  
 And Allah careth for all  
 And He knoweth all things.

يَعْلَمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ تُقْرِبُوهُ فَيُؤْتِي وَأَعْلَمُو أَنَّ اللَّهَ

عَنْ حَيْثُ

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعْدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ  
 بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ  
 وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلَيْهِ



= as a gift of Allah? Obviously the produce of honest labour or agriculture can be so referred to. In modern commerce and speculation there is much of quite the contrary character, and charity will not cover the taint. Some kind of art, skill, or talent are God-given: it is the highest kind of charity to teach them or share their product. Others are the contrary: they are bad or tainted. In the same way some professions or services may be tainted, if these tend to moral harm.

315. The preceding note tries to indicate some of the things which are bad or tainted. We should not even think of acquiring them for ourselves, soothing our conscience by the salve that we shall practise charity out of them.

316. *Closed eyes* imply disgust or connivance because of some feature which we would not openly acknowledge.

317. To dedicate tainted things to Allah is a dishonour to Allah, Who is independent of all wants, and Who is worthy of all honour and praise.

318. Good and evil draw us opposite ways and by opposite motives, and the contrast is well marked out in charity. When we think of doing some real act of kindness or charity, we are assailed with doubts and fear of impoverishment; but evil supports any tendency to selfishness, greed, or even to extravagant expenditure for show, or self-indulgence, or unseemly appetites. On the other hand, Allah draws us on to all that is kind and good, for that way lies the forgiveness of our sins, and greater real prosperity and satisfaction. No kind or generous act ever ruined any one. It is false generosity that is sometimes shown as leading to ruin. As Allah knows all our motives and cares for all, and has everything in His power, it is obvious which course a wise man will choose. But wisdom is rare, and it is only wisdom that can appreciate true well-being and distinguish it from the false appearance of well-being.

269. He granteth wisdom  
To whom He pleaseth;  
And he to whom wisdom  
Is granted receiveth  
Indeed a benefit overflowing;  
But none will receive admonition  
But men of understanding

270. And whatever ye spend  
In charity or  
Whatever vow you make,  
Be sure Allah knows it all.  
But the wrong-doers  
Have no helpers.

271. If ye disclose (acts<sup>319</sup>  
Of) charity, even so  
It is well,  
But if ye conceal them,  
And make them reach  
Those (really) in need,  
That is best for you:  
It will remove from you  
Some of your (stains  
Of) evil. And Allah  
Is well acquainted  
With what ye do.

272. It is not for you  
To guide them to the right path.<sup>320</sup>

يُؤْتَى الْحِكْمَةُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ  
الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا  
وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُتُوا أَلْبَابُ<sup>٦٧</sup>

وَمَا أَنْفَقُتُمْ مِنْ نَفَقَةٍ أُنْذَرْتُمْ مِنْ نَذْرٍ  
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ  
مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ<sup>٦٨</sup>

إِنْ تُبْدِوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعْمَاهُ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا  
وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءُ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ كَفَرُ  
عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ  
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ حَيْرٌ<sup>٦٩</sup>

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدًى نَهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي

319. It is better to seek no publicity in charity. But if it is known there is no harm. If it is for public purposes, it must necessarily be known, and a pedantic show of concealment may itself be a fault. The harm of publicity lies in motives of ostentation. We can better reach the really deserving poor by quietly seeking for them. The spiritual benefit ensures to our own souls, provided our motives are pure, and we are really seeking the good pleasure of Allah.

320. In connection with charity this means that we believe those really in need, whether they are good or bad, on the right path or not, Muslims or otherwise. It is not for us to judge in these matters. Allah will give light according to His wisdom. Incidentally it adds a further meaning to the command. "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (ii. 256). For compulsion may not only be by force, but by economic necessity. In matters of religion we must not even compel by a bribe of charity. The chief motive in charity should be Allah's pleasure and our own spiritual good. This was addressed in the first instance to Al-Muṣṭafā in Madinah but it is of universal application.

