



# THE GRAND QUR'AN

## The First Third



*A faithful rendition, annotated translation  
of the first ten ajzā' of the Message of God*

**Waleed Bleyhesh al-Amri**  
Associate Professor of Translation Studies

1441/2020



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of the first ten ajzā' of God's Message*

**Waleed Bleyhesh al-Amri**  
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Taibah University

THE  
GRAND QUR'AN  
The First Third

القرآن العظيم  
ترجمة معاني الألف الأول

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Endowment for Cherishing the Two Glorious Revelations



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*In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*



*O Allah! I am your servant - son of your male servant, son of your female servant - my forelock is in Your Hand—Your Ruling surely will come to pass upon me, Your Judgement upon me is ever fair. I ask You by every one of Your Names: whether you called Yourself by it, revealed it in Your Book, sent it down to any of your creation, or withheld it with You in the knowledge of the Unseen, that You shall **make the Grand Qur'an the spring of my heart, the light in my sight, the soother of my worries, and the dispenser of my sorrows.***

(Imām Aḥmad: 4318)



---

*For those who are turning their gaze anxiously in  
the sky looking for the light of truth!*

***Would the one who was dead and We caused  
him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light  
to walk in among people be like the one who is  
plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for  
him to emerge out of which! (6: 122)***





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## Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Endowment for Cherishing the Two Glorious Revelations

Al-Madina Al-Munawara

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



خدمة القرآن الكريم والسنة المعطرة  
في بلد الرسول الكريم ﷺ

## المملكة العربية السعودية

وقف تعظيم الوحيين  
المدنية المنورة

ترخيص وزارة الشؤون الإسلامية  
والدعوة والإرشاد رقم: 162/ع

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على المبعوث رحمة للعالمين نبينا وحبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين ومن تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين. أما بعد :

فإن القرآن الكريم كتاب الهداية لجميع البشر كآل سَمَاءَ ﴿ إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِيَّ حَيْثُ أَقْرَأُ ﴾ ﴿١٦٠﴾

أنزله الله تعالى على رسوله الكريم ﷺ ليخاطب الناس به كافة على مختلف أجناسهم واختلاف ألسنتهم وألوانهم .. يخاطب عقولهم ويوصل إلى قلوبهم ووجدانهم بأسلوب مبين ومعجز، فينير به تعالى تلك العقول ويهدي به تلك القلوب إلى صراطه المستقيم، ويخرجها من الظلمات إلى النور، ويسطرها سبيل السلام والآخرى كآل سَمَاءَ ﴿ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ ﴾ ﴿١٦٠﴾ يَهْدِي بِرَأْسِهِ مَنْ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٦٠﴾

وإن هذا القرآن العظيم نزل بلسان عربي مبين، وهو معجز بلفظه ومعناه، نزل للمؤمنين جميعاً فيه دينهم وشرعهم الحكيم؛ ولناس كافة على وجه العموم للدعوة إلى هذا الدين العظيم دين الإسلام توحيداً لله وعبادة له والتزاماً بشرعه الخفيف لإفناقه من براثن الشرك والوثنية والعبودية لغير الله تعالى.

فكان لزاماً أن تجتمع الجهود المباركة لترجمة معاني هذا القرآن الكريم قياماً بواجب الدعوة إلى الله تعالى، وأداءً لأمانة تبليغ الرسالة؛ ترجمة صحيحة وموثوقة ودقيقة في كلياتها ومعانيها وما تهدف إليه؛ لأنها تتكلم عن الله تعالى وتوضح شرعه وهدية وطريقه الحق. من أجل ذلك تصدق وقف تعظيم الوحيين هذا الواجب العظيم والأمر الخطير المهم؛ فجاءت هذه الترجمة الكريمة مشروعة مباركاً من مشاريعه، ولقد أكرمنا الله تعالى برجلٍ فذَّ عالمٍ بمعاني القرآن الكريم وترجماته المتنوعة خير من هذا نذر وقته وجهده لخدمة القرآن الكريم بهذا الجانب العظيم، وهو سعادة الدكتور وليد بن بليش العمري (أستاذ اللغات والترجمة المشارك بجامعة طيبة بالمدينة المنورة)؛ إذ وضع خطة فريدة عميقة منضبطة بضوابط هامة سليمة في منهجها وخطواتها ومراجعتها وملتزمة بهدي القرآن الكريم وبيانه من السنة النبوية الصحيحة؛ في وسطية واعتدال وابتغاء مراد الله تعالى في كتابه العظيم.

وإذ إن أقدم هذا المشروع المبارك فإني أشكر لسعادته هذا الجهد العظيم وهذه المنهجية المميزة الفريدة وللفرق العلمي والنتيجة المباركة من الخبراء والمستشارين والمراجعين لهذه الترجمة الرائدة وأسأل الله تعالى للجميع عظيم الأجر والثواب ومزيد التوفيق والسداد، وإنه ليسرني أيضاً في هذا التقديم أن أبارك هذا الإصدار الأول من الترجمة وهو باكورة هذا المشروع ترجمة معاني سورة الفاتحة وسورتي البقرة وآل عمران (الزهراوين)، وأسأل الله تعالى أن يتم هذا الترجمة المميزة على خير ما يراد ويحقق المطلوب.

وختاماً أرفع أسمى آيات الشكر وأعظم عبارات التقدير إلى مقام خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك سلمان بن عبدالعزيز آل سعود وإلى ولي عهده الأمين صاحب السمو الملكي الأمير محمد بن سلمان بن عبدالعزيز آل سعود على ما يقدمونه من جهود عظيمة في خدمة القرآن الكريم والسنة النبوية المطهرة نشراً وتعليماً وحكماً وتسليماً؛ كما أرفع جزيل الشكر وأطيب التقدير إلى صاحب السمو الملكي الأمير فيصل بن سلمان بن عبدالعزيز آل سعود أمير منطقة المدينة المنورة وإلى سمو نائبه صاحب السمو الملكي الأمير سعود بن خالد الفيصل آل سعود على كريم اهتمامها ورعايتها لمشاريع الوقف وبرامجها، والله أسأل أن ينفع بهذا السفر الكريم، وآخر دعوانا أن الحمد لله رب العالمين ..

أ.د. عباد بن زهير حافظ  
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## Foreword

*Gratitude be to Allah, the Lord of all beings. May the Peace and Blessings be upon the one who was sent as mercy to all beings, our beloved Prophet Muhammad, and upon his household, all of his Companions and those who follow his way until the Day of Judgement.*

The Glorious Qur'an is a Book of guidance to all humans: "Truly this Qur'an guides toward that which is most upright", (17: 9). Allah sent it to his Noble Messenger (ﷺ) so that he could address all people, regardless of their race, tongue or colour with it; appealing to their minds and reaching out to their hearts in a distinct and inimitable manner. Through it, Allah enlightens minds and guides hearts to His Straight Path; saving them from loss and darkness and delivering them to the light of guidance; unrolling for them the paths of peace and making its ways distinct both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter: "A light has now come to you from Allah and a clear Book, with which Allah guides to the ways of peace those who follow what pleases Him, bringing them from darkness out into light, by His Will, and guiding them to a straight path". (5:15-16)

This Glorious Qur'an was revealed in a clear Arabic tongue, it is miraculous both in word and sense. It came down to the Believers explaining for them their religion and wise laws. It invites all people to this great religion, the religion of Islam. It constitutes a call to be free from all forms of Association with Allah, to uphold His commandments, and, thus, to save humanity from the ghastly grip of Denial, idol worship and slavery to anything besides Allah. There is, therefore, a great onus upon us to ensure sincere efforts are made to translate this Divine Message by way of calling to Allah and to fulfilling the duty of Believers to deliver the Message. Such a translation must be faithful, reliable and precise in its rendition of both words and meanings. This because it represents the Word of Allah, explains His doctrines and lays out the path of the Truth. It is for this reason that the Endowment for Cherishing the Two Glorious Revelations has shouldered the responsibility of being a platform for this worthy endeavour adding it to the list of its long-term projects. Allah has blessed us with a scholar who possesses extensive knowledge in the field of Qur'anic translation – Dr Waleed Bleyhesh al-Amri (Associate Professor of Translation Studies, Taibah University) – and who possesses great dedication to serving this Glorious Book. He has set out a well-researched, well-thought out plan for his translation, one that entails all the many stages from translation to revision. The translation you are about to embark upon reading is true to the teachings of the Qur'an and reflects a moderate, unrestrictive understanding of its dictates.

As I pen this foreword I extend my sincerest commendations to the author for this great effort and his well-founded methodology. I would also like to thank the team of scholars who helped in revising and editing the translation. I pray to Allah to shower them all with His blessings. I should not fail to mention that this translation of the first ten *ajzā'* is only the first step in the larger project of translating the whole Qur'an into English under the ambitious title, *The Grand Qur'an*.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and the Crown Prince for their great services in the dissemination and teaching of the Glorious Qur'an and the Noble Prophetic Sunnah. I would also like to thank HRH Prince Faisal Ibn Salman Al Saud, governor of the Madinah region, as also the deputy governor, HRH Prince Saud Ibn Khalid al-Faisal Al Saud for their gracious care and concern for the projects and programmes of the Endowment.

May Allah make this worthy tome beneficial!

**Prof. 'Imād Zuhayr Ḥāfid**

**Secretary-General of the Endowment for Cherishing the Two Glorious Revelations  
Imam of Quba Mosque in Madinah**





## What is the Qur'an?

The Qur'an is the inimitable, verbatim Word of God, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as an ever-lasting miracle, ever-present to guide those who seek the Truth and the way to felicity in this life and the great reward of God in the Hereafter. It is Islam's foundational text which encapsulates its message; it is the foremost source of guidance and legislation for Believers. Believers' lives are directed by it and their actions find grounds in it. The tenets of Islam cannot be grasped without a proper understanding of the Qur'an. A great many Muslims learn it by heart, and it is used as a reference book, a book of rules and guidelines, and as an ethical textbook for hundreds of millions the world over. Its authenticity and the binding nature of its dictates are authoritative across the board. Unlike the other previously revealed Scriptures, which underwent major alterations through editing, translations in and out of Greek, Syriac, Hebrew, Latin, Aramaic and Ethiopic, amendments by scribes and religious leaders, loss of some of the books, the Qur'an remains in its Original authentic form as known at the time of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). This is because guardianship of these Book was left to the learned among the people: *"They were entrusted with the protection of the Book of Allah, and they were witnesses to it"*, (4: 44); whereas God Almighty made the pledge to preserve the Quran Himself: *"We have sent down the Reminder 'Qur'an' Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it"*, (15: 9).

The word 'Qur'an' relates directly to the act of reading and reciting. In fact, the first word revealed in the Qur'an was the command: *Iqra' (Read!)*. This great word is the key to unlocking the doors of knowledge and enlightenment, emancipating the human mind, and breaking the shackles of ignorance. Through 'reading' the Qur'an humans find their way to the Truth and take their surest steps on the Straight Path that leads to the Pleasure of God and deliverance. Each Qur'anic sura is preceded by the statement *"In the Name of Allah, Most Beneficent, Most Merciful"*<sup>(1)</sup>, thus one engages in this act of profound reading with the resolution of seeking God's own help and assistance; and who is a better guide than God!

But whatever may be said about the Qur'an, none can say it better than God Himself.

---

1 With the exception of Sura 9, *al-Tawbah* (Repentance)

## *What does God say about the Qur'an?*

God directly speaks to us through and in the Qur'an which is His final Message to humanity. He urges humans to consider this Message with great attention, read it with deliberation and delve into its deep and multifarious meanings: *"Would they not contemplate the Qur'an; had it been from another 'source' besides Allah, they would have found many a discrepancy in it"*, (4: 82); *"Will they not contemplate the Qur'an? Do they have locks on their hearts?"* (47: 24). To this effect God speaks of the Qur'an in a number of ways:

- The Qur'an is to the heart what the spirit is to the body. It is a beacon of light and guidance: *"We have thus revealed a Spirit to you 'Muhammad' by Our command: you knew neither the Book nor the Faith, but We made it 'the Qur'an' a light, guiding with it whoever We will of Our servants. You are indeed guiding to the straight path"*. (42: 52)
- It is a guidance that's not to be doubted: *"That Book 'the Qur'an' – no doubt – in it is guidance to the Mindful"*. (2: 2)
- *"And those that have been given knowledge will see that what has been sent down to you from your Lord is the Truth, and that it guides to the path of the Noble, the Praiseworthy"*. (34: 6)
- A guidance to uprightness: *"Truly this Qur'an guides toward that which is most upright, and gives glad tidings to the Believers who perform righteous deeds that theirs shall be a great reward"*. (17: 9)
- *"The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was sent down as guidance for mankind, 'containing' clear indicators of guidance and a criterion 'for distinguishing between right and wrong'"*. (2: 185)
- *"Say 'Muhammad': 'The Holy Spirit 'Angel Gabriel' has brought it 'the Qur'an' down from your Lord with Truth to strengthen those who Believe, and as guidance, and glad tidings to those who submit'"*. (16: 102)
- *"When We sent a group of jinn your way to listen to the Qur'an. Then, upon hearing it, they said 'to one another', 'Listen attentively!'" Then when it was over, they returned to their fellow jinn as warners. They said: "Our people, we have heard a Book which was sent down after Moses, confirming what came before it, guiding to the Truth and to a Straight Path'"*. (46: 29-30)

## What does God say about the Qur'an?

- Guidance and a healing! “Say ‘Muhammad’: *“It ‘the Qur’an’ is guidance and healing for those who Believe”*. (41: 44)
- A criterion with which to distinguish between Truth and falsehood: “*Blessed be He Who has revealed the Distinguisher ‘the Qur’an’ to His servant that he may warn the whole world”*. (25: 1)
- A proof and a clear light, a way of deliverance: “*O people, there has come to you a ‘conclusive’ proof from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a Glaring Light ‘the Qur’an’*”. (4: 174)
- “*A light has now come to you from Allah and a clear Book, with which Allah guides to the ways of peace those who follow what pleases Him, bringing them from darkness out into light, by His will, and guiding them to a straight path”*. (5:15-16)
- It is a Truth which bears Truth. A harbinger of good news and warnings which is to be studied with much attention and dedication: “*We sent down the Qur’an with the Truth, and with the Truth it has come down, We sent you ‘Muhammad’ only to give good news and warning; ‘bearing’ a recitation ‘a Qur’an’ that We have revealed gradually so that you may recite it to people slowly and with deliberation. ‘This is why’ We sent it down by stages”*. (17: 105-106)
- A favour to the Believers along with the favour of the Prophet (ﷺ): “*Allah has favoured the Believers when He sent among them a Messenger of their kind; He recites His Signs ‘ayas’ to them, purifies them, and teaches them the Book ‘the Qur’an’ and Wisdom—indeed they were utterly lost before”*. (3: 164)
- It is a blessed Book: “*This is a blessed Book We have sent down”*. (6: 92)
- “*This is a blessed Book We have sent down. So follow it and be Mindful ‘of Allah’, so you may be shown mercy”*. (6:155)
- “*‘This is’ A blessed Book which We have sent down to you ‘Muhammad’ so that they may contemplate its Signs ‘ayas’, and people of reason may pay heed”*. (38: 29)
- It is to be listened to attentively: “*When the Qur’an is recited, listen to it attentively and be silent, so you may be shown mercy”*. (7: 204)

- It is an inimitable miracle of Divine source: *“Nor could this Qur'an have been devised by anyone other than Allah. It is a confirmation of what was revealed before it and an explanation of the Scripture – let there be no doubt about it – it is from the Lord of all beings. Or do they say, “He has made it up?” Say ‘Muhammad’, “Then produce a sura like it, and call on anyone you can beside Allah if you are telling the truth””*. (10: 37-38)
- *“Or do they say: “He ‘Muhammad’ has invented it ‘the Qur’an’ himself,” say: “Then produce ten invented suras like it, and call in whoever you can beside Allah, if you are truthful. If they do not answer you, then you will all know that it is sent down with Allah’s Knowledge, and that there is no god but Him. Then will you submit to Him?”* (11: 13-14)
- *“Say: “If the whole of mankind and jinn were to gather together to produce the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce the like thereof, even if they backed up each other with help and support””*. (17: 88)
- It explains matters plainly to people: *“Alif, Lām, Rā’; these are the Signs ‘ayas’ of the Book that makes things clear”*. (12: 1)
- God is its Guardian: *“We have sent down the Reminder ‘Qur’an’ Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it”*. (15: 9)
- There is no crookedness in it. It is totally upright: *“All gratitude be to Allah Who has sent down to His servant ‘Muhammad’ the Book ‘the Qur’an’ and has not placed therein any crookedness— ‘He made it’ perfectly upright, to warn of a severe punishment from Him; to give good news to the Believers—who do good—that they will have a fine reward”*. (18: 1-2)
- It is a glory to its companions: *“We have surely sent down to you a Book ‘the Qur’an’, in which there is glory for you. Will you not then understand?”* (21: 10)
- A mighty Book with no falsehood: *“Truly it is a mighty Book; which falsehood cannot touch from any front, a Revelation sent down from the Wise One, Worthy of All Praise”*. (41: 41-42)
- A noble, well-guarded Book: *“Truly it is a noble Qur'an; in a Book well-guarded”*. (56: 77-78)

## What does God say about the Qur'an?

- It is a weighty Word, even a mountain would crumble had the Qur'an been sent to it: *"If We had sent this Qur'an down to a mountain, you 'Muhammad' would have seen it humbled and split apart in its awe of Allah: We offer people such illustrations so that they may reflect"*. (59: 21)
- *"Truly We shall soon cast upon you a weighty Word"*. (73: 5)
- The most beautiful and consistent of all teachings, whereby those who ponder upon it will rightly shiver: *"Allah has sent down the most beautiful of all teachings: a Book that is consistent and often repeated; that causes the skins of those in awe of their Lord to shiver. Then their skins and their hearts soften at the mention of Allah: such is Allah's Guidance. He guides with it whoever He wills; no one can guide those Allah leaves to stray"*. (39: 23)

## The merit of the Qur'an

For Muslims the merit of the Qur'an is indisputable. Indeed, innumerable tomes have been penned by Muslim scholars throughout the ages, invariably titling their works *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* (Merits of the Qur'an)<sup>1</sup>. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) speaks of the Qur'an thus:

The Book of Allah: in it is news of those who came before you and what will come after you and, judgement regarding your affairs; it is the most serious of matters, no tyrant will cast it aside without Allah destroying him, whoever seeks guidance by any other besides it will be misguided by Allah; it is the enduring rope of Allah, the Wise Mention, and the Straight Path; it will not be swayed by whims, distorted by tongues; the knowledgeable cannot have enough of it, nor will it become cumbersome by repetition and its wonders are never ending; it is the recitation that when the jinn heard it, they could not but say: “*We have heard a wondrous Recitation that leads to guidance*” (72: 1-2); whoever cites it has spoken the Truth, whoever acts by it will be rewarded, whoever judges according to it will pass a fair judgement and whoever invites to it will be guided to a straight path. (al-Tirmidhī: 2906)

There are a number of hadiths (or Prophetic sayings) that encourage Believers to read the Qur'an—reciting it is an act of worship and for which the reciter is generously rewarded. Here are some of the best-known of them:

- 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever reads a letter of the Qur'an receives one *ḥasanah*-reward for it then each reward is multiplied by ten. I shall not say that: “*Alif-lām-mīm*” is one letter. But *alif* is a letter, *lām* is a letter and *mīm* is a letter”. (al-Tirmidhī: 2910)

1 Of these, for instance, are those by: Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām, al-Ḍarīs al-Bajalī, al-Nasā'ī, al-'Ajalī and Ḍiyā'uddīn al-Maqdisī.

- Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Read the Qur'an for it comes on the Day of Judgement to intercede on behalf of those who associate themselves with it. Read *al-Zahrāwān* (The Two Luminous Suras), *al-Baqarah* and *Āl 'Imrān*, as they come on the Day of Judgement as if they were two clouds, or shades or two flocks of birds, keeping closely together arguing on behalf of the one who owns them”. (Muslim: 1910)
- 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever reads the Qur'an while being accomplished at it will be among the generous obedient messengers 'the most revered angels'. And the one who reads the Qur'an haltingly and with difficulty will have two rewards”. (Muslim: 798)
- Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The likeness of the Believer who reads the Qur'an is that of a citrus fruit, it both smells and tastes good. Yet the likeness of a Believer who does not read the Qur'an is that of a palm date fruit, it has no smell but its taste is sweet. While the likeness of a hypocrite who reads the Qur'an is that of a basil leaf, it smells good but its taste is bitter. Yet the likeness of the hypocrite who does not read the Qur'an is that of bitter apple, it has no smell and its taste is bitter”. (al-Bukhārī: 5427)
- Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) narrated that the Prophet said: “One should only be covetous of two people: a man who has been given the Qur'an—he recites it during the night time and during the day time. And a man who has been given wealth—he spends 'charitably' out of it during the night time and during the day time”. (Muslim: 815)
- Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allah has His Own people among people”. They said: “Messenger of Allah! Who are they?” He replied: “‘They are' the people of the Qur'an—the people of Allah and His closest 'friends'”. (Ibn Mājah: 215, Aḥmad: 11870)
- 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “It will be said to the companion of the Qur'an 'on the Day of Judgement': ‘Recite and elevate and recite beautifully as you used to do in the worldly life for your station 'in Paradise' will coincide with the last aya you recite’”. (Aḥmad: 6799)



- Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “No group of people shall gather in one of the houses of Allah ‘a mosque’ reciting and studying the Book of Allah without tranquillity descending upon them, mercy engulfing them, angels encircling them and Allah mentioning them among His audience”. (Muslim: 6863)
- ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Indeed Allah elevates by this Book some people stations ‘above others’, and downgrades with it others”. (Muslim: 817)

## *Keys to understanding the Qur'an*

Although the Qur'an can be seen and read as a 'book', in as much as it is put down in book format, is not, however, to be thought of as a 'book' that follows the usual rules and maxims of text building and book composition. Rather, the Qur'an urges us to read it with careful attention focusing on its deep and various meanings. The relatively difficult language of the Qur'an, lack of access to mainstream Muslim commentaries (particularly as they are not widely translated into other languages), and inadequate Qur'an translations, among many other reasons, may, however, constitute a barrier blocking the channels of communication between the Qur'an and the reader. Muslims read the Qur'an on a daily or weekly basis and, especially during the month of Ramadan. It should be emphasized here though that a mechanical reading of the Qur'an cannot unravel the meanings underpinning the Qur'anic messages in each sura, and which would leave their hidden treasures locked away.

Furthermore, uninitiated readers will find it difficult to read through the Qur'an unless they are equipped with the right keys to understanding it. Some of these are as follows:

- **Key 1:** *The Qur'an is a book of guidance.* God speaks of the guidance of the Qur'an as a life-line and a source of light that dissipates the darkness of doubt and expunges other diseases of the heart: *"Would the one who was dead and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in among people be like the one who is plunged in 'complete' darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which!"* (6: 122). The main purpose of the Qur'an is to guide people to eternal bliss and happiness which is gained through adherence to God's commands. To this effect it employs such discursive tools as storytelling, admonition and encouragement in a manner not found in other books.
- **Key 2:** *The Qur'an is first and foremost a constitution of high morals.* It establishes the standards of morality that sound human nature embodies: justice, equality, moral integrity, fair and equitable laws and rulings, and good governance and administration of justice. Through the Qur'an, we find these highlighted, underlined and repeated in different forms and guises. They are projected as the elements which, when strung together, lead to the Pleasure of God.

- **Key 3:** *The Qur'an came to us through revelation from God to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Angel Gabriel (جبرائيل) was the conduit of this revelation and it did not happen all at once but went on for an extended period of 23 years. It came gradually and in sections at intermittent stages. This, so as to maintain Allah's guidance, consolidate the Prophet's mission with Godly Signs (ayas), smooth the gradual legislation of the new code of life, and to make the Qur'an easy for the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions to learn by heart.*
- **Key 4:** *The expanse of time over which the Qur'an was revealed is traditionally divided into two broad periods, i.e. those of Makkah (86 suras) and Madinah (28 suras). The Makkan period, which lasted for 13 years, saw the tender growth of the seedling of Faith in an extremely harsh environment of ignorance. The ayas revealed during this period talk about: matters of creed, Belief, resurrection and the Day of Judgement, Prophethood, the evil of Denial and Associating other deities in worship with God, the call to return to the pristine creed of Abraham and stories of earlier nations who incurred God's Wrath and destruction for their rebelliousness against their Prophets. Qur'anic Signs (ayas) kept on coming until it was absolutely clear what Belief and what lack of it exactly entail. In the face of the unrelenting persecution that they were subjected to, the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions had to migrate to Madinah. This move heralded a new definitive phase in the history of Islam, the Prophetic mission, and the nature of the revealed ayas themselves. Here, the earlier themes also carried on, yet with a new emphasis along with the introduction of new laws for the community: rulings that bear on different circumstances, the penal code, religious obligations and how to deal with the People of the Book and the hypocrites. Indeed, a whole way of life was laid out quite distinctly, thus culminating in the final, most perfect Message that came from God: "Today I have perfected your religion for you, finalized My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you". (5:3) It is very telling that the last aya of the Qur'an that was revealed was: "Be Mindful of a Day on which you shall be returned to Allah and every soul shall be paid in full what it earned—they will not be wronged!" (2: 281)—a person's mission in life is to be prepared for judgement by God, the Most Just of all judges.*

- **Key 5:** *The language of the Qur'an is indeed unique in its style. It is neither prose nor poetry.* Instead, it masterfully employs all what language has to offer to achieve the highest effect on the human psyche. Armstrong (1994, p. 168) describes the effect of the Qur'an on its immediate recipients as follows: "The early biographers of Muhammad constantly described the wonder and shock felt by the Arabs when they heard the Koran for the first time. Many were converted on the spot, believing that God alone could account for the extraordinary beauty of the language. Frequently a convert would describe the experience as a divine invasion that tapped buried yearnings and released a flood of feelings. Muslims like Khalif Umar seem to have experienced a similar unsettling of sensibility, an awakening and a disturbing sense of significance which enabled them to make the painful break with the traditional past. Even those Qurayshis who refused to accept Islam were disturbed by the Koran and found that it lay outside all their familiar categories: it was nothing like the inspiration of the *kāhins* 'soothsayers' or the poets; nor was it like the incantations of a magician. Some stories show powerful Qurayshis who remained steadfastly with the opposition being visibly shaken when they listened to a sura".
- **Key 6:** *The Qur'an mainly deals with three themes: belief, laws and manners.* Each theme comprises an array of interrelated lesser ones that together constitute a complete whole. *Belief* entails how a Believer is to perceive matters such as the Unseen (*al-Ghayb*-what lies beyond the realm of human perception), Paradise, Hellfire, the origin of creation, the essentials of religion, the truth of God's Oneness (Monotheism), the Prophets and what they really stood for, and the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an. A Muslim is to Believe in these in accordance with the Qur'an and the Sunnah (which, in a sense, is the Prophetic example of how the Qur'an is to be interpreted); they are the creedal foundations of Faith. *Laws*, on the other hand, are the practical foundations of Faith on which Islam is built. They revolve around three types of relationship: a person's relationship with God (acts of worship), a person's relationship with other humans (financial dealings, laws of inheritance, communal affairs) and each person's relationship with themselves (those of food and drink and personal conduct). *Manners* abound in the Qur'an. Throughout

its suras, the Qur'an establishes a very high standard code of morality, one that encourages people to strive to embody sterling manners. Indeed, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), whose manners and conduct took their roots in the Qur'an (Muslim: 746), was set by God as a moral example to be emulated by all humans: "*Indeed for you in the Messenger of Allah there is a sterling example*". (33: 21) God praised His Messenger (ﷺ) and extolled his virtuousness by saying: "*Indeed you are of great moral character!*" (68: 4)

- **Key 7:** *Qur'anic suras are of different length, content and unique character.* The length of Qur'anic suras varies significantly: the longest sura in the Qur'an is Sura 2 (*al-Baqarah*) in which there are 286 ayas and the shortest is Sura 108 (*al-Kawthar*) in which there are only 3 ayas. In terms of length, Qur'anic suras fall into four categories: *al-ṭiwāl* (the lengthy) of which there are seven, *al-mi'ūn* (the hundreds-numbered) the ones in which there are more than one hundred ayas, *al-mathānī* (the oft-repeated) in which there are less than a hundred ayas, and *al-mufaṣṣal* (the detailed) which begin with Sura *Qāf* until the end of the Qur'an. These categories follow the order in which they are to be found in the Qur'an with the exception of the opening Sura *al-Fātiḥah* (which is considered as a preface that encompasses the totality of the Qur'anic message).
- **Key 8:** *Overall, there are 114 suras, 6,236 ayas, 77,437 words, and 321,000 letters in the Qur'an.* The first revelation was Sura 96 (*al-'Alaq*) in which there is the command "*Read!*" and the last revelation was Sura 110 (*al-Naṣr*) which foretells the conquest of Makkah and the culmination of the Prophetic mission.
- **Key 9:** *The suras of the Qur'an, and the ayas within them, do not follow the chronological order in which they were revealed; they are ordered as we find them today in the printed muṣḥafs (or written Qur'an copies) at the behest of the Prophet (ﷺ).* This arrangement, however, is unique in terms of the logical and thematic coherence of the content of each sura and how they interrelate with the following and preceding suras. As a whole, they provide a seamless, intellectually engaging read. It is a person's mission in life to ponder these and try to discover the gems they offer to the curious mind.

- **Key 10:** *Thematic unity in the Qur'an can be found in either one of two aspects.* The first whereby every sura deals with a unique theme right from its beginning to its end. In this respect, Suras *al-Infītār*, *al-Inshiqāq*, and *al-Zalzalah* deal solely with the tribulations of the Day of Judgement. The second type, the more common of the two, is that whereby a sura may deal with more than one theme. Yet no matter how many themes are dealt with in the same sura, one finds a commonality that binds them together to form a complete whole. A certain theme might also be dealt with recurrently throughout a number of Qur'anic suras. Each occurrence of such theme is context-bound and is meant to serve the purpose for which it is mentioned in that particular instance. 'Patience,' is one of these themes. It is dealt with in Makkan and Madinan suras in instances where laws, manners, matters of faith, stories of old, and the call to Believe are spoken of. This no doubt reflects its importance as also the defining nature of how life is projected in the Qur'an, i.e. as an ongoing struggle. The Qur'anic field of knowledge that deals with thematic wholesomeness is known as *ʿIlm al-Munāsabah* (the Science of Relevance). It focuses on how the beginning of the sura sets the essential scene, the connection between the various ayas, how the different thematic units within the sura are relayed and the relation between that sura and the ones preceding and following it.
- **Key 11:** *Historical accounts and stories of old found in the Qur'an are cited as examples to take heed from.* Although one may find snippets of a story told in one place, other events relating to that same story may be found in another place but in more or less detail and presented from a different angle. In order to unlock the full meaning of these accounts they should be read within their immediate context. In this way, the overall purport of the sura most certainly affects the story's interpretation. Sometimes, a complete story is told in full in one place. For example Suras *al-Aʿrāf*, *al-Shuʿarā* and *Yūsuf*, each tells a complete story. Besides, there are three types of stories that are told in the Qur'an. The most common are stories of the Prophets of God. The other two being: accounts of persons and peoples of ancient times (the companions of the cave (*aṣḥāb al-kaḥf*) the companions of the pit of fire (*aṣḥāb al-ukhdūd*), the companions of the Sabbath (*aṣḥāb al-sabt*), the two sons

of Adam (Cain and Abel); and accounts of the events that took place during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), such as the battles the Prophet (ﷺ) waged. Stories in the Qur'an are intended for various purposes among which are: to highlight the bond that exists between the followers of the Truth with each other and those of falsehood with each other throughout different times and circumstances; so that Believers follow the example of their predecessors, especially their steadfastness in the face of relentless opposition; to give concrete examples of how Divine laws and canons came to pass; to prove the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and to soothe the hearts of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions. Some stories are repeated in different places in the Qur'an to achieve a number of aims: to highlight the uniqueness of the Qur'an in its ability to tell the same story from a number of different angles without showing any discrepancies; to underline the importance of the story itself and the many lessons that can be drawn from it and to constantly remind people of certain stories that are of particular significance (take for example the various events that took place during Prophet Moses' (ﷺ) lifetime and mission).

- **Key 12:** *Those who were given earlier Divine Scriptures are referred to in the Qur'an with the honorary title, the People of the Book.* The 'People of the Book', namely, the Jews and Christians, and their religious symbols are a recurrent Qur'anic theme, particularly in the Madinan suras. Overall, they are spoken of as nations who have diverged from the correct path. They are constantly reminded of their wrong and are gently called upon to mend their ways. The Qur'anic principle of how to engage in debate with the People of the Book is to be considerate and draw on shared values: *"Do not argue with the People of the Book unless gently, except with those of them who act wrongfully. And say: "We believe in what has been sent down to us and what was sent down to you. Our God and your God is 'the same' One. And to Him we 'fully' submit". (29: 46)*
- **Key 13:** *Each sura in the Qur'an is unique in its own way.* The blueprint of a sura is defined by its theme, employment of discourse, style, markedness of lexis, length of ayas and sound of pauses (with which each aya ends). All of these make up the special character of each sura.

- **Key 14:** *Some would willingly look at the Qur'an through the narrow eyes of 21st century secular values and eventually take issue with certain of its dictates.* Knowing that these so-called values are lacking and, more often than not, detrimental to humans and disastrous to their planet at large, the fact of the matter is that such a Divinely revealed Book of guidance as the Qur'an should be the yardstick against which all these 'values' should be judged. But then, *"Is one who walks with his face stooped down more guided, or one who walks upright upon a Straight Path?"* (67: 22)
- **Key 15:** *The Qur'an is only befittingly interpreted within context.* Each word is to be read within the aya, each aya within the thematic unit, and each thematic unit within the sura in which it occurs if the deep meaning is to be got at. Needless to say, context is of central importance to understanding any given message and no word or string of words should be taken out of context, if it is to be understood properly.
- **Key 16:** *Although we were not among the immediate audience addressed by the Qur'an or players in its stories, we are nonetheless encouraged to take heed from them, and try to bring personal insights drawn from them to bear on our own circumstances.* This obviously comes with the caveat of doing so with full realization of the proper meaning we choose to apply to our lives. In this respect, those with particularly receptive hearts, will usually feel as if what is being recited is meant for them personally.
- **Key 17:** *Finally, the most important of the keys to approaching the Qur'an is that it is to be read contemplatively (cf. 4:82, 38:29, 47:24), with an open heart and a receptive mind. It is a dignified text that remains aloof and will only yield its fruits to those who approach it with the best of intentions. But for those who come to it with their hearts smitten with doubt, it remains insurmountable and its terrains rugged. 'Buts and ifs' will only work as hurdles preventing the reader from getting to the core of the Message.*



## *The Qur'an known through translation: translating the untranslatable!*

The issue of Qur'anic translation is critical. For Muslims, the Qur'an, the inimitable Word of God, is unarguably untranslatable. Therefore, any text other than the Arabic Original – no matter the translation's professed adherence to the original 'spirit' – will necessarily *be a particular interpretation rather than a transparent representation*. One of the most respected Qur'an translators into English, M.M. Pickthall (1930-1999: xiii) sums up the issue in the Introduction to his translation:

The Qur'an cannot be translated. That is the belief of old-fashioned Sheykhs and the view of the present writer. The Book is here rendered almost literally and every effort has been made to choose befitting language. But the result is not the glorious Qur'an, that inimitable symphony, the very sounds of which move men to tears and ecstasy. It is only an attempt to present the *meaning* of the Qur'an - and peradventure something of the charm - in English. It can never take the place of the Qur'an in Arabic, nor is it meant to do so.

Another translator puts it so:

Briefly, the rhetoric and rhythm of the Arabic of the Koran are so characteristic, so powerful, so highly emotive, that any version whatsoever is bound in the nature of things to be but a poor copy of the glittering splendour of the original... My chief reason for offering this new version of a book which has been 'translated', many times already is that in no previous rendering has a serious attempt been made to imitate, however imperfectly, those rhetorical and rhythmical patterns which are the glory and the sublimity of the Koran. (Arberry: 24-25)

The material form of the Qur'an, its stylistic patterns and their semantically-oriented manifestations, are as critically important as its Message. The Andalusian scholar Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064; al-Aḥkām,

2: 88) has it that: “The opinion of leading scholars is unanimous about the inimitability of the Qur'an. We know for sure that if the Qur'an is translated into another language, or even were its words to be replaced by other Arabic words, such translation would not be inimitable; what is not inimitable is not a Qur'an”. Ibn Ḥazm's unequivocal statement derives from the fact that there are some eleven *ayas* expressly confirming the Arabic revelation of the Qur'an: 12:2, 13:37, 16:103, 20:113, 26:195, 39:28, 41:3, 41:44, 42:7, 43:3, 46:12.