But Allah guides  
To the right path  
Whom He pleaseth.  
Whatever of good ye give  
Benefits your own souls,  
And ye shall only do so  
Seeking the "Face"<sup>321</sup>  
Of Allah. Whatever good  
Ye give, shall be  
Rendered back to you,  
And ye shall not  
Be dealt with unjustly.

273. (Charity is) for those  
In need, who, in Allah's cause<sup>322</sup>  
Are restricted (from travel).  
And cannot move about  
In the land, seeking  
(For trade or work):  
The ignorant man thinks,  
Because of their modesty,  
That they are free from want.  
Thou shalt know them  
By their (unfailing) mark:  
They beg not importunately  
From all and sundry.  
And whatever of good  
Ye give, be assured  
Allah knoweth it well.

مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا شَفَعُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ  
فَلَا نَقْسِمُكُمْ وَمَا شَفَعُونَ إِلَّا بِتَقْسِيمٍ  
وَجْهَ اللَّهِ وَمَا شَفَعُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ يُوفَّ  
إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَخْصَرُوا فَ سَبِيلٌ  
اللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرَبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ  
يَخْسِبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاهُمْ مِنْ التَّعْفُفِ  
تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسَيِّئَاتِهِمْ لَا يَسْتَعْلُمُونَ النَّاسُ  
إِلَمْحَا فَأَوْ مَا شَفَعُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُوَعِّدُ  
عَلَيْهِ

321. See note to ii. 112. *Wajh* means literally: face, countenance; hence, favour, glory, Self, Presence.

322. Indiscriminate acts of so-called charity are condemned as they may do more harm than good (see ii. 262). The real beneficiaries of charity are here indicated. They must be in want. And the want must be due to some honourable cause. For example, they may be doing some unpaid service, such as teaching, or acquiring knowledge or skill, or be in exile for their faith, or in other ways be prevented from seeking employment or doing strenuous work. "Allah's cause" must not be narrowly interpreted. All sincere and real service to humanity comes within the definition. Such men do not beg from door to door. It is the duty of those who are well-to-do, or the Public Purse, to find them out.

## SECTION 38.

274. Those who (in charity)<sup>323</sup>  
Spend of their goods  
By night and by day,  
In secret and in public,  
Have their reward  
With their Lord:  
On them shall be no fear,  
Nor shall they grieve.
275. Those who devour usury<sup>324</sup>  
Will not stand except  
As stands one whom  
The Satan by his touch  
Hath driven to madness.<sup>325</sup>  
That is because they say:  
"Trade is like usury,"<sup>326</sup>

الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ وَالنَّهَارَ  
سِرًا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ هُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا  
يَفْعُومُ الْذِي يَتَغَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمُسِّىٰ  
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَهَلَّ

323. We recapitulate the beauty of charity (*i.e.*, unselfish giving of one's self or one's goods) before we come to its opposite, *i.e.*, the selfish grasping greed of usury against those in need or distress. Charity instead of impoverishing you will enrich you: you will have more happiness and less fear. Contrast it with what follows,—the degradation of the grasping usurer.

324. Usury is condemned and prohibited in the strongest possible terms. There can be no question about the prohibition. When we come to the definition of Usury there is room for difference of opinion. Hadhrat 'Umar, according to Ibn Kathir, felt some difficulty in the matter, as the Prophet left this world before the details of the question were settled. This was one of the three questions on which he wished he had had more light from the Prophet. Our 'Ulmā, ancient and modern, have worked out a great body of literature on Usury, based mainly on economic conditions as they existed at the rise of Islam.

325. An apt simile: whereas legitimate trade or industry increases the prosperity and stability of men and nations, a dependence on Usury would merely encourage a race of idlers, cruel blood-suckers, and worthless fellows who do not know their own good and therefore akin to madmen.

326. Owing to the fact that interest occupies a central position in modern economic life, and specially since interest is the very life blood of the existing financial institutions, a number of Muslims have been inclined to interpret it in a manner which is radically different from the understanding of Muslim scholars throughout the last fourteen centuries and is also sharply in conflict with the categorical statements of the Prophet (peace be on him). According to Islamic teachings any excess on the capital is *riba* (interest). Islam accepts no distinction, in so far as prohibition is concerned, between reasonable and exorbitant rates of interest, and thus what came to be regarded as the difference between usury and interest; nor between returns on bonus for consumption and those for production purposes and so on.

But Allah hath permitted trade  
And forbidden usury.  
Those who after receiving  
Admonition from their Lord,  
Desist, shall be pardoned  
For the past; their case  
Is for Allah (to judge);  
But those who repeat  
(The offence) are Companions  
Of the Fire: they will  
Abide therein (for ever).

276. Allah will deprive  
Usury of all blessing,  
But will give increase  
For deeds of charity:  
For He loveth not  
Any ungrateful  
Sinner.
277. Those who believe,  
And do deeds of righteousness,  
And establish regular prayers  
And give Zakat,  
Will have their reward  
With their Lord:  
On them shall be no fear,  
Nor shall they grieve.<sup>327</sup>
278. O ye who believe!  
Fear Allah, and give up  
What remains of your demand  
For usury, if ye are  
Indeed believers.

الله أَلْبِسَهُ وَحْرَمَ الَّذِي نَوَّأَ فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ دُمُوعَةً  
مِنْ رَيْدَهُ فَأَنْهَى فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ  
وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا  
خَلِيلُونَ

يَتَحَقَّقُ اللَّهُ أَلْبِسَهُ وَبَرِّي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ  
لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَئِمَّةٍ

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَأْتُوا وَعْدَنَا أَعْمَلُوا الْمُنْكَرَ حَتَّى  
وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَمَا تَوَلَّ الْزَكُورَ لَهُمْ  
أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا عُوْنَاقٌ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزُنُونَ

يَتَأْمِنُهَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَأْتُوا أَنْقَوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ  
مِنْ أَرْبَيْنَ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ

327. The contrast between charity and unlawful grasping of wealth began at ii. 274, where this phrase occurs as a theme. Here the theme finishes with the same phrase. The following four verses refer to further concessions on behalf of debtors, as creditors are asked to (a) give up even claims arising out of the past on account of usury, and (b) to give time for payment of capital if necessary, or (c) to write off the debt altogether as an act of charity.

279. If ye do it not,  
Take notice of war<sup>328</sup>  
From Allah and His Messenger:  
But if ye repent  
Ye shall have  
Your capital sums:  
Deal not unjustly,  
And ye shall not  
Be dealt with unjustly.

280. If the debtor is  
In a difficulty,  
Grant him time  
Till it is easy  
For him to repay.  
But if ye remit it  
By way of charity,  
That is best for you  
If ye only knew.

281. And fear the Day  
When ye shall be  
Brought back to Allah.  
Then shall every soul  
Be paid what it earned,  
And none shall be  
Dealt with unjustly.

## SECTION 39.

282. O ye who believe!  
When ye deal with each other,  
In transactions involving  
Future obligations  
In a fixed period of time,  
Reduce them to writing<sup>329</sup>

فَإِن لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَإِذَا هُوَ أَبْرَقٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ  
وَإِن تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ  
لَا تَنْظِلُمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ

وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرْهُ إِلَى مَيْسَرٍ وَأَن  
تَصَدِّقَ فَوْأَخِيرَ الْكُمَّ إِن كُنْتُمْ  
تَعْلَمُونَ

وَأَنْفَعُوا يَوْمًا شَرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُؤْفَقُونَ  
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا دَآيْنُوكُمْ بِدِينِ إِنْ أَجْعَلْتُمْ  
مَسْكَمًا فَاصْطَبُوهُ وَلَا يَنْكُبْ بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبًا  
بِالْمَعْذِلِ وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلِمَهُ

328. This is not war for opinions, but an ultimatum of war for the liberation of debtors unjustly dealt with and oppressed.