Besides this there are other reasons that challenge the notion of the translatability of the Qur'an. Meaning and form in the Qur'an are intertwined and multi-layered. The language of the Qur'an is extraordinarily vigorous. Its style reaches noteworthy heights, particularly in: affirmations of the Oneness, Uniqueness, and Omnipotence of God, in forceful descriptions of the Day of Judgement, in moralizing passages, and in admonitions against polytheism. It is, to a large measure, revealed in dense and highly allusive, elliptical speech. The great exegete Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 923) remarks in his commentary:

It is obvious that there is no discourse more eloquent, no wisdom more profound, no speech more sublime, no form of expression more noble, than 'this' clear discourse and speech with which a single man challenged a people at a time when they were acknowledged masters of the art of oratory and rhetoric, poetry and prose, rhyme and soothsaying. It reduced their fancy to folly and demonstrated the inadequacy of their logic... It let them know that the evidence of the Truth of what he 'Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)' said, the proof of the genuineness of his Prophethood, was the *Bayān* (Discourse), the *ḥikmah* (Wisdom), the *Furqān* (Distinguisher which he conveyed to them in a language like their language, in a speech whose meanings conformed to the meanings of their speech. Then he told them all that they were incapable of bringing anything comparable to 'even' a part of 'what he had brought', and that they lacked the power to do this.

In a self-referential assertion of its own uniqueness, the Qur'an describes its effect on Believers in the following manner: *“Allah has sent down the most beautiful of all teachings: a Book that is consistent and often repeated; that causes the skins of those in awe of their Lord to shiver. Then their skins and their hearts soften at the mention of Allah: such is Allah's Guidance. He guides with it whoever He wills; no one can guide those Allah leaves to stray”*. (39: 23). According to many well-accomplished translators, any translation of the Qur'an not only betrays the meaning of the original, but also loses much of its poetic and affective force. Anyone who has read it in the original is forced to admit that this caution is well justified; no translation, however faithful to the meaning, has ever been fully successful or even remotely close. Arabic, when masterfully put to use, is a remarkably terse, rich and forceful language, and the Arabic Qur'an is by turns striking, soaring, vivid, shaking, tender, melodic and breathtaking. It is not surprising, then, that a skilled reciter of the Qur'an can reduce his audience to helpless tears.

## The exegetical problem

The untranslatable nature of the Qur'an does not stop at its language and style. There are also interpretational issues that pose serious questions to its translatability. Ibn Kathīr (d. 1372) begins his widely-acclaimed *Tafsīr* (commentary) with an account of the early Muslims' discretion (including the most prominent Companions) with regard to interpreting the Qur'an. Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه), for instance, when asked about the meaning of fruits (*fākihātan*) and *abbā* (grass, pasture, fodder, herbage) (80:31) replied piously: "What sky shades me, and what earth holds me, if I say about Allah's Book that of which I have no knowledge?" Umar's (رضي الله عنه) laconic reply, in turn, was: "We were told not to be pedantic". This pious generation remained extremely cautious about imposing any kind of external reading on the Qur'an, demonstrating an acute awareness of the fraught relationship that exists between the text and its supplementary texts.

The Qur'an itself, after all, was accessible to its immediate community of revelation by virtue of linguistic and contextual proximity. The core message of the Qur'an was available to them and its immediate historical referential and semantic fields were familiar to them. On the other hand, instances of *tafsīr* by the Companions and even by the Prophet (ﷺ) himself are well-documented. It remains that parts of the Qur'an were not always transparent to everyone. Indeed, the honoured Companion Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), known as *Tarjumān al-Qur'ān* (Interpreter of the Qur'an), said: "The Qur'an has four aspects (*awjuh*): *tafsīr* (exegesis), which the learned know; *al-'arabiyyah* (language) which the Arabs understand; *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* (permitted and forbidden things), of which no one is allowed to be ignorant; and *ta'wīl* (explanation), which only Allah knows". Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān (d. 767), an early Qur'an commentator, further expounds in his *Tafsīr* (1: 27) what is at stake in understanding the Qur'an:

The Qur'an contains references to particular and general things (*khāṣṣ* and *'āmm*), particular references to Believers and particular references to the Associators, and general references to all people; it contains unequivocal and ambiguous passages (*muḥkam* and *mutashābih*), explained and unexplained passages (*mufassar* and *mubham*); it contains allusions and explicit utterances (*iḍmār* and *tamām*); it contains

cohesive devices; abrogating and abrogated ayat (*nāsikh* and *mansūkh*); it contains changes in word order; it contains similar utterances with many different aspects (*ashbāh*); it contains passages that are continued in a different sura; it contains accounts of earlier generations and accounts of what there is in Paradise and Hell; it contains a reference to one particular Denier; it contains commandments, laws, ordinances; it contains parables by which Allah Almighty refers to Himself, parables by which He refers to Deniers and idols, and parables by which He refers to this world, to resurrection and to the world to come; it contains accounts of what is in the hearts of Believers, and accounts of what is in the hearts of Deniers, polemics against the Arabian polytheists, and it contains explanations, and for each explanation there is a 'further' explanation.

Anyone who is to truly understand the Qur'an must be able to recognize multiple levels of interpretation. Added to this is the exegetical overlay that has accumulated through the passage of time. Since its modest beginnings, the *tafsīr* corpus has evolved into a sea of writing that has been expanding for almost the last millennium and a half. On the one hand, the inexhaustibility of God's Word was matched by the inexhaustibility commentators saw in its meaning. On the other hand, every group in the Muslim community has its own corpus of *tafsīr* supporting and justifying its reading. Thus sectarian and doctrinal *tafsīr* has evolved. It is not only the immense volume that makes this literature of interest, but also the pivotal role it has played in shaping and reflecting specific rationalities throughout Islamic history. This became more acute as the spatio-temporal gap separating the text receiver from its original context increased and more meaning-making agents became involved.

This is why more often than not translators resort to *tafsīrs* to understand and, in turn, render certain Qur'anic passages. However, this has proven to be used as a vehicle to juxtapose and superimpose certain ideological leanings and exegetical views thereby clouding further the message of the Qur'an and setting up

added barriers between the reader of the translation and original Arabic Writ. Translators being no more than modern-day readers and, more often than not, adherents of any of the different Islamic schools of thought out there, inevitably find that a relationship of confluence holds between their translations and commentary. On the one hand, there is a great exegetical tradition built around this most sacred Book, which cannot be simply ignored if the end product of a translation is to be of any success. This tradition arose from either different interpretational standpoints or from sincere intentions to make its language, which is shrouded in the veil of time, explicit and penetrable. However, the translator, while drawing on this wealth of scholarly subtexts that run along the prime text should not fall into the trap of making himself captive to them by allowing his translation to become overloaded or the representation to be so permeated by them that it would only be seen through their kaleidoscope. Such awareness, if existent in the first place, is seldom realized in the actual and mentally demanding act of translating. *This long tradition of commentary is not to be ignored altogether but its flow in the final product of the translation has to be filtered through and checked if the original text is to be better represented and subservient translations are to be avoided.*

While carrying out their task, two types of interventions are identifiable in translators' works:

- *Translational intervention:* can take place both within the body of the text and outside it. Examples of translational intervention take shape in the form of: accounting for cultural and linguistic equivalence; compensating for loss; aiding reading; pronouncing pronoun referents; explaining translational choice (as in the case of diverting from certain inherited translation choices); answering for failings in translation.
- *Exegetical intervention:* may materialize in the following examples: further expounding the meanings of certain lexical items; providing the reasons for revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*); explaining a legal ruling; highlighting the relevance between ayas and suras; explaining the ambiguous (*tawdīh al-mubham*); spelling out the inclusive (*tafṣīl al-mujmal*); precisely identifying the unrestricted (*taqyīd al-mutlaq*); pinpointing the generalized (*takhṣīs al-‘āmm*), and adding their own exegetical remarks.

One may yet divide intervention into two further types:

- *random intervention*: involves putting a *tafsīr* in place of a direct translation serving no obvious agenda. Further they can be divided into: (a) necessary transposition dictated by the nature of the Qur'anic text itself as in the case of not being able to actually visualize the meaning and having a mental picture of it. And (b) unnecessary transposition attributed to carelessness or incompetence on the part of the translator.
- *Pre-meditated intervention*: mostly aimed at controlling the text and to manipulate its authority. These either come as part of the translator's strategy; or as a part of his bias (partiality).

*No claim is made here whereby the dependency of Qur'an translation on tafsīr is to be undermined or that the two can by any means be prised apart, it is rather to say that we should be all the more aware of the nomenclature and nature of this relationship. This has proven to be of benefit to the current translation in its attempt to raise the standard and to better reflect the sense of the original. Qur'an translators should beware not to let the commentary seep into the translation. The aim must be to let the Qur'an speak for itself as much as possible and to disengage it from subtexts and to check the subtexts in place, that is in annotations but not in the body of the text of translation itself. The aim must be to overcome, as much as possible, the intermediary rule of the exegetical corpus - whose importance in understanding the Original is undeniable - in the actual representation of translation.*

## *Positioning the current translation*

No translator will ever embark on such a momentous project without realizing the magnitude of his undertaking, his position in the history of humanity *viz-a-viz* their most pressing need for Divine guidance, and where to make a well-calculated stand in the ceaseless flow of previous and concurrent translations of the Qur'an. This is especially so when it comes to English, the now lingua franca of the world of which there are 1.2 billion speakers. Moreover, English is a language which faithfully captures in the folds of its own history the tumultuous relationship that ever existed between Islam and the West at large. Imprints of this history are no more evident than in the act of translating the Qur'an which resulted in more than 120 existing complete English translations. Ziad Elmasrafy makes the case:

Translation is the most political art, all the more so when it involves representing a text held sacred by those with whom relations are not always friendly. The forms of information and varieties of scholarship necessary for the translation of the Qur'an into Western languages ... are driven by the complex ties that bind the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds. (*The Enlightenment Qur'an: the politics of translation and the construction of Islam*, 2014: Preface)

Each translator who has stood behind any of these translations comes with a uniqueness informed by his or her own character, bearing the trappings of their upbringing, education, language mastery, and the religious and political milieus in which they were born and raised. Thus each translation, like a fingerprint, is unique in its own way as much as it is reflective of the personality of its generator.

One has to stress that Qur'anic translation is an extremely dynamic interaction, where Faith is negotiated and identity is presented. Thus, the history of such translation into English, as a case in hand, has ever been marked by waves of deviation: first came ferocious Orientalism, and then came sectarianism, after that rationalism and apologetics, and finally interventionist translations on socio-political grounds. It would be hard to find a translation of the Qur'an which does not carry one or two or even more traces of these global trends. What is more is that, no matter what the circumstances and the



dictates of time might be these trends still carry on to this very day. However, this does not at all imply that Qur'an translations should not respond to their context and the changing world around them.

As an Associate Professor of Translation Studies who specializes in the critique of Qur'an translations and through my daily work with Qur'an translations for the past 17 years, I have been afforded the vantage point of seeing the subtleties of these translations along with both the advantages and disadvantages of each. Their uniqueness could be either ideational, with translators bringing their own standpoint to bear on the final product of their work, or methodological, in which translators make deliberate choices as to what they see as the most befitting of a number of possible alternatives of rendition. Out of this life-long engagement of thought and practice my resolve to start a new translation came into being. Yet, throughout the current translation, I have made a point of entertaining an informed consultation of all the translations of my predecessors, a legacy which I consider to be the collective genius of some of the best human minds. Needless to say, this translation is 'unique' in as much as it makes deliberate, well-thought choices and decisions of its own.

In this respect, then, the methodology of the current translation can be summed up as follows:

- It represents a safe, mainstream yet non-restrictive understanding of the Message of the Grand Qur'an. The great wealth of Qur'anic commentary that we have inherited through millennia of scholarship, hard study and contemplation is considered with empathy and careful attention. This weighty inheritance is a boon to be consulted with great respect not a bane bearing the trappings of times of old, which some would consider as unbefitting of modern-day thought patterns. As you read through the translation, you will surely come to realize this and, hopefully, appreciate the work of these great scholars of Islam.
- Each sura is preceded by a brief introduction. This scene-setter is indispensable for anyone who wants to unlock some of the meaning potential of the sura. The rationale behind the name of the sura, its major themes and keys to understanding it are provided. These are meant to be occasionally referred to as one progresses in the reading of the sura if and when the need arises. They will hopefully assist you to calibrate your reading.

- This translation is marked by its ‘faithfulness’: neither too literal nor too free. I have done my utmost to make my translation as reflective of the Original as humanly possible. In the process, neither were extraneous readings juxtaposed with the Original words, nor were any personal or ideational aberrations superimposed in the rendition at hand. My thoughts, if any, are kept to the annotations. This obviously made my task all the more difficult, yet all the more satisfying.
- Every care was taken to make each aya rendition read as a composite whole, i.e. understood independently of its notes. To achieve this aim, given the peculiarity of the diction of the Qur’an which is at times elliptical and terse, I have had to include explanatory brackets in the body of the text itself, but have also tried to keep them as minimal and unobtrusive as possible.
- The annotations supplement the reading: providing the referent of what is being pointed at, shedding more light on meaning by cross-referencing ayas, providing explanatory Prophetic hadiths, further explaining the meaning and expounding on it and, at times, providing insightful thoughts that further understanding and open up the door to contemplation. Notes are also well-documented and rely on the most respected sources of exegesis. Although I intervene as much as choosing what I deem to be the best reading from a wide array of time-honoured Qur’anic explanations, I do not make the presumptuous claim that any of the annotations is totally my own.
- Key Qur’anic themes such as those of Belief (*īmān*) and Denial (*kufṛ*), worldly life (*al-ḥayāt al-dunyā*) and the Hereafter (*al-ḥayāt al-ākhirah*), Paradise (*al-jannah*) and Hellfire (*al-nār*) and Mindfulness (*al-taqwā*) are discussed in the footnotes. Being the pivotal concepts that they are, they had to be explained clearly to the reader.
- In order to bring out the connectivity and thematic unity of the suras and ayas, I have sought to give the overall theme and key of the sura, thematically grouping ayas in related units, provide unobtrusive aya numbering, and judiciously use punctuation to highlight the intended meaning and indicate the connection between the ayas. All these seek to help the reader appreciate the cohesion and coherence of the Message.

- Given that the language of the translation must try to reflect some of the grandiosity of the language of the Qur'an, the translation is in modern-day, non-banal, idiomatic, educated English. It further minimally employs some well known stylistic features found in many a well-respected Qur'an translation and which some would consider archaic. The overall language is easy to understand to a reader of an appropriate educational background.
- In attempting to Islamize English, use of semantically non-charged, transparent English lexical items for some Islamic terminology: Sign (Aya); Prayer (*salāh*), and Pilgrimage (Hajj), Belief (*Īmān*), Denial (*Kufr*) are deployed with caps to draw attention to their usage beyond the everyday. I have also done away with italics and diacritics for some common terms for which there are no English equivalents: sura and aya. Use of Westernized names for Allah (ﷻ) as God and those of the Prophets (ﷺ), are only given in my prefatory notes.

At surface level, taken at face value, the Qur'an can be striking for some whilst daunting for others, especially to those whose hearts are not possessed of the sweet, blessed Faith. Yet, much of the Quran's beauty and real significance is to be found in what lies beneath. One can only begin to have a feel of this deep meaning once the surface is left behind and one dives deep to explore what intricate mesh of relationships ties with what hits the eyes at first appearance. Such is the life-long quest that has engaged many a celebrated scholar and many a sincere person in search of the Truth: *"Would they not ponder the Qur'an or are there on some hearts their locks!"* (47: 24)

The Quran is an incredibly deep text. Deeper than oceans, indeed God says: *"Say, "If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like thereof to replenish it"* (18: 109). This depth is indicated, to name but a few, by the relationship that holds each sura with the preceding and following ones, the relevance of each aya to the next, parallel ayas which are similar, or slightly different, and that are to be found in different places, how the same word is strategically deployed along the suras, stories told many times over from different angles, the judicious use of synonymous and near-synonymous words, homographs, dialectical

variations, grammar and syntax as also graphic representations. If at all, this translation only manages to allude to such depth, direct the inquisitive mind to it, but it would be weaving a tall story indeed to say that it has got to its bottom. This can only be found in the many centuries of scholarship that have permeated the past and will continue to do so throughout many future ones.

Finally, it is a tall story, teetering on the sacrilegious, that any mere human is even remotely able to convey the very Word of God in its totality. By translating the untranslatable we are at once engaging in an impossible mission that we fully realize is not going to be carried out to satisfactory completion even before we set about it! But this need not hold us back from engaging in a quest to explore the limits of the ‘translatability’ of the Qur’an and the possibility of compensating for the degrees of loss, great as they are. Yet it has to be stressed that any human endeavour will fall short of accomplishing the task. What one can hope for though is to get across the purport of the Qur’anic message such that people can pay heed to it. This is a legitimate attempt indeed.

*Whatever one was made able to accomplish is a failing human effort. If I have done well then all thanks are due to Allah Who guided me, but if otherwise, then, all failure is due to my shortcomings and the work of the Devil.*

## Bibliography

In order to understand and ‘interpret’ the Word of God I could not but stand on the shoulders of giants and draw on a wealth of scholarship— an enduring legacy bequeathed to us by the great scholars of Islam. Of these, I frequently consulted the following and whereby in the text named only references are identified for qualification purposes or as windows of opportunity for further study:

### **Tafsīrs**

Muqātil (*Tafsīr Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān*); Ibn Ishāq (*Tafsīr Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq*); Ibn Abī Ḥātim (*al-Tafsīr bi al-Ma’thūr*); al-Ṭabarī (*Jāmi’ al-Bayān fī Ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*); al-Baghawī, (*Ma’ālim al-Tanzīl*); Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah (*al-Muḥarrar al-Wajīz fī Tafsīr al-Kitāb al-‘Azīz*); al-Wāḥidī (*al-Wasīṭ; al-Wajīz* (indicated when referred to)); al-Rāzī (*Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*); Ibn Kathīr (*Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*); al-Qurṭubī (*al-Jāmi’ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān*); al-Alūsī (*Rūḥ al-Ma’ānī fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm wa al-Sab’ al-Mathānī*); al-Biqā’ī, (*Naẓm al-Durar fī Tanāsuh al-‘Āyāt wa al-Suwar*); al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī (*al-Durr al-Maṣūn*); al-Qāsimī (*Maḥāsīn al-Ta’wīl*); al-Shinqīṭī (*Aḍwā’ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān bi al-Qur’ān*); al-Sa’dī (*Taysīr al-Karīm al-Raḥmān fī Tafsīr Kalām al-Mannān*); Ibn ‘Āshūr (*al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*); Ibn ‘Uthaymīn (*Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*); Rashīd Riḍā (*Tafsīr al-Manār*); al-Maḥallī and al-Suyūṭī (*Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*); Ḥikmat Bashīr (*al-Tafsīr al-Ṣaḥīḥ*); King Fahd Glorious Qur’an Printing Complex (*al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*); Endowment for Cherishing the Two Glorious Revelations (*Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*); al-Durar al-Sanīyyah (*al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*).

### **Hadīth Compendia**

al-Bukhārī (*Ṣaḥīḥ*); Muslim (*Ṣaḥīḥ*); al-Tirmidhī (*Sunan*); Ibn Mājah (*Sunan*); Imām Aḥmad (*Musnad*); al-Ḥākim (*al-Mustadrak*); al-Nasā’ī (*al-Sunan al-Kubrā*); Abū Dāwūd (*Sunan*); Ibn Ḥibbān (*Ṣaḥīḥ*); al-Ṭabarānī (*al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*); al-Bazzār (*Musnad*); al-Wāḍi’ī (*al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Musnad*).

### **Qur’anic Vocabulary and Arabic Dictionaries**

al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*); Ibn Qutaybah (*Gharīb al-Qur’ān*); al-Sijjīstānī (*Gharīb al-Qur’ān*); Ibn Manẓūr (*Lisān al-‘Arab*); Ibn Fāris (*Maqāyīs al-Lughah*); al-Jawālīqī, (*al-Mu’arrab*).

### *Other References*

Ibn Taymiyyah (*Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā; al-Zuhd wa al-Wara‘ wa al-‘Ibādah*); Ibn al-Qayyim (*Shifā’ al-‘Alīl; Ṭarīq al-Hijratayn; Ighāthat al-Lahfān*); al-Ṭahāwī (*Sharḥ Mushkil al-Athār*); Ibn Ḥazm (*al-Nāsikhwa al-Mansūkh*); al-Naḥḥās (*al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*); Ibn al-Jawzī (*Zād al-Masīr*); al-Shawkānī (*Nayl al-Awṭār*); Abū al-Baqā’ al-Kafawī (*al-Kulliyāt*); ‘Abdul-Ḥayy al-Faramāwī, *al-Mawsū‘ah al-Qur’āniyyah al-Mutakhaṣṣiṣah* (entry “*taqwā*”); al-Dabl (*Dalīl al-Balāghah al-Qur’āniyyah*); al-Nawawī (*al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalāt al-Qur’ān*).



سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ

*al-Fātiḥah*  
(The Opening)





## al-Fātiḥah (The Opening)

**Title:** due to its merits, this sura has many names. The most well-known is: *al-Fātiḥah* (The Opening) or *Fātiḥat al-Kitāb* (The Opening of the Book; al-Bukhārī: 756, Muslim: 394) because the Qur’an begins with it. Its other names include: *Umm al-Kitāb* (The Mother of the Book; al-Bukhārī: 1165), *Umm al-Qur’ān* (The Mother of the Qur’an; al-Bukhārī: 4704), *al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm* (The Grand Qur’an), *Asās al-Qur’ān* (The Foundation of the Qur’an), *Sūrat al-Ḥamd* (The Sura of Thankfulness). It is also called *al-Sab‘ al-Mathānī* (The Oft-repeated Seven) because it is read in every *rak‘ah*– unit of Prayer. Additionally, it has other names that denote its healing power: *al-Shifā’* (The Cure) and *al-Ruqyah* (The Incantation; al-Bukhārī: 2276).

**Merit:** this is the greatest, most-often repeated sura in the Qur’an. Abū Sa‘īd Ibn al-Mu‘allā (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: “I shall inform you of the greatest sura of the Qur’an before you leave the mosque”. Abū Sa‘īd continues: “He took me by the hand and as he was about to leave the mosque, I said: “Messenger of Allah! You said: “I shall inform you of the greatest sura of the Qur’an”. He said: “*الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ*” (*Gratitude be to Allah the Lord of all beings*). It is *al-Sab‘ al-Mathānī* (The Oft-repeated Seven) and *al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm* (The Grand Qur’an) that I have been given” (al-Bukhārī: 4703). No Prayer will be accepted of those who do not recite The Opening (al-Bukhārī: 756; Muslim: 394). It is also a light that no other Prophet before Muhammad (ﷺ) was given. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “While Gabriel was sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ), he heard a creaking sound from above, lifted his head and said: “This is a Heavenly door. It is opened today and never ever has it been opened before”. Then an angel descended to Earth through it. He ‘Gabriel’ said: “This is an angel who descended to Earth and never ever has he descended before”. The angel greeted them and said: “I bring you glad tidings of two lights that you are given and never have they been given to any Prophet before you: *Fātiḥat al-Kitāb* (The Opening of the Book) and the endings of *al-Baqarah*. You shall never read a letter of any of them without your prayer being answered”. (Muslim: 806) In addition, through this sura communication takes place between Allah and His servants. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Almighty Allah said: “I divided Prayer into two halves between Me and My servant and to

My servant shall be granted all what he asks for”. When the servant says: “*Gratitude be to Allah the Lord of all beings*”, Allah says: “My servant has thanked Me”. When the servant says: “*The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*”, Allah says: “My servant has praised Me”. When the servant says: “*Owner of the Day of Judgement,*” Allah says: “My servant has glorified Me”. When the servant says: “*‘Only’ You do we worship, and ‘only’ from You do we seek help*”, Allah says: “This is between Me and My servant and to My servant shall be granted what he asks for”. When the servant says: “*Guide us to the straight path; the path of those on whom You have bestowed your Grace, not those on whom ‘is Your’ Wrath nor the misguided*”, Allah says: “This is for My servant and to My servant shall be granted what he asks for”. (Muslim: 395)

**Theme:** the main theme of *al-Fātiḥah* is that all acts of worship should be dedicated wholly and solely to Almighty God and shall be carried out with total devotion. Additionally, al-Qurtubī (1: 112) is of the opinion that it is called *al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm* because it encapsulates the totality of Qur’anic knowledge: “Praise of Almighty God with the Attributes of His Mightiness and Perfection, the command to worship Him with devotion, confessing that one is unable to carry out worship without seeking Divine help, beseeching God for guidance to the Straight Path, saving one from the ways of the misguided and making clear the final destination of the Deniers”.

**Key:** the key to understanding *al-Fātiḥah* is to think of it as a form of prayer or supplication, in which Believers begin by extending their thankfulness to Allah and praise to Him, then they tell of their dedication to His worship alone, only to ask Him at the end to guide them to the Straight Path, which leads to the Almighty’s Pleasure, the ultimate goal that one strives to achieve in this life.

﴿1﴾ In the Name of Allah<sup>(1)</sup>, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful<sup>(2)</sup>.

﴿2﴾ Gratitude be to Allah the Lord<sup>(3)</sup>

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ  
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾

- 1 Allah (الله) is God's most unique Name, grandly referred to as *Lafẓ al-Jalālah* (The Word of Majesty). It occurs in the Qur'an 2,697 times in 85 of its 114 suras. Allah is considered the Almighty's Supreme Name (*al-Ism al-A'zam*) by Abū Ḥanīfah (quoted in al-Ṭahāwī, *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār*, 1: 1616). According to the vast majority of scholars Allah is linguistically unique in that it is originally a proper and underived noun (cf. al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awtār*: 1: 18). None other than the Almighty is named by it: "Do you know any other of a Name like His?" (19: 65) In Abrahamic religions, i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the concept of God basically has the same referent. He is unlimited with regards to knowledge (omniscience), power (omnipotence), existence (omnipresence) and benevolence. However, there are points of departure regarding how each religion perceives God. The most outstanding of which is that Islam Believes in a One and Only God without the slightest form of Association (cf. 3: 64): "Say: He is God, Unique. \*God is the Oft-Beseched. \*He begot none, nor was He begotten. \*None is equal to Him" (Sura *al-Iklās*, Q. 112). Additionally, God in Islam has unique Names and Attributes and in accordance with Muslim belief ('*aqidah*) the Muslim conception of God is not anthropomorphic in the slightest form: "Nothing is like Him; he is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing". (42: 11)
- 2 The 'Most Beneficent' and the 'Most Merciful' here stand for the Arabic *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm*, respectively. They are both intensive forms derived from the noun *raḥmah*, mercy. Whilst they both denote the trait of mercy, semantically, however, they are different; *ar-Raḥmān* is more intensive than *ar-Raḥīm* (cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*, root: *r ḥ m*). According to exegetes, *ar-Raḥmān's* Mercy encompasses all creatures, whereas *ar-Raḥīm's* is reserved only for Believers (cf. 33:43, al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-Sa'dī). The extent of God's Mercy is highlighted in the following tradition: Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "God has one hundred mercies. He sent down one of them on humans, jinn, animals and venomous creatures. Through it they show mercy to each other, and through it wild beasts show mercy to their young. God has reserved ninety-nine mercies with which He bestows mercy on his servants on the Day of Judgement" (al-Bukhārī: 6000; Muslim: 2752).
- 3 The Arabic *rabb* translated here as 'Lord' is semantically and lexically related to *tarbiyah*, which means to nurture, but with much care and attention (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 381). When used in its absolute form with the definite article, *al-Rabb*, it could only mean God Almighty, Who is the One Who takes care and provides for all beings.

of all beings<sup>(4)</sup>; <sup>(3)</sup> The Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful; <sup>(4)</sup> Owner of the Day of Judgement<sup>(5)</sup>. <sup>(5)</sup> 'Only' You do we worship, and 'only' from You do we seek help from. <sup>(6)</sup> Guide us to the Straight Path<sup>(6)</sup>; <sup>(7)</sup> the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace<sup>(7)</sup>, not those on whom 'is Your' Wrath<sup>(8)</sup> nor the misguided<sup>(9)</sup>.

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾  
 إِلَهِكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾ أَهْدِنَا  
 الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ  
 أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ  
 وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾



- 4 'All beings' here stands for *al-'ālamīn*, usually translated as 'worlds'. It means the Heavens the Earth and all that is within them and all that is between them (cf. 26: 23-24).
- 5 'The Day of Judgement', a translation of *yawm ad-dīn* in this aya, is a recurrent theme in the Qur'an. However, its nomenclature differs according to the effect intended, and whereby it is variously *Yawm ad-Dīn* (the Day of Judgement), *Yawm al-Hisāb* (the Day of Reckoning), *Yawm al-Qiyāmah* (the Day of Resurrection), *al-Wāqī'ah* (the Befalling), *aṭ-Ṭammah* (the Dumfounding), *aṣ-Ṣākhkhah* (the Deafening), *ar-Rājifah* (the Quaking), *al-Faza' al-Akbar* (the Great Fright) and *al-Hāqqah* (the Real). These many names for one and the same thing, some of which are indeed heart-rending, signify its magnitude and drive home the message: "Be Mindful of a Day on which you shall be returned to Allah". (2: 281)
- 6 *al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* is the road (an Arabicized word after the Latin word *strāta*, i.e. road) which is straight, clear and has no turns or curves (al-Ṭabarī). It is used figuratively in the Qur'an to denote the correct manner in which God is to be worshipped and which leads to His Pleasure. It also denotes being spared torment in the Hereafter (cf. 6: 153).
- 7 Those who know the Truth and follow it: "Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, then those are among the ones on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace—of the Prophets, the Affirmers of Truth, the martyrs and the pious—indeed the companion of these is well off". (4: 69)
- 8 Those who know the Truth and do not follow it. (al-Ṭabarī)
- 9 Those who are ignorant of the Truth and worship God following only their whims and wishful thinking. (al-Ṭabarī)

سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

*al-Baqarah*  
(The Cow)



## al-Baqarah (The Cow)

**Title:** the surah is named after the incident of the cow, as related in Ayas 67-74, highlighting the lukewarm response of the Children of Israel to God’s commandments whereby He sought to test their Faith.

**Merit:** the longest sura in the Grand Qur’an totalling 286 ayas, *al-Baqarah* has a number of merits. Firstly, it is a blessing for the Muslim household. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Do not turn your homes into graveyards, the devil shuns the home in which Sura *al-Baqarah* is recited” (Muslim: 780), and Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Read Sura *al-Baqarah* as owning it is a blessing and abandoning it is a loss, and the sorcerers cannot bear it”. (Muslim: 1910) Secondly, and very importantly, it, along with *Āl ‘Imrān*—together known as ‘*al-Zahrāwān*’ (lit. The Two Luminous Suras) – will come to intercede on behalf of a person who takes them as his own on the Day of Judgement. Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Read the Qur’an for it comes on the Day of Judgement to intercede on behalf of those who associate themselves with it. Read *al-Zahrāwān*, *al-Baqarah* and *Āl ‘Imrān*, as they come on the Day of Judgement as if they were two clouds, or shades or two flocks of birds, keeping close together arguing on behalf of he who owns them”. (Muslim: 1910) *al-Baqarah* also contains some of the most meritorious ayas—the greatest aya in the Qur’an, the Aya of *al-Kursī* (No. 255) and the last two ayas of the sura. ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Āmir (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever recites the last two ayas of *al-Baqarah*, these will suffice him [as a shield from evil]”. (al-Bukhārī: 5008) The longest aya in the Qur’an, Aya *Ad-Dain* (No. 282), also occurs in *al-Baqarah*.

**Theme:** the main message of *al-Baqarah* is that true Believers receive God’s commandments with unequivocal acceptance and submission. *The sura is meant to establish firm Belief that can stand the tests and trials to come in order to prevail over Denial.*

**Key:** in order to unlock the meaning for this sura one has to take it as a detailed answer from Allah to the Believers’ supplication to guide them to the Straight Path, found at the end of *al-Fātiḥah*—here Allah tells Believers how to find this Straight Path and true, unshakable Belief. The first five ayas capture the essence of the message: that true guidance is



to be found in the Qur'an and that true Believers are those who submit themselves unquestioningly to Allah's Will and have unshakeable faith in all that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came with. The many stories and incidents of disobedience and rebelling against Allah's commands told here are given to highlight what lack of Belief and submission is like. Furthermore, it is a very early Madinan sura, which explains the many references given to the Children of Israel, who then resided in Madinah in their multitudes, and the gentle reminder they were given to the Straight Path of Allah. The sura also includes the admonishing of hypocrites lurking within the newly-formed community, and the introduction of new laws such as fasting during the month of Ramadan, how to perform Hajj and familial matters. Essentially, many new laws for the Muslims and their community at large are introduced in a very considerate manner: and whereby Believers are to obey these with total submission.

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*

﴿١﴾ *Alif, Lām, Mīm*<sup>(1)</sup>. ﴿٢﴾ That<sup>(2)</sup> Book<sup>(3)</sup> — no doubt — in it is guidance to the Mindful<sup>(4)</sup>; ﴿٣﴾ who ‘unshakably’

اَلَمْ ۙ ذٰلِكَ الْكِتٰبُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ هُدًى  
لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِيْنَ

- 1 Twenty nine suras in the Qur’an begin with these disjointed letters of the Arabic alphabet (known as *al-hurūf al-muqatta‘ah*). Exegetes, over time, have speculated on their meaning, however, two opinions prevail. Firstly, that they indicate the inimitable nature of the Qur’an, as it is made up of letters from the Arabic alphabet. The Arabs at the time of revelation were the unrivalled masters of the Arabic language and yet when challenged were totally unable to create anything like the Qur’an. This, despite the fact that it heralded a complete overhaul of their socio-religious system, one that threatened their very own way of existence. This challenge to author something like it was delivered by the Qur’an in more than one place (cf. 10: 38, 11: 13, 17: 88). This bears testimony to the inimitable, Divine source of the Qur’an (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Ashūr). Secondly, a significant number of the Prophet’s Companions (رضي الله عنهم), including the rightly-guided Caliphs, the Followers and their followers refrained from interpreting them, and since nothing has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) as to their meaning, we should also follow suit and say: “God knows best”.
- 2 The fact that the demonstrative pronoun *dhālika* (that) rather than *hādhdhā* (this) is employed in this āya to refer to the Book, the Qur’an, underlines its loftiness and most high status. (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, 1:28)
- 3 This āya contains a pause of *al-mu‘ānaqah* (congruence) and, thus, has two alternative readings. In the Uthmanic codex this type of pause is symbolized by a pair of triangular shaped dots. If one is to pause at the first position one is not to pause at the second and vice versa. Under no circumstances is one to stop at both as the meaning would be seriously altered. In this position, if we pause at the first indication, the āya could be read as: “*This Book in which there is no doubt, containing guidance to the Mindful*”, in which emphasis is laid on the infallible Divine origin of the Qur’an and, thus, no one is to doubt it (cf. 41:42). Stopping at the second indication gives rise to the reading represented in the translation above, which emphasizes that the Qur’an is a Book of Guidance (cf. 17: 9).
- 4 *At-Taqwā*, translated here and throughout this rendition as Mindfulness, is a central Qur’anic concept. It means being aware of God and watchful of Him in all our deeds and intentions; acts of the heart. This constant vigilance nurtures within a deep sense of sincerity and relatedness to God, thus eschewing worldly temptations and distractions which sway one from the real goal in life and the purpose of existence: namely, to worship God alone. Etymologically, it is derived from the verb *ittaqa*, i.e. placing protection between oneself and what can cause harm. The overall meaning

Believe in the Unseen<sup>(5)</sup>, keep up the Prayer<sup>(6)</sup> and give out of what We have provided for them; <sup>(4)</sup> who Believe in what is sent down to you 'Muhammad' and what was sent down before you<sup>(7)</sup>, and have firm faith in the Hereafter. <sup>(5)</sup> These are guided by their Lord, and these are the successful<sup>(8)</sup>.

يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمِمَّا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلِكَ وَالْآخِرَةَ هُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَأُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾

<sup>(6)</sup> Indeed the Deniers<sup>(9)</sup>, whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not Believe<sup>(10)</sup>.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾

is to be vigilant and aware of God at all times in order that His Punishment is avoided. (For more information see: Abdul-Ḥayy al-Faramāwī, *al-Mawsū'ah al-Qur'āniyyah al-Mutakhaṣṣiṣah*, entry "taqwā", pp. 734-737.)

- 5 'The Unseen' is *al-Ghayb*, i.e. what lies beyond the realm of perception and is only known through revelation. It is what people, particularly the materialistically oriented, find hard to Believe in, and includes, *inter alia*, the angels, life after death, Hellfire and Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 6 'Keeping up the Prayer', *iqāmat aṣ-ṣalāh*, entails performing it punctually and devoutly, observing the manner set forth by the Prophet (ﷺ), who said: "Pray as you have seen me Pray". (al-Bukhārī: 631)
- 7 That is to Believe in what Muhammad (ﷺ) came with from God and what the Messengers came with before him without differentiation among them or Denial of what they came with.
- 8 'The successful', *al-muflīḥūn*, are those who succeed in attaining what they wish for, namely, to be guided by God, and avoid the evil of what they fear. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 9 The noun *kufīr* is derived from the root verb '*kafara*', i.e. 'to cover' (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*), by extension it entails 'covering up the truth' (al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*) which is an integral part of the purport of the Qur'anic term. *al-Ladhīna kafarū*, literally, those who Deny is usually translated as disbelievers or unbelievers. However, 'disbelieving', in essence, is denial of what the Prophet (ﷺ) came with or a part of it (cf. al-Sa'dī). Thus, the choice of the term Deniers throughout this translation. Deniers are those who staunchly, heedlessly and shamelessly cover up the Truth. They are widely set apart from the Believers who willingly and devoutly open up to it and embrace it; they come at the other end of the divide.
- 10 Those who Denied the Truth with which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came, out of arrogance and transgression, will never Believe because of their

﴿7﴾ Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes there is a veil—theirs is a grievous Punishment<sup>(11)</sup>.

﴿8﴾ Some people say: “We Believe in Allah and in the Last Day”, while, in fact, they do not Believe<sup>(12)</sup>. ﴿9﴾ They seek to deceive Allah<sup>(13)</sup> and the Believers—they only deceive themselves, not realizing it<sup>(14)</sup>. ﴿10﴾ In their hearts there is disease and thus “because of it” Allah has increased their disease<sup>(15)</sup>. Theirs is a painful Punishment for their ‘persistent’ lying. ﴿11﴾ When it is said to them: “Do not sow corruption in the land”, they say: “We are only but reformers”. ﴿12﴾ Nay! They are the corruptors but they do not realize it! ﴿13﴾ When it is said to them: “Believe as the ‘other’ people have Believed”, they say:

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾  
 وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَبِالْيَوْمِ  
 الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ  
 وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخَادِعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ  
 وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ  
 اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا  
 يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي  
 الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ  
 هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾  
 وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا كَمَا ءَامَنَ النَّاسُ قَالُوا

stubbornness and intransigence. But, if they mend their ways and reach deep into their hearts, they could possibly open up to Belief (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 16: 584-589, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā‘ al-‘Alīl*, 91).

- 11 ‘*Adhāb*, translated here as ‘Punishment’, means that they are condemned to painful suffering in Hellfire (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Sa‘dī).
- 12 These are the hypocrites or *al-munāfiqūn* (63: 1), whose hidden truth, Denial, is in contrast to what they show to people, i.e. Belief. The fact of their matter is told here quite lucidly (Ayas 8-20), exposing their pretence so that people make no mistake about them. They are a third party, somewhere between Believers (spoken of in Ayas 1-5) and Deniers (spoken of in Ayas 6-7) (cf. Ibn Kathīr).
- 13 Cf. 58: 18.
- 14 Cf. 4: 142.
- 15 Cf. 9:125. They were stricken with cancerous doubt. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī)

“Should we Believe as the feeble-minded<sup>16</sup> have Believed?” Indeed they are the feeble-minded but they know not. <sup>14</sup> When they meet those who Believe, they say: “We Believe!”, but when they are alone with their devils<sup>17</sup>, they say: “Surely we are with you. We are but mocking”. <sup>15</sup> Allah mocks<sup>18</sup> them and slackens the reins for them to wander aimlessly in their blindness<sup>19</sup>. <sup>16</sup> These are the ones who traded in guidance for loss. Their trade did not flourish nor were they guided. <sup>17</sup> Their similitude is that of one who kindles a fire; as soon as it casts light on what is around him, Allah takes away their light leaving them in ‘utter’ darkness<sup>20</sup>, unable to see<sup>21</sup>;

أَتُؤْمِنُ كَمَا ءَامَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ  
السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَإِذَا الْقَوَا  
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا إِلَىٰ  
شَيْطَانِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ  
مُسْتَهْزَءُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ  
فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ  
اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالَةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ  
وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي  
أَسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ  
اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

- 16 *al-Sufahā'*, translated here as ‘the feeble-minded’, is an adjective for the noun *safah* (feeble-mindedness). *Safah* indicates a person’s inability to distinguish between what is good and what is not. Thus, a person of this nature, unwittingly, inflicts harm on himself. The hypocrites are saying that the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were not able to discern what is good for themselves and consequently they Believed. Little did they know that they are the feeble-minded (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 17 Their leaders in this evil. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 18 God mocks them by making their squalid condition look good to them. On the Day of Judgement, God will give them light just like that of the Believers, then when they walk in it, God will snatch it away from them leaving them desolate in complete darkness. Great is their despair after hope! Cf. 57:14. (al-Sa‘dī)
- 19 *Ṭughyān*, lit. transgression and exceeding the limits. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, 41; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, 321)
- 20 *Zulumāt*, is an intensive plural form of *zalmā'* or *zulmah*, i.e. darkness. These are the darkness of doubt and that of Denial (cf. Ibn Kathīr).
- 21 The illuminating fire here denotes Belief, which dissipates darkness; their nominal Belief did them as much good as a transitory source of light does in utter darkness. (Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿18﴾ deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not find their way back<sup>(22)</sup>.

﴿19﴾ Or like a downpour from the sky, in which there is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears from thunderclaps<sup>(23)</sup>, fearing death—Allah is surrounding<sup>(24)</sup> the Deniers. ﴿20﴾ The lightning<sup>(25)</sup> almost snatches away their sight; whenever it flashes they walk in its light and when the light goes, they stand still<sup>(26)</sup>. If Allah so willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight—Allah is Able over everything.

﴿21﴾ People! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you might be Mindful<sup>(27)</sup>.

﴿22﴾ He Who made the land a carpet<sup>(28)</sup> and the sky a roof<sup>(29)</sup> for you,

صُمُّ بُكْرٌ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ  
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَبَرْقٌ يَّجْعَلُونَ  
أَصْبِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ مِنَ الصَّوْعِقِ حَذَرَ  
الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ مُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ  
يَخْطِفُ أَبْصَرَهُمْ كُلَّمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ مَشَوْا فِيهِ  
وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَذَهَبَ  
بِسْمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ  
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

يَتَّبِعُهَا النَّاسُ أَعْتَدُوا رَبِّكُمْ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ  
وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ الَّذِي  
جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فُرْشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً

22 Cf. 22: 46 and 63:3.

23 Their admonition in the Qur'an and how it reveals their truth are akin to deafening thunderclaps penetrating their eardrums. (al-Ṭabarī)

24 Almighty God knows all too well the affairs of the hypocrites and He has utter control over them to dispose of them as He wishes; they can neither deceive Him nor escape His Punishment (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

25 The glaring light of the Qur'an. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn 'Atīyah, Ibn Kathīr)

26 The parable of the heavy downpour is another way, along with the illuminating fire, of vividly describing the tumultuous psychological state the hypocrites had to live through in the midst of Believers to whom the Qur'an was being sent down telling them of the Truth of their hidden enemies. Enemies who are repeatedly, and in the strongest of terms, censured and called to listen to the voice of reason.

27 Being heedful of your Creator and Provider.

28 Stretched out, easy to walk on like a carpet. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr)

29 Cf. 21: 32.

and sent water down from the sky and grew with it 'all sorts of' produce as provisions for you. Therefore, 'knowing this,' do not set up 'rivalling' equals for Him<sup>(30)</sup>. ﴿23﴾ And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down to Our servant<sup>(31)</sup>, come up with a single sura<sup>(32)</sup> like it, and call 'for your aid' your witnesses<sup>(33)</sup> apart from Allah, if only you were truthful. ﴿24﴾ But if you will not do it – and you will never 'ever' do it – be Mindful of the Fire, the fuel of which is people and stones<sup>(34)</sup>, that has been prepared for the Deniers. ﴿25﴾ Give glad tidings to those who Believe and do good deeds that theirs are Gardens<sup>(35)</sup> under which rivers flow; whenever they are provided with a fruit from it, they would say: "This is what we have been provided with before!<sup>(36)</sup>" They have been provided with it resembling each other<sup>(37)</sup>.

وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ وَادْعُوا شُهَدَاءَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهٖ مُتَشَبِهُونَ

30 Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he asked the Prophet (ﷺ): "What is the gravest of all sins?" He (ﷺ) replied: "That you take 'as god' a rival equal to Allah when it is He Who created you". (al-Bukhārī: 4477, Muslim: 86)

31 The referent of 'Our servant', is Muhammad (ﷺ) to whom the Qur'an was sent down.

32 Sura is a Qur'anic chapter.

33 Your aides and partners who would readily interpose for you. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

34 Cf. 21: 98.

35 *al-Jannah* or Paradise the plural of which is *Jannāt* as in this aya

36 There is an element of a renewed and pleasant surprise involved here.

37 The fruits of Paradise look like those to be found in this worldly life, but their taste is different. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Qurṭubī)

For them in it are purified<sup>(38)</sup> spouses—they will abide therein forever.

﴿26﴾ Allah does not shy away from giving a gnat<sup>(39)</sup> as an example or even less than it<sup>(40)</sup>. Those who Believe will know that it is the Truth from their Lord, but those who Deny will say: “What need does Allah have for this example!” He ‘Allah’ misguides with it ‘this example’ a great number of people and guides with it a great number of people<sup>(41)</sup>. But He only misguides the Transgressors<sup>(42)</sup>; ﴿27﴾ those who break the covenant of Allah<sup>(43)</sup> after it has been set as binding, sever what Allah ordained to be joined, and sow corruption in the land. These are, indeed, the Losers. ﴿28﴾ How could you Deny Allah, while you were dead and He made you alive; He then will take your lives,

وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا  
خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

﴿٢٦﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا  
بِعُوضَةٍ فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ  
أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا  
يُضِلُّ بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا  
وَمَا يُضِلُّ بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ الَّذِينَ  
يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ  
وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا ءَمَرَ اللَّهُ بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ  
فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾  
كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَكُنْتُمْ ءَمَوَاتًا  
فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ

38 Pure and clean, both bodily and spiritually. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī)

39 Such an insignificant creature can be used to present to people evidence of the truthfulness of the Message. Besides the Qur’an and its Signs (Ayas) no matter how small or belittled the evidence is, it is still enough proof for those who seek the Truth with open hearts.

40 The expression used here is *fa māfawqahā*, which literally means: ‘or what is above it’, i.e. either smaller or larger in size. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Atīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

41 Cf. 9: 124-125.

42 *al-Fāsiqūn*, derived from the noun *fisq*, are those who overstep the limits that God has demarcated for people. *Fisq* is a manifestation of Denial (cf. 74: 31).

43 Cf. 2: 84-85 and 5: 12-13 and 70.



then bring you to life again, and after that you will be returned to Him again?<sup>(44)</sup> <sup>(29)</sup> He is the One Who created for you all that there is in Earth, then made for<sup>(45)</sup> the sky and formed it into seven skies. He has knowledge of everything<sup>(46)</sup>.

<sup>(30)</sup> 'Mention Muhammad'<sup>(47)</sup> When your Lord said to the angels: "I shall instate a successor<sup>(48)</sup> on Earth!" They said: "Will you instate in it one who sows corruption and sheds blood, whereas we 'incessantly' glorify You in gratitude to You and exalt You?"<sup>(49)</sup> He said: "I know that which you do not".

ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾  
هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا  
ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ  
سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

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

- 44 These are the cycles of life and death that humans go through: seeds in the loins of men, creation and birth, death, being brought to life at resurrection and being held accountable for one's deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Ashūr, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 45 This translation of the Divine Attribute *Istawā* follows after al-Wāhidi in *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī and Ibn 'Uthaymīn. Alternatively, it could mean that Almighty God rose to the sky in a manner befitting Him only, which in al-Baghawī's opinion is the interpretation given by Ibn 'Abbās (ﷺ) and most of the exegetes of his generation.
- 46 This aya is further expounded in Ayas 41: 9-12.
- 47 Abū al-Baqā' al-Kafawī (*al-Kullīyyāt*, p. 69) says: "Whenever 'the particle' *idh* is mentioned in the Qur'an it implies 'the command' 'mention!' That is, mention 'Muhammad' to them 'the ones to whom the Qur'an is being recited' or recall in your mind... most exegetes agree to this".
- 48 *Khalīfah* is derived from *khalafa* which denotes standing in place of someone else (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 210; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, p. 294). Here, it means someone who comes after another and takes his place; these are mankind, Adam and his progeny, who successively take over each other's place, generation after generation, until the Day of Judgement. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 49 Abū Dharr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked: "What is the best utterance?" He replied: "Whatever Allah chose for His angels and servants: "*Subhān Allāh wa bi-ḥamdih* (Glorified be Allah and 'we do this' in gratitude to Him)". (Muslim: 2731)

﴿31﴾ He taught Adam all the names 'of things', then showed them to the angels and said: "Tell Me the names of these, if only you were truthful!" ﴿32﴾ They said: "Glorified may You be! We have no knowledge but what You have taught us. You are All-Knowing, All-Wise". ﴿33﴾ He said: "Adam! Tell them their names". When he told them their names, He said: "Did I not instruct you that I know what is hidden in the Heavens and the Earth?—and I know what you make public and what you hide"<sup>(50)</sup>.

﴿34﴾ 'Mention Muhammad' When We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam!"<sup>(51)</sup>; they bowed down except Iblīs<sup>(52)</sup>; he refused, became arrogant<sup>(53)</sup> and was one of the Deniers. ﴿35﴾ We said: "Adam! Dwell yourself and your wife in the Garden<sup>(54)</sup> and eat thereof

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالَ يَتْلُوا آيَاتِهِمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنْني أَنْعَمُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَوَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٤﴾ قَالَ يَتْلُوا آيَاتِهِمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنْني أَنْعَمُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَوَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٦﴾

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ أَبَى وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكُلَا مِنْهَا

- 50 This quiz was posed to the angels, the closest to God of His creation, to prove to them, by practical example, the Truth of God's All-Encompassing Knowledge, and, in turn, the Wisdom of His Choice. It is also a concrete manifestation of God's infinite Justice, which allows for questioning by even the most obedient of His subjects, the angels. This Most Able of Sovereigns answers their concerns.
- 51 The command to the angels to bow down to Adam is an act of worship to God and reverence to Adam who was honoured by God Himself. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 52 Iblīs is Satan. Etymologically, *iblis* comes from *iblas*, i.e. having no hope in good things, grief and sadness caused by utter despair. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 23; al-İṣḫāhānī, *al-Mufradāt*, p. 143)
- 53 His arrogance is spelled out elsewhere in the Qur'an; 7: 12, 38: 76, 15: 33.
- 54 This Garden is Paradise, the very Heavenly abode of eternal bliss. (al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 4: 347, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr)

'bountifully' aplenty wherever you wish, but do not come near this tree, or 'else' you will be from among the wrongful". ﴿36﴾ Satan tripped them into it<sup>(55)</sup> and drove them out from where they were<sup>(56)</sup>; We said: "Go down, as enemies to each other. In Earth will be your dwelling and livelihood for a given time<sup>(57)</sup>". ﴿37﴾ Adam received a few words<sup>(58)</sup> from His Lord, and He forgave him; He is the All-Forgiving the Most Merciful. ﴿38﴾ We said<sup>(59)</sup>: "Go down all of you<sup>(60)</sup>, whenever guidance comes to you from Me whoever follows it will have neither fear nor will they grieve. ﴿39﴾ As for those who Deny and disbelieve in our Signs these are the company of the Fire; forever they will abide therein<sup>(61)</sup>."

رَعَدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونُوا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتَاعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَتَلَقَىٰ آدَمُ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٨﴾ قُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فَإِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِنِّي هُدًى فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

55 How he managed to do this is told in more detail in 7: 20-22.

56 The great blessing of dwelling in Paradise.

57 Until the Day of Judgement. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

58 These *kalimāt* or 'words', or supplication, are provided in 7: 23: "They 'both' said: "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers".

59 What follows is the original covenant: to follow the path of guidance shown to them by God's Messengers. Those who Believe in the Message will lead a life of felicity but those who Deny will meet Hellfire as their final destination.

60 The addressees were Adam, Eve and Satan. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr)

61 The episode of Adam's creation and his encounter with Satan are spelled out in detail in 20:116-123.

﴿40﴾ Children of Israel!<sup>(62)</sup> Remember My favour which I conferred on you, and fulfil 'your obligations to' My pledge and I will honour 'My obligations to' your pledge<sup>(63)</sup>; and fear none but Me. <sup>(41)</sup> Believe in what I have sent down confirming what you have<sup>(64)</sup>, do not be the first to Deny it, do not trade my Signs<sup>(65)</sup> for a pittance<sup>(66)</sup> and be Mindful of Me, <sup>(42)</sup> do not mix up Truth with falsehood, and do not suppress the Truth while you are aware of it, <sup>(43)</sup> keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms and bow down 'in Prayer' with those who bow down<sup>(67)</sup>.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ  
 وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِنِّي فَأَرْحَمُ الرَّحِيمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾  
 وَإِذْ آمَنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلْنَا مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا  
 أُولَٰئِكَ فَفِرَّ بِهِمْ وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا  
 قَلِيلًا وَإِنِّي فَاتِنُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَا تَلْسَمُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبُطْلِ  
 وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْمُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَالْقِيمُوا  
 الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ  
 الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

- 62 Israel is Prophet Jacob (ﷺ). The use of the epithet 'Children of Israel' for the Israelites is meant to act as a reminder to them to follow in the footsteps of the Patriarch from whom they are directly descended.
- 63 God's pledge to the Children of Israel and theirs to Him are given in 5: 12. This mutual pledge is related as: if the Children of Israel keep up the Prayer, give charity, Believe in and support the Prophets, and spend in the cause of God, God will, in return, expiate their sins and admit them to the Gardens through which rivers flow, i.e. Paradise.
- 64 God is inviting the Children of Israel to Believe in the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's (ﷺ) Message in fulfilment of their pledge to Him (cf. 7: 156-157, in which the Children of Israel are enjoined to Believe in the gentile Prophet whom they find mentioned in the Torah). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 65 The Torah in which there is mention of the Messengership of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).
- 66 Their leaders used to reap shares from their devoted folk's wealth. Hence, they tried to hide the Truth about Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) fearing that they would lose these gratuities.
- 67 This is an invitation from God to the Children of Israel to join the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions and become Believers performing acts of worship accordingly (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿44﴾ How could you enjoin people to do what is right and forget "about it" yourselves, while you read the Book<sup>(68)</sup>; have you no sense? ﴿45﴾ Seek help in patience and Prayer<sup>(69)</sup>; indeed they are hard save for the dedicated<sup>(70)</sup>. ﴿46﴾ Those who firmly Believe that they will be meeting their Lord and that they are returning to Him.

﴿44﴾ أَنَا أَمْرُوتِ النَّاسِ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنَسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿45﴾ وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿46﴾ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿47﴾

﴿47﴾ Children of Israel! Remember My favour which I conferred on you and that I privileged you over other peoples<sup>(71)</sup>. ﴿48﴾ Be cautious of a Day<sup>(72)</sup> on which no soul will be of use to another soul, neither intercession<sup>(73)</sup> nor ransom will be accepted from it, and they<sup>(74)</sup> will not be helped.

﴿47﴾ يٰبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتِيَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿48﴾ وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا شَفَعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿49﴾

Furthermore, al-Wāhidī is of the opinion that the command to “bow down with those who bow down” is specifically mentioned to denote performing congregational, obligatory Prayers.

68 The Torah.

69 The commentary widely-known as *al-Jalālayn* has it that this command is addressed to: “The Children of Israel who were hampered from Belief out of greed and love of vainglory. They are commanded to seek help in patience, i.e. fasting, which dents wantonness, and Prayer because it leads to humbleness and expels haughtiness”.

70 The ‘dedicated’ (*al-khāshī‘īn*) are those who are humble in obedience to God, fearful of His Punishment, Believing in His promise and warning. (al-Ṭabarī)

71 In their time, God gave them certain privileges over other peoples; Prophets, revealed Books and kingship (cf. 5: 20). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

72 The Day of Judgement.

73 On the Day of Judgement no intercession on behalf of a Denier will be accepted, but it will be accepted for a Believer given that God permits it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

74 The Deniers.

﴿49﴾ 'Remember' When We saved you from the people of Pharaoh who subjected you to the worst of suffering—they slaughtered your sons and kept your womenfolk alive—surely, this was a great tribulation from your Lord. ﴿50﴾ 'Remember' When We spilt the sea for you, delivered you, and drowned the people of Pharaoh before your eyes<sup>(75)</sup>. ﴿51﴾ And 'remember' when We appointed forty nights for Moses<sup>(76)</sup>, and then when he was away you took up 'worshiping' the calf—you were unjust<sup>(77)</sup>. ﴿52﴾ Then We forgave you so that you might be thankful<sup>(78)</sup>. ﴿53﴾ 'Remember' When we gave Moses the Book and the Distinguisher<sup>(79)</sup>, so that you might be guided. ﴿54﴾ 'Remember' When Moses said to his people: "My people, you have done yourselves injustice by taking the calf 'as an idol'. Repent to your Originator! Kill yourselves<sup>(80)</sup>;

وَأَذِّنْ لِكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يَدَّبْحُونَ أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِمَّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمْ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً ثُمَّ أَخَذْنَا الْعَجَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا مَا كُنتُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجَلِ فَتُنَبِّئُوا إِلَىٰ بَارِيكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ

75 Cf. 26: 61-66.

76 The meeting place where Moses was to receive the Torah is specified elsewhere in the Qur'an; 20: 80.

77 Associating any other with God in worship is a grave injustice (cf. 31: 13).

78 For more details on these episodes cf. 7: 138-155.

79 Mujāhid and al-Rabi' Ibn Anas are of the opinion that the Book is the same as the *Furqān* (the Distinguisher) that distinguishes Truth from falsehood; the Torah is the *Furqān* in this aya. (Ibn Abū Ḥātim)

80 The same form of punishment is mentioned in Exodus 32:15-35. By the Prophet's (ﷺ) permission (al-Bukhārī: 3274), Muslims are allowed to mention these Biblical accounts or the so-called *isrā'iliyyāt* (or apocryphal sources ascribed to the Children of Israel) but they are not to rely on them.

that will be best for you with your Maker; that He may forgive you. Surely, He is the All-Forgiving the Most Merciful. ﴿55﴾ ‘Remember’ When you said: “Moses! We will not Believe in you unless we see Allah before our own eyes”. Suddenly, the thunderbolt struck you while you were beholding. ﴿56﴾ Then We resurrected you after your death<sup>(81)</sup>, so that you might be thankful. ﴿57﴾ We shaded you with the clouds<sup>(82)</sup> and sent down to you the manna and quails<sup>(83)</sup>. Eat from the good things that We provided for you. They<sup>(84)</sup> did not commit injustice against Us, but they did themselves the injustice.

ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَٰ رَبِّكُمْ فَتَابَ  
عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ  
يَمُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ بِكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَىٰ اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً  
فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾  
ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَظَلَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا  
عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَنَّٰنَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُّ مَن طَيَّبَتْ  
مَا رَزَقْتَهُ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلٰكِن كَانُوا  
أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

- 81 When the punishment of the thunderbolt struck them, they died, then God brought them back to life so that they might become grateful to Him. (al-Ṭabarī)
- 82 This is an account of sparing the Israelites the glare of the sun whilst they were lost in the wilderness. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abū Ḥātim)
- 83 In Arabic, *al-mann* and *al-salwā*, respectively. They both have linguistic roots in Arabic; *al-mann* means that which is God-given without effort, while *al-salwā* means that in which one finds consolation and comfort. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 84 Rhetorical shifts (known as *uslūb al-iltifāt*) from, for instance as in this aya, the first person plural pronoun ‘you’ into the third person plural pronoun ‘they’ is very common in the Qur’anic discourse. This well-known and well-researched linguistic feature is employed to serve a number of rhetorical purposes. In this instance, it is meant to announce that enumeration of the Israelites’ repeated offenses has come to an end and that talk is directed to other nations so that they may take heed and not fall into the same trap (cf. al-Qāsimī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Dabl, *Dalīl al-Balāghah al-Qur’āniyyah*, p. 39).

﴿58﴾ ‘Remember’ When We said: “Enter this town<sup>(85)</sup> and eat from it wherever you like plentifully; and enter through the gate prostrating ‘in thankfulness’ and say: “*ḥittah!*”<sup>(86)</sup>, and We shall forgive you your sins and We shall increase ‘the reward of’ those who do good”.  
 ﴿59﴾ The wrongdoers among them substituted what was said to them for something else, and We sent down on the wrongdoers a plague<sup>(87)</sup> from the sky for exceeding the limits. ﴿60﴾ ‘Remember’ When Moses prayed ‘earnestly’ for water for his people. We said: “Strike the rock with your staff”; twelve springs gushed out from it. Every people<sup>(88)</sup> knew their own fountain. “Eat and drink from what Allah has provided for you and do not stalk the land corrupting”. ﴿61﴾ ‘Remember’ When you said: “Moses, we will not bear with you for one type of food.

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا ادْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا  
 حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَاَدْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا  
 وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ  
 وَسَيَزِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ  
 ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى  
 الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا  
 يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ \* وَإِذْ اسْتَسْقَى مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ  
 فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ  
 مِنْهُ اثْنَا عَشَرَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ  
 مَشْرِبَهُمْ كُلُّوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا  
 فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى  
 لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَى طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ

85 This Divine command to the Children of Israel to ‘enter’ the town is explained in 7: 161 as ‘reside’ in the town, i.e. Jerusalem.

86 That is ‘forgiveness’; they were asked to seek forgiveness. The word is derived from *ḥaṭṭa*, i.e. to put down a burden (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’an*, p. 50; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 13), but they subtly twisted their tongues to mean ‘barley’, *ḥintah* (al-Bukhārī: 4641, cf. particularly al-‘Asqalānī’s comment).

87 *Rijz*, i.e. torment and tumult. (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 489; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, p. 341)

88 Each one of the twelve tribes of the Children of Israel (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)



Ask your Lord to bring out for us from what the earth grows: herbs, cucumber, garlic<sup>(89)</sup>, lentils and onions. He said: “Would you exchange what is better for that which is worse? Go down to ‘just’ any town, for there will be yours what you asked for”. Humiliation and indignity were stamped on them, and they deserved the Wrath of Allah, all because they used to Deny Allah’s Signs and kill the Prophets, this is because they defied and took to ‘habitually’ exceeding the limits.

﴿62﴾ Certainly, the Believers, the Jews, the Christians and the Sabians whoever Believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good among them, theirs will be their reward from their Lord, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve<sup>(90)</sup>. ﴿63﴾ ‘Remember’ When We took your pledge<sup>(91)</sup>, and raised the mountain<sup>(92)</sup> above

فَأَنذَرْنَا لَنَارَبِّكَ يُخْرِجُ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ  
الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَّيَاهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا  
وَبَصَلِهَا قَالَ أَتَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ  
بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ أَهَيْطُوا مَصْرَاقِينَ لَكُمْ مَا  
سَأَلْتُمْ وَصُرِّبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ وَالْمَسْكَانَةُ  
وَبَاءَ وَبَعْضَ مِمَّنْ أَلَّهَ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا  
يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّينَ بِغَيْرِ  
الْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّٰدِقِ  
وَالصَّٰلِحِينَ مَن ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ  
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا  
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَإِذْ  
أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ

89 According to some authorities *fūmihā*, translated here as garlic, also means wheat. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 51; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 367)

90 This applies to those who came before Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent. Thereafter, whoever seeks a religion other than Islam will find it not accepted from him and in the Hereafter he will be among the Losers (3: 85) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr). Furthermore, Ibn ‘Ashūr opines that this aya is meant to show these people that the Door to God is easy to arrive at and that seeking refuge with Him is not beyond their reach, but they have to Believe and do good deeds..

91 Cf. 2: 83-85.

92 *At-tūr* is of Syriac origin (al-Jawāliqī, *al-Mu’arrab*, p. 435) and whilst it means any mountain, it could also mean a certain mountain or a mountain covered with greenery. (al-Ṭabarī)

you<sup>(93)</sup>; “Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what came into it, so that you might be Mindful”.<sup>(64)</sup> Then you turned away after that. Had it not been for Allah’s favour and Mercy, you would have been among the Losers.<sup>(65)</sup> You know ‘what befell’ those of you who transgressed on the Sabbath<sup>(94)</sup>. We said to them: “Be apes, despised!”<sup>(66)</sup> We made it ‘this town’ a ‘severe’ lesson to those of its time and those that came after it, and an admonishment to the Mindful.

<sup>(67)</sup> ‘Remember’ When Moses said to his people: “Surely Allah commands you to slaughter a cow”<sup>(95)</sup>. They said: “Are you deriding us?” He said: “*I seek refuge by Allah, that I should be an ignoramus!*”<sup>(96)</sup> <sup>(68)</sup> They said: “Pray to your Lord to tell us ‘clearly’ what it is”. He said: “He says: “It is a cow not too old, neither is it too young, but somewhere in the middle. So do what you are being commanded to!”

خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ  
ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ  
مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ عَلَّمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ  
أَعْتَدُوا مِنْكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً  
خَاسِيَةً ﴿٦٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ لَكُمْ آيَةً لِمَا بَيْنَ  
يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلَفَهَا وَمَوْعِظَةً لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ  
أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقْرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُرُوطًا قَالَ  
أَعُودُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا  
أَنْعِ لَنَا رَبَّكَ بَيْنَ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ  
إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَا فَارِضٌ وَلَا يَكْرَهُونَ بَيْتَ  
ذَلِكَ فَافْعَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

93 This is further underlined in 7: 171.

94 The details of this town’s story are given in 7: 163-165.

95 Moses asked them to slaughter a cow without being specific about it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

96 ‘I seek refuge by Allah’ is a literal translation for the Arabic expression (*a’ūdhu bi Allāh*) which, depending on the context, as in this case, is meant to express a strong feeling of aversion to something, i.e. that they accused him of an act befitting only the ignorant, let alone a Messenger of God.

﴿69﴾ They said: “Pray to your Lord to tell us what its colour is”. He said: “He says: “It is a yellow cow, bright is its colour, pleasing to the beholders”. ﴿70﴾ They said: “Pray to your Lord to tell us what exactly it is; all cows look alike to us. At this we shall, Allah willing, be guided”. ﴿71﴾ He said: “He says: “It is a cow neither humbled by tilling the earth, nor by watering plants; unblemished, and its colour is untainted””. They said: “Now you have come with the Truth!” They slaughtered it—barely did they do so. ﴿72﴾ ‘Remember’ When you killed a soul and disputed over it<sup>(97)</sup>. Allah reveals what you were bent on hiding. ﴿73﴾ We said: “Strike him ‘the victim’ with a piece of it ‘the cow’<sup>(98)</sup>”. It is in this manner

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ صَفْرَاءُ فَاقِعٌ لَوْنُهَا تَسُرُّ الْتَّظِيرِ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشَبَهَ عَلَيْنَا وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَّا ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَّا شِيْءَ فِيهَا قَالُوا الْفَنَ جِئْتَ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبَحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادْرَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَقُلْنَا أَصْرَبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا

97 This aya concludes the episode of the cow and the debate surrounding it. Commentators agree that the details given here provide a foregrounding of how Moses' people argued with him in what had been Divinely ordained. al-Biqā'ī is of the opinion that the episode is divided into two sections by way of drawing attention to two separate favours. Firstly, the favour of forgiveness for being reluctant to obey what is Divinely ordained. Secondly, the favour of revealing the killer by way of a miracle. On the other hand, al-Biqā'ī also sees that attention is being drawn to the fact that there is an issue of admonishment here. Firstly, they are being admonished for not being polite enough with their Prophet by accusing him of 'deriding' them, and not being observant enough of God's commands. Secondly, they are being reproached for killing an inviolable, sacrosanct soul, and the evil such an act incurs. al-Biqā'ī then concludes that this instance of foregrounding is, consequently, more relevant to the preceding and numerous violations. Thereby, the theme of reproach is still being continued here.

98 It is reported that having been hit with a piece of the cow, the victim came back to life and pointed his killer out. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

that Allah brings to life the dead and shows you His Signs so that you might think<sup>(99)</sup>. ﴿74﴾ ‘Yet’ After that your hearts became akin to rocks or ‘even’ harder; truly among rocks some from which rivers gush forth, some crack and water seeps through, and some come tumbling down in fear of Allah—Allah is not heedless of what you do.

﴿75﴾ Do you ‘Believers’ then hope that they will Believe in you<sup>(100)</sup>, when a party of them used to hear the words of Allah<sup>(101)</sup> and distort them even after they had fully comprehended them and fully realizing what they were doing? ﴿76﴾ When they meet up with the Believers, they say: “We Believe!”, but when they are alone with each other, they say:

كَذَلِكَ يُحَى اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَرَقَسْتُمْ قُلُوبَكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَتَّسِقُ فَيَجْرُحُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

\* أَفَتَعْظُمُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِالْكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانُوا قَرِيبًا مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَحْرِجُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ قَالُوا

99 In this way, they were invited to think over their actions and to be more heedful, obeying God more willingly. (al-Ṭabarī, Sa‘ dī)

100 That is to listen to and Believe in what you call them to (al-Ṭabarī). This is the reason behind recounting, in detail, the Israelites’ numerous violations in the previous ayas. The residents of Madinah, who made up the majority of the Believing community at the time, had lived alongside the Jews for a very long time and came to regard them as their moral superiors, having the Book and the knowledge that they lacked. These views were also shared further afield by other illiterate Arab pagans, who only had a most rudimentary knowledge of the religion of Abraham (ﷺ). The Israelites were so imprinted in the Arab psyche that nothing but telling their truth in great detail would actually make the Believers fully comprehend the actual reality. It is, in a way, establishing Faith on a clean slate (but not exactly from scratch as we will be told shortly of the relatedness of Islam to the Abrahamic creed), and correcting collective societal misconceptions.

101 The Torah. (al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*; Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr)

“Do you tell them what Allah has blessed you with the knowledge of which<sup>(102)</sup> so that they might use it in argument against you before your Lord; have you no sense? ﴿77﴾ Did they not know that Allah is in on what they hide and what they reveal? ﴿78﴾ Some of them are unlettered<sup>(103)</sup>, ‘they’ do not know the Book only wishfully<sup>(104)</sup> thinking—they only guess. ﴿79﴾ Woe betides those who write the Book<sup>(105)</sup> with their own hands, then say: “This is from Allah!”, so that they may exchange it for a pittance. Woe betides them for what their hands have written, and woe betides them from what they earn. ﴿80﴾ They say: “The Fire will not touch us except for a limited number of days”<sup>(106)</sup>. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Have you ‘got’ a promise from Allah? For Allah never breaks His promise. Or do you say about Allah that of which you have no knowledge?”

أَتَحَدِّثُونَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجُّوكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَمَنْهُمْ أُمِّيُّونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا الْأَمَانِيَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَسْتَوِيَ بِهِ تَمَتًّا قَلِيلًا فَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَقَالُوا لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارَ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَةً قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ ۗ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

102 That their Book tells of the advent of a Messenger who is described in much detail (cf. 2:89). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah)

103 This describes the stance of a third category of Madinan Jews with regards to the Message of Muhammad (ﷺ); namely, the ill-educated who follow what their minds tell them of what their Scripture says. The first two being the learned who willingly twist the words of God even after they have fully comprehended them, and the hypocrites who when they meet Muslims pay them lip service. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī)

104 They concoct false wishes. God has given examples of such falsity in 2: 111 and 4: 123.

105 What they claim to be their Scripture. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

106 They were so audacious because of this claim. (al-Sa‘dī)

﴿81﴾ Nay, but whoever commits a foul deed and is surrounded by his sin<sup>(107)</sup>, will be 'among' the company of the Fire, forever they abide therein. ﴿82﴾ 'But' Those who Believe and do good deeds are the company of Paradise, forever they abide therein.

﴿83﴾ 'Mention' When We took the pledge of the Children of Israel that: you should worship none but Allah; be kind to your parents, relatives, orphans and the needy; speak nicely to people; and keep up Prayer and give out the prescribed alms; then you turned away – save a few of you – paying no heed. ﴿84﴾ 'Remember' When We took your pledge that: you should not shed one another's blood and that you should not expel one another out of your lands; then you vowed bearing witness to it! ﴿85﴾ After 'all' this, here you are killing one another and driving a group of you out of their lands, rallying against them unjustly and out of aggression. 'But' When they come to you as captives, you ransom them, while driving them out 'in the first place' is forbidden for you. Do you Believe in parts of the Book and Deny others?<sup>(108)</sup>

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ  
فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨١﴾  
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ  
أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ  
إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ  
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ  
حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ  
ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ  
مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ  
دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تَخْرُجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِكُمْ  
ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْشَهُدُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ  
هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَخْرُجُونَ  
فَرِيقًا مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ دِيَارِهِمْ تَظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِم  
بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِن يَأْتُوكُمْ أُسْرَىٰ  
تَفْدُوهُمْ وَهُمْ هُمْ مَحْرُورٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ  
أَقْتَرُمْونَ بَعْضُ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ

107 *Ahāṭat bihi khaṭī'atuhu* 'surrounded by his sin', is, in other words, immersed in sin.

108 There were three Jewish tribes who allied themselves with the two paganistic Arab tribes of Madinah before Islam, falling, thus, into two

What then will be the punishment of who does this, but abasement in this worldly life, and in the Hereafter they will be consigned to the harshest of Punishments? Allah is not unaware of what you commit. ﴿86﴾ Those are the ones who exchanged the Hereafter for this worldly life<sup>(109)</sup>; because of this their Punishment will not be alleviated nor will they be aided.

﴿87﴾ We gave Moses the Book<sup>(110)</sup> and sent Messengers after him in succession<sup>(111)</sup>; and gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear evidences<sup>(112)</sup> and aided him with the Holy Spirit<sup>(113)</sup>. Is it not so that whenever a Messenger comes to you with

فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَرَوْا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ فَلَا يَخَفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ

rivalling parties. On the one hand, there were the Jewish Banū Qaynuqā‘ the allies of the Arab tribe of al-Khazraj and, on the other, there were Banū al-Naḍīr and Banū Qurayzah who took sides with the Arab tribe of al-Aws. In their infamous prolonged feuds, the Jewish clans fought alongside their allies against their brethren knowing what the Torah says about killing one another and driving one another out of the land. Even when arms were laid aside, they would ransom one another. Thus this Divine admonition. (al-Sa‘dī)

109 *al-Ḥayāt al-Dunyā*, translated as worldly life, literally means, the lower/close/nearly life, in comparison with *al-Ḥayāt al-Ākhirah* (lit. the last/final/ultimate life), i.e. the Hereafter. This comparison is always present in the Qur’an. Whereas living merely for this lowly, worldly-life is strongly condemned, seeking the reward of the loftier Hereafter is, by contrast, highly commended.

110 The Torah.

111 Cf. 5: 44.

112 These are the miracles that Jesus performed (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī), which are spelled out in 3: 49 and 5: 110.

113 *Rūḥ al-Qudus* (lit. the Sanctified Spirit) is Angel Gabriel (جبرائيل). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

what you do not like you become disdainful, Denying some 'of them' and killing others? <sup>(88)</sup> They said: "Our hearts are encased"<sup>(114)</sup>. Nay but Allah Damned them for their Denial, so little do they Believe. <sup>(89)</sup> When a Book<sup>(115)</sup> came to them from Allah confirming what they already have; 'while' before it they used to invoke "Divine" assistance<sup>(116)</sup> over those who Deny, still when what they knew came to them, they Denied it. Allah's Damnation is on the Deniers. <sup>(90)</sup> Meagre is the price for which they sold themselves that they Deny what Allah sent down out of envy that Allah should send this favour on whomever He wills among His servants. They have thus deserved Wrath upon Wrath<sup>(117)</sup>—the Deniers' is a humiliating Punishment.

بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰٓ أَنفُسُكُمْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِقْنَا  
كَذَّبْتُمْ وَفَرِيقًا تَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا  
غُلْفٌ ۚ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا  
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ  
عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا مِن  
قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا  
جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى  
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ بِسْمَا الشُّرُوبِ ۚ أَنفُسُهُمْ  
أَن يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ بَغْيًا ۖ أَن يُنَزَّلَ اللَّهُ  
مِن فَضْلِهِ ۚ عَلَىٰ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۗ  
فَبَأَوْ بِعَضْبٍ عَلَىٰ عَضْبٍ ۖ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ  
عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

114 *Ghulf*, wrapped in a cover, alternatively means "uncircumcised", a term which is often used in the Bible: Leviticus 26: 41, Jeremiah 9: 26, Ezekiel 44: 7.

115 The Qur'an.

116 The Jews used to seek victory over the Arabs in expectance of the coming Prophet whom they knew of from the Torah. They knew that his coming was imminent, so, at times of war and fighting, they would pray: "O God! Send this Prophet about whom we find in the Torah so that our enemies may suffer and be killed at his hands". When God sent Muhammad (ﷺ) and they realized that he was not one of them, they Denied him out of envy of the Arabs of whom the Prophet was one. Yet, they knew all too well that he was the one mentioned in the Torah. (al-Ṭabarī)

117 They deserved God's double Wrath firstly for their earlier rebelliousness and then for Denying Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah)



﴿91﴾ When it is said to them: “Believe in what Allah has sent down”<sup>(118)</sup>, they say: “We ‘only’ Believe in what has been sent down to us”. And they Deny what came after it<sup>(119)</sup> when it is, indeed, the Truth confirming what is already with them. Say ‘to them’: “Why would you then kill the Prophets of Allah earlier, if you are ‘truly’ Believers?”<sup>(120)</sup>

﴿92﴾ Indeed Moses came to you with clear evidences<sup>(121)</sup>, then you took ‘to worshipping’ the calf<sup>(122)</sup> after him<sup>(123)</sup>—you are indeed unjust.

﴿93﴾ ‘Remember’ When We took your pledge and raised the mountain above you: “Hold fast to what We have given you and be heedful!” They said: “We listen and we disobey”. The ‘love of the’ calf was made to seep into their hearts because of their Denial. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Vile it is what your Belief commands you to do, if you were truly Believers”.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا تَوْمِنُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ \* وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَسْمِعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ لِيَسْمَأَيَا مَرْكُم بِهِ إِيمَانُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

118 The Qur’an.

119 What was revealed after the Torah.

120 This rhetorical question is meant to emphasize how flagrantly in the wrong they were, claiming that they were fulfilling the dictates of the Torah, while unjustly killing their Prophets (cf. NT: Matthew 23:37) when, in fact, these Prophets only came to them with a confirmation of the Torah, which itself forbids killing God’s Messengers. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’adī)

121 Moses’ miracles. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

122 Cf. 2: 51.

123 While he was away.

﴿94﴾ Say: “If the Last Abode<sup>(124)</sup> with Allah was yours exclusively of all the people<sup>(125)</sup>, then wish for death, if you were truly sincere”.  
 ﴿95﴾ For sure they will not ever wish for it, for what their hands have sent forth<sup>(126)</sup>; Allah is fully aware of the evildoers. ﴿96﴾ You are sure to find them the keenest on a life<sup>(127)</sup> of all people, even more so than the Associators<sup>(128)</sup>. Each of them wishes he could live a thousand years; ‘but’ that ‘he lives such a long life’ will not budge him away from Punishment—Allah is All-Seeing of what they do.

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوْا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوْهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾  
 وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاتِهِمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُرْحَزِحِهِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ يُعَمَّرَ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

﴿97﴾ Say whoever is an enemy to Gabriel<sup>(129)</sup> when he brought it ‘the

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ

124 al-Jannah (Paradise).

125 Reference is made here to the false belief that only either the Jews or the Christians will enter Paradise; cf. 2: 111 below.

126 They are in fear of what they have done and dread that the sins they have committed will be accounted for on the Day of Reckoning. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭṭiyah)

127 The Qur’an uses the unqualified *ḥayāt*, life, to emphasize their keenness on being alive and their aversion to death, irrespective of the quality of the life that they are so eager to lead (cf. al-Tawḥīdī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

128 Although they are told of life after death and what awaits the real servants of God in their Scriptures, they are keener on living longer in this life than even those who do not Believe in the Hereafter, i.e. *al-Mushrikīn*, those who Associate other deities in worship of God, i.e. the idolaters who were not privileged with a revealed Scripture). (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn)

129 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The Jews came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and they said: “Abū al-Qāsim, we will ask you about five things, if you tell us about them we will know that you are a Prophet and we will follow you”. ‘After asking about four things’, They said: “There only remains one matter, if you tell us about it, we will swear allegiance to you and that is: no Prophet was ever sent without him assigned an angel who brings him the news, who

Qur'an down to your heart with Allah's permission<sup>(130)</sup>; confirming what preceded it<sup>(131)</sup>, guidance and glad tidings to the Believers. <sup>98</sup> Whoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, Messengers, Gabriel and Michael, then Allah is an enemy to the Deniers. <sup>99</sup> We have sent down to you clear Signs<sup>(132)</sup>, none rebuffs them except the rebellious. <sup>100</sup> Incredulous it is that whenever they make a pledge, a group of them cast it away—indeed most of them do not Believe. <sup>101</sup> When a Messenger from Allah<sup>(133)</sup> came confirming what was with them, a group of those who were given the Book threw the Book of Allah behind their backs as if they did not know 'better'. <sup>102</sup> 'Instead' They followed what the devils used to recite during Solomon's reign<sup>(134)</sup>.

عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾ مَنْ كَانَتْ عَدَاؤًا لِلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ أَوْ كَلَّمَآءَ عَاهِدُوا عَهْدًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَفَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ بَلَّ أَكْثَرُھُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَأَتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكٍ سُلَيْمَانَ ﴿١٠٢﴾

is yours? He (ﷺ) replied: "Gabriel, may peace be upon him". They said: "Gabriel! He who comes with war, fighting and torment! He is our enemy! If you said Michael who comes with mercy, plantation and rain, we would have Believed in you". "Allah then revealed this aya". (al-Tirmidhī: 2117, Imām Aḥmad: 2483)

130 Gabriel did not bring the Qur'an down of his own accord but was sent by God Himself. This is reason enough to reject their poor excuse.

131 That it confirmed what is in their Scripture was enough evidence for them, had their hearts been more accepting of the Truth.

132 The Qur'an containing enough Signs for those who really seek Guidance. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

133 Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

134 These are the magical incantations that the devils used to mumble during the time of Solomon (ﷺ). After his death, the devils brought them out to people claiming that Solomon owed his great powers to them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

Solomon did not Deny<sup>(135)</sup> but the devils did, teaching people magic; and 'they also followed' what was brought down to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, in Babylon. The two would not teach anyone 'magic' unless they say: "Be warned! We are but a test 'of Faith', do not, then, Deny!" They learn from them that with which they cause divisions between a man and his wife<sup>(136)</sup>; 'yet' they will not harm anyone with it unless Allah wills. They only learn that with which they harm themselves and is of no use to them. They know that whoever buys this has no share in the Hereafter. Wretched it is what they sold themselves for, if only but they 'truly' knew. ﴿103﴾ Had they Believed and were Mindful, their reward from Allah would have been better 'for them', if only but they 'truly' knew.

وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمٰنُ وَاٰلِهٖنَّ السَّيِّطٰتِ  
 كَفَرُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ النَّاسَ السَّحْرَ وَاَنْزَلَ  
 عَلٰى الْمَلٰٓئِكِیْنِ هٰرُوْتَ وَاَمْرُوْتَ وَاَمَّا  
 يُعَلِّمٰنِ مِنْ اٰحَدٍ حَتّٰی یَقُوْلَا اِنَّمَا نَحْنُ  
 فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا تَكْفُرْ فَيَتَعَلَّمُوْنَ مِنْهُمَا  
 مَا یُفْرِقُوْنَ بَیْهٖ بَیْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَرَوْجِهٖٓ وَاَمَّا هُم  
 بِضَآرَتِیْنِ بَیْهٖ مِنْ اَحَدٍ اِلَّا یَاذِبُ اللّٰهُ  
 وَیَتَعَلَّمُوْنَ مَا یُضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا یَنۢفَعُهُمْ وَاَلَقَدۡ  
 عَلَّمُوْا لِمَنْ اَشْرٰتُهٗ مَا لَهٗ فِی الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ  
 حَاقٍ وَّلَیْسَ مَا شَرُّوْا بِهٖۤ اَنْفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوْا  
 یَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۳﴾ وَاَلَوْ اَنَّهٗمْ اٰمَنُوْا وَاَتَّقَوْا لَمَتُّوْۤا  
 مِّنۢ عَلَمٍ اِلَّا خَیْرٌ لَّوْ كَانُوْا یَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۴﴾

135 Engagement in magic is an act of Denial, because it defies God's will and its sheer foulness flies in the face of true Belief. Such a practice is not becoming of a most-dignified Prophet of God, as claimed by some here (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

136 Causing domestic discord is singled out here because of its gravity, carrying as it does the seed of social decay. Jābir Ibn 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Satan sets his throne upon water and sends out his troops. The closest to him will be the person who causes the most sedition. One of them will come to him and report: "I did this and that". Satan will reply: "You did nothing!" Then another will come forward and say: "I did not leave him 'the husband' until I caused him to leave his wife". Then Satan draws him close and says: "Well done you!" (Muslim: 2813)

﴿104﴾ Believers! Do not say: “*Rā’inā*”, but say: “*Unẓurnā*”<sup>(137)</sup>, and listen<sup>(138)</sup>; the Deniers’ is a painful Punishment. ﴿105﴾ The Deniers among the people of the Book and the Associators do not wish that any good comes down to you from your Lord; Allah specifically favours whomever He wills with His Mercy—Allah is the Owner of bountiful Grace<sup>(139)</sup>. ﴿106﴾ Whatever Sign<sup>(140)</sup> We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We replace it with one which is better or equal to it. Did you not know that Allah has power over everything? ﴿107﴾ Did you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth<sup>(141)</sup>, and that you have no ally or helper<sup>(142)</sup> beside Allah?

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رِعْسًا وَقُولُوا  
 أَنْظِرْنَا وَأَسْمَعُوا وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ  
 أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٤﴾ مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ  
 الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
 مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ  
 بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ  
 الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٠٥﴾ مَا نَسَخَ مِنْ ءَايَةٍ أَوْ نَسِهَا  
 نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ  
 اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ  
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٠٦﴾

137 One word for seeking the Prophet’s permission, i.e. *rā’inā* (bear with us), is replaced by another, i.e. *unẓurnā* (grant us repose), as *rā’inā* can be twisted and used derogatorily to mean something inappropriate (from *ru’ūnah*, foolishness). The Qur’an (4: 46) explains how the Jews of Madinah used to address the Prophet by subtly twisting their tongues when uttering *rā’inā* to mean: “You are foolish” (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī).

138 Believers are commanded to listen to the Prophet (ﷺ) with the pure intention of obedience. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah)

139 Cf. 4: 113.

140 Aya.

141 Since God is the Sovereign Owner of all creation, He has the undisputed right to make lawful or unlawful whatever He wills (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī). Thus, He abrogates certain rulings and replaces them with others, but being infinitely Fair and Wise, He replaces these with the likes of them or even better ones.

142 None has the power to confer goodness and drive away harm except Almighty God. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī)

﴿108﴾ Or do you want to ask of your Messenger something similar to what Moses was asked before<sup>(143)</sup>; whoever replaces Belief with Denial, indeed has strayed from the right path. ﴿109﴾ Many among the people of the Book wish that they could turn you away from your Belief into Denial out of selfish envy after the Truth has become clear to them. Forgive and overlook until Allah comes with His command<sup>(144)</sup>; indeed Allah has power over everything. ﴿110﴾ Keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms. Whatever good you send forth for yourselves, you will find it with Allah<sup>(145)</sup>; indeed Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.

﴿111﴾ They said: “None will enter Paradise but those who are Jews or Christians”. Those are their ‘vain’ wishes. Say to them: “Produce your proof if you are truthful!” ﴿112﴾ Nay! Whoever submits his face<sup>(146)</sup> to Allah and is a doer of good,

أَمْ تُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سَأَلَ  
 مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ  
 فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْ  
 أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِن بَعْدِ  
 إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفْرًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ  
 أَنفُسِهِمْ ۖ بَعْدَ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ ۗ  
 فَاعْفُوا وَاصْفَحُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ ۗ إِنَّ  
 اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا  
 الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ  
 مِن خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ  
 بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ  
 هُودًا أَوْ نَصْرًا ۗ تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا  
 بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ بَلَىٰ  
 مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ

143 These questions are not asked to gain insight and wisdom but are rather intended to emphasize the Prophet’s powerlessness. Examples of these are detailed in 4: 153 and 17: 89-93.

144 To bring about His ruling regarding them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

145 Believers are commanded to turn their attention away from these squabbles and concentrate on matters that are more rewarding and ascertaining of Faith. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

146 That is devoting oneself wholly to God. The face is synecdochically mentioned in place of the whole self because it is the most dignified of all human body parts. (al-Ṭabarī)

he will have his reward with his Lord; they will have neither fear nor will they grieve. <sup>(113)</sup> The Jews said: “The Christians have no ground”<sup>(147)</sup>; the Christians said: “The Jews have no ground”; even though they read the Book<sup>(148)</sup>. The same was said by those who have no knowledge; Allah will judge between them concerning what they dispute over on the Day of Judgement.

<sup>(114)</sup> Who is more unjust than one who prohibits mentioning Allah’s Name in places of worship dedicated to Him and who strives hard for their desolation?<sup>(149)</sup> These are not to enter them ‘places of worship’ except in a state of fear<sup>(150)</sup>. Theirs in the worldly life is disgrace and theirs in the Hereafter a great Punishment.

فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتْ  
الَّذِينَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى لَيْسَتْ  
الْيَهُودُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتَّبِعُونَ الْكُتُبَ  
كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ  
فَاللَّهُ يَكْفُرُ بِهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا  
فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذْكَرَ  
فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ مَا كَانَ  
لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا  
خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾

147 That is, their religion is baseless. Ibn Abū Hātim documents in his *Tafsīr* that Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When the Christians of Najrān came to the Messenger of God (ﷺ), the rabbis met them and both parties disputed in the Messenger’s (ﷺ) presence. Rāfi‘ Ibn Ḥuraymilah ‘a Jewish rabbi’ said: “You ‘Christians’ have no ground whatsoever!” He Denied Jesus and the Evangel! A Najranian said: “You have no ground whatsoever!” He Denied both the Prophethood of Moses and the Torah!”

148 Each party reads their respective revealed Books, i.e. the Torah, which foretells the good news of the coming of Jesus (ﷺ) and the Evangel which tells them the truth about Moses (ﷺ) and the Torah. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr)

149 al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn ‘Āshūr are of the opinion that the ones who are meant by this are the pagans of Makkah who drove the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions from the Sanctuary and dedicated it to idol worshipping: thus, the ‘desolation’ of the place of worship (*masjid*). Some Qur’anic ayas (8: 34 and 48: 25) allude to the actions of the pagans regarding prohibiting Muslims from worshiping God in the same terms.

150 God decrees here that the just punishment of those who commit such a vile act is that they will only enter places of worship in a state of fear and trepidation expecting Divine justice will be exacted on them or that the Believers will seize them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿115﴾ To Allah belong the East and the West, wherever you turn, you will find Allah’s Face—Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Knowing<sup>(151)</sup>.  
 ﴿116﴾ They said: “Allah has taken to Himself a child”<sup>(152)</sup>. *Glory be to Him!*<sup>(153)</sup> Nay! But all that is in the Heavens and the Earth are His, they are all submitting to Him<sup>(154)</sup>. ﴿117﴾ ‘He is’ The ‘Masterful’ Originator of the Heavens and Earth, when He decrees something He says only: “Be!”<sup>(155)</sup> and it is.

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَشَرَّ وَجْهٍ  
 اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَالِمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ  
 وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهُ ۚ بَلْ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ  
 وَالْاَرْضِ كُلُّ لَهٗ رَقِيبٌ ﴿١١٦﴾ يَدْبِعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ  
 وَالْاَرْضِ وَاِذَا قَضٰى اٰمْرًا فَاِنَّمَّا يَقُوْلُ لَهٗ  
 كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿١١٧﴾

- 151 This is by way of consolation to the Believers who had been persecuted and prevented from performing their right to worship—that the whole world belongs to God and one can find Him wherever one turns.
- 152 This claim is made by the Jews when they said that Ezra was the son of God, the Christians when they said that Jesus was the son of God (cf. 9: 30) and the Arab pagans who claimed that the angels were God’s daughters (cf. 16: 57 and 43: 19) (Ibn Kathīr). The claim that God has a son - or offspring - is rebuffed as horribly macabre recurrently in the Qur’an (cf. 10-68-69, 4:171 and 25: 1-2) because a son is his father’s like and equal. Such qualities are not becoming of Almighty God, the Absolute Sovereign, for whom no one can be alike (cf. 6: 100-101).
- 153 *Sunhānahu* (lit. *Glorified be Him!*) is used here as an emotionally charged interjection that highlights how unbecoming what they claim of God is.
- 154 *Qāniṭūn*, translated here as ‘submitting’, has the much wider meaning that all of God’s creation, particularly those endowed with free will, are servants of His, over whom He has total control and that they are all subject to Divine canons and rules of existence (being ever needful, getting old and dying) whether they are willing to admit them or not. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 155 God’s Absolute Power is highlighted here. The realization of His Will and His Ability to create are carried out by this two-lettered command, (*Be!*) (cf. 3: 47 and 59, 19: 34-35, 36: 81-82). The Possessor of such power has no need for procreation (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).



﴿118﴾ Those who have no knowledge<sup>(156)</sup> also said: “If only Allah would talk to us or a Sign would come to us”. The same was said by those who came before them; their hearts are alike<sup>(157)</sup>. We have made the Signs clear to those who firmly Believe<sup>(158)</sup>.

﴿119﴾ We have sent you ‘Muhammad’ with the Truth, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; and you will not be asked about the company of Hellfire.<sup>(159)</sup>

﴿120﴾ Neither the Jews nor the Christians will ever be pleased with you unless you follow their religion<sup>(160)</sup>; say: “It is Guidance from Allah that is the ‘true’ Guidance”.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَبَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٩﴾

وَلَنْ تَرْضَى عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَى حَتَّى تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنْ هَدَى اللَّهُ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ

156 These are Arab pagans, elsewhere called ‘the illiterates’ (cf. 3: 20). (Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

157 The hearts of the Deniers of the Message are alike. The three examples of acts of Denial, spelled out in Ayas 114-119, i.e. persecuting Believers and denying them their right of worship, claiming that God has an offspring and toyingly asking their Prophets for proofs and miracles without seriously intending to Believe in them (for more of this cf. 6: 124, 17: 90-93), are meant to show that Deniers, old and new, ignorant or having a revealed Book that should guide them to the Truth, are one and the same. Their driving forces and motives are similar (cf. 51: 52-53).

158 If a person’s heart is smitten with the disease of Denial it shows through their actions irrespective of all other considerations. Conversely, those who open up their hearts to the Truth will find ample evidence for it.

159 That is you Prophet will not be responsible for what becomes of them after you have delivered the Message to them (cf. 3: 20-21). God is consoling Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and assuring him of the Truthfulness of his Message in the face of the fierce war he and his followers were facing on all these fronts.

160 Because every party sees itself as the sole possessor of the Truth. Thus, they did not open up to the Truth and follow God’s Guidance.

If you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, there will not be a guardian or protector for you from Allah. ﴿121﴾ Those to whom We have given the Book recite it as it should be recited<sup>(161)</sup>; these Believe in it, however those who Deny it are the losers.

﴿122﴾ Children of Israel! Remember My Favour which I blessed you with and that I privileged you with over all people<sup>(162)</sup>. ﴿123﴾ Be Mindful of a Day on which no soul will be of use to another<sup>(163)</sup>; neither ransom will be accepted from it<sup>(164)</sup> nor intercession of use to it<sup>(165)</sup>, and they 'the Deniers' will not be helped<sup>(166)</sup>.

﴿124﴾ 'Mention Muhammad'<sup>(167)</sup> When Ibrāhīm 'Abraham' was tested by his Lord by certain

وَلِينَ اتَّبَعَتْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وِليٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٢١﴾  
الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

يٰٓبَنِي إِسْرٰٓءِيْلَ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَتِي الَّتِي اَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ وَاِنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلٰى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَاَتَقُوا يَوْمَآ لَا تَجْزٰٓى نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا ۗ وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا تَنْفَعُهَا شَفَاعَةٌ ۗ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

\* وَإِذْ ابْتَلٰٓى اِبْرٰٓهٖمَ رَبُّهُ ۙ

161 The People of the Book are encouraged to follow their original uncorrupted Books unquestioningly without Denying all or parts of them, particularly those aspects that speak about the coming of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. 5: 68, 7: 157, 28: 52-53).

162 Cf. 5: 20, 44: 32.

163 Cf. 31: 33.

164 Cf. 3: 91, 5: 36, 6: 70 and 57: 15.

165 Cf. 26: 100-101, 74: 48. The rejection of intercession on the Day of Judgement only applies to Deniers. It will be accepted on behalf of a Believer provided God grants such permission and He is pleased with the person on behalf of whom it takes place (cf. 53: 26; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

166 No one will be able to save them from God's Punishment (cf. 36: 25-26, 46: 28 and 53: 26; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

167 Of a related nature to what precedes this. What comes next is the accurate account of the origin and reality of the Abrahamic creed and, by extension, so-called 'Abrahamic religions'.

words<sup>(168)</sup> which he fulfilled. He ‘The Lord’ said: “I will make you a leader<sup>(169)</sup> to humanity”. He ‘Ibrāhīm’ said: “And my posterity ‘too’?” He said: “My promise does not include the unjust”.<sup>﴿125﴾</sup> ‘Mention Muhammad’ And when We made the House<sup>(170)</sup> a repeatedly-visited, safe haven for people—and make Ibrāhīm’s standing-stone<sup>(171)</sup> a place for Prayer. We commanded Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘il ‘Ishmael’: “That you should purify<sup>(172)</sup> My House

بِكَيْمَتٍ فَأَتَيْنَهُنَّ قَالَ إِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ إِمَامًا  
قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي قَالَ لَا يَنْتَهِ عَهْدِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾  
وَأَدْجَعْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْنًا وَاتَّخِذُوا  
مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى وَعَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنَّ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِي

- 168 The Lord assigned some tasks and commandments for Abraham (ﷺ) to carry out, which he did dutifully without hesitation or delay (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Exemplary of which is the following commandment to Abraham and Ishmael to set the foundations of the Ka‘bah and to make ready the Holy Sanctuary in Bakkah (Makkah) for God’s worship.
- 169 God rewarded Abraham (ﷺ) for his devoutness by granting him the highest of all honours, making him an *Imām* (leader) to all humanity and an example to be followed by those who seek God’s Pleasure.
- 170 The Holy Sanctuary in Makkah (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī); the central symbol of pristine Faith.
- 171 *Maqām Ibrāhīm* is the stone on which Abraham (ﷺ) stood while building the Ka‘bah. The commandment here enjoins Believers to Pray at that place; it is an everlasting Sign and evidence to all people of the relatedness of the religion of Islam to Abraham’s creed, *Islām*, the most pristine of all religions. Jābir Ibn ‘Abdīllah (رضي الله عنه) narrated in a lengthy Ḥadīth that the Prophet (ﷺ): “Headed to *maqām Ibrāhīm* and recited the aya: “...and make *Ibrāhīm*’s standing-stone a place for Prayer”. He (ﷺ) placed himself behind the *maqām* making it come between himself and the Ka‘bah. ‘And then he Prayed two *rak‘ahs*’ reading in the first: *qul huwa Allāh-u aḥad* (“Say: He is God, Unique.”) and in the second: *qul yā ayuha al-kāfirūn* (“Say: You Deniers!”). (Muslim: 1218)
- 172 They were commanded to purify it from all sorts of impurities, physical and spiritual, such as idols, and to build it with pure intention, devoting it wholly to God. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

for those who circumambulate, and those who keep retreat<sup>(173)</sup>, those who bow down and prostrate themselves ‘in Prayer’”.  
 ﴿126﴾ ‘Mention Muhammad’ When Ibrāhīm said: “My Lord! Make this town<sup>(174)</sup> safe and provide its people with ‘all sorts of’ produce<sup>(175)</sup>, ‘especially’ those of whom Believe in Allah and the Last Day”. He ‘Allah’ said: “As for those who Deny, I will make them enjoy a little<sup>(176)</sup> and then force them into the Punishment of Hellfire—miserable is their destination!”  
 ﴿127﴾ ‘Mention Muhammad’ While Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl were raising the foundations of the House<sup>(177)</sup> ‘they prayed’: “Our Lord, accept ‘this’ from us; You are the All-Hearing the All-Knowing”<sup>(178)</sup>.

لِلصَّالِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ  
 إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ  
 أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
 الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ  
 إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ  
 إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا  
 تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٧﴾

173 *al-‘ākiḥīn* are those who dedicate part of their time to worship, shunning engagement in worldly affairs during this time.

174 Bakkah/Makkah. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

175 Cf. 28: 57. Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Ibrāhīm sanctified Makkah and prayed for it and I sanctified Madinah as much as Ibrāhīm sanctified Makkah, and I prayed for it ‘a blessing in its produce measuring instruments of ‘*mudd* and *ṣā’* twice as much as Ibrāhīm asked for Makkah”. (al-Bukhārī: 2129)

176 Granted that even the Deniers will also be provided for by God in this life, but theirs is only a transitory enjoyment which, no matter how great it might seem, is dwarfed by comparison to the everlasting provision and reward for Believers in Paradise (cf. 31: 23-24, 47: 12; al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī).

177 Ibn ‘Aṭīyah relates in his *Tafsīr* the consensus that *al-Bayt* (The House) here is the Ka‘bah itself. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

178 They chanted this supplication while building the Ka‘bah (cf. al-Bukhārī: 3364).

﴿128﴾ “Our Lord make us wholly submitting<sup>(179)</sup> to you and from our posterity a nation wholly submitted to you, show<sup>(180)</sup> us our rites<sup>(181)</sup> and accept our repentance; You are the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”. ﴿129﴾ “Our Lord send them<sup>(182)</sup> a Messenger<sup>(183)</sup> from among them to recite Your Signs<sup>(184)</sup> to them, teach them the Book<sup>(185)</sup> and Wisdom<sup>(186)</sup> and purify<sup>(187)</sup> them; You are the All-Prevailing the All-Wise”. ﴿130﴾ None would forsake the creed of Ibrāhīm<sup>(188)</sup> except one who fools himself.

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً  
مُّسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ  
التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٨﴾ رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا  
مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ  
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ  
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَمَنْ يَرْغَبْ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ

179 *Muslimayn* (dual form of *muslim*), i.e. both of us totally submitted to God. Total submission to God and devotion to Him in worship is the basic meaning of *Islām*. All Prophets were ‘Muslim’ in as much as they were wholly devoted to God and sincerely submitted to Him in worship according to their own respective creeds. Needless to say, after Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent to mankind no other religion except Islam is accepted from anyone (cf. 3: 85).

180 Guide and teach us how to perform our rites correctly.

181 These are the rites of Hajj in particular. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

182 The submitting nation from among the posterity of Abraham and Ishmael.

183 The Messenger is Muhammad (ﷺ). This is further explained in 62: 2. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Atīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī)

184 Ayas of the Qur’an (lit. Signs).

185 Teach them the interpretation and rulings of the Qur’an. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

186 Exegetes differed as to the exact meaning of *ḥikmah*, translated here as Wisdom, but al-Ṭabarī concludes that it means knowledge of God’s commands which are not known except by the explanation of the Messenger (ﷺ). That is the Prophet’s (ﷺ) Sunnah and oral traditions, Hadiths.

187 Make them more devout to God and free from Associating others in worship with Him. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Atīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī)

188 The ‘creed of Ibrāhīm’, *millata Ibrāhīm*, known as *ḥanīfiyyah*, is the most primordial, pristine, uncorrupted precursor to all heavenly-revealed religions. The Qur’an underlines Islam’s close relation to it in various places: 2: 35, 4: 125, 6: 161 and 16: 123.

We have chosen him in the worldly life and in the Hereafter<sup>(189)</sup> he is one of the Righteous<sup>(190)</sup>. ﴿131﴾ ‘Because’ As soon as His Lord said to him: “submit!”<sup>(191)</sup> he said: “I submit to the Lord of all beings”. ﴿132﴾ With this Ibrāhīm and Ya‘qūb ‘Jacob’<sup>(192)</sup> enjoined their sons: “My sons! Allah has chosen this religion for you, so die not without being devoutly submitted”. ﴿133﴾ Or were you<sup>(193)</sup> present when death came upon Ya‘qūb? When he said to his sons: “What will you worship after me?” They said: “We will worship your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers, Ibrāhīm, Ismā‘īl<sup>(194)</sup> and Ishāq ‘Isaac’, a one ‘and only’ Lord; we have submitted to Him”. ﴿134﴾ That nation passed away; it earned what it has earned and yours is what you earn. You will not be answerable for what they used to do<sup>(195)</sup>.

وَلَقَدْ أَصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ  
لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ  
أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَوَصَّى بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ  
بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يٰبَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمْ  
الْدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾  
أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ إِذْ  
قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ  
إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ  
وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾  
تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلكُمْ مَا  
كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْنَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

189 The lofty status in which Prophet Abraham (ﷺ) is held in the Qur’an and the relatedness of Islam with his creed is further expounded in: 16: 12-123.

190 *Aṣ-Ṣāliḥūn* are God’s Prophets and Messengers, who hold the highest ranks in Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

191 Unconditional submission and utter surrender to God’s Will capture the essence of *ḥanīfiyyah*. This word (*Islām*) was bequeathed to Abraham’s posterity forever so that they might remain true to it (cf. 43: 26-28).

192 Jacob, the forefather of the Israelites, also known as Israel, was the son of Isaac, Abraham’s son. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

193 The direct addressees were the Jews of Madinah who Denied Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ) Messengership. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

194 Ishmael was actually Jacob’s paternal uncle. They counted him among Jacob’s ‘fathers’ out of respect.

195 Although the People of the Book are reminded of the true faith of their patriarchs, they are also cautioned not to be boastful about it and to do

﴿135﴾ They said: “Become Jews or Christian, and you will be guided”. Say: “Nay, but ‘we follow’ the creed of Ibrāhīm, rightly oriented<sup>(196)</sup>, and he was not one of the Associators”. ﴿136﴾ Say: “We Believe in Allah, and what came down to us, and what came down to Ibrāhīm, Ismā‘il, Ishāq ‘Isaac’, Ya‘qūb ‘Jacob’ and the Tribes<sup>(197)</sup>, and what Musā and ‘Isā ‘Jesus’ were given, and what the Prophets were given from their Lord<sup>(198)</sup>. We do not distinguish between any of them<sup>(199)</sup> and we are ‘ever’ submitting<sup>(200)</sup> to Him”.