329. The first part of the verse deals with transactions involving future payment or future consideration, and the second part with transactions in which payment and delivery are made on the spot. Examples of the former are if goods are bought now and payment =

Let a scribe write down  
Faithfully as between  
The parties: let not the scribe  
Refuse to write: as Allah<sup>330</sup>  
Has taught him,  
So let him write.  
Let him who incurs  
The liability dictate,  
But let him fear Allah  
His Lord  
And not diminish  
Aught of what he owes.  
If the party liable  
Is mentally deficient,  
Or weak, or unable  
Himself to dictate,<sup>331</sup>  
Let his guardian  
Dictate faithfully.  
And get two witnesses,  
Out of your own men.<sup>332</sup>  
And if there are not two men,  
Then a man and two women,  
Such as ye choose,  
For witnesses,

اللَّهُ فَلَيَكْتُبْ وَلَيَمْتَلِلْ الَّذِي عَانِيهِ الْحَقُّ  
وَلَيُسْتَقِلَّ اللَّهُ رَبُّهُ وَلَا يَتَبَخَّسْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ كَانَ  
الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِهًًا أَوْ ضَمِيقًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِعُ  
أَنْ يُمْلَأْ هُوَ قَلْيَمْلِلْ وَلَيُتَدَبِّرُ الْعَدْلُ وَأَسْتَشِهْدُوا  
شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رَجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ نَارَجِلَينِ  
فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ وَمَنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشَّهَدَاءِ  
أَنْ تَضْلِلَ إِلَى خَدْنَهُمَا فَنَذْكُرْ إِلَى خَدْنَهُمَا  
الْأُخْرَى وَلَا يَأْبَ الشَّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَأْدُعُوا وَلَا تَنْعَمُوا  
أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَيْرًا إِلَى أَجْلِهِ ذَلِكُمْ  
أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِ الشَّهَدَةِ وَأَذْنَ

= is promised at a fixed time and place in the future, or if cash is paid now and delivery is contracted for at a fixed time and place in the future. In such cases a written document is recommended, but it is held that the words later on in this verse, that it is "juster... more suitable as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts," etc., imply that it is not obligatory in law. Examples of the latter kind—cash payment and delivery on the spot—require no evidence in writing, but apparently oral witnesses to such transactions are recommended.

330. The scribe in such matters assumes a Judiciary capacity: he should therefore remember to act as in the presence of Allah, with full justice to both parties. The art of writing he should look upon as a gift from Allah, and he should use it as in His service. In an illiterate population the scribe's position is still more responsible.

331. Possibly the person "mentally deficient, or weak, or unable to dictate," may also be incapable of making a valid contract, and the whole duty would be on his guardian, who again must act in perfect good faith, not only protecting but vigilantly promoting the interests of his ward.

332. It is desirable that the men (or women) who are chosen as witness should be from the circle to which the parties belong, as they would best be able to understand the transaction, and be most easily available if their evidence is required in future.

So that if one of them errs.  
The other can remind her.  
The witnesses  
Should not refuse  
When they are called on  
(For evidence).  
Disdain not to reduce  
To writing (your contract)  
For a future period,  
Whether it be small  
Or big; it is juster  
In the sight of Allah,  
More suitable as evidence,  
And more convenient  
To prevent doubts  
Among yourselves  
But if it be a transaction  
Which ye carry out  
On the spot among yourselves,  
There is no blame on you  
If ye reduce it not  
To writing.  
But take witnesses  
Whenever ye make  
A commercial contract;  
And let neither scribe  
Nor witness suffer harm.  
If ye do (such harm),  
It would be wickedness  
In you. So fear Allah;  
For it is Allah  
That teaches you.  
And Allah is well acquainted  
With all things.<sup>333</sup>

الآتُرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَن تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً  
تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ  
إِلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهُدُو إِذَا تَبَايعُوكُمْ  
وَلَا يَضُرُّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِن تَفْعَلُوا فَإِنَّهُ  
مُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا يَكُونُ كُمْ  
اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَلَيْهِ ﴿٦٣﴾

333. Commercial morality is here taught on the highest plane and yet in the most practical manner, both as regards the bargains to be made, the evidence to be provided, the doubts to be avoided, and the duties and rights of scribes and witnesses. Probity even in worldly matters is to be, not a mere matter of convenience or policy, but a matter of conscience and religious duty. Even our every-day transactions are to be carried out as in the presence of Allah.

283. If ye are on a journey,  
And cannot find  
A scribe, a pledge  
With possession (may serve  
The purpose).<sup>334</sup>  
And if one of you  
Deposits a thing  
On trust with another,<sup>335</sup>  
Let the trustee  
(Faithfully) discharge  
His trust, and let him  
Fear Allah his Lord.  
Conceal not evidence;  
For whoever conceals it,-  
His heart is tainted<sup>336</sup>  
With sin. And Allah  
Knoweth all that ye do.

## SECTION 40.

284. To Allah belongeth all  
That is in the heavens  
And on earth. Whether  
Ye show what is in your minds  
Or conceal it, Allah

وَإِن كُشِّرْتَ عَلَى سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَايِسًا فِرَهَنْ  
مَقْبُوضَهُ فَإِنْ أَمِنْ بِعَصْكُمْ بَعْضًا فَلَيُوَدَّ الَّذِي  
أَوْتُمْ أَمْتَهَهُ وَلَيُسْتَقِيَ اللَّهُ رَبُّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا  
الشَّهَادَهُ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ مُؤْمِنٌ قَبْلَهُ  
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلَيْهِ

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْدِلُوا  
مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَايِسِنُكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ  
فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

334. A pledge or security stands on its own independent footing, though it is a very convenient form of closing the bargain where the parties cannot trust each other, and cannot get a written agreement with proper witnesses.

335. The law of Deposit implies great trust in the Depositary on the part of the Depositor. The Depositary becomes a trustee, and the doctrine of Trust can be further developed on that basis. The trustee's duty is to guard the interests of the person on whose behalf he holds the trust and to render back the property and accounts when required according to the terms of the trust. This duty again is linked to the sanction of Religion, which requires a higher standard than Law.

336. It sometimes happens that if some inconvenient piece of evidence is destroyed or concealed, we gain a great advantage materially. We are warned not to yield to such a temptation. The concealment of evidence has a serious effect on our own moral and spiritual life, for it taints the very source of higher life, as typified by the heart. The heart is also the seat of our secrets. We are told that the sin will reach our most secret being, though the sin may not be visible or open to the world. Further, the heart is the seat of our affections, and false dealing taints all our affections.

Calleth you to account for it.  
He forgiveth whom He pleaseth,  
And punisheth whom He pleaseth.  
For Allah hath power  
Over all things.

وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٦﴾

285. The Messenger believeth  
In what hath been revealed  
To him from his Lord,  
As do the men of faith,  
Each one (of them) believeth  
In Allah, His angels,  
His books, and His Messengers.<sup>337</sup>  
“We make no distinction (they say)  
Between one and another<sup>338</sup>  
Of his Messengers.” And they say:  
“We hear, and we obey:  
(We seek) Thy forgiveness,<sup>339</sup>  
Our Lord, and to Thee  
Is the end of all journeys.”
286. On no soul doth Allah  
Place a burden greater  
Than it can bear.<sup>340</sup>  
It gets every good that it earns,

مَأْمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رِحْمَةٍ  
وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلُّهُمْ مَأْمَنٌ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَكَتِيَّهُ، وَكُلُّهُمْ  
وَرَسُلِهِ، لَا فَرْقَ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ  
وَكَلُّهُمْ أَسْعَفَنَا وَأَطْعَنَا غَفْرَانًا كَرِيمًا  
وَإِنَّكَ أَنْعَمْرٰ

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا الْهَامَّا كَسْبَتْ  
وَعَلَيْهَا مَا أَكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذنَا إِنَّنَّا

337. This Sūra started with the question of faith (ii. 3-4), showed us various aspects of Faith and the denial of Faith, gave us ordinances for the new People of Islam as a community, and now rounds off the argument again with a confession of Faith and of its practical manifestation in conduct (“we hear and we obey”), and closes on a note of humility, so that we may confess our sins, ask for forgiveness, and pray for Allah’s help and guidance.