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾  
 قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ  
 إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ  
 وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ  
 النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ  
 وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

some soul searching by asking themselves the difficult question of how far removed they are from the essence of real surrender to God’s Will (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

- 196 This is the translation of *ḥanīf*. *Ḥanīfiyyah* is the religion of Ibrāhīm. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-Arīb*). Abraham, who is the example set for humanity for those who seek to find the right path of God (cf. 2: 124), was neither a Jew nor a Christian (cf. 3: 67).
- 197 *al-Asbāt*, the Tribes, are the Prophets from among the twelve sons of Jacob, i.e. Yūsuf (Joseph) and his brothers, twelve men in all and their posterity, particularly the Prophets, who held on to their path. *Sibī* means grandson (al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*), and here they are taken to be branches of the same tree.
- 198 This is the ultimate declaration of the Truth of the Faith of Muslims—they Believe in the Truthfulness of earlier Prophets and Messages in their pristine, uncorrupted forms without favouring one over another.
- 199 The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Prophets are half-brothers. Their mothers are different but their religion is the same”. (al-Bukhārī: 3211)
- 200 *Muslimūn*, meaning submitted to God alone, both internally and outwardly, and being totally devoted to His worship and subservient to His Will. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿137﴾ 'So' If they Believe in what you have Believed in, then they have become guided, but if they turn away then they are in an opposing league 'to yours'. Allah will suffice you 'for defence' against them—He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. ﴿138﴾ This is the colour<sup>(201)</sup> of Allah; whose colouring is better than that of Allah? We are 'ever' worshipping Him. ﴿139﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Do you argue with us regarding Allah, when He is our Lord and yours. Ours are our deeds and yours are your deeds<sup>(202)</sup>. We are 'ever' devoted to Him". ﴿140﴾ Or do you 'yet' claim that Ibrāhīm, Ismā'īl, Ishāq, Ya'qūb and the Tribes were either Jews or Christians?<sup>(203)</sup> Say: "Are you more knowledgeable or Allah?"<sup>(204)</sup> No one is more unfair than him who suppresses a testimony that he has from Allah<sup>(205)</sup>. Allah is not unaware of what you commit".

فَإِن آمَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا آمَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا  
وَأَن تَوَلَّوْا فَلَنَمَاهُرْ فِي شِقَاقٍ فَسَيَكْفِيكَهُمُ  
اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾ صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ  
أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً وَنَحْنُ لَهُ  
عَبِيدُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ قُلِ اتَّخَذْتُنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا  
وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَا أَعْمَلْنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ  
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ  
إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ  
وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلِ  
ءَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ أَمِ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ أَظْهَرُ مِمَّنْ كَتَبَ  
شَهَادَةَ عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا  
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

201 *Şibghah* etymologically means the 'colour' in which the servants of God are dyed. It is the religion of God, i.e. *Islām*, the rightly-oriented religion of Abraham (ﷺ). It is so called because religious devoutness shows on the person as much as a dye of a cloth shows on it (cf. al-Baghawī).

202 Every party will only be held accountable for their own deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

203 Both Judaism and Christianity were founded after the demise of these noble Prophets. How, then, can anyone claim that these Prophets were followers of their own religion? The ones who adhere more closely to their core Faith have indeed more of a claim to them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

204 Cf. 3: 65-68.

205 The suppressed testimony alluded to here is either about the true nature of the religion of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn 'Āshūr), or mention of the truthfulness of the Messengership of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that they find in their Books (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn 'Uthymīn).



﴿141﴾ That nation passed away; it earned what it has earned and yours is what you earn. You will not be answerable for what they used to do”.

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَآخَرُهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلَا تَسْأَلُونَ عَنْهَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤١﴾

﴿142﴾ The feeble-minded people<sup>(206)</sup> will say: “What turned them away from the direction of Prayer<sup>(207)</sup> they used to face?” Say: “To Allah belongs the East and the West<sup>(208)</sup>. He guides whom He wills to a straight path”<sup>(209)</sup>.

\* سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّاهُمْ عَن قِبْلَتِهِمُ الَّتِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٢﴾

206 The seismic shift of the change in the direction of Prayer from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah in Makkah is dealt with in detail in Ayas 142-150 here. During their very early Madinan days, Muslims used to face Jerusalem for Prayers in compliance with the People of the Book of Madinah, namely the Jews; this by way of placating and winning them over. Here, God is setting the scene for the criticism that was to be expected by announcing to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions that those who oppose this move are foolhardy and 'feeble-minded'. The whole truth of this trying affair is laid out before the Believers so that they know what is to come - difficulty and opposition – and that they will, thus, be prepared and stay firm.

207 *Qiblah* is the Islamic term for the direction Muslims face in their Prayers. As to the reason behind the revelation of this aya, al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The Prophet (ﷺ) Prayed towards the direction of Jerusalem for sixteen or seventeen months, but he was inclined towards Praying to the direction of the Ka'bah. Then Allah sent down: “*We have certainly seen you turning your face anxiously in the sky. We shall turn you to a direction of Prayer that you shall be satisfied with. Turn then your face to the Sanctified Mosque*” (2: 144). He then turned towards the Ka'bah, and the feeble-minded, 'the Prophet's (ﷺ) detractors', said: “What turned them away from the direction of Prayer they used to face?”” (al-Bukhārī: 399, Muslim: 525) This move marked a practical declaration of the relation of Islam to the Abrahamic creed (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Sa'dī) a return to the pristine religion of God, i.e. *Islām*. At the same time, it represented a practical announcement of Islam's break from other religions: a timely statement of intent given the essential reality that has just been given about the Truthfulness of the Abrahamic creed in the preceding ayas.

208 No direction is out of the realm of His dominion. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

209 That is guiding the Believers to the same direction of Prayer which Abraham (رضي الله عنه) used to face. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿143﴾ Thus We have made you a middle nation<sup>(210)</sup>, so that you may be witnesses over people and the Messenger be a witness over you<sup>(211)</sup>. We have made you face the direction of Prayer you used to, so that We may know he who follows the Messenger from he who turns back on his heels<sup>(212)</sup>. Indeed it<sup>(213)</sup> is heavy except for those who are guided by Allah. Allah was not to render your Belief<sup>(214)</sup> in vain; indeed Allah is Ever-Kind, Ever-Merciful to people. ﴿144﴾ We have certainly seen you turning your face 'anxiously' in the sky<sup>(215)</sup>. We shall turn you to a direction of Prayer that you shall be satisfied with. Turn then your face

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا  
شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ  
شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا  
إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يَتَّبِعُ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى  
عَقْبَيْهِ ۗ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ  
هَدَى اللَّهُ ۗ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ ۗ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرُءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ قَدْ نَرَى  
تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً  
تَرْضَاهَا ۗ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ

- 210 *Ummatan wasaṭan* (lit. a middle nation) means just and fair, taking a middle way or path of moderation in life and not inclining towards any of the extremes that border on danger (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr). Also see: 3: 110.
- 211 One interpretation of this aya is that this moderate Believing nation, will bear witness on the Day of Judgement that the Prophets and Messengers of God delivered their Messages dutifully to their nations (cf. Ibn Mājah: 4284, Imām Aḥmad: 11575). Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) will, in turn, bear witness that his nation has spoken the Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, al-Sa'dī).
- 212 A true Believer will abide by the Prophet's commands without qualms.
- 213 The change of *qiblah*.
- 214 *Īmān* (Belief) here means Prayer which was observed in obedience of the Messenger (ﷺ) by facing the first *qiblah* (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī). Naturally, the Believers, although unquestioningly obeying God's command, heavy as it was, were worried about the fate of their earlier Prayers. So God, the Ever-Kind, assures them here that these are safeguarded with Him.
- 215 The Prophet (ﷺ) was anxiously awaiting the command to change the *qiblah*. For this he used to look up at the sky expectantly. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

to the Sanctified Mosque<sup>(216)</sup>. Wherever you 'Believers' are, turn your faces towards it. Indeed those who have been given the Book know for sure that this is the Truth from their Lord<sup>(217)</sup>—Allah is not unaware of what they do. ﴿145﴾ Surely if you bring to the people of the Book every Sign, they will not follow your direction of Prayer, neither will you follow their direction of Prayer. None of you will follow each other's direction of Prayer. Surely if you follow their whims after the knowledge that came to you, indeed then you are one of the wrongdoers. ﴿146﴾ Those to whom We have given the Book know it<sup>(218)</sup> as much as they know their own children—indeed a party of them suppresses the Truth knowingly. ﴿147﴾ The Truth is from your Lord, so be not one of the doubtful. ﴿148﴾ Each have their own direction to follow, then engage in a race for good deeds. Wherever you might be, Allah will bring<sup>(219)</sup> you all—indeed Allah has power over everything<sup>(220)</sup>.

شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ  
فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا  
الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا  
اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَلَئِن آتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ  
أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ  
وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ  
بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَئِن آتَيْتَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ  
مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾  
الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ  
أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِن فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ  
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَ  
مِنَ الْمُتَمَرِّزِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ  
مُؤَيَّدَةٌ فَاصْبِرُوا لِكَيْرَاتٍ إِنَّ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ  
بِكُرِّ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٤٩﴾

216 *al-Masjid al-Harām* of Makkah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

217 Jews and Christians have it in their Books that this is the correct direction of Prayer as it is written in their Books as a sign of Muhammad's (ﷺ) Prophethood. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Atīyah, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

218 That the Ka'bah is the correct direction of Prayer. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

219 Gather.

220 Cf. 5: 48.

﴿149﴾ Wherever you 'Muhammad' set out 'on a journey' from, turn your face towards the Sanctified Mosque; this certainly is the Truth from your Lord—Allah is not unaware of what you do.

﴿150﴾ Wherever you set out from 'Muhammad' turn your face towards the Sanctified Mosque<sup>(221)</sup>; wherever you 'Believers' might be turn your faces towards it<sup>(222)</sup>, this in order that people would have no argument against you<sup>(223)</sup>, barring those who are unfair—fear them not but fear Me, so that I may perfect My Favour on you<sup>(224)</sup> and so that you may be guided<sup>(225)</sup>.

﴿151﴾ This 'favour' is like 'that of' sending among you a Messenger<sup>(226)</sup> from your own who recites Our Signs to you, purifies you,

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ قَوْلٍ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ  
الْحَرَامِ وَإِنَّهُ لِلْحَقِّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ  
عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ قَوْلٍ  
وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا  
كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ  
لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ  
فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ  
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ  
آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ

221 In the face of all the hue and cry that surrounded this new bold move, God here again assures His Messenger of the binding nature of this command (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm ad-Durar*).

222 Wherever you might be in the world, face the Ka'bah for Prayers. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

223 One of the reasons for the change of *qiblah* was so that the Jews would have no ground to argue against Believers for denouncing them; in other words, when the Muslims had initially followed their direction of Prayer. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

224 By making you stand out from all other nations with revelation of the best of religions, Islam, and making you face the Ka'bah in Makkah, the original direction of Prayers set forth in Abraham's pristine creed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr).

225 Being guided by God in this life is the fruit of one's obedience to Him.

226 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). This is in response to Abraham's (عليه السلام) Prayer, cf. 2: 129. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī)

teaches you the Book and Wisdom<sup>(227)</sup>, and teaches you that which you did not know<sup>(228)</sup>. ﴿152﴾ Remember Me<sup>(229)</sup> and I shall remember You<sup>(230)</sup>; be grateful to Me and do not Deny Me.

﴿153﴾ You who Believe, seek help in patience and Prayer—indeed Allah is with<sup>(231)</sup> the patient. ﴿154﴾ Say not about those who are killed in the path of Allah<sup>(232)</sup>: “dead”; nay, they are alive but you perceive it not<sup>(233)</sup>. ﴿155﴾ We shall test<sup>(234)</sup> you with some fear, hunger and dwindling financial resources, souls and crops—deliver good tidings to those who are patient. ﴿156﴾ Those who when struck by a calamity say: “Verily to Allah we belong and to Him we shall return”<sup>(235)</sup>.

وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾ فَادْكُرُوا فِي آذَانِكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتَ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَلَيَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

- 227 The Book (*al-Kitāb*) and Wisdom (*al-Hikmah*) are the Qur'an and Sunnah respectively. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 228 News of that which they had no means of knowing, e.g.: the Unseen (*al-Ghayb*), and specifically, past and future events. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Ashūr)
- 229 Believers are encouraged to engage in the great form of worship of remembrance (*dhikr*) by way of thanking God for these favours.
- 230 God laudably mentions and showers with favour those who remember and mention Him.
- 231 Here is evidence of God's particular Companionship, *ma'īyah*, with the Believers; leading to His guidance and support.
- 232 *Fī sabīl Allāh* (lit. in the path of God) means by striking a path that is in accordance with God's ordinances. Here are meant those who met their death on the battlefield in His cause.
- 233 Cf. 3: 169-171.
- 234 As much as there are rewards and favours for Belief, there are also hardships and trials.
- 235 This remembrance, *dhikr, innā li-Allāh wa innā ilayhi rāji'un*, is at once enormous and profound (cf. Muslim: 218).

﴿157﴾ On those are Prayers<sup>(236)</sup> from their Lord and Mercy—those are the truly guided.

﴿158﴾ Certainly *Ṣafā* and *Marwah*<sup>(237)</sup> are among the Symbols<sup>(238)</sup> of Allah—whoever proceeds for the House in pilgrimage or lesser pilgrimage<sup>(239)</sup>, there is no blame for him to circulate<sup>(240)</sup> between them—“for” whoever does good voluntarily, Allah is indeed Thankful and All-Knowing.

﴿159﴾ Indeed those who suppress what We brought down of clear Signs and Guidance, after We have expounded them to people in the Book—Allah Damns<sup>(241)</sup> them and they are damned by those who damn<sup>(242)</sup>;

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

﴿١٥٨﴾ إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ  
الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ  
بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ  
عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٩﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنْ  
الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَى مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لِلنَّاسِ  
فِي الْكِتَابِ أُولَئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ  
اللَّعُونُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

236 God’s Prayers upon the Believers is praise of them and blessing them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’adī)

237 The two small mounts in the Sanctified Mosque, between which people circulate when they perform *sa’y* Hajj or ‘*umrah*.

238 *Sha’ā’ir* (lit. symbols) is the plural of *Sha’īrah*, which denotes everything that God made as a Sign for His worship (cf. al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’an*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). These two symbols are further emblematic of the relation of Islam to the creed of Abraham (ﷺ). They are mentioned in the narration of the building of the Ka’bah. Further, they are mentioned here just after hardship and trial have been talked of as a reminder of the test of Hagar’s faith between these two mounts (cf. al-Rāzī).

239 ‘*umrah* (lesser pilgrimage).

240 According to ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), the Anṣār Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) had qualms before the revelation of this aya about circulating between the two mounts (al-Bukhārī: 4495; Muslim: 1277). Further, the aya was revealed before the Muslims had gained control over Makkah and while pagans freely performed their rites in the Sanctuary.

241 *al-La’an* is casting and driving away from God’s Mercy. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Shinqīṭī)

242 These are detailed in Aya 161 below: the angels and all humans. (al-Shinqīṭī)

﴿160﴾ except those who repent and undo the harm and explain 'Allah's revealed Signs and Guidance'—those I shall forgive them, for I am the Forgiver, the Most Merciful. ﴿161﴾ Those who Deny<sup>(243)</sup> and die Denying, on them is Allah's, the angels' and all humans' damnation; ﴿162﴾ forever they last in it<sup>(244)</sup>—their Punishment will not be lightened neither will they have respite. ﴿163﴾ Your God is one God, indeed He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

﴿164﴾ Verily in the creation of the Heavens and Earth; the alternation of night and day; the vessels that run in the sea 'laden' with what benefits people; the water that Allah causes to fall from the sky to enliven the earth with it after its death and disperses therein every moving creature; the dispensing of the winds; and the harnessed clouds between the sky and Earth are Signs<sup>(245)</sup> for the heedful.

﴿165﴾ There are people who take 'for themselves' rivals to Allah<sup>(246)</sup>,

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنُّوا فَأُولَٰئِكَ  
 أَنْوَبَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾ إِنَّ  
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا أُولَٰئِكَ  
 عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾  
 خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ  
 وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ وَاللَّهُ كَرِيمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
 إِلَٰهُهُمُ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٣﴾

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ  
 اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ  
 بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ  
 مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا  
 مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ  
 الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ  
 يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِنْ  
 دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا

243 Those who go on covering up the Truth until they meet their deaths.

244 Damnation and the Fire.

245 There are two types of Signs that lead to Belief: Qur'anic Signs, ayas, and Cosmic Signs. The Signs detailed here as evidence to God's existence are indeed cosmic.

246 After living through and experiencing firsthand all these clear Signs, some people still take to worshipping false deities besides God.

whom they love as much as they love Allah—'but' the Believers are stauncher in their love for Allah<sup>(247)</sup> 'more than anything else'. Should the Transgressors 'come to' see 'the Day' when they 'actually' see Punishment<sup>(248)</sup>—'they would realize' that all power belongs to Allah and that the Punishment of Allah is severe indeed. ﴿166﴾ Then those who were followed<sup>(249)</sup> shall disown those who followed, 'when' they saw the Punishment and all means<sup>(250)</sup> were cut off from them. ﴿167﴾ Those who followed shall say: "Should we have another round, we will disown them as they disowned us"<sup>(251)</sup>; thus Allah shows them their deeds as remorse 'for them'—they shall not be let out from the Fire.

﴿168﴾ O people, eat of what is there in the Earth, lawful and good<sup>(252)</sup>, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan<sup>(253)</sup>, indeed he is an open enemy to you.

يُحِبُّوهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٥﴾ إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوْا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّءُوا مِنَّا كَذَلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦٧﴾

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوْا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ إِنَّهُ رَكُومٌ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾

247 As compared to these idolaters' love for their gods.

248 As a result of Divine Judgement after Resurrection.

249 Those who were taken as gods besides God (cf. 18: 19: 81-82, 29: 25, and 34: 31-33). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

250 Of salvation and deliverance (cf. 6: 94). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

251 Cf. 6: 27-28 and 26: 91-102.

252 These are the two conditions regarding the food that people are allowed to consume: lawful (unlawful foods will be explained shortly in Aya 173) and beneficial, not harmful (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

253 Who makes people deem lawful or unlawful what is not (cf. 6: 140-142).



﴿169﴾ Indeed he only bids you to ‘commit’ what is wicked and sinful, and that you should say of Allah what you have no knowledge of<sup>(254)</sup>. ﴿170﴾ Should they be told: “Follow what Allah sent down”<sup>(255)</sup>, they would say: “Nay, we would only follow that which we found our fathers doing”<sup>(256)</sup>; ‘Would they’ Even if their fathers were mindless of everything, nor were they guided? ﴿171﴾ The similitude of those who Deny is that of one who howls at that which does not hear anything except the calling and yelling<sup>(257)</sup>—dumb, deaf, blind, they have no sense<sup>(258)</sup>. ﴿172﴾ O Believers, eat of the good things<sup>(259)</sup> which We provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if you indeed worship Him ‘alone’. ﴿173﴾ Indeed He ‘Allah’ made unlawful for you carrion, blood<sup>(260)</sup>, swine flesh, and what was intended ‘as sacrifice’ for others besides Allah; ‘yet’ whoever is forced ‘by

إِنَّمَا يُأْمُرُكُم بِالسُّوءِ وَالْفَحْشَاءِ وَإِن تَقُولُوا  
عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ  
اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَشِيعُ مَا الْقَبَا  
عَلَيْهِ ءَابَاءَنَا أَوْ لَوْ كَانَ ءَابَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ  
شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَمِثْلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
كَمِثْلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دَعَاءً  
وَنِدَاءً صُمُّ بِكُمْ عُمَىٰ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا  
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُلُوا مِن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ  
وَأَشْكُرُوا لِلَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ ءِتَاءَةً تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿١٧٢﴾  
إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ  
الْخِزْيِيرِ وَمَا ءَهِلَّ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنَ اضْطَرَّ

254 Falsely claiming that God made one thing or another either lawful or unlawful (cf. 7: 27-28, 33-33, 16: 114-116).

255 Divine revelation. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

256 Cf. 5: 103-104, 31: 20-21 and 37: 69-70.

257 Like mindless animals that do not discern what is being said to them. They only recognize shouting and yelling voices—they hear but do not listen.

258 Their senses are not tuned to Divine admonition.

259 *Tayyibāt*, healthy and wholesome (cf. 5: 87-88 and 23: 51).

260 What is unlawful is flowing blood but not the blood captured in vessels after slaughter, cf. 6: 145. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

necessity<sup>261</sup> – neither transgressing<sup>(261)</sup> nor going to excess<sup>(262)</sup> – he is not guilty of sin—certainly Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿174﴾ Indeed those who suppress what Allah sent down in the Book and trade it off for a meagre price, these eat nothing but fire in their bellies; and on the Day of Resurrection Allah will not speak to them, nor will He purify<sup>(263)</sup> them—theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿175﴾ Those are the ones who traded off guidance for loss, and Punishment for Forgiveness—incredulous is their endurance in the Fire!<sup>(264)</sup>

﴿176﴾ That is because Allah sent down the Book with Truth, and those who differ upon the Book are in extreme disagreement<sup>(265)</sup>.

﴿177﴾ It is not sincere piety<sup>(266)</sup>

عَدْرَبَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٧٣﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيُسْتَرُونَ بِهِ تَمَنَّا قَلِيلًا أُولَئِكَ مَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ إِلَّا النَّارَ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٤﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَى وَالْعَذَابَ بِالْمَغْفِرَةِ فَمَا أَصْبَرَهُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ ﴿١٧٥﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ نَزَلَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِي الْكِتَابِ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿١٧٦﴾

\* لَيْسَ الْبِرَّ

261 By eating any of these without being in such a circumstance where one is hard pressed into it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

262 Even in pressing circumstances, eating more than what is absolutely necessary (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

263 Absolve them of their sins.

264 God is mocking their ignorance of the severe Punishment that awaits them in the Hereafter they will only experience the most excoriating pain and sufferance (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).

265 With the Truth. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

266 The comparison here is made between nominal piety which is shallow and superficial as opposed to sincere, heart-earned piety which is deep and life defining. Here, God gives examples of what constitutes sincere piety (*birr*) in His Eye, prominent among which are acts of the heart; these are a truer translation of the Belief that resides in the heart. Aya 177 also comes as a

that you should turn your faces towards the East and the West, but sincere piety 'is attained by' he who: Believes in Allah, the Last Day<sup>(267)</sup>, the angels, the Book and the Prophets; gives away money – dear to one's heart – to kinfolk, orphans, the destitute, the stranded<sup>(268)</sup>, beggars, and by way of 'freeing' necks<sup>(269)</sup>; keeps up the Prayer and gives out the prescribed alms<sup>(270)</sup>; those who fulfil the pledges they make, persevere in times of hardship and vicissitude, and during toughness<sup>(271)</sup>; these are the ones who are truthful, these are the ones who are truly Mindful.

أَنْ تُوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ قِبَلَ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ  
وَلَكِنَّ الْآيَةَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ  
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالْكِتَابِ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ وَآتَى الْمَالَ  
عَلَى حُبِّهِ ذَوِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ  
وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَالسَّائِلِينَ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَأَقَامَ  
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَالْمُوفُونَ بِعَهْدِهِمْ  
إِذَا عَاهَدُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ  
وَحِينَ الْبَأْسِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَأُولَئِكَ  
هُمُ الْمُتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾

prelude paving the way to the laws (Divine *prescriptions* for the Believing community) that are introduced in Ayas 178-209: retribution, distribution of inheritance, fasting, fighting, fair financial dealings and Hajj. All these laws are hard for people whose piety is not genuine but rather feigned. For those who have entered into the sphere of Faith wholly and wholeheartedly (Aya 209), however, this is not so.

267 That comes after Resurrection.

268 The Qur'an uses the expression 'the son of the road' (*ibn al-sabīl*), for those who are left without means whilst travelling, being away from home, and those who can extend a helping hand in such times of need.

269 Manumitting slaves from bondage and/or ransoming those to be executed for unintentional manslaughter by donating blood money.

270 That is Zakah.

271 The meaning of *al-ba'sā'* is not specified in this aya and can be varyingly translated according to the stand the translator takes. al-Shinqīṭī gives reference to Aya 33:18, and opines here that it means heated or ardent fighting in battle (cf. also al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿178﴾ O Believers, retribution<sup>(272)</sup> for the murdered is prescribed for you: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. Whoever is pardoned by a brother<sup>(273)</sup> 'of the dead', let it<sup>(274)</sup> be sought with lenience, and given courteously. This is an alleviation and mercy from your Lord; whoever aggresses<sup>(275)</sup> after this 'settlement' will have a painful Punishment. ﴿179﴾ Verily there is a life<sup>(276)</sup> for you in retribution, you people of reason, so that you may be Mindful.

﴿180﴾ It is prescribed for you that when death approaches one of you, and that he would leave behind a good wealth, he should bequeath of it to his parents and relatives equitably<sup>(277)</sup>. This is an obligation on the Mindful.

﴿181﴾ Whoever alters it<sup>(278)</sup> after hearing it, then those who alter it will bear the burden of this sin. Indeed Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كِتَابٌ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِصَاصُ  
فِي الْقَتْلِ ۗ الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنثَىٰ  
بِالْأُنثَىٰ ۖ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَاتِّبَاعٌ  
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَإِذَا إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ  
مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ  
فَهُوَ عَدَاؤُكَ ۖ إِلَيْهِ ۗ ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيٰوةٌ  
يٰۤاُولِيَ الْاَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنِ  
تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةَ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ  
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۖ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ  
بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الذَّيْبِ  
يُبَدِّلُونَهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨١﴾

272 *Qisās*, translated here as retribution, is exacting justice on one who commits a crime in a manner equal to the crime committed. In the Qur'an it is associated with either manslaughter or causing bodily harm. The person who commits such a crime is punished in like manner: killing or injury and, thus, an eye for an eye.

273 The living relative who takes charge of the victim's affairs. Usually the brother.

274 Blood money. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī)

275 By harming the murderer.

276 This exacting of due justice on murderers works as a deterrent and guarantees the whole society a peaceful and equitable way of existence.

277 The distribution of inheritance should be fair and even.

278 The will of the deceased.

﴿182﴾ Whoever fears a swerving from the right path or sin on the part of the testator<sup>(279)</sup>, and he settles matters between them<sup>(280)</sup>, he will be committing no sin. Indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿183﴾ O Believers, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed on those who came before you, so that you might be Mindful. ﴿184﴾ 'It lasts' For days numbered<sup>(281)</sup>; but whoever of you is ill or on a journey, 'should make up for the missed days by fasting' equally on other days. For those who can bear it<sup>(282)</sup>, they can compensate by providing for the needy; whoever does good voluntarily<sup>(283)</sup>, it is better for him, but fasting is better for you, if you only knew. ﴿185﴾ The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an

فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مُوسٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ إِتْمَانًا فَاصْلَحَ  
بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٨٢﴾

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ  
كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ كَانَ  
مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِنْ أَيَّامِهِ  
أُخْرَى وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ  
مِسْكِينٍ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَإِنْ  
تَصَوْمُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾  
شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

279 Ensuring that the testator is neither intentionally nor unintentionally unfair or inequitable by giving out to a non-legal inheritor more than a third of the total inheritance (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

280 By making just and fair adjustments to the will such that disputes are avoided (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

281 The days of the month of Ramadan. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

282 This license is said to have been in force during the earlier days of Islam but was abrogated by the next aya which limits it to the ill and travelling. The ruling that remains is: "Whom of you witnesses the month let him fast it". (Cf. Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, p. 26.)

283 By giving the needy more than the quantity stipulated by jurists as compensation for leaving out days of mandatory fasting, or feeding more than one person. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr)

was sent down<sup>(284)</sup> as guidance for mankind, 'containing' clear indicators of guidance and a criterion 'for distinguishing between right and wrong'. Whoever of you witnesses the month let him fast it; 'but' whoever of you is ailing or on a journey, 'should make up for the missed days by fasting' equally on other days—Allah seeks ease not hardship for you, so that you may complete the 'prescribed' number of days, and Glorify<sup>(285)</sup> Allah in thankfulness for His Guidance of you, this so that you might be thankful. <sup>(186)</sup> Should My servants ask you about Me, I am<sup>(286)</sup> near. I answer the Prayer of the one who prays. Let them 'then' respond to Me and Believe in Me so that they might be guided. <sup>(187)</sup> It is lawful for you to be intimate with your wives on nights of fasting; they are a cover 'of modesty' for you and you are a cover for them. Allah knows that you used to betray yourselves<sup>(287)</sup>,

هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَىٰ وَالْفُرْقَانِ  
 فَمَن شَهِدَ مِّنْكُمْ الشَّهْرَ فَلْيَصُمْهُ  
 وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ  
 مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ الْيُسْرَ  
 وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ  
 وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَاكُمْ  
 وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ  
 عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ  
 إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي  
 لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ أَجَلٌ لَّكُمْ لَيْلَةٌ  
 الصِّيَامِ الزَّوْفُ إِلَىٰ نِسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ  
 لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِبَاسٌ لَّهُنَّ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ  
 كُنْتُمْ تُخَانُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

284 This either means that the Qur'an was sent down from the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*) to the Lowest Heaven (*al-Samā' al-Dunyā*) on the Night of Decree (*Laylat al-Qadr*) during the month of Ramadan (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī); or that the start of the revelation of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) began on the Night of Decree (cf. Ibn Ishāq, Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr*, Ibn 'Ashūr, Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

285 By saying the *Takbīr* of Eid (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭūi, Ibn Kathīr).

286 God takes on the answer directly to His servants without the need for intercession. God's nearness means that one need not raise one's voice or ask for intercession for God to hear one's Prayers and answer them.

287 'Betraying' themselves by flouting an earlier observance whereby they were not intimate with their wives during the whole month of Ramadan (cf. al-Bukhārī: 4508).

'yet' He accepted your repentance and forgave you. Now you may lie down with them and seek what Allah wrote for you<sup>(288)</sup>. Eat and drink until the white thread of dawn<sup>(289)</sup> can be discerned from the black thread 'of night'<sup>(290)</sup>; then you have to carry on fasting until night-time. Do not lie down with them while you confine yourselves<sup>(291)</sup> to mosques—these are the boundaries of Allah, steer away from them. Like so Allah explains His Signs to people, that they might be Mindful.

﴿188﴾ Do not devour each other's property unlawfully, nor offer them to the rulers<sup>(292)</sup>, so that you may eat up a portion of the property of others sinfully, knowingly. ﴿189﴾ They ask you about the crescents<sup>(293)</sup>; say: "They are indicators of timings for people and Pilgrimage". It is not sincere piety that you approach houses from the back<sup>(294)</sup>,

فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَفَا عَنْكُمْ قَالَتَن نَبَشْرُوهُنَّ  
وَأَبْتَغُوا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا  
حَتَّىٰ بَدَتَيْنَ لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ  
الْأَسْوَدِ مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتُمُوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَى  
الْأَيْلِ وَلَا تَبَشِّرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي  
الْمَسْجِدِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا كَذَلِكَ  
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿188﴾

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُم بَيْنَكُم بِالْبَاطِلِ  
وَتُدْلُوا بِهَا إِلَى الْحُكَّامِ لِيَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا  
مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْأَشْرِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿189﴾  
\* يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِئُ  
لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحُجِّ وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ  
مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا

288 Namely, children. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

289 The light of dawn.

290 Cf. al-Bukhārī: 1954 and Muslim: 1100.

291 *I'tikāf* is confining oneself to a mosque for a certain period of time with the intention of getting closer to God and dedicating oneself to His worship.

292 Offer bribes to those who rule in cases of litigation, i.e. judges. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

293 The phases of the moon and how, unlike the sun, it changes with the passage of time. The answer came that through these changes and phases people would be able to know the times of fasting, Hajj, women's periods of waiting, etc. (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

294 It was an Arab habit, except for the Quraysh, during the period before Islam to enter their houses from the back after donning the *ihrām* for

but sincere piety is that who is Mindful. Approach the houses from their 'front' doors<sup>(295)</sup> and be Mindful of Allah, so that you may be successful.

﴿190﴾ Fight in the path of Allah those who fight you and do not transgress<sup>(296)</sup>—surely Allah likes not the transgressors. ﴿191﴾ Kill them wherever you find them<sup>(297)</sup>, and drive them out from where they drove you out<sup>(298)</sup> – surely trial<sup>(299)</sup> is more grievous than killing. Do not fight them in the Sacred Mosque until they fight you in it, and if they fight you, kill them; this is the 'just' requital of the Deniers. ﴿192﴾ 'But' If they desist, then Allah is surely All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِن آتَقَىٰ وَأَتُوا الْبَيْتَ  
مِنَ أَبْوَابِهَا وَأَتَفَوْا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٨٩﴾

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ  
وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾  
وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ  
أَخْرَجُواكُمْ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تَقَاتِلُوهُمْ  
عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّىٰ يَقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِن قَاتَلُوكُمْ  
فَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩١﴾ فَإِن أَنتَهُوْا  
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٢﴾

'umrah or Hajj thinking that this was an act of obedience. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

- 295 This is by way of inducing them to break with groundless old habits, and embrace a whole new perspective regarding what a true relationship with God is supposed to be. A reminder of what sincere piety (*birr*) really is; not outward and contrived but rather inward and sincere (cf. 2: 177).
- 296 Do not overlook the rulings prescribed for fighting. Among these are not killing or harming women, children, the elderly and those who did not aid, by any means, the fight against the Believers. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 297 The Deniers who raised arms against the Believers. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 298 The land, Makkah, from which the Muslims had been expelled. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 299 *Fitnah* comes from the root *f-t-n* which means to test and try; the pagans of Makkah subjected the Muslims to the harshest treatment and, at times, outright torture to drive them, and whoever might be tempted to join them, away from Islam.



﴿193﴾ Fight them until there is no trial<sup>(300)</sup>, and the religion becomes sincerely Allah's own. If they desist, only the wrongdoers shall be transgressed against. ﴿194﴾ The sacrosanct month<sup>(301)</sup> is by way of 'replacement for' the sacrosanct month<sup>(302)</sup>; 'violation of' what is prohibited is repayable. Whoever transgresses against you, transgress against them as much as they did and be Mindful of Allah and know that Allah is with the Mindful.

﴿195﴾ Spend in the path of Allah<sup>(303)</sup>, do not throw yourselves into 'utter' ruin<sup>(304)</sup>, and perfect 'your deeds'—surely Allah likes those who perfect.

﴿196﴾ Fulfil Pilgrimage and lesser pilgrimage<sup>(305)</sup> perfectly<sup>(306)</sup> for Allah, but if you are impeded<sup>(307)</sup>

وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ  
فَإِنْ اُنْتَهُوا فَلَا عُدْوَانَ عَلَيَّ وَاللَّامِينَ ۖ الشَّهْرِ  
الْحَرَامِ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْحُرُمَتُ فَصَاصٌ فَمَنْ  
اَعْتَدَى عَلَيَّ كُفْرًا عَدُوًّا عَلَيَّ بِمِثْلِ مَا اَعْتَدَى  
عَلَيَّكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاَعْمُوا اَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ  
الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝۱۹۴ وَانْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا  
بِاَيْدِيكُمْ اِلَى التَّهْلُكَةِ وَاَحْسِنُوا اِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ  
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۝۱۹۵

وَاتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ

300 Forcing Muslims out of their religion.

301 *al-Ashhur al-Hurum*, lit. the sacrosanct months, in which it was agreed that no fighting was permissible: namely, al-Muḥarram, Rajab, Dhū al-Qi'dah, Dhū al-Hijjah.

302 According to al-Sa'dī this has two meanings. Firstly, if they fight you during a sacrosanct month then fight them back (cf. also al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*). Secondly, God rewarded His Prophet (ﷺ) for not fighting during the sacrosanct month of Dhū al-Qi'dah in the sixth year of Hijrah when he wanted to perform 'umrah but was turned away by the pagans, by enabling him to perform it (in what is known as 'Umrat al-Qaḍā') during the same month of the following year (cf. al-Ṭabarī).

303 Raise the necessary funds to prepare for such a just fight (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

304 By not making the necessary preparations (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

305 'umrah.

306 Upholding and closely observing the rites of these two great forms of worship.

307 If your journey was prevented by an enemy or an illness, or by whatever forceful reason.

then 'slaughter' whatever offering is affordable<sup>(308)</sup>. Do not shave your heads<sup>(309)</sup> until the offerings reach their allotted location 'of slaughter'; 'yet' whoever of you is ill or suffers from his head<sup>(310)</sup>, let him compensate for it by fasting, giving charity, or slaughtering 'for Allah'. If you feel secure<sup>(311)</sup>, then those who enjoy 'a repose'<sup>(312)</sup> from minor pilgrimage until Pilgrimage, 'they are to compensate by sacrificing' whatever offering is affordable; 'but' whoever could not 'afford an offering', let him fast three days during Hajj and seven when you return<sup>(313)</sup>: these are ten complete.

فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَخْلُقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ  
الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ ۚ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى مِّن  
رَأْسِهِ ۖ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّن صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ ۚ فَإِذَا  
أَمِنْتُمْ ۖ فَمَن تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ ۖ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ  
مِن الْهَدْيِ ۖ فَمَن لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ۖ فِي  
الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ ۚ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ

- 308 *al-hady*, lit. sacrificial animals gifted to God. The term is limited to those animals intended for slaughter during Hajj or 'umrah. Otherwise, they are called *udhiyah*, simply sacrifice.
- 309 Shaving the head is prohibited for those who embark upon Hajj or 'umrah. This is why it is used here to mean that: you will not relieve yourselves of the prohibitions of these rites. That is until you sacrifice the *hady*. The place of slaughter for those who were cut short would be the spot they managed to reach, but for those who completed their rites it would be within the sanctified (*haram*) area of Makkah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Shinqīṭī).
- 310 Those who are inflicted with head ailments, like a rash or lice, are allowed to shave their heads, or shorten their hair while still in a state of *ihrām*, given that they make up for it by fasting three days, feeding six of the poor (each with half a *ṣā'*), or sacrificing a goat for the poor of the Sanctified Mosque (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).
- 311 If hindrances no longer exist.
- 312 A relaxation period extending from the time of performing 'umrah – during the months of Hajj – until the coming of the Hajj days, in which one enjoys what is forbidden for those in a state of *ihrām*.
- 313 To your homes.

This ‘ruling applies’ to those whose family<sup>(314)</sup> do not reside around<sup>(315)</sup> the Sanctified Mosque—be Mindful of Allah and know that Allah’s Punishment is severe. <sup>﴿197﴾</sup> Hajj is ‘due during’ known months<sup>(316)</sup> and whoever takes on himself to perform Hajj, let him hold back from intimate acts, sinning and quarrelling; whatever good you do Allah knows about it. Provide for yourselves<sup>(317)</sup>, indeed the best provision is Mindfulness, so be Mindful of Me, you people of reason. <sup>﴿198﴾</sup> You will not be sinning should you seek bounty<sup>(318)</sup> from your Lord, and as you press on ‘returning’ from ‘Arafāt, mention Allah<sup>(319)</sup> at the Inviolable Symbol<sup>(320)</sup> and mention Him as He guided you; for indeed before it<sup>(321)</sup> you were truly astray.

ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٩٦﴾  
الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَعْلُومَةٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ  
الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفْتٍ وَلَا فُسُوقٍ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي  
الْحَجِّ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمَهُ اللَّهُ  
وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُونِ  
يَأْتُوا بِالْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٧﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ  
أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا  
أَفَضْتُمْ مِنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ  
عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوهُ  
كَمَا هَدَيْتُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ  
لَمِنَ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١٩٨﴾

314 That is, the pilgrims’ places of permanent residence.

315 These are either the ones who reside within the radius of the Sanctified Mosque at a distance in which Prayers are not shortened (*qasr*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī), or, in particular, only those who are residents of the sanctified area (*haram*) surrounding the Mosque (cf. Ibn ‘Uthaymīn).

316 These are Shawwal, Dhū al-Qi‘dah, and the first ten days of Dhū al-Ḥijjah.

317 The reason for this aya’s revelation is as mentioned by Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه): “The people of Yemen used to come for Hajj without providing themselves with supplies, saying: “We are the Reliars ‘on God’”. But when they reached Makkah they used to solicit provisions from people”. (al-Bukhārī: 1523)

318 By trading. (Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurṭibī, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

319 Engage in *dhikr*, Prayers and Praying.

320 *al-Mash‘ar al-Ḥarām* is Muzdalifah. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa‘dī)

321 God’s Guidance of you to the correct Abrahamic rites of Hajj. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿199﴾ Then set forth<sup>(322)</sup> from where people set forth, and seek Allah's forgiveness<sup>(323)</sup>—indeed He is the All-Pardoning, Most Merciful. ﴿200﴾ When you are done with your devotional rites mention Allah as much as you mention your fathers<sup>(324)</sup> and more passionately. Some people would say: “Our Lord give us in this worldly life”, having no share in the Hereafter; ﴿201﴾ “yet” some of them<sup>(325)</sup> say: “Our Lord, give us what is good in this worldly life and what is good in the Hereafter, and spare us the Punishment of the Fire”<sup>(326)</sup>. ﴿202﴾ Those<sup>(327)</sup> are the ones who have a share of what they earned<sup>(328)</sup>; surely Allah is swift in reckoning<sup>(329)</sup>.

ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاصَ النَّاسُ  
وَأَسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٩﴾  
فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ  
كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا  
فَمَنْ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي  
الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ ﴿٢٠٠﴾  
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا  
حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا  
عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ  
مِمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

322 The addressees are the Quraysh who, known as *al-hums*, held back from going to ‘Arafāt and instead remained in Muzdalifah. Being the guardians and the tenders of the Holy Sanctuary they considered themselves a station above others, but after the advent of Islam, this command remedied the situation (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī).

323 That is *istighfār* (seeking forgiveness) for any shortcomings during the performance of Hajj.

324 The Arabs were, particularly at that juncture in history, very fond of talking without end at almost any social interaction, about the chivalric and heroic deeds of their forefathers.

325 These are the ones who are well-guided.

326 This supplication (*Rabbanā ātinā fī al-dunyā ḥasanah wa fī al-ākhirati ḥasanah wa qinā ‘adhāb an-nār*) contains all that is good and desirable by humans. Hence why, as found in al-Bukhārī (6389) and Muslim (2690), it is the supplication prayed most often by the Prophet (ﷺ).

327 The ones who supplicate with this Prayer. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

328 The good deeds that they did.

329 Repayment. (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn)

﴿203﴾ Mention Allah in 'these' numbered days<sup>(330)</sup>; whoever hastens 'departure' in two days<sup>(331)</sup> will not be sinning, and whoever stays behind<sup>(332)</sup> will not be sinning, for those who were Mindful<sup>(333)</sup>— be Mindful of Allah and know that you will be gathered unto Him.

﴿204﴾ Of people are those<sup>(334)</sup> whose talk about this worldly life<sup>(335)</sup> you are drawn to, calling Allah to bear witness to what is in his heart, while he is the bitterest of adversaries<sup>(336)</sup>. ﴿205﴾ When he turns away 'from you' he sets about the land to sow corruption and devastate tillage and progeny<sup>(337)</sup>— surely Allah likes not corruption.

﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْرَ عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْرَ عَلَيْهِ لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٠٤﴾

﴿٢٠٤﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ ﴿٢٠٥﴾ وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾

330 People are encouraged to mention God in the form of *Takbīr* abundantly during the days of *Tashrīq*: 11, 12 and 13 of Dhū al-Hijjah (al-Qurṭubī notes that exegetes unanimously agree on this).

331 That is before the sun sets on the second day, 12 Dhū al-Hijjah. (al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa‘dī)

332 To depart on the next day.

333 During their Hajj. (al-Ṭabarī)

334 With their eloquent talk, the hypocrites (cf. 63: 1-4), whose Faith is insincere, had won the Prophet’s (ﷺ) attention (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). The moral here is that it’s not sweet talk and hollow words that define a real Believer but rather sincerity and selfless actions that lead to such a lofty status.

335 With regards to worldly matters.

336 ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The worst of men in the Sight of Allah is the bitter adversary” (al-Bukhārī: 3178, Muslim: 58). This is one of the four traits of a sheer hypocrite. The other three being: telling lies, breaking promises and betraying pledges (cf. al-Bukhārī: 2457, Muslim: 2668).

337 Crops and offspring. Sowing corruption in the land by spreading Denial, acts of rebelliousness against God and injustice will surely cause disruption in the balance of life and may bring about God’s punishment of withholding rain, the source of the very element of life, water, thus causing ruin and death (cf. 7: 96 and 30: 41). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿206﴾ When it is said to him: “Be Mindful of Allah!” Sinful conceit gets the better of him—will Hellfire not be enough for him! Indeed it is the worst of beds.

﴿207﴾ ‘While’ Among people are those who sell themselves<sup>(338)</sup> seeking the Pleasure of Allah—indeed Allah is Most Kind to His servants.

﴿208﴾ O Believers, enter into Submission wholly<sup>(339)</sup> and do not follow the footsteps of Satan—indeed he is for you an open enemy. ﴿209﴾ Shall you slip<sup>(340)</sup> after Clear evidences came to you, then know that Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿210﴾ Do they expect ‘nothing’ but that Allah comes to them in shadows of clouds along with the angels; ‘lo!’ the affair is settled and to Allah all affairs are returned<sup>(341)</sup>.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَيْسَ الْأَمْهَادُ ﴿٢٠٦﴾  
وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠٧﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا آذْخُلُوا فِي السَّلَامِ كَأَفْئَةٍ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾ فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٩﴾ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٢١٠﴾

338 Give away their lives.

339 Embrace Islam to the fullest, following all its commandments wholeheartedly (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abū Ḥātim, Ibn Kathīr). The word employed here is *silm* rather than *islām*. The meaning of *silm* is to make peace, submit and unrestrainedly surrender to the Will of God, all of which captures the underlying and essential meaning of *islām* (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qurʿān*; al-İşfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

340 The imagery of losing one’s footing and firm step, shows in a concrete way how it looks to backslide from the right path while knowing it.

341 On the Day of Judgement God comes in the shadows of clouds to pass judgement on His creation. He condemns to Hellfire those who slip away from the path that He has clearly shown through His Books and Messengers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī, Ibn ʿĀshūr).

﴿211﴾ Ask the Children of Israel how many a clear Sign We have given them! But whoever exchanges the bounty of Allah for Denial<sup>(342)</sup> after it came to him, will come to know that Allah is severe in Punishment.

﴿212﴾ The worldly life is prettified for the Deniers; they ridicule those who Believe; but the Mindful are indeed above them on the Day of Judgement<sup>(343)</sup>—Allah showers favours whom He wills without account<sup>(344)</sup>. ﴿213﴾ Mankind was one nation<sup>(345)</sup>, then Allah sent the Prophets bearing good tidings and cautioning, and He sent down with them the Book<sup>(346)</sup> with Truth so as to arbitrate between people in what they dispute over. It<sup>(347)</sup> was only disputed over by those to whom it was given after the clear Signs came to them, out of contravention one against the other.

سَلَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كِرَاءَ آيَاتِهِمْ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ يَبْتِغُونَهَا وَفِيهَا  
يُبَدِّلُ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢١١﴾ زَيْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيَاةَ  
الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ  
اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ  
بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢١٢﴾ كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً  
فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ  
مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ  
فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ  
أُوْتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ

342 Cf. 14: 28-29.

343 Cf. 83: 29-36.

344 The Mindful will be entered into Paradise; the greatest 'favour' from God (cf. 7: 49). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Ashūr)

345 Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "The time between Adam and Noah was ten centuries. Throughout these, people were on the right path of God, but then they started disputing 'over matters of faith'. So, God sent Prophets bearing glad tidings and cautioning". (al-Hākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 2:546, cf. also al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

346 Revealed Scriptures which contain Truthful news and fair commands. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'dī)

347 The Truth as found in their respective Scriptures (cf. Ibn 'Atīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). The plight of humans, especially those who lack true sincerity and thereby humbleness, is such that the more knowledge they possess, the more haughty and disputatious they become.

But Allah leads the Believers to the Truth, which they disputed over, with His Will—Allah guides those He wills to a straight path. ﴿214﴾ Or you think that you will enter Paradise without the example of those who came before<sup>(348)</sup> comes to pass you! They were touched by turmoil and affliction, and fiercely shaken<sup>(349)</sup>, until the Prophet<sup>(350)</sup> and those who Believed with him exclaim: “When is Allah’s victory?”—verily Allah’s victory is ever near.

﴿215﴾ They ask you ‘Muhammad’ what they should spend<sup>(351)</sup>; say: “Whatever good<sup>(352)</sup> you spend ‘is to be’ on your parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, and the stranded”—whatever good you do Allah knows about it. ﴿216﴾ Fighting is prescribed for you, as much as you hate it; might you hate a thing which is good for you and might you love a thing which is evil for you—Allah knows and you do not know.

فَهَدَىٰ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَا اٰخْتَلَفُوْا فِيْهِ  
 مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ وَاللّٰهُ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَاءُ اِلَىٰ  
 صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٢١٤﴾ اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوْا  
 الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَّثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ  
 مَسَّهُمُ الْاَسَآءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَرُوْلُوْا حَتّٰى يَقُوْلَ  
 الرَّسُوْلُ وَالَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا مَعَهُ مَتٰى نَصَرَ اللّٰهُ  
 اِلَآ اِنْ نَصَرَ اللّٰهُ قَرِيْبٌ ﴿٢١٥﴾

يَسْأَلُوْنَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ ۗ قُلْ مَا اَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ  
 حَيْرٍ فَلِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنَ وَالْاٰقِرْبٰىنَ وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسْكِيْنَ  
 وَاٰبِى السَّبِيْلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ مِنْ حَيْرٍ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ  
 بِهٖ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢١٦﴾ كَتَبَ عَلَیْكُمْ الْقِتَالَ وَهُوَ كَرِهٌ  
 لَّكُمْ وَعَسٰى اَنْ تَكْرَهُوْا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ  
 لَّكُمْ وَعَسٰى اَنْ تُحِبُّوْا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ  
 لَّكُمْ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢١٦﴾

348 True Believers in earlier God-revealed religions. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

349 The road to Paradise is not paved with roses. As with all great destinations, it can only be reached through difficulty (cf. 3: 142, 29: 2-3).

350 Any of the previous Prophets.

351 They ask what, how much and in what way should they spend in the cause of God (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī). Ayas 215-220 list some of the hardships and trials that the Believers were to face: spending their money, fighting enemies, abstaining from intoxicants and gambling, and dealing carefully with the wealth of those whom they had guardianship over.

352 Money earned from lawful means.



﴿217﴾ They<sup>(353)</sup> ask you about the sacrosanct month 'whether there is' fighting during it! Say: "Fighting in it is grave"; 'but' turning 'people' away from the path of Allah, Denying Him and 'preventing access to' the Sanctified Mosque, and driving its people away from it are graver before Allah—surely trial<sup>(354)</sup> is more grievous than killing. They will keep on fighting you until they turn you back from your religion, if they could. Whoever of you reneges on his religion and dies Denying, the deeds of these are nullified in this worldly life and in the Hereafter—these are the company of the Fire, forever they abide therein. ﴿218﴾ Those who Believe and those who migrated and fought in the cause of Allah; these are 'rightly' hopeful of Allah's Mercy—Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿219﴾ They ask you about intoxicants and gambling; say: "There is a great sin in both, and 'some' benefits to people", but their sin is greater than their benefit<sup>(355)</sup>.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يَقْتُلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُم مِّن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَعُوا وَمَن يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُم عَن دِينِهِ فِمَتًّا وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢١٨﴾ \*يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْتَفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَّفْعِهِمَا

353 The Deniers asked this question intending to scorn the Prophet (ﷺ) for what they saw as breaking an oath when a group of Believers unknowingly killed a Denier during a sacrosanct month (cf. al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 8803).

354 These trials and tribulations (*fitnah*) that the Deniers subjected the Believers to are far graver than unknowingly killing a single Denier during a sacrosanct month (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

355 ‘Benefits’ are mentioned only way of preparing the then newly-formed Muslim community for the total prohibition of intoxicants and gambling which was to come (cf. 5: 90-91).

They ask you what they should spend<sup>(356)</sup>; say: “the surplus<sup>(357)</sup>”. Like so Allah makes clear to you the Signs so that you may contemplate, <sup>(220)</sup> this worldly life and the Hereafter. They ask you about orphans<sup>(358)</sup>; say: “Nurturing them is best<sup>(359)</sup>, and that you should intermix with them; they are your brothers”. Allah knows those who reform and those who corrupt<sup>(360)</sup>. Had He willed, He would have made it onerous<sup>(361)</sup> on you—surely Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

﴿221﴾ Do not marry Associating females unless they Believe; indeed a Believing slave female is better than an Associator<sup>(362)</sup>, though you might like her.

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنفِقُونَ قُلِ الْعَفْوَكَذَلِكَ  
يُبينُ اللهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١٩﴾  
فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الَّتِي تَمْسَى قُلِ  
إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ تُخَاطَبُوا فِي خَوْنِكُمْ  
وَأَلَّهٌ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللهُ  
لَأَعْنَتَكُمْ إِنَّ اللهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٠﴾

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّى يُؤْمِنَ وَلَأَمَةٌ  
مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ

356 In God’s cause.

357 *al-‘Afw* is what is more than necessary to sustain you. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

358 That is looking after orphans’ affairs, especially their money (cf. 4: 10). So, God willed that a Muslim’s duty towards orphans in that person’s custody is, firstly, to have their best interests in mind. Knowing that not mixing orphans’ and a custodian’s money is a difficult task (cf. Abū Dāwūd: 2871, Aḥmad: 3002) given the latter pays for the former’s living expenses from it, God gave permission for this but with a forewarning that the guardian should be Mindful of Him in this regard.

359 Taking care of orphans’ inheritances and looking after them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī)

360 Regarding the affairs of orphans and their finances.

361 By making taking care of orphans’ finances particularly tough in not allowing their guardians to mix their money with that of their custodians. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

362 The Arabic term is *mushrik*, meaning one who associates other deities with God in worship.

Do not marry 'your women' to Associators; indeed a Believing slave male is better than an Associator, though you might like him. These invite to Fire, and Allah invites to Paradise and forgiveness by His permission, and He makes His Signs clear to people so that they may remember. ﴿222﴾ They ask you about menstruation; say: "It is harm<sup>(363)</sup>". So keep away from women during menstruation<sup>(364)</sup>, and do not approach them<sup>(365)</sup> until they become purified<sup>(366)</sup>. When they purify themselves<sup>(367)</sup> come to them from where Allah has instructed you<sup>(368)</sup>. Verily Allah likes those who repeatedly repent and those who purify themselves. ﴿223﴾ Your women are cultivating fields for you<sup>(369)</sup>, so come to your cultivating fields the way you want<sup>(370)</sup>,

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى النَّارِ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ وَالْمَعْفَرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ أَذَىٰ فَأَعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّىٰ يَطْهُرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾ نِسَاءُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّىٰ شِئْتُمْ

363 This is a literal translation for the word used, namely, *adhā*. It could also mean something which is hateful as it causes discomfort (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abū Ḥātim).

364 When asked by the Muslims, who saw the Jews of Madinah avoiding their women completely during menstruation, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Do everything except intercourse". (Muslim: 302)

365 Sexually in the vagina. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

366 That is until their periods end. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

367 By washing themselves. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

368 Have vaginal intercourse with them in a state of purity. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

369 In as much as you sow your seeds into their wombs in expectance of yield. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

370 In whatever position, given that intercourse takes place in the vagina. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

and send 'something good' ahead for yourselves<sup>(371)</sup>; and be Mindful of Allah and know that you will meet Him—and give glad tidings to the Believers.

﴿224﴾ Do not make your oaths in the Name of Allah a hindrance from you doing good<sup>(372)</sup>, being Mindful and amending affairs between people—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿225﴾ Allah will not hold you accountable for careless swearing 'by Him'<sup>(373)</sup>, but He will hold you accountable for what your hearts have earned<sup>(374)</sup>—Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing. ﴿226﴾ Those who vow against their women, there shall be a waiting period of four months<sup>(375)</sup>. But if they go back 'on their oath', then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَقَدِّمُوا لِنَفْسِكُمْ وَأَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلْقَوُهُ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٥﴾ لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٦﴾ لِلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ تَرْتِيبًا أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِنْ فَاءَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

371 Do good deeds that will be of use to you in the Hereafter. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, Ibn 'Ashūr)

372 That is, do not make your oaths in God's Name not to do something which is enjoined and commendable stop you from doing it because you fear that you will be breaking that oath. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, al-Shinqīṭī)

373 Unintentionally saying: "Yes, by God", or: "No, by God". (al-Bukhārī: 6663)

374 That is, a person intentionally lies and yet swears by God that he is telling the truth. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'adī, al-Shinqīṭī)

375 This is the act of *ilā'*; vowing not to have intercourse with one's wife with the purpose of punishing her. Four months is the maximum time limit allowed for this state of affairs to go on. Otherwise, the husband who took such a vow needs to either get things back to normal, in which case he does not need to make up for breaking his vow and is forgiven by God, or else he should conclude the divorce and no longer hurt his wife (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).

﴿227﴾ But if they are resolved on divorce, then Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿228﴾ Divorced women must wait for three courses<sup>(376)</sup>. It is unlawful for them to conceal what Allah created in their wombs<sup>(377)</sup>, if 'truly' they Believe in Allah and the Hereafter. Their husbands have more right to take them back if they 'truly' mean to mend matters<sup>(378)</sup>. For them 'women' is as much as there is 'expected' of them<sup>(379)</sup>, as per what is 'socially' agreed<sup>(380)</sup>; men have a degree above them<sup>(381)</sup>—verily Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿229﴾ Divorce is for two times<sup>(382)</sup>;

وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾  
وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ  
وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ  
إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَبُعُولَتَهُنَّ  
أَحَقُّ بِرِدَّيْهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ  
مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ  
دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٨﴾ الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَيْنِ

376 *Thalāthata qurū'* is either three menstrual cycles, or three clean intervals after menstruation before a divorced woman can remarry. This is so as to ensure that no pregnancy has taken place. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

377 That is to conceal pregnancy during their waiting period ('*iddah*'), with the intention of concluding the divorce.

378 Should they wish to reconcile. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

379 Their rights and duties are the same as men's. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

380 The word *ma'rūf*, lit. the known, translated here as socially agreed, is recurrent over the next few ayas that deal with marital affairs. Social norms that are in agreement with Islamic laws come to bear on settling disputes of marriage and marital life, but the judgement of this is left for people of good reason and thorough knowledge, given that they intend to safeguard the sanctity of this bond.

381 al-Shinqīṭī is of the opinion that this is explained by Aya 4: 34: "*Men are in charge of women, because Allah favoured one over the other and of the money they men spend*".

382 A man is only allowed to divorce his wife and then take her back twice. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

either hold them in agreeably<sup>(383)</sup> or let 'them' go gracefully. It is unlawful to you 'men' to take back anything of what you gave them 'your wives'<sup>(384)</sup>, unless they 'husband and wife' fear not upholding Allah's boundaries<sup>(385)</sup>; but if you<sup>(386)</sup> fear that they would not uphold Allah's boundaries, she would not be sinning in 'choosing' whatever she redeems herself for<sup>(387)</sup>. These are the boundaries of Allah—whenever one oversteps the boundaries of Allah is among the Transgressors. <sup>(230)</sup> But if he divorces her<sup>(388)</sup>, she becomes unlawful for him unless she marries another husband. If he<sup>(389)</sup> 'then' divorces her, they will not be sinning to go back 'to each other'<sup>(390)</sup>; should they know that they would uphold Allah's boundaries.

فَأَمْسَاكُمْ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٍ بِإِحْسَنٍ وَلَا يُجِزُ  
لَكُمْ أَنْ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ  
يَخَافَا إِلَّا بُقِيمًا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ إِلَّا  
بُقِيمًا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ  
بِهِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ  
حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣٠﴾ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا  
فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ حَتَّى تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ فَإِنْ  
طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ طَلَّقَا  
أَنْ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ

383 By being kind and nice to them, in accordance with agreed social norms, whilst they are under your roofs.

384 Dowry and gifts.

385 Here *hudūd Allāh* (God's boundaries) means His commands regarding marital rights. A wife who seeks divorce because she does not feel affectionate towards, or just hates, her husband, in turn, alienates him by not fulfilling his rights, can, thus, compensate him for this. In this way, he is allowed to take the money in exchange for conceding to her demand for divorce (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīfī).

386 The ones who are brought to pass judgement on the case.

387 That is giving the husband an agreed sum of the money she received from him as dowry or gifts, in order to make him divorce her.

388 For a third time. (al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

389 The other husband.

390 Going back to her earlier husband if the divorce from her subsequent husband is sealed.

These are the boundaries of Allah, which He makes clear to those who know. ﴿231﴾ If you divorce women ‘revocably’ and they complete their time<sup>(391)</sup>, either hold them in agreeably or let them go agreeably. Do not hold them in<sup>(392)</sup> by way of hurt to transgress ‘against them’<sup>(393)</sup>; whoever does that will be doing himself injustice. Do not ridicule the Signs of Allah and remember the bounty of Allah and the Book and Wisdom that He sent down to you to caution you with; be Mindful of Allah and know that Allah Knows everything. ﴿232﴾ If you divorce women ‘revocably’ and they complete their time, do not ‘you guardians’ forbid them to reunite with their husbands, should they agree between themselves in keeping with what is ‘socially’ acceptable. With this are admonished those who Believe in Allah and the Last Day; this is more dignified for you and purer—Allah Knows and you do not know.

وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣١﴾  
 وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَّغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ  
 بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ  
 ضِرَارًا لِيَتَعْتَدُوا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ  
 نَفْسَهُ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوعًا وَادْكُرُوا  
 نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ  
 وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ  
 بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٢﴾ وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَّغْنَ  
 أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ  
 إِذَا تَرَاضَوْا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ذَلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ  
 كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۚ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ  
 لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٣﴾

391 Waiting period ('iddah) as explained in the previous ayas.

392 Deciding to keep the wife and not conclude divorce.

393 To harm them by prolonging an agonizing waiting period, holding them back from marrying other husbands or forcing them into seeking separation and, in the process, financially compensating the current husband for it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

﴿233﴾ Mothers<sup>(394)</sup> should nurse their infants for two complete years, 'this is' for those who wish to fulfil 'the complete term of' nursing. The one to whom the child was born<sup>(395)</sup>, has to provide for them and clothe them, in keeping with what is 'socially' acceptable; no soul should bear a burden that is beyond its capability. No mother should be made to suffer using her infant, nor should a father. The same is incumbent on the 'father's' heir<sup>(396)</sup>. Should they 'the father and mother' seek weaning 'the infant', in agreement and by consultation between them, there is no sin on them<sup>(397)</sup>. If you want to hire a wet nurse for your infants, then there is no sin on you if you pay what you agree on, in keeping with what is socially acceptable—be Mindful of Allah, and know that Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.

﴿234﴾ Those of you who pass away leaving behind wives, let them 'the widows' remain waiting for four months and ten days.

﴿۲۳۳﴾ وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ ۗ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنْعَمَ ۚ وَالرِّضَاعُ عَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ ۖ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ لَا تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا أَوْسَعَهَا ۚ لَا تَضَارُّ وَاوِدَةً يُوَالِدُهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ يُوَالِدُهَا ۚ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ ۚ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنِ تِرَاضٍ مِمَّنْهُمَا أَتَشَاوُرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا ۚ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَاءً ۖ إِنَّمَا يُنْعَمُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَامُواهُنَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿۲۳۴﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا ۚ

394 The majority of the rightly-guided predecessors are of the opinion that 'mothers' here means divorced mothers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abū Ḥātim, Ibn 'Āshūr).

395 The father.

396 In case of the father's death, the person who takes over responsibility after him has to provide for the nursing mother in the same way. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

397 That is if they come to an agreement to wean the infant before the two-year period of nursing has finished. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)



When they finish their term<sup>(398)</sup>, you are not to blame for what they 'choose to' do with themselves, in keeping with what is acceptable<sup>(399)</sup>—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do. ﴿235﴾ You will not be sinning should you allude to a marriage proposal to women<sup>(400)</sup>, or that you keep this to yourselves<sup>(401)</sup>. Allah knows that you will keep on thinking about them, but do not promise them secretly, unless you say what is acceptable<sup>(402)</sup>, and do not tie the knot of marriage during the waiting period, 'but wait' until the term has elapsed. Know that Allah knows what you tell yourselves and be cautious of Him—know that Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing. ﴿236﴾ You will not be sinning should you divorce women whom you did not touch 'yet' nor committed yourselves to by stating a sum 'of dowry'. Bestow on them, the well-off according to his means and the poor according to his means, in keeping with what is 'socially'

فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٥﴾ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْتُمْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَلِيمَ اللَّهِ أَنَّكُمْ سَأَلْتُمُوهُنَّ وَالْكَفَى لَأَنْ تَوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا وَلَا تَعْرُضُوا عَقْدَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٦﴾ لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَّعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمُوسِعِ قَدَرَهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرَهُ مِمَّا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ

398 This waiting period is known as *'iddah*. During these four months and ten days the widow is not to remarry. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīfī)

399 A social norm that entails keeping within the dictates of Islam.

400 The widowed and irrevocably divorced.

401 Having the intention.

402 That is, only an implication of marriage is acceptable during the waiting period but not a direct statement of marriage intent.

acceptable<sup>(403)</sup>—this is a duty on the well-doers. <sup>(237)</sup> If you divorce them before touching them, but you committed yourselves to paying a sum ‘of dowry’ to them<sup>(404)</sup>, ‘pay them’ half of what you committed yourselves to, unless they ‘the wives’ waive ‘the due sum’ or in whose hand the marriage knot<sup>(405)</sup> is waives ‘it’. That you should waive is closer to Mindfulness, and do not overlook kindness among yourselves—verily Allah is All-Seeing of what you do. <sup>(238)</sup> Observe the Prayers<sup>(406)</sup> – and ‘especially’ the middle Prayer<sup>(407)</sup> – and rise for Allah ‘consistently’ devoutly.

حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾ وَإِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَرْصَفْ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوا الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عَقْدَةُ الزَّكَاحِ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنْ اللَّهُ يَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٧﴾ حَفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقَوْمُوا لِلَّهِ قَنِينًا ﴿٢٣٨﴾

- 403 By way of consolation, it is a duty on the husband who divorces a woman before marriage is consummated, by getting in bed with her, or before a certain sum of money as dowry has been stated, to give her a present which would, according to social norm, make it up to her. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīfī)
- 404 This is the ruling regarding divorce that takes place before coupling has taken place between the divorcees, but in which the husband has already committed himself to paying a certain amount as a dowry, thus showing his firm intention of marriage. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 405 The wife’s representative.
- 406 The five mandatory daily Prayers (*al-Ṣalawāt al-khams*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Prayers are mentioned in the midst of marital affair rulings, because of the hurtful and hard feelings divorce can leave in its wake. Hence, people are reminded of the Hereafter—by virtue of being vigilant in their Prayers. Their observance of these rulings and whereby they should not ‘overlook kindness’ among themselves is made surer by this reminder of accountability. Prayer in another aya is a deterrent against overindulgence: “Verily Prayer admonishes against vileness and loathsome acts” (29: 45), (cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 407 The third, middle Prayer; namely, *ṣalāt al-‘aṣr*. This aya shows how particularly meritorious this Prayer is. (al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*)

﴿239﴾ But if you become fearful<sup>(408)</sup>, then ‘perform Prayers whether you are’ on foot or mounted, yet when your fears ease, mention Allah as He taught you that which you had no knowledge of. ﴿240﴾ Those of you who pass away leaving behind wives, let them ‘state in a will for their wives a maintenance for a year without expelling them ‘from their homes’<sup>(409)</sup>, but if they leave ‘their homes’ you are not to blame for what they ‘choose to’ do with themselves, in keeping with what is acceptable—surely Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

﴿241﴾ ‘Likewise’ for the divorced women a maintenance ‘is due’ in keeping with what is ‘socially’ agreed—this is a duty on the Mindful. ﴿242﴾ Like so, Allah explains to you His Signs<sup>(410)</sup> so that you might become aware ‘of them’.

﴿243﴾ Have you not seen those who fled their homelands in their thousands in fear of death,

فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ فَرَجَالًا أَوْ رُكْبَانًا فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَمَا عَلَّمَكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا وَصِيَّةً لِأَزْوَاجِهِمْ مَتَاعًا إِلَى الْحَوْلِ غَيْرَ إِخْرَاجٍ فَإِنْ خَرَجْنَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي مَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ مِنْ مَّعْرُوفٍ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٠﴾ وَلِلْمُطَلَّقاتِ مَتَعٌ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٤١﴾ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٤٢﴾

\* أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ

408 Of an imminent danger, enemies and the like, which would be cause enough for you not to perform Prayers in the given strict manner (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

409 The majority of exegetes are of the opinion that the ruling of this aya was abrogated by Aya 2: 234: “Those of you who pass away leaving behind wives, let them ‘the widows’ remain waiting for four months and ten days”. (al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikhwa al-Mansūkh*, Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

410 In such a way, the ayas clearly spell out rulings and regulations so that people become fully aware of them and apply them in their lives. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

whereupon Allah said to them: “Die!” Then He brought them back to life<sup>(411)</sup>. Indeed Allah is bountiful to people, but most of them are thankless. ﴿244﴾ Fight ‘then Believers’ in the path of Allah and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿245﴾ Would there be one who loans Allah a comely loan<sup>(412)</sup>, so that Allah would multiply it for him manifold—Allah tightens and loosens<sup>(413)</sup>, and unto Him you shall return.

﴿246﴾ Have you not seen the notables among the Children of Israel, after ‘the time of’ Moses, when they said to a Prophet of theirs: “Point out a king for us so that we may fight in the path of Allah”. He said to them: “Would you then – should fighting be prescribed for you – not fight?”

فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٤٤﴾ وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٥﴾ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يقرضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيضَعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْصُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَأِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّهِمْ إِنَّهُ لَمَلِكٌ نَقَلْتَلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَتَبَ عَلَيْكُمْ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا

411 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), and Believers at large, are told, in a very subtle, edifying manner, of the story of a certain people who, because of fear of annihilation, fled their town in droves, thus thinking that they would outdo God’s Will. In order to show them that they could not escape His Judgement and make them realize His bountiful favours, God took their lives to show them that He is capable of bringing about their worst fears, only then to give them their lives back again.

412 *al-Qard al-hasan* is spending in the cause of Allah in expectation of nothing but His reward. As much as Believers are encouraged to fight in the path of God and are strongly reminded that they cannot escape death, they are also encouraged to spend out of their wealth, not expecting any return in the process, to arm fighting Believers (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). They are equally and strongly reminded that it is God alone Who makes people rich or poor (cf. 2: 261-262).

413 Making people rich or poor. (al-Ṭabarī)

They said: “Why would we not fight in the path of Allah when we were expelled from our lands and ‘bereft of’ our children<sup>(414)</sup>?” When fighting was mandated upon them, they took to their heels, except a few—Allah is surely All-Knowing of the unjust. <sup>(247)</sup> ‘At that’ Their Prophet said to them: “Allah has pointed out Tālūt<sup>(415)</sup> as a king for you”. They said: “How come he becomes a king over us when we are more deserving of kingship than him; he ‘even’ has no vast wealth?” He said: “Allah has favoured him above you and made him deeply knowledgeable and physically imposing”. Allah grants kingship to whomever He wills—verily Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. <sup>(248)</sup> Their Prophet said to them: “The sign of his ‘rightful’ kingship is that the chest<sup>(416)</sup> comes to you and in it there is tranquillity from your Lord and remnant ‘relics’<sup>(417)</sup> of what was left by the house of Moses and the house of Hārūn ‘Aaron’, carried by angels. Surely this is ‘enough as’ a sign for you, that is if you are ‘true’ Believers”.

قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَاءِنَا فَلَمَّا  
كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا  
مِّنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾ وَقَالَ  
لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ  
طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ  
الْمَلِكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمَلِكِ  
مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يَأْتِ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً  
فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مَلَكَهُ  
مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ  
نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ  
التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ  
وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ  
تَحْمِلُهَا الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِن فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً  
لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾

414 Their women and children were taken captive by the enemy. (al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

415 Believed to be the Biblical King Saul.

416 *At-Tābūt* is said to be the Ark of the Covenant.

417 These are believed to be Moses’ (ﷺ) staff and some broken Tablets. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿249﴾ When Ṭālūt pulled ahead with the soldiers, he said to them: “Allah will test you with a river. Whoever drinks of it is not one of mine. But whoever does not taste it, is of mine, excepting one who scoops a handful”. They drank ‘their fill’ of it but a few of them. When he crossed it, along with those who Believed with him, they said: “We have no power today against Jālūt<sup>(418)</sup> and his soldiers”. ‘But’ Those who are sure that they will be meeting Allah said: “How many a time has a small company vanquished a multitudinous one with Allah’s permission! Verily Allah is with the steadfast”. ﴿250﴾ When they made themselves seen to Jālūt and his soldiers, they said: “Our Lord! Pour steadfastness on us, make firm our feet<sup>(419)</sup> and grant us victory over the Denying people”. ﴿251﴾ They defeated them with Allah’s permission; Dāwūd ‘David’ killed Jālūt and Allah gave him kingship and Wisdom<sup>(420)</sup> and taught him of whatever He willed<sup>(421)</sup>. Had it not been for people pushing each other

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ  
 اللَّهُ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ  
 مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا  
 مَنْ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ  
 إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ  
 آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ  
 بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ  
 أَنَّهُم مُّكَلَّفُوا اللَّهَ كَرَمٍ مِنْ فَتْنَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ  
 غَلَبَتْ فِيهِمْ كَثِيرَةٌ يَأِذِنُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ  
 مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٤٩﴾ وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ  
 وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا  
 وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ  
 الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾ فَهَرَمُوهُمْ يَأِذِنُ  
 اللَّهُ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدَ جَالُوتَ وَعَآتَهُ  
 اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ  
 وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ

418 Believed to be the Biblical Goliath.

419 Make us stand firm.

420 Prophethood. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

421 All sorts of knowledge and how to make body armour (cf. 21: 80).  
 (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

'back and forth'<sup>(422)</sup>, the land would have gone to ruins. But Allah is Favourable to all beings. <sup>(252)</sup> These are the Signs of Allah, We recite them for you with Truth—indeed you are 'one' of the Messengers. <sup>(253)</sup> Those Messengers, We favoured some of them above others: among them are some to whom Allah spoke 'directly'<sup>(423)</sup>; and some of them He raised by degrees<sup>(424)</sup>. We granted Jesus, son of Mary, the clear evidences<sup>(425)</sup>, and bolstered him with the Holy Spirit<sup>(426)</sup>. Had Allah willed, those who came after them<sup>(427)</sup> would not have fought among each other, after the clear evidences<sup>(428)</sup> that came to them. But they differed; some of them Believed while some of them Denied. Had Allah willed, they would not have fought among each other, But Allah does what He wills.

لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٥٢﴾ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢٥٣﴾ \* تِلْكَ الْأَرْسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّن كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ۗ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلْنَا الَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ مِّن بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَٰكِنِ اخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ ءَامَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلْنَا وَلَٰكِنِ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٢٥٤﴾

422 That people are engaged in an eternal struggle between right and wrong, good and evil, is known as *sunnat al-mudāfa'ah*, lit. the canon of scuffle. God would not let evil prevail entirely without it being constantly challenged, otherwise earth would become a ruinous, non-habitable planet (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

423 God spoke directly to Moses (ﷺ) (cf. 4: 164).

424 They were raised in rank to higher levels than the others just like Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

425 Miracles and the Evangel. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr)

426 Archangel Gabriel (ﷺ).

427 Succeeding generations.

428 God's Signs: miracles and Divine Writs, which are cause enough for them all to Believe.

﴿254﴾ You who Believe! Spend of what We provided for you before a Day comes, when there will not be trading, nor bonds or intercession<sup>(429)</sup>—indeed the Deniers are the unjust ones. ﴿255﴾<sup>(430)</sup> Allah, there is no god but Him<sup>(431)</sup>, the Ever-Living<sup>(432)</sup>, the All-Sufficient<sup>(433)</sup>; neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him<sup>(434)</sup>; to Him belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth<sup>(435)</sup>.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ  
مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعٌ فِيهِ وَلَا حِجْلٌ  
وَلَا شَفَعَةٌ ۗ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٥٤﴾  
اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ  
سِنَةٌ ۗ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۗ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي  
الْأَرْضِ ۗ

- 429 The Day of Judgement on which no money, connections, or power of persuasion will avail a wrongdoer; only Divine Justice prevails. Cf. 2:48 and 2:122.
- 430 This aya is known as *Āyat al-Kursī*, lit. Aya of the Footstool. It is the single greatest aya in the Grand Qur'an. Ubayy ibn Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) once asked him: "Abū al-Mundhir, do you know which one of the ayas of the Book of Allah is the greatest?"... I said: (*Allah, there is no god but Him, the Ever-Living, the All-Sufficient*). He beat my chest and said: "By Allah, may knowledge be joyous to you Abū al-Mundhir!" (Muslim: 810) It is considered thus because it details the Attributes and Divine Characteristics of the God Who is truly worthy of worship: unlimited with regards to knowledge (omniscience), power (omnipotence), and existence (omnipresence). Any god would have to fulfil all these criteria to be truly worthy of worship. Among the virtues of this aya is that whoever recites it before going to sleep, will find that no devil comes near him until he wakes up. Rather, he is safeguarded in God's guardianship (cf. al-Bukhārī: 2311).
- 431 There is no god worthy of worship except Allah/God.
- 432 His Life is the perfect Life: it was not preceded by non-existence nor will it be followed by annihilation (cf. 25: 58). It entails all the characteristics of perfection. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 433 Self-sufficient; He is free from want of help or assistance. He is also in charge of the affairs of all others besides Him. Without Him, they will all go to ruin (cf. 30: 25). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 434 Dozing off and falling asleep are but normal to all creation that are inherently frail, but they are unbecoming of God, the Ever-Living Sustainer of the universe.
- 435 He is the Sole and Real Owner of the universe: thus, none is worthy of worship except Him. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)



Who is it, that is 'so daring' to intercede with Him without His permission!<sup>(436)</sup> He knows what is there in front of them and what is there behind them<sup>(437)</sup>, but they know nothing of His Knowledge, except what He wills. His Footstool<sup>(438)</sup> encompasses the Heavens and Earth, and He is not taxed by maintaining them<sup>(439)</sup>— He is the Most High, the Most Great. <sup>(256)</sup> There is no coercion in religion<sup>(440)</sup>; guidance has been set 'clearly' apart from error. Whoever renounces false idols<sup>(441)</sup>

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ  
مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ  
مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ  
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٦﴾ لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَد تَّبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ  
مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ

- 436 He is not like any sovereign with whom people, especially an inner circle of close aides and relatives, dare to intercede, relying on his need of them. Instead, God is free from need of help or assistance.
- 437 He is in full knowledge of the past, present and future of all His creations. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 438 According to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), *al-Kursī* is 'the Footstool', is where Allah's Feet are put, without likening Him to any of His creation; "Nothing is like Him; He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing". (42: 11) It is a separate creation to the 'Arsh, the Throne, and is smaller in size. al-Qurtūbī commenting on *al-Kursī* says in his *Tafsīr*: "Prophetic narrations bear evidence that *al-Kursī* is a great creation in front of the Throne and the Throne is greater than it".
- 439 God Almighty's power and capability are inexhaustible.
- 440 This is a great Islamic principle whereby no one is to be coerced to Believe. Instead, both right and wrong have been clearly demarcated for those of good reason to see. The choice of which to follow is left to the person, but the duty of the Believers is to make sure that people know what is right and what is wrong. Ibn 'Āshūr (*al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, 2: 499) opines that this aya immediately follows *Āyat al-Kursī* for good reason. He has it that: "...all that the previous aya contains of the clear proofs of the Oneness and Greatness of the Creator, and the purgation of Godliness from all the impurities that other nations plagued it with, would surely lead those of good reason to accept this religion 'Islam', whose precepts and dictates are quite clear and upright, willingly, without coercion or compulsion".
- 441 *Aṭ-Ṭāghūt* is everything with regards to which people exceed proportionate limits be it worshipped, followed or obeyed. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

and Believes in Allah, has 'indeed' held tight to the surest of ties<sup>(442)</sup>; there is no undoing it—Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿257﴾ Allah is the Ally of the Believers; He delivers them from darkness into light<sup>(443)</sup>. 'But' Those who Deny, the allies of whom are the false idols; they take them out of light into darkness<sup>(444)</sup>—these are the company of the Fire, therein they abide forever.

﴿258﴾ <sup>(445)</sup>Have you not seen the one<sup>(446)</sup> who argued with Ibrāhīm about his Lord, 'only but' that Allah gave him kingship<sup>(447)</sup>.

وَيُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَى  
لَا انفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾  
اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ  
إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ  
الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى  
الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ  
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ  
أَن آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ

442 A metaphorical tie (or handle) that gives grip to the rope that leads to Allah, i.e. Islam (cf. al-Bukhārī: 3813, Muslim: 2484).

443 The one whose Ally is none but the Almighty God Himself, is helped, supported and guided by Him. He enables that person to walk further and further on the surest road to certitude leaving behind the darkness of loss and breaking through the veils of doubts and vain desires (for which in the original Qur'anic the intensive plural *zulumāt* (lit. multiple darknesses) is applied). The light of Belief and certainty will become manifest to him, he will be given the empowering faculty of discernment, he will ever-elevate to the highest ranks of Belief, and his heart will see for real the Truth of things (cf. 47: 17). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

444 The greatest ally of the misguided is none other than Satan himself. He will throw them into the bottomless pit of loss, draw them step by step into Denial and misguidedness until the clouds of darkness thicken around them to the extent that they will see nothing beyond, especially the light of Belief and its evident signs (cf. 4: 116-121, 24: 39-40). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

445 Ayas 258-260 give tangible examples of how God delivers the Believers from darkness into light (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Such examples fall very much in line with this sura's main theme: to establish firm Belief.

446 He is said to be the Biblical King Nimrod.

447 Such is the nature of despots when gone unchallenged for extended periods of time, they become so megalomaniac that they think that they are God Himself. The Qur'an also speaks of Pharaoh who said to his people: "I am your Lord, Most High" (79: 24).

When Ibrāhīm said: “My Lord is the One Who gives life and causes death”. He said: “I give life and cause death!”<sup>(448)</sup> Then Ibrāhīm said: “Then verily Allah brings the sun out from the East; bring it ‘you’ out from the West!” The Denier was dumbstruck—surely Allah does not guide<sup>(449)</sup> the unjust ones. <sup>(450)</sup> Or like the one who came upon a town deserted and gone to rack and ruin; he said ‘wondering’: “How will Allah restore this to life after its death!” Allah made him die for a hundred years then He brought him back. He ‘Allah’ said: “How much ‘time’ did you stay?” He said ‘guessing’: “A day or part of it!” He ‘Allah’ said: “Nay, but you stayed for a hundred years. Look then at your food and drink it has not become putrid. ‘But’ Look at your donkey – We will make you a Sign to people – see the bones how We splice them together and clothe them with flesh”. When he was sure, he said: “I know ‘for certain’ that Allah is Able over everything”.

إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٨﴾ أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مائة عامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتَ مائة عامٍ فَأَنْظِرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لِمَ يَسْتَسْئِرُ بِنَظْرِي إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَنْظِرْ إِلَى الْعَظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوها لِحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٥٩﴾

448 Citing his power over people’s fates and lives (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

449 God does not aid with His guidance those whose hearts are bent on Denial. Were they really in search of the Truth, God would surely have lead them to the right path. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

450 The previous episode demonstrated God’s Lordship (*Ulūhiyyah*) but this and the next one show His ability to resurrect (*ba’th*) His creation as also prove that God alone is “the One Who gives life and causes death”. (Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿260﴾ 'Or' When Ibrāhīm said: "My Lord, show me how you bring the dead to life". He 'Allah' said: "Did you not Believe!" He said: "Beyond doubt! But that so that my heart will be reassured"<sup>(451)</sup>. "To this he was replied" "Take you then four birds, hold them to you (and cut them to pieces<sup>(452)</sup>), then, on every mountain, put a portion of them. Then call them and they will come hurrying to you. And know that Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise".

﴿261﴾ <sup>(453)</sup>The similitude of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, is that of a grain 'when planted, out of' which sprouts seven ears; in every ear there are one hundred grains—Allah multiplies for whom

وَاِذْ قَالَ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ رَبِّ اَرِنِيْ كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتٰتَ ۗ  
 قَالَ اَوْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُ ۗ قَالَ بَلٰى وَلٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنُّ قَلْبِيْ  
 قَالَ فَخُذْ اَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ اِلَيْكَ  
 ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلٰى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ  
 ادْعُهُنَّ يٰٓاْتِيْنَكَ سَعِيًّا وَاَعْلَمَنَّ اَللّٰهُ عَزِيْزٌ  
 حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٢٦٠﴾

مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ يُنْفِقُوْنَ اَمْوَالَهُمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ  
 كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ اَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِيْ كُلِّ  
 سُنْبُلَةٍ مَّاكَةُ حَبَّةٌ وَاللّٰهُ يُضَعِفُ لِمَنْ

451 The Patriarch of Prophets, Abraham, had no doubt whatsoever in his mind about God's ability to resurrect the dead. This is what the Prophet (ﷺ) implied by saying: "We are more likely to doubt than Ibrāhīm" (al-Bukhārī: 4537, Muslim: 151), when he heard that people said Abraham doubted. Scholars are of the opinion that Abraham wanted to reach the highest rank of knowledge, the so-called 'concrete certitude' (*haqq al-yaqīn*), which comes with actually seeing and living through an experience (cf. al-Wāhidi, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Ashūr). Ibn al-Qayyim has it that: "Knowledge is of three ranks: firm knowledge (*'ilm al-yaqīn*) which comes with receiving news: then, what is being told becomes evident to the sight and heart and knowledge becomes exact knowledge (*'ayn al-yaqīn*), and when it is touched and felt it becomes concrete certitude (*haqq al-yaqīn*) (*Madārīj al-Sālikīn*, 1: 469). So Abraham, the beloved of God, knowing that God was likely to grant him his wish, wanted to actually see resurrection in action.

452 In accordance with al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī citing many scholars.

453 Spending in the cause of God in the manner and decorum detailed below is one of the greatest signs that a person truly Believes in resurrection and the Hereafter. Had he not firmly Believed, he would not have spent his livelihood thus (cf. al-Tawhīdī). Such a call to engaging in charity sums up the morale behind stories of resurrection and not living only for this world.

He wishes<sup>(454)</sup>, Allah is All-Encompassing<sup>(455)</sup>, All-Knowing. <sup>(262)</sup> Those who 'sincerely' spend their wealth and do not thereafter mar what they spend with taunts and hurt<sup>(456)</sup>; theirs is their 'great' reward with their Lord—they will have neither fear nor will they grieve. <sup>(263)</sup> Kind words and forgiveness<sup>(457)</sup>, is better than a charity which is followed by hurt—Allah is Free of Need, All-Forbearing. <sup>(264)</sup> You who Believe, do not render your charity void with taunts and hurt, like the one who spends his wealth to show off to people, while Believing not in Allah and the Last Day. His similitude is of a smooth rock on which there is dust, when heavy downpour hits it, it is left bare<sup>(458)</sup>; they can hold in naught of what they have earned<sup>(459)</sup>—Allah does not guide those who Deny<sup>(460)</sup>.

يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلَيْهِمُ <sup>(٢٦١)</sup> الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ  
 أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَذَكَّرُونَ مَا  
 أَنْفَقُوا مَتَا وَلَا أذَى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
 وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ <sup>(٢٦٢)</sup> \* قَوْلٌ  
 مَعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ  
 يَتَّبِعَهَا أذَىٰ وَاللَّهُ عَنِّي حَلِيمٌ <sup>(٢٦٣)</sup> يَأْتِيهَا  
 الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يُبْطَلُوا صَدَقَتَكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ  
 وَالْأَذَىٰ كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ  
 وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ  
 صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ  
 صَلْدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا  
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ <sup>(٢٦٤)</sup>

454 This is due to the fact that spenders do not all have the same degree of sincerity. What they spend also differs in quality and usefulness and how much a charity is needed also determines its worth. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

455 *Wāsi'*, lit. outspread; that is His Generosity is outspread and wide open and no one should think that such a plentiful reward is an exaggeration. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

456 They give charity out willingly, without constantly reminding people and badgering them about it and, thus, hurting them psychologically.

457 People of benevolence are enjoined to be patient and speak kindly to those who seek assistance from them overlooking the discomfort they might have been caused in the process.

458 Soilless and barren, unable to grow plants.

459 Their insincere spending 'in good faith', with which they thought they earned reward, will be blown to nothingness. They will have no harvest to reap in the Hereafter.

460 Due to their insincerity.

﴿265﴾ And the similitude of those who spend their wealth seeking the Pleasure of Allah and believing firmly 'in His reward', is that of a garden on a mound<sup>(461)</sup> 'when' touched by a downpour, it gives its yield twofold; if no heavy rain falls on it, then a 'mere' drizzle 'would suffice'—Allah is All-Seeing of what you do. ﴿266﴾<sup>(462)</sup> Would one of you wish to have a garden of palm trees and grapevines, through which rivers flow; in it he has all sorts of crops. He gets hit by old age while having 'only but' feeble descendants<sup>(463)</sup>, then it 'the garden' gets struck by a whirlwind in which there is fire, and it gets burned up.

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمُ ابْتِغَاءَ  
مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ  
جَنَّةٍ يَرْوَاهُ آبُهَا وَإِلُّ قَاتَتْ أَكْثَلَهَا  
ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلَّ وَاللَّهُ  
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٥﴾ أَيُّوَدُ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن  
تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّن تَنْجِيلٍ وَأَعْتَابٍ تَجْرِي  
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ، فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ  
وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَةٌ ضِعْفًا  
فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ ۗ

- 461 Gardens, farms and thickets that are on elevated ground are more fertile than lower placed ones due to the fact that their rich soil mostly remains intact, not being depleted or swept away by running water or streams; such gardens are also more exposed to the wind which results in easier pollination and are much more exposed to the sun, the source of light. This is the analogy God draws of the charity of the sincere. No matter how much it is, it grows and prospers. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 462 Here is a third parable demonstrating the three states of givers: the Deniers, the sincere Believers, and those who Believe, but who follow their charity by taunting and hurting the recipient’s feelings, thus rendering their charity ‘void’ (2: 246) (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). They give out in charity and gain tremendous reward for it but it gets hit by the devastating whirlwind of tormenting the needy and burns all down to dust. When it is time to reap the harvest of the wealth spent in ‘good’ deeds, a time when it is most needed, then that owner being too old and infirm and his dependents very young and helpless, just like this imaginary garden, will find it swept away overnight with nothing but sorrow left. On the Day of Judgement they come to their Lord having earned nothing for their charity (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 463 The father’s dependents are in much need of this garden. However, being weak and helpless, they cannot restore it to its former glory, especially now that their father is old and infirm. Their state is a desperate one.

Thus Allah expounds the Signs for you so that you might contemplate. <sup>4267</sup> You who Believe, spend out of the best of what you have earned and what We brought out of earth for you<sup>(464)</sup>; and do not aim for the worthless of it to spend 'in charity', while you 'yourselves' would not take it unless 'disdainfully' with closed eyes—know that Allah is Free of Need, All-Praiseworthy. <sup>4268</sup> Satan promises<sup>(465)</sup> you poverty, and incites you to immorality<sup>(466)</sup>. And Allah promises you forgiveness by Him and abundance—verily Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. <sup>4269</sup> He 'Allah' gives wisdom<sup>(467)</sup> to whoever He wishes; whoever is given wisdom, has been endowed with plentiful goodness—none will contemplate except those of good reason. <sup>4270</sup> Whatever 'charity' you spend or vow<sup>(468)</sup> you make,

كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَنِّي حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾ الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدْكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٩﴾ يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٧٠﴾ وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ نَفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ مِنْ نَذْرٍ

464 Crops and minerals (gold, silver and the like). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

465 Intimidates people with poverty if they spend their money in charity. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

466 *al-fahshā’* signifies all bad and immoral deeds. Ibn al-Qayyim says: “Exegetes unanimously agree that *al-fahshā’* here means *miserliness*” (*Tarīq al-Hijratayn*, p. 375).

467 Spending in the cause of God, seeing the rewards that are in store for those who engage in such charitable acts, is practical wisdom. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

468 *Nadhr* is vowing to make obligatory for oneself that which is not, usually in return for a Godly favour. For example, by feeding a number of destitutes at the time of one’s marriage.

Allah knows about it—the wrongdoers have no aides<sup>(469)</sup>. ﴿271﴾ Should you make your charity public, all well and good it is ‘indeed’, but that should you conceal it and give it to the poor is better for you<sup>(470)</sup> and ‘Allah’ will atone some of your sins ‘for it’—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do. ﴿272﴾<sup>(471)</sup> It is not

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٢٧١﴾ إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ ۗ وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ ۗ وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٧٢﴾ \* لَيْسَ

- 469 Those who withhold from giving out what is due, fulfilling their vows, or whose spending and vows are in contradiction to what pleases God, will not be spared His Punishment. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)
- 470 Observing secrecy while giving out voluntary, non-prescribed charity, in particular (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah), to the poor is better than making it public because it ensures the recipient’s dignity is maintained and is closer to sincerity on the part of the giver (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). Among the seven categories of people who will be sheltered under the Shade of God’s Throne, on the Day of Judgement, when there will be no other shade except it, is: “... a man who gives out a charity making it secret, so much so that his left hand would not know how much ‘or what’ his right hand spent”. (al-Bukhārī: 1423, Muslim: 1031)
- 471 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) explains this aya as follows: “He ‘The Prophet (ﷺ)’ used to command us not to give out charity except to Muslims until this aya was revealed. After it, he commanded us to give charity to whoever asks for it, no matter what religion they follow” (Ibn Abū Ḥātim). He further explains that the reason behind this aya’s revelation was that Muslims were of two minds about giving out charity to their Denying relatives and when they asked the Prophet (ﷺ), he gave them permission and this aya was revealed (al-Bazzār: 5042, al-Ṭabarānī: 12403, al-Wāḍi‘ī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Musnad*: 630). Asmā’ bint Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنها) was visited by her Denying mother, during a truce with the Quraysh. She sought the Prophet’s permission to give charity to her mother and he allowed her (al-Bukhārī: 5979, Muslim: 1003). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “A man said: “I shall give out a charity this night!” He went out with it and put it in the hand of a prostitute. When the morning came people started talking ‘wondrously’ saying: “A charity was given to a prostitute!” The man said: “Thank you God, a prostitute! I shall give out a charity!” He went out with it and put it in the hand of a rich man. When the morning came people started talking ‘wondrously’ saying: “A charity was given to a rich man!” The man said: “Thank you God, a rich man! I shall give out a charity!” He went out with



‘incumbent’ for you ‘Prophet’ to guide them<sup>(472)</sup>, but Allah guides whoever He wills. Whatever good you spend is for your ‘own’ selves. You ‘should not’ spend except seeking Allah’s Face<sup>(473)</sup>. Whatever good you spend will be paid back fully to you, and you will not be wronged<sup>(474)</sup>. ﴿273﴾ ‘Give out’ To the poor who are wholly wrapped up in the path of Allah<sup>(475)</sup>; ‘as’ they cannot move about the land.

عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَئِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي  
مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَا يُنْفِكُوهُ  
وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَا  
تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُؤْتِ الْيَتِيمَ وَأَنْتُمْ  
لَا تَنْظُمُونَ ﴿٢٧٣﴾ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْصَرُوا  
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ

it and put it in the hand of a burglar. When the morning came people started talking ‘wondrously’ saying: “A charity was given to a burglar!” The man said: “Thank you God, a prostitute, a rich man and a burglar!” Then he was approached and it was said to him: “As for your charity, it has been accepted; the prostitute might use it to give up her profession, the rich man might reflect and take to giving out of his wealth and the burglar might give up his thieving”. (Muslim: 1022). The morality behind the aya is such as to encourage Believers to spend in charity sincerely and in good faith, seeking only God’s pleasure no matter who the recipient of that charity is.

- 472 The Prophet’s mission was to guide people to the right path of God. Guidance here does not denote that of directing people to or showing them the right path (*hidāyat al-irshād*), but rather that of making them actually follow that path (*hidāyat tawfīq*). This kind of guidance is left to God alone. (Cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa‘dī)
- 473 You are the ones who will actually benefit from it, first and foremost, should you be truly sincere and seek only God’s Pleasure, aiming to enter Paradise to actually see God’s Most Beautiful Face, which is the greatest Bounty ever. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 474 Neither cheated nor defrauded and you will be rewarded for it precisely. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 475 Although honest charity can be given to anyone, the most deserving of it are Believers who are poor as a result of their having dedicated themselves to the worship of God and, as a result, are held back from earning their livelihoods (al-Rāzī, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Some great exegetes are of the opinion that these are the ones who are caught up fighting in the cause of God and, thus, cannot be left to engage in other worldly matters (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ṭarīq al-Hijratayn*, p. 377, al-Sa‘dī).

The ignorant thinks them well-off because of their reticence<sup>(476)</sup>; you will know them by their signs—they do not beg of people importunately. Whatever good you spend, Allah is All-Knowing of it. <sup>(274)</sup> Those who spend their wealth ‘in charity’ by night and day, secretly and openly, theirs will be their reward from their Lord, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve<sup>(477)</sup>.

يَحْسَبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ  
تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ  
إِلْحَاقًا وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٤﴾ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ  
وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ  
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ  
يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٤﴾

<sup>(275)</sup> ‘While’ Those who devour usury<sup>(478)</sup> will only rise up in a way similar to he who is touched by the devil<sup>(479)</sup>. That for saying: “Trade and usury are the same”; Allah has made trade lawful, and He made usury unlawful. Whoever gets a warning from His Lord and detests<sup>(480)</sup>, for him what is gone is gone,

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا  
يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَخَبَّطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ  
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا  
وَإَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ  
مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَاتَّهَىٰ فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ

476 Holding back from begging.

477 They will be saved from trepidation of the future and sorrow over the past, i.e. they will attain what they desire and be spared from what they apprehend. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

478 *Ribā*, a recurrent theme in the Qur’an, is a financial transaction in which the lender loans money out and in return gets the principal capital plus interest. Whereas giving out money in charity is strongly encouraged, as seen in these ayas, usury is considered one of the seven cardinal sins (*al-sab‘ al-mūbiqāt*) in Islam, because it cuts against the grain of the true Believing spirit as expounded in the Qur’an; essentially, it entails exploitation of the economically vulnerable by the strong and resourceful.

479 The image given here, of a person possessed by the devil staggering while standing and walking unsteadily as they are resurrected for the Day of Judgement, is meant to repulse people from such transactions. It is also a just requital because it mimics their insatiable lust for money in this life making them declare lawful what is not, thus twisting the laws ordained by God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

480 Halts dealing in such a transaction.

and Allah will decide His case<sup>(481)</sup>. Whoever backtracks<sup>(482)</sup>, these are the company of the Fire, therein they abide forever<sup>(483)</sup>. ﴿276﴾ Allah extirpates usury<sup>(484)</sup> and fosters<sup>(485)</sup> charities—Allah likes not every tenacious Denier, ‘wonted’ committer of sins. ﴿277﴾ Those who Believe, do good deeds, keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms, theirs will be ‘justly’ their reward from their Lord, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve<sup>(486)</sup>. ﴿278﴾ You who Believe, be Mindful of Allah and relinquish what is left of ‘outstanding’ usury<sup>(487)</sup>, if you are ‘really’ Believers.

وَأْمُرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٧٦﴾ يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُزِيهِ الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٧٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٨﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾

481 Judging by his intentions and motives. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Baghawī)

482 Goes back to dealing in usury knowing how sinful it is. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Baghawī)

483 Rebellious, sinning Believers will not stay in Hellfire indefinitely. Instead, they will abide in it for a very long period of time and for as long as it takes to cleanse them of their sins. (Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’ dī)

484 One way to interpret this is that God would not bless or prosper the money gained through such an immoral transaction (cf. 30: 39). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’ dī)

485 *Yurbī* (lit. to grow and cultivate translated here as foster) is semantically related to *ribā* (usury; originally meaning ‘increase’). It is used strategically here by way of correcting this misnomer, showing what blessed investment, which is likely to grow and flourish, really is: namely, charity (cf. 2: 245). Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever gives in charity the equal of a date ‘of palm’ from a good source – Allah only accepts what is good – Allah will receive it with His Right Hand. Then He will nurture it for him as much as one of you cares for his young foal, until it becomes as big as a mountain”. (al-Bukhārī: 1410) Charity is described in the Qur’an as a trade with God that will not go to ruin (cf. 35: 29).

486 Cf. 2: 274 above.

487 The remaining usurious interest due on transactions conducted before usury was declared unlawful. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’ dī)

﴿279﴾ But if you do not do so, then be warned of a war by Allah and His Messenger. But if you give ‘usury’ up, ‘duly’ yours is your principal ‘capital’—you will not do wrong nor will you be wronged<sup>(488)</sup>. ﴿280﴾ But if he ‘the indebted’ is ‘financially’ constrained, then ‘grant him’ a deferral until a time of ease ‘for him’. But that you shall remit ‘the debt as’ charity is better for you, if only but you knew<sup>(489)</sup>. ﴿281﴾ Be Mindful of a Day on which you shall be returned to Allah and every soul shall be paid in full what it earned—they will not be wronged.

﴿282﴾ <sup>(490)</sup> You who Believe, when you enter into a debt ‘agreement’ for a specified term, then write it down; and let a scribe, write it down between you even-handedly. Let no scribe refuse writing as Allah has taught him<sup>(491)</sup>;

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ  
وَإِنْ نُبِئْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ زُجُومٌ مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ  
وَلَا تَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾ وَإِنْ كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ  
فَنظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ  
لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨٠﴾ وَاتَّقُوا  
يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ  
نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدِينٍ إِلَىٰ  
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ  
كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَنْ  
يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ

488 Not doing wrong by receiving interest and not being wronged against by preserving your principal capital in full. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

489 Abū Qatādah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever is hopeful that Allah will spare him the hardships of the Day of Judgement, then let him grant deferral to a constrained indebted, or relieve him ‘altogether’”. (Muslim: 1563)

490 This is known as *āyat ad-Dayn*, the aya of Debt, and it is the longest aya in the Qur’an. It rounds off and explains, just in as much detail, the preceding discourse about financial dealings: charity – encouraging Believers to be ever-ready to help the needy and come to their aid; usury – warning them against exploiting people’s weaknesses; and now debt – ensuring that it is minutely written down and sealed off (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

491 Being learned is a great favour from God.

let him write and let the one who owes the right<sup>(492)</sup> dictate; and let him be Mindful of Allah, his Lord, and not hold in any of it<sup>(493)</sup>. But if the one who owes the right is incompetent<sup>(494)</sup>, weak<sup>(495)</sup>, or cannot dictate<sup>(496)</sup>, then let his agent<sup>(497)</sup> dictate fairly. Call in to witness 'the agreement' two of your men-folk; but if not two men then 'be it' one man and two women whom you approve of as witnesses; perchance one of them 'women' slips up, the other would remind her. Let no witnesses refuse when asked 'to bear witness'. Do not be weary of writing it<sup>(498)</sup> down, be it small or large, marking its specified term. This<sup>(499)</sup> is fairer before Allah, surer for upholding testimony<sup>(500)</sup>, and more likely to eliminate doubtfulness; unless that it is an immediate trade 'transaction' that you run among yourselves;

فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسْ مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمْلَ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَسْأَلُكُمْ مِنَ الشَّهَادَةِ أَنْ تَكُونُوا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَأَمْرَاتَانِ مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا وَلَا تَسْمَعُوا أَنْ تَكْتُمُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ

492 The debtor, to underline his full awareness and commitment to settle the debt. (al-Sa'dī)

493 That is not confessing the whole sum of the debt.

494 The great student of Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه), Mujāhid (quoted in al-Ṭabarī), is of the opinion that *al-safīh* here is one who is not informed enough to know how to dictate such a legal deed in the correct manner.

495 Young or frail. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

496 Unable to articulate because of a temporal or permanent impairment. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

497 The one in charge of his affairs. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

498 The agreement.

499 Writing debts down.

500 That you should not doubt the truthfulness of a testimony. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

then you will not be guilty of sin that you do not write it down, yet bring in those who bear witness when you engage in trade; let no harm come to ' or be caused by' either scribe or witness, should you do this, then this is transgression on your part; be Mindful of Allah; Allah teaches you—Allah is All-Knowing of everything. ﴿283﴾ If you are on a journey, and you cannot find a scribe, then pledges<sup>(501)</sup> ' should be' handed in; 'but' if you trust each other<sup>(502)</sup>, let the one who is trusted fulfil his trust and Be Mindful of Allah, his Lord. Do not withhold testimony<sup>(503)</sup>; whoever withholds it, then his heart is sinful—Allah is All-Knowing of what you do.

﴿284﴾ To Allah belongs all that is in the Heavens and Earth. Should you reveal what lurks within your souls<sup>(504)</sup> or hide it, Allah will hold you accountable for it<sup>(505)</sup>;

فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا ۗ وَأَشْهَدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ ۚ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فَسُوقٌ بِكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٣﴾ \* وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهْنَ مَقْبُوضَةٌ ۗ فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فليؤدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِمِنَ أَمَدَّتْهُرَ وَلِيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُرَ ۗ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٤﴾

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُرَ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ ۗ

501 A deposit of personal property as security for the debt which is liable to forfeiture in the event of default (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

502 That is both parties trust each other enough not to write a deed, bring witnesses, or exchange bonds.

503 In a scenario where the indebted fails to honour his word and denies the debt, anyone who witnessed the deal has to come forward and speak the truth.

504 The thoughts that go on in one's mind.

505 God favoured the Believing community by not holding them to account for the thoughts that go on in their minds, unless they put them into action. Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah will not hold my nation accountable for internal dialogue, 'the thoughts that go on in their minds', unless they speak it out or bring it into action". (al-Bukhārī: 2528; Muslim: 127)

He then absolves whom He wishes and Punishes whom He wishes—surely Allah is Able over everything. ﴿285﴾ (506) The Messenger Believes in what was sent down to him by His Lord as do the Believers; they all Believe in Allah, His angels, Books, Messengers – “We make no distinction between His Messengers” ‘they say’ – and they say: “We listen and we obey. Your forgiveness, our Lord ‘we beseech’; to you is ‘our’ return”. ﴿286﴾ Allah would not charge a soul with that which it cannot bear; to it belongs what it earned and against it is held what it has committed.

فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٨٥﴾ ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِن رَّبِّهِ ۚ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلُّ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ ۚ وَكُتُبِهِ ۚ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ لَّا نَفَرِقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّن رُّسُلِهِ ۚ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨٦﴾ لَّا يَكْفِيكَ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا ۖ لَّا أُوسِعُهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ

- 506 About the virtue of these two last ayas of *al-Baqarah*, Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “While Gabriel was sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ), he heard a creaking sound from above, lifted his head and said: “This is a Heavenly door. It has been opened today and never ever has it been opened before”. Then an angel descended to Earth through it. He ‘Gabriel’ said: “This is an angel who has descended to Earth and never ever has he descended before”. The angel greeted them and said: “I bring you glad tidings of two lights that you are given and never have they been given to any Prophet before you: *Fātiḥat al-Kitāb* ‘The Opening of the Book’ and the endings of *al-Baqarah*. You shall never recite a letter of any of them without your Prayer being answered”. (Muslim: 806) Also ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Āmir (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever recites the last two ayas of *al-Baqarah*, they will suffice him ‘as a shield from the evil’.” (al-Bukhārī: 5008) ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When the Messenger of Allah ascended to heaven on the nocturnal journey, he was made to reach the Lote Tree of Extremity (*Sidrat al-Muntahā*)... The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was given three things: the five obligatory Prayers, the endings of *al-Baqarah* and whoever does not Associate anything with Allah of his nation will be absolved from even the thrusters, ‘major sins that thrust people in Hellfire’”. (Muslim: 173) As a whole, these two ayas constitute a declaration of unshakable Faith. The kind of Faith Islam natures as evident in *al-Baqarah*.

'We pray to you' "Our Lord, do not charge us for what we forgot or erred 'in doing'; our Lord, do not lay on us what is burdensome as you did unto those who came before us; our Lord, do not burden us with that which we have no power over; forgive us, absolve us and have mercy on us. You are our Ally; make us prevail over the Denying people".