338. Cf. ii. 253, n. 289. It is not for us to make any distinction between one and another of Allah’s Messengers: we must honour them all equally, though we know that Allah in His wisdom sent them with different kinds of mission and gave them different degrees of rank.

339. When our faith and conduct are sincere, we realise how far from perfection we are, and we humbly pray to Allah for the forgiveness of our sins. We feel that Allah imposes no burden on us that we cannot bear, and with this realisation in our hearts and in the confession of our lips, we go to Him and ask for His help and guidance.

340. Cf. ii. 233. In that verse the burden was in terms of material wealth: here it is in terms of spiritual duty. Assured by Allah that He will accept from each soul just such duty as it has the ability to offer, we pray further on for the fulfilment of that promise.

And it suffers every ill that it earns.  
 (Pray:) "Our Lord!  
 Condemn us not  
 If we forget or fall  
 Into error; our Lord!  
 Lay not on us a burden  
 Like that which Thou  
 Didst lay on those before us,<sup>341</sup>  
 Our Lord! lay not on us  
 A burden greater than we  
 Have strength to bear.  
 Blot out our sins.  
 And grant us forgiveness.  
 Have mercy on us.  
 Thou art our Protector;  
 Grant us victory  
 Over the unbelievers.

أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا  
 كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا  
 وَلَا تُحْمِلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَأَعْفُ عَنَّا  
 وَأَغْفِرْنَا وَأَرْجِعْنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانْصُرْنَا  
 عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ



341. We must not be arrogant, and think that because Allah has granted us His favour and mercy we have no need to exert ourselves, or that we are ourselves superior to those before us. On the contrary, knowing how much they failed, we pray that our burdens should be lightened, and we confess our realisation that we have all the greater need for Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

And so we end the whole argument of the Sūra with a prayer for Allah's help, not in our own selfish ends, but in our resolve to uphold Allah's truth against all Unbelief.

## APPENDIX 1.

### The abbreviated Letters (*Al-Muqatta'at*)

Certain Suras have certain initials prefixed to them, which are called the "Abbreviated letters." A number of conjectures have been made as to their meaning. Opinions are divided as to the exact meaning of each particular letter or combination of letters, and it is agreed that only Allah knows their exact meaning.

Their presence is not inconsistent with the character of the Qurān as a "plain book." The book of nature is also a plain book, but how few can fully understand it? Every one can get out of the Qurān plain guidance for his life according to his capacity for spiritual understanding. As his capacity grows, so will his understanding grow. The whole Book is a Record for all time. It must necessarily contain meanings that only gradually unfold themselves to humanity.

This is not a mystery of the same class as "mysteries" by which we are asked to believe against the dictates of reason. If we are asked to believe that one is three and three is one, we can give no intelligible meaning to the words. If we are asked to believe that certain initials have a meaning which will be understood in the fullness of time, we are asked to draw upon Faith, but we are not asked to do any violence to our reason.

I shall try to discuss some of the probable meanings of any particular abbreviated letters or set of abbreviated letters on the first occasion on which it appears in the Qurān. But it may be desirable here to take a general view of the facts of their occurrence to help us in appreciating the various views which are held about them.

There are 29 letters in the Arabic alphabet (counting *hamza* and *alif* as two letters), and there are 29 Sūras which have abbreviated letters prefixed to them. One of these Sūras (S. xlvi.) has two sets of abbreviated letters, but we need not count this Sūra twice. If we take the half of the alphabet, omitting the fraction, we get 14, and this is the number of letters which actually occur in the Muqatta'at.

The 14 letters, which occur in various combinations, are:

ا ص ك ه  
ح ط ل ي  
ر ع م  
س ق ن

## Appendix 1.

The science of phonetics tells us that our vocal sounds arise from the expulsion of the air from the lungs, and the sounds are determined by the way in which the breath passes through the various organs of speech, e.g., the throat (guttural), or the various positions of the tongue to the middle or front of the palate or to the teeth, or the play of the lips. Everyone of these kinds of sounds is represented in these letters.

Let us now examine the combinations

Three of these letters occur alone, prefixed each to only one Sūra. The letters and Sūras are:

- S. xxxviii.  
S. l.  
S. lxxviii.

١٣

The combinations of two letters occur in ten Sūras as shown below. Three of them occur only once each, but the fourth  $\tilde{\text{س}}$  occurs in seven consecutive Sūras.

- S. xx.  
S. xxvii.  
S. xxxv.  
S. xl.  
S. xli.  
S. xlvi.  
S. xlvi.  
S. xlvi.

طه  
طس  
تیں

Note that S. xlvi. has a double combination of abbreviated letters, one of two followed by one of three. See under combinations of five.

There are three combinations of three letters each, occurring as follows in 13 Sūras:

- S. ii.  
S. iii.  
S. xxix.  
S. xxx.  
S. xxxi.  
S. xxxii.  
S. x.  
S. xi.  
S. xii.  
S. xiv.  
S. xv.

二

5

## Appendix 1.

S. xxvi.  
S. xxviii.

طس

Combinations of four letters occur twice, each only once:—

S. vii.  
S. xiii.\*

الْمَصْ  
الْتَّرْ

\* Note that the three preceding and the two following Sūras have the triple letters. الْلَّرْ.

Finally there remain the combinations of five letters, each of which occurs once only, as follows:

S. xix.  
S. xlvi.

كَهِيْعَصْ  
حَمْ عَسْقَ

In S.xlii. the حَمْ and عَسْقَ are put in separate verses. From that point of view they may be considered two separate combinations. The first combination has already been listed under the group of two-letter combinations.

This arithmetical analysis brings certain facts into prominence. I do not know how far they have a bearing on the inner meaning of the *Muqatta'at*.

The combinations of abbreviated letters that run in a series in consecutive Sūras is noticeable. For example, حَمْ occurs in seven consecutive Sūras from xl. to xlvi. The combination الْتَّرْ occurs in six consecutive Sūras x. to xv., but in one of them (S. xiii.) it is modified to الْتَّرْ connecting it with the الْتَّرْ series. The الْتَّرْ series covers 6 Sūras. It begins with S. ii. and S. iii., which are practically the beginning of the Qur-ān, and ends with the four consecutive Sūras xxix. to xxxii. I call S. ii. and S. iii. practically the beginning of the Qur-ān, because S. i. is considered a general introduction to the Qur-ān, and the first Sīpāra is commonly known as الْتَّرْ, the first verse of S. ii. The combination طسَّ is prefixed to S. xxvi. and S. xxviii., but the intervening S. xxvii. has the combination طسْ, which may be considered a syncopated form, or the three-letter combination طسَّ may be considered an extended form of طسْ. Again the question arises: does the مُ in الْتَّرْ, and طسَّ, stand for the same signification, or does it mean a different thing in each case? We may generalise and say that there are three series of six, and one series of three, and the others occur all singly.

We should logically look for a common factor in the Sūras bearing the same initials, and this factor should be different for Sūras bearing other initials. In all cases where the abbreviated letters occur, there is some mention of the Qur-ān or the Book. The *Itqān* makes an exception in the case of three Sūras 'Ankabūt (S. xxix), Rūm (S. xxx), and Nūn (S. lxviii). But a close perusal will show that these Sūras are no exceptions. In xxix. 27 we have a reference to

## Appendix I.

the Book remaining in the family of Abraham, and later on we have a whole Section, devoted to the Book, with special reference to the continuity of revelation in the previous Books and the Qur-ān (xxix. 45-51). In xxx. 58 there is express mention of the Qur-ān, and the whole argument of the Sūra leads up to the intimate relation between Allah's "Signs" in nature (xxx. 20-27) and His revelation in the Qur-ān. In S. lxviii, the very first verse begins the theme with the Pen as the instrument of writing, exhorts Al-Muṣṭafā to stand forth boldly to proclaim the Message, and ends (lxviii. 52) with the declaration that it is a Message for all the worlds.

These are general considerations, which I have thought it most convenient to present in the form of an Appendix.