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا  
وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ  
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحْمِلْنَا مَا  
لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَعَنْفُ عَنَّا وَعَافِرُنَا  
وَأَرْحَمَنَا أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ  
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾







سُورَةُ آلِ عِمْرَانَ

*Āl 'Imrān*

(The Family of 'Imrān)



## Āl ‘Imrān (The Family of ‘Imrān)

**Title:** it takes its name from the Family of ‘Imrān, who, along with the House of Ibrāhīm (mentioned in Aya 33), are cited as moral, virtuous paragons chosen by Allah because of their devotion to His worship. They are to be emulated by all humans.

**Merit:** the meritorious status of this sura is on a par with that of *al-Baqarah*. In fact, they are both known as *al-Zahrāwān* (lit. The Two Luminous Suras). These two suras will, along with the rest of the Qur’anic, come to intercede on behalf of the one who claims them as his own on the Day of Judgement; yet they are set apart from the other suras of the Qur’an. An-Nawwās Ibn Sam‘ān (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The Qur’an, along with the people who used to adhere to its commandments, will be brought on the Day of Judgement, with *al-Baqarah* and *Āl ‘Imrān* at the front... as if they were two dark clouds, or two shades between them is light, or two huge flocks of birds, flying closely together arguing on behalf of he who owns them”. (Muslim: 805)

**Theme:** the main theme of this sura is to further nurture the Believing spirit and bring it to maturity. It encourages holding fast to the teachings and dictates of Islam, by proving Allah’s Oneness with Signs and evidences. All this is coupled with a refutation of the doubts cast on Islam and its precepts.

**Key:** the sura is an answer to the Believers’ Prayer, found at the very end of *al-Baqarah*; to prevail over the Deniers. It begins with the ultimate declaration of Faith, “*Allah, there is no god but Him*”, which constitutes the same words found in the Qur’an’s greatest aya, the Aya of *al-Kursi*; the very word over which the epic battle of Belief and Denial is fought. Here, Belief and Denial come head to head in the battles of words and arguments against the People of the Book, and that of taking up arms against the Arab pagans. In both confrontations, Belief emerges victorious and establishes itself firmly on the world stage. In order to win this victory, Believers are repeatedly and strongly encouraged to remain steadfast and be Mindful.

The overall milieu in which *al-Baqarah* is set carries over here and is expounded upon with further illustrations and more details. In the same vein, it takes the early Madinan period as the background against

which it plays out its themes and characters: the People of the Book, the Deniers, the Battles of Badr and Uḥud, building the desired Muslim character and introducing new laws for the community. Moreover, it is useful to realize that the reason for the revelation of a number of passages of *Āl 'Imrān* is to refute and rebut the arguments of the learned Arabian Christians, better known as the Christians of Najrān, who came to Madinah to debate with the Prophet (ﷺ) regarding matters related to Faith. The Jews of Madinah are also addressed at length.

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*

﴿١﴾ *Alif, Lām, Mīm*<sup>(1)</sup>. ﴿٢﴾ Allah, there is no god but Him, the Ever-Living, the All-Sufficient<sup>(2)</sup>. ﴿٣﴾ He sent down to you ‘Muhammad’ the Book<sup>(3)</sup> with the Truth confirming what came before it; He ‘also’ sent down<sup>(4)</sup> the Torah and the Evangel<sup>(5)</sup> ﴿٤﴾ earlier as guidance for people and He sent down the Distinguisher<sup>(6)</sup>.

الرَّ ۙ لِلّٰهِ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّوْمُ ﴿١﴾ نَزَّلَ  
عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ  
وَاَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْاِنْجِيلَ ﴿٢﴾ مِنْ قَبْلُ هٰدِيَ  
لِلنَّاسِ وَاَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ ﴿٣﴾

- 1 These disjointed letters are meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the Truthfulness of the Message, as they highlight the Qur’an’s inimitable nature (cf. 2: 1).
- 2 Cf. 2: 255. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allah’s Greatest Names are found in these two ayas: “Your God is one God. There is no god but him — *ar-Rahmān* (the Most Beneficent), *ar-Rahīm* (the Most Merciful)” (2: 163) and: “The beginning of *Āl ‘Imrān*: “*Alif, Lām, Mīm. Allah, there is no god but Him, al-Ḥayy* (the Ever-Living), *al-Qayyūm* (the All-Sufficient)””. (al-Tirmidhī: 3478)
- 3 The Qur’an.
- 4 The difference between *nazala* ‘sent down’ which is mentioned with regards to the Book of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and *anzala*, also translated here as ‘sent down’, which is said with regards to the Torah and the Evangel, is that the first, *nazzala* signifies that the action took place in installments over a long period of time whilst the second, *anzala*, happened once and as a whole (cf. al-Ṭabarī).
- 5 *al-Injīl* (Evangel; Gospel) is the Arabic name for the Book that was given to Jesus (ﷺ). It is mentioned in the Qur’an as one of the Scriptures that were revealed by God; the others being: the *Ṣuḥuf* (Scrolls) of Abraham and Moses (87: 19), *al-Zabūr* - possibly the Psalms (4: 163, 17:55) - that were given to Prophet David, *al-Tawrāt* (the Torah), and the Qur’an itself, alternatively referred to as *al-Kitāb*, the Book. *al-Injīl*, in Islam, is not to be identified with the extant biblical ‘New Testament’; rather it is believed, as told in the Qur’an, to have been revealed to Prophet Jesus (ﷺ) as a whole (cf. 5: 46). It is also believed to have either been lost or corrupted beyond recognition. Needless to say, the same goes for the Torah, to a great extent.
- 6 Ibn Taymiyyah says: “The word *al-furqān* signifies that which separates Truth from falsehood. To illustrate, take as example the Signs with which the Prophets were sent: Moses’ serpent, white hand and the splitting of the

Indeed those who Deny the Signs<sup>(7)</sup> of Allah will have a severe Punishment—Allah is All-Prevailing, capable of vengeance<sup>(8)</sup>.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ  
وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ﴿٧﴾

<sup>(5)</sup> Indeed nothing, neither in Earth nor in the Heavens, is hidden from Allah. <sup>(6)</sup> He is the One Who forms you in ‘your mothers’ wombs as He wills—there is no god but Him, the All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٥﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ

<sup>(7)</sup> He is the One Who sent down the Book to you ‘Muhammad’; among its Signs<sup>(9)</sup> are those which are impregnable<sup>(10)</sup> – these are the

sea, etc. By extension, the Qur’an is a *furqān* because it is a great Sign of the Prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ). It is also a *furqān* in that it sets apart Truth from falsehood, as mentioned in: “*Glorified is He Who sent al-Furqān (the Distinguisher/Qur’an) to His servant*”. (25:1) This is why a number of scholars opine that *al-furqān* here ‘Aya 3:4’ is the Qur’an itself. The word *al-furqān* further means God’s victory to His Prophets and Believing servants and the vanquishing of their enemies, because, with this support, God separates His allies from His enemies: “...*the day of furqān (the Battle of Uḥud) when the two parties met...*” (8:41). (Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 27:227) al-Zamakhsharī (1:336), al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī (*al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, 3:22-23) and al-Qāsimī (2: 255) also opine that *al-furqān* is another epithet of the Qur’an used here to further highlight its high standing. The Qur’an is referred to as *al-Furqān* in this instance to set the scene for the confrontation that unfolds in this sura (cf. the ‘Key’ in the Introduction to this sura), and to underline the prevalence of Belief over Denial, which are set widely apart in and by the Qur’an.

7 Revelations.

8 *Dhū intiqām* (revenge, vengeance, retribution), is not an absolute Attribute or Name of Almighty God, but it is bound by limitation to certain instances of rebellion against the Almighty’s will (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn). Hence why I have chosen here not to capitalize it as I always do with other Divine Names or Attributes.

9 Ayas, Qur’anic verses.

10 *Muḥkamāt*, lit. closely-knit. The meaning of all such Qur’anic ayas is distinct and clear, free from doubt and uncertainty. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

foundation of the Book<sup>(11)</sup> – and others which are equivocal<sup>(12)</sup>. Those in whose hearts is deviance follow the equivocal ‘portions’ of it, seeking ‘to cause’ quandary and aim for ‘manipulating’ its interpretation—none knows its ‘true’ interpretation except Allah<sup>(13)</sup>. Those who are firm in knowledge<sup>(14)</sup> say: “We Believe in it; all of it comes from our Lord”—none will contemplate ‘this’ except the people of sound reason. ﴿8﴾ ‘Those of firm knowledge pray:’ “Our Lord, do not cause our hearts to swerve<sup>(15)</sup> after You have guided us and grant us a mercy from Your own—You are indeed the Munificent Giver;

هُنَّ اُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَاٰخِرُ مِمَّا شَهِدَتْ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ فِي قُلُوْبِهِمْ رِيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُوْنَ مَا تَشَبَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَاَبْتِغَاءَ تَاْوِيْلِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَاْوِيْلَهُ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَالرَّاسِخُوْنَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُوْلُوْنَ ءَاَمَنَّا بِهِ ۗ كُلُّ مَرْءٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ اِلَّا اُولُوْا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾ رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْ قُلُوْبَنَا بَعْدَ اِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً ۗ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿٨﴾

- 11 *Umm al-Kitāb*, lit. the Mother of the Book, i.e. the great majority of the Qur’an’s ayas and on which a true understanding of it is built. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 12 *Mutashābihāt*, lit. similar, and whereby the meaning of some Qur’anic ayas is unclear to some or most people. Interpretation of these, however, is known by referring to those ayas that are impregnable, *muḥkamāt*. Yet, as said in the aya itself, there still remain some whose meaning is only known by Allah.
- 13 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) says: “The Qur’an has four aspects (*awjuh*): *tafsīr* (exegesis), which the learned know; *al-‘arabiyyah* (the language) which ‘well-versed’ Arabs understand; *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* (permitted and forbidden things), of which no one is allowed to be ignorant of; and *al-ta’wīl* (interpretation), which only God knows”. (Muqātil, *Tafsīr Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān*, 1:27)
- 14 People of true knowledge are lauded here with the worthy epithet “*al-rāsikhūna fī al-‘ilm*”, the well-grounded in knowledge. Unlike others, they know enough and are so humble as to say: “God knows best!”
- 15 Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) said that: “The Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray most by saying: “O He Who changes hearts, make my heart firm in Your religion” (*yā Muqallib al-qulūb, thabbit qalbī ‘alā dīnika*). When she asked him the reason for this, he (ﷺ) replied, saying: “Umm Salamah, know that every human’s heart is between two Fingers of Allah’s. Whoever He wills, He makes steadfast, and Whoever He wills He causes to deviate”. (al-Tirmidhī: 3522)



﴿9﴾ our Lord, You will surely gather 'all' people on a Day<sup>(16)</sup> in which there is no doubt—verily Allah does not break His appointment”.

﴿10﴾ Those who Deny, nothing – neither their wealth nor their children – will spare them from Allah—those are fuel for the Fire. ﴿11﴾ ‘Just’ like the habitual ways of the people of Pharaoh and those ‘who came’ before them<sup>(17)</sup>; they Denied our Signs and Allah seized them ‘in Punishment’ for their sins—indeed Allah is severe in Punishment.

﴿12﴾ Say to the Deniers: “You shall be overpowered<sup>(18)</sup> and herded to Hellfire—indeed it is the worst of beds. ﴿13﴾ There is a Sign<sup>(19)</sup> for you in two parties who met ‘in battle’: one fights in the cause of Allah, ‘while’ the other is Denying. They ‘the Believers’ saw them ‘the Deniers’ twice their number before their own eyes.

رَبَّنَا اِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيْعَادَ ﴿٩﴾

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَنْ نُّغْفِرَ عَنْهُمْ اَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا اَوْلَادَهُمْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْئًا وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ وَقُودُ النَّارِ ﴿١٠﴾ كَذٰبِ اٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوْا بٰيٰتِنَا فَاَخَذَهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِذُنُوْبِهِمْ وَاللّٰهُ سَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١١﴾

قُلْ لِلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا سَتَعْلَبُوْنَ وَتُحْشَرُوْنَ اِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وِبَسَّ الْمِهَادِ ﴿١٢﴾ قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ اٰيَةٌ فِيْ فِئَتِيْنَ التَّتَقٰتِ فَاِنَّهُنَّ تَقَاتِلْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَاُخْرٰى كَافِرَةٌ يَّرَوْنَهُمْ فَمِنْهُمْ رَاٰى الْعَيْنُ

16 The Day of Judgement.

17 These are cited here as an example of how the laws and canons of God make the days of victory and defeat alternate between Believers and Deniers; a fact mentioned later in Aya 137. The example of Pharaoh, the mightiest of all Deniers, who fought against the frailest of Believers, the people of Moses, heartens the early Believing community of Madinah, who, by worldly measures, were always the weaker side in their early confrontations. The aya that follows gives them the good news of a Godly promise of victory.

18 Beaten in battle by the Believers (cf. 58: 21, 40: 51). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

19 The Battle of Badr is evidence enough of God’s fulfilment of His promise to the Believers that they will defeat the Deniers.

Allah supports with His victory whoever He wills—indeed in this there is insight to the people of reason<sup>(20)</sup>.

﴿14﴾ Prettified for mankind are objects of desire<sup>(21)</sup>: women, children, hoards upon hoards of gold and silver, fine<sup>(22)</sup> steeds, cattle and ploughing grounds; these are the pleasures of this worldly life, but with Allah lies the best of returns. ﴿15﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “Shall I tell you what is better than this? For the Mindful with their Lord are Gardens under which rivers flow, in which they eternally abide; for them in these are purified spouses, and Pleasure<sup>(23)</sup> from Allah—Allah is All-Seeing of ‘His’ servants.

وَاللّٰهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصْرِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّاُولِي الْاَبْصٰرٍ ﴿١٣﴾

رٰزٍ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوٰتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ  
وَالْبَنِيْنَ وَالْقَنَاطِرِ الْمَقْنَطَرِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ  
وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْاَنْعَامِ  
وَالْحَرْثِ ذٰلِكَ مَتَعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللّٰهُ  
عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَاٰبِ ﴿١٤﴾ \* قُلْ اُوْنِيْتُكُمْ  
بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذٰلِكُمْ لِلَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
جَنَّٰتٌ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ  
فِيْهَا وَاَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ  
وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيْرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿١٥﴾

- 20 The Believers were made to realize prior to locking swords with the Deniers that the latter’s forces were actually double their own numbers and, by purely worldly standards, this meant that the party so much less in number would eventually be defeated. Yet, Divine Wisdom made them see this with their own eyes in such a way as to only further strengthen their Faith; they were totally dependent upon God for assistance and knew for sure that victory comes only from Him. (Ibn Kathīr)
- 21 It is human nature to desire such things as are alluring. Yet the next two ayas explain that true Faith requires resisting worldly temptations, putting them second to seeking God’s Pleasure, and devoting oneself to God. For all this, the reward is eternal joy and bliss.
- 22 *Musawwamah*, marked by their beauty. (al-Baghawī)
- 23 Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allah Almighty will call the people of Paradise: ‘People of Paradise!’ They will reply: ‘All pleasure is Yours our Lord, yes!’” He says: “Are you satisfied?” They reply: “Why wouldn’t we be when You gave us what You did not give any other of your creation!” He says: “I shall give you ‘yet’ better than that!” They reply: “Lord! What is better than that?” He says: “I bestow My Pleasure upon you and I shall never be Displeased with you again”.” (al-Bukhārī: 6549, Muslim: 2829)

﴿16﴾ They are the ones who say: “Our Lord, indeed we have Believed! Forgive us our sins, and spare us the torment of Hellfire”.

﴿17﴾ “They are” The forbearing, the truthful, the utterly devout, the ‘charitably’ spending, and the ‘persistently’ asking for forgiveness in the late-night hours<sup>(24)</sup>. ﴿18﴾ Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him<sup>(25)</sup>; the angels and the people of knowledge ‘bear witness to that too and that’ He is the upholder of justice. There is no god but Him, the All-Prevailing the All-Wise.

﴿19﴾ The religion with Allah is *Islam*<sup>(26)</sup>. The ones who were given the Book only differed after ‘true’ knowledge came to them, out of transgression among themselves. Whoever Denies Allah’s Signs, then Allah is swift in reckoning. ﴿20﴾ If they argue with you ‘Muhammad’, say: “I have devoutly submitted my face<sup>(27)</sup>

الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اٰتِنَا اٰمَنًا فَاَعْفِرْ  
لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَرَبَّنَا وَعَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ  
وَالصّٰدِقِيْنَ وَالْقٰنِتِيْنَ وَالْمُنْفِقِيْنَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِيْنَ  
بِالْاَسْحَارِ ﴿١٧﴾ شَهِدَ اللّٰهُ اَنَّهُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ  
وَالْمَلٰئِكَةُ وَاُوْلُو الْعِلْمِ قَايِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ  
لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿١٨﴾

اِنَّ الدِّيْنَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ الْاِسْلَامُ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ  
الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوْا الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا  
جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بِغَيۜثِنۜهُمۜ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ  
بَاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩﴾  
فَاِنْ حَآجُوْكَ فَقُلْ اَسَمِعْتُ وَجِهِيْ

24 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Our Lord, glory be His, descends every night to the lowest Heaven, when only the last third of it remains, and He says: “Would there be one who supplicates to Me so that I may answer him? Would there be one who asks of Me so that I may give him? Would there be one who seeks My forgiveness so that I may forgive him?””. (al-Bukhārī: 1145, Muslim: 758)

25 Testifying to the Oneness of God is the perfect epitome of Belief.

26 Cf. 3:85. Ibn Taymiyyah (*Jāmi‘ al-Masā’il*, 6:220) says: “*Islam* is surrender to Allah alone. It conveys two meanings: yielding and surrender, and devoting one’s surrender to Allah alone”.

27 The ‘face’ is used metonymically to mean a person’s whole self. It is chosen to represent the whole here because it is the most dignified part of the human body.

to Allah along with those who follow me”. Say to those who were given the Book and the illiterates<sup>(28)</sup>: “Do you devoutly submit?” If they devoutly submit then they are guided, but if they turn away, then you are tasked with nothing more than delivering ‘the Message’ and Allah is indeed All-Seeing of ‘His’ servants.

لِلّٰهِ وَمَنْ اتَّبَعْنٰ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰتُوا الْكِتٰبَ وَالْاُمِّيِّنَ ؕ اَسْمٰمُۢمۡۙ فَاِنْ اَسْمٰمُوۡا فَقَدْ اَهْتَدُوۡا ۗ وَاِنْ تَوَلَّوۡا فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيۡكَ الْبَلٰغُۙ وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيۡرٌۙ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠﴾

﴿21﴾ Those who Deny Allah’s Signs, kill the Prophets unjustifiably<sup>(29)</sup> and kill those people who enjoin justice; give them tidings<sup>(30)</sup> of a painful Punishment. ﴿22﴾ These are the ones whose deeds in this worldly life and in the Hereafter will come to nothing—they will have no helpers. ﴿23﴾ Have you ‘Muhammad’ not seen these who were given a portion of the Book<sup>(31)</sup>, when called to the Book of Allah for judgement among them, a party of them turn their backs ‘to it’ unheeding.

اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَكْفُرُوۡنَ بِآيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَيَقْتُلُوۡنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَبْعَثُ اللّٰهُ فِيۡ سَبِيۡلِ حَقِّهِۙ وَيَقْتُلُوۡنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَأۡمُرُوۡنَ بِالْقِسۡطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَيَشۡرَهُمۡۗ بَعۡدَآبِ اٰلِـِٔمِۙ ﴿٢١﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ حَبِطَتۡ اَعۡمَالُهُمۡ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمۡ مِّنۡ نَّصِيۡرٍۙ ﴿٢٢﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِيْنَ اٰتُوا نَصِيۡبًا مِّنَ الْكِتٰبِ يُدْعَوۡنَ اِلَى الْكِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ لِيَحۡكُمَ بَيْنَهُمۡ فَيَتَوَلَّوۡا فِرۡقًا مِّنۡهُمۡ وَهُمْ مُّعۡرِضُوۡنَ ﴿٢٣﴾

28 *al-Ummiyyūn*, the Arab idolaters, who had neither a guiding Book nor any grasp of reading and writing, except very few of them. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 101)

29 Prophets, who are chosen by God from among the seething sea of humanity and set as examples for the rest, can never be killed on proper, justifiable grounds. However, *bi ghayr haqq* (unjustifiably) is mentioned here to further highlight the repulsiveness of such a hideous act and that it is carried out carelessly and unreservedly (Ibn ‘Āshūr). According to the New Testament, Jesus said: “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee*” (Matthew xxiii, 37). See also Matthew xxiii, 34-35, Luke xi, 51, both of which refer to the murder of Zachariah.

30 *Bashshir-hum*, literally means ‘give them good tidings’, and is used here rhetorically by way of mocking them. (Ibn ‘Āshūr)

31 Reference here is being made to the Torah.

﴿24﴾ This is for their saying: “The Fire will only touch us for a few days”—what they used to fabricate in their religion<sup>(32)</sup> has deceived them. ﴿25﴾ How ‘would their state be’ when We gather them on a Day<sup>(33)</sup> in which there is no doubt; every soul shall be requited what it earned in full, and they shall not be wronged.

﴿26﴾ Say: “O Allah, Owner of kingship. You accord kingship to whom You will and wrench<sup>(34)</sup> kingship away from whom You will. You honour whom You will and you disgrace whom You will. In your Hand is all good, You are Able over everything”. ﴿27﴾ “You merge night into day and You merge day into night. You cause the living to come out of the dead and You cause the dead to come out of the living. And You shower with favours whom You will without account”.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَنْ تَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا  
مَّعْدُودَاتٍ وَّعَرَّهْمُ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا  
يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جُمِعْتُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ  
فِيهِ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ  
لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ  
تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعْزِزُ مَنْ  
تَشَاءُ وَتُدْخِلُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِإِذْنِكَ الْحَيَاتِ عَلَى  
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ  
وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ  
الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ  
تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

32 Such as falsely saying that they will only enter Fire, as Punishment for their sins, for a few days and then they will be entered into Paradise.

33 The Day of Judgement.

34 This image, evoked by the verb ‘tanzi‘u’, is that of forcefully tearing away something precious from the tight bear hug of someone holding to it dearly. It is a very fitting image of how those in power are attached to their thrones and never succumb to leaving them. Yet God’s overpowering Will comes between them.

﴿28﴾ No Believers shall take the Deniers as allies<sup>(35)</sup> rather than the Believers. Whoever does this, he has nothing to do with Allah<sup>(36)</sup>; except when you seek refuge from them<sup>(37)</sup>. Allah warns you 'to beware' of Himself—to Allah shall be the 'final' return. ﴿29﴾ Should you hide what lurks in your chests<sup>(38)</sup> or reveal it, Allah knows it and He knows what is in the Heavens and Earth—indeed Allah is Able over everything. ﴿30﴾ On the Day in which every soul shall find all the good that it did 'made' available 'for it'; 'but' every foul 'deed' that it has committed, it wishes it would be at a great distance from it the foul deed; Allah warns you 'to beware' of Himself—Allah is Most Compassionate to 'His' servants.

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ تُقَاتَةٌ وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ. وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨﴾  
 قُلْ إِنْ تَحْفَظُوا مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ تُبْدُوهُ يُعَلِّمَهُ اللَّهُ بِمَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ. وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٣٠﴾

35 *Yattakhidh awliyā'*, take as helpers and aides those whom are held dear, cherished and supported. Deniers are not to be taken as *awliyā'* over and above the Believers (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī). Commenting on his translation of 4:139, Muhammad Asad in his Qur'an translation has this to say: "However, the term ... *awliyā'*... does not indicate, in this context, merely political alliances. More than anything else, it obviously alludes to a 'moral alliance' with the deniers of the Truth: that is to say, to an adoption of their way of life in preference to the way of life of the Believers, in the hope of being 'honoured', or accepted as equals, by the former. Since an imitation of the way of life of confirmed unbelievers must obviously conflict with the moral principles demanded by true Faith, it unavoidably leads to a gradual abandonment of those principles".

36 God disowns those who do such a thing.

37 Fearing infliction of harm by the Deniers, Muslims are given license here to placate the Deniers with their tongues, yet their hearts are to remain firm in Faith. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, al-Sa'dī)

38 The truth that your hearts hide with regards to your relationship with the Deniers. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

﴿31﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "If you 'really' love Allah then follow me<sup>(39)</sup> and Allah shall love you and forgive your sins—Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful". ﴿32﴾ Say: "Obey Allah and the Messenger, but if they take to their heels, then Allah likes not the Deniers".

﴿33﴾ Allah chose 'for honour' Adam, Noah, the House of Ibrāhīm and the Family of 'Imrān over 'and above' all people<sup>(40)</sup>.

﴿34﴾ A line of descent, they take after each other—Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

﴿35﴾ 'Mention' When the woman<sup>(41)</sup> of 'Imrān said: "My Lord, I have vowed what is in my belly<sup>(42)</sup> entirely 'dedicated' for You<sup>(43)</sup>, so accept 'it' from me. You are the All-Hearing, All-Knowing<sup>(44)</sup>".

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

\*إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾

39 The true sign of one's love for Allah is to follow Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and adhere to his teachings and Sunnah.

40 Here, God mentions those whom He honours as they show people the way to His love (Riḍā, al-Manār, 3: 237): Adam whom He created with His own Hands, blew his soul into him, made the angels prostrate themselves to him, taught him the names of everything, and made him father of humanity; Prophet Noah (ﷺ) whom He honoured by making him the first bearer of His Message to humanity and made his posterity remain where all other bloodlines vanished; Prophet Abraham (ﷺ), the beloved of God, and his descendants among whom is a great number of Prophets, including Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ); the Family of 'Imrān: 'Imrān and his wife, their daughter Mary and her son Jesus (ﷺ), who is one of the greatest Prophets of humanity. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

41 His wife.

42 Womb.

43 The carried child is to be dedicated to the worship of Allah and is to spend an entire life tending places of worship. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr)

44 Of the truthfulness of my intentions.

﴿36﴾ When she delivered her<sup>(45)</sup>, she said: “My Lord, I have delivered her a female – Allah knew best what she delivered – and a male is not like a female<sup>(46)</sup>. I name her Maryam ‘Mary’ and I ask for her and her posterity refuge with You from the outcast<sup>(47)</sup> Satan”<sup>(48)</sup>.

﴿37﴾ Then her Lord accepted her cherishingly, made her blossom handsomely, and entrusted her to ‘the charge of’ Zakariyyā ‘Zachariah’<sup>(49)</sup>. Whenever Zakariyyā entered the sanctum upon her, he found her provided for. He said: “Maryam, where did you get this from?” She said: “It is from Allah. Indeed Allah provides for whomever He wishes without account”.

﴿38﴾ There ‘and then’ Zakariyyā prayed to his Lord ‘saying’: “My Lord grant me a righteous posterity, You are All-Hearing of prayers”.

فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ اِنِّیْ وَضَعْتُهَا اُنْثٰی وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَیْسَ الذَّكَرُ کَالْاُنْثٰی وَاِنِّیْ سَمَّیْتُهَا مَرْیَمَ وَاِنِّیْ اُعِیْذُهَا بِکَ وَذُرِّیَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّیْطٰنِ الرَّجِیْمِ ﴿۳۶﴾ فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُوْلٍ حَسَنٍ وَاَنْذَبَهَا نَسًا وَّحَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِیَّا کَلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَیْهَا کَرِیْمًا الْمِحْرَابِ وَحَدَّ عَنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ یٰمَرْیَمُ اِنِّیْ لَکَ هٰذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ یَرْزُقُ مَنْ یَّشَآءُ بِغَیْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿۳۷﴾

هُنَالِكَ دَعَا كَرِيْمًا رَبَّهُ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً اِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿۳۸﴾

45 The baby girl.

46 She said this apologetically because she had wished for a male child rather than a female one because males in her culture were better suited for the purpose she intended, namely, to look after a temple. But God had His own plans for the baby girl.

47 *Ar-Rajīm*, lit. one who is ejected. Satan is so named because he was thrown out of Paradise.

48 God answered her prayers. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Every newborn child is touched by the devil and they start off by wailing because of this touch, except Maryam and her son”. (al-Bukhārī: 3231, Muslim: 2366)

49 Cf. 44. That Zachariah, the great servant of God, was made Mary’s guardian and mentor is one of the signs that God accepted her mother’s pledge to Him. (Ibn ‘Āshūr)



﴿39﴾ The angels called him while he was Praying in the sanctum saying that: “Allah gives you the good news of Yaḥyā<sup>(50)</sup>, a believer in a Word from Allah<sup>(51)</sup>, a master, ‘utterly’ chaste<sup>(52)</sup> and a Prophet among the virtuous ‘Prophets’”.  
 ﴿40﴾ He ‘Zakariyyā’ said: “My Lord how can I have a boy when old age has overcome me and my wife is barren?” He<sup>(53)</sup> said: “Thus Allah does what He wills”.  
 ﴿41﴾ He ‘Zakariyyā’ said: “My Lord, make me a sign for this”. He said: “Your sign is that you would not talk to people for three days except using gestures—mention your Lord abundantly and glorify ‘Him’<sup>(54)</sup> late and early ‘in the day’”.

فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَى مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِّنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَكُونُ لِي غَلْمٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آيَةُ آيَاتِكَ آلَا تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْرًا وَادْكُرُّ رَبَّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَرِ ﴿٤١﴾

﴿42﴾ ‘Mention’ When the angels said: “Maryam, Allah picked you, purified<sup>(55)</sup> you and favoured you over the women of the world”.

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

50 As a son.

51 The ‘Word of Allah’ is Jesus who was conceived by God’s Word and command. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

52 *Ḥaṣūr*, lit. withholder, living ascetically and abstaining from sins and staying aloof from the desires of the flesh. (Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah)

53 It is not specified who this reply came from. It is perceivable, however, that God communicated with him through the conduit of an angel. It is also worth noting here that Zachariah did not address the angel or ask him for anything but rather, being fully cognizant that God is ever near and answering of Prayers, directed his Prayers to God and not the intermediary.

54 *Sabbih*, lit. glorify ‘your Lord’, is to extol, exalt and venerate God. He was commanded to dedicate himself to God at all times.

55 That God made her purity inherent to her and known to her immediate community was for the very good reason to preempt any aspersions that would be cast on her when the time came for her delivery of Jesus. (Riḍā al-manār)

﴿43﴾ “Maryam, devote yourself ‘Obidiently’ to your Lord, prostrate and bow down along with those who bow down ‘in Prayer’”<sup>(56)</sup>. ﴿44﴾ These are some accounts of the unknown<sup>(57)</sup>, We reveal them to you. You were not with them when they threw their pens<sup>(58)</sup> as to who would take charge of Maryam. You were not with them when they disputed.

يَمْرَمَ أَقْبَىٰ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَسْجُدِي وَأَرْكَعِي  
مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ  
إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُونَ أَقْلَمَهُمْ  
أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ  
يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

﴿45﴾ When the angels said: “Maryam, Allah gives you the good news of a word from Him<sup>(59)</sup>; his name is the Messiah, ‘Īsā, son of Maryam; honourable in the worldly life and the Hereafter, and among those drawn near<sup>(60)</sup>”. ﴿46﴾ “He talks to people while in the cradle<sup>(61)</sup>, and as a grown man<sup>(62)</sup>; and he is one of the righteous”.

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَمْرَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِبَشَرِكَ  
بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ  
وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾  
وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ  
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

- 56 In return for honouring her over all other women, Mary is told to devote herself to God. (al-Sa‘dī)
- 57 *al-Ghayb*, lit. the Unseen, what is beyond the reach of perception. Such stories, in the manner and detail told here, were not known to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his community. This is a Sign from God signifying that Muhammad (ﷺ) conveyed nothing of his own and that all was inspired by God; the accounts of Mary and her mother, Zachariah, John and Jesus given here are different from the narratives prevalent at the time. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 58 *Yulqūna aqlāmahum*, lit. to throw their pens. It was their habit at the time to draw lots by casting reeds, which were sharpened and used as pens.
- 59 Jesus was not conceived by any human act of procreation but rather, like Adam, through God’s commanding Word: Be! Thus he is called “the Word of God”. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 60 *al-Muqarrabīn*, lit. the drawn near, are the select few who are close to God.
- 61 He was made able to talk in the very early suckling age as a Sign to Mary’s people (cf. 19: 29-33).
- 62 After attaining Messengership to call them to God.

﴿47﴾ She said: “My Lord, how can I have a child<sup>(63)</sup>, while no human ‘has ever’ touched<sup>(64)</sup> me?” He<sup>(65)</sup> said: “Thus Allah creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He only says: “Be!” and it is”.  
 ﴿48﴾ “He ‘Allah’ teaches him the book<sup>(66)</sup>, wisdom<sup>(67)</sup>, the Torah and the Evangel”.  
 ﴿49﴾ “A Messenger to the Children of Israel ‘announcing to them’ that: “I have come to you with a Sign<sup>(68)</sup> from your Lord that: I form for you the like of the shape of a bird from clay and blow ‘my breath’ into it and it becomes a ‘living’ bird with Allah’s permission; I cure the born blind, the leper and bring the dead to life with Allah’s permission; I tell you of what you eat and what you store in your homes<sup>(69)</sup>—indeed in these ‘miracles’ is a Sign for you if only you were Believers””.

قَالَتْ رَبِّ اَنۡىۤ يَكُوۡنُ لىۤىٓ وَّلَدٌ وَّلَمْ يَمَسَّسْنِىۤ بَتَّءٍ  
 قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ اَللّٰهُ يَخْلُقۡ مَا يَشَآءُ اِذَا قَضٰى اَمْرًا  
 فَاِتِمَّا بِقَوْلِ لّٰهُرۡكُنۡ فَيَكُوۡنُ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَيُعَلِّمُهٗ الْكِتٰبَ  
 وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْاِنۡجِيْلَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَرَسُوْلًا  
 اِلٰىۤ بَنِيۤ اِسْرَءِيْلَ اِنۡىۤ قَدۡ جِئْتُكُمۡ بِبَيٰتٍ  
 مِّنۡ رَّبِّكُمۡ اِنۡىۤ اَخْلَقُ لَكُمۡ مِّنَ الطِّيۡنِ  
 كَهَيۡئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَاَنْفُخُ فِيْهِ فَيَكُوۡنُ طَيْرًا يٰۤاِذۡنِ  
 اَللّٰهِ وَاُنۡبِئِىۤ الْاَكْثَمَةَ وَالْاَبْرَصَ وَاُحۡىِ  
 الْمَوْتِىۤ اِذۡنِ اَللّٰهِ وَاُنۡبِئِكُمۡ بِمَا تَاْكُلُوۡنَ وَمَا  
 تَدۡخُرُوۡنَ فِىۤ بُيُوۡتِكُمۡ اِنۡ فِىۤ ذٰلِكَ لَآيٰةٌ لَّكُمۡ  
 اِنۡ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيۡنَ ﴿٤٩﴾

63 *Walad* is child irrespective of gender. al-Biqā‘ī (*Naẓm al-Durar*, 4: 400) explains that Mary, unlike Zachariah who said: “*ghulam*-boy”, said so incredulously because, understandably, she was of a mind that conceiving a child without a meeting between a man and a woman was simply impossible.

64 Mary only managed to allude, quite euphemistically, to sex. This is a concrete example of her exemplary upbringing—‘handsome blossoming’.

65 The angel who was used as a conduit of communication between God and Mary.

66 How to read and write. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

67 Made wise and discerning.

68 The following miraculous, supernatural acts are Signs of his Truthfulness. ‘Sign’ is used here as a generic noun in the singular form although the Signs told here are more than one. (cf. al-Rāzī)

69 Even this seemingly simple act defies human capacity and is an indicator of a person’s extraordinary capability. It could have been meant to address a wider audience who might just show up and ask for a ‘casual’ sign, and after receiving it would be more receptive to the Message.

﴿50﴾ “And I have come to confirm what came before me of the Torah, and that I shall make lawful to you some of what was forbidden for you. I came to you with a Sign from your Lord, so be Mindful of Allah and obey me”.

﴿51﴾ “Allah is verily my Lord and yours, so worship Him—this is a straight path<sup>(70)</sup>”.

﴿52﴾ When ‘Īsā sensed<sup>(71)</sup> their<sup>(72)</sup> ‘ardent’ Denial, he said: “Who are my helpers ‘in the way’ to Allah?”<sup>(73)</sup> The disciples<sup>(74)</sup> said: “We are the helpers of ‘the way of’ Allah. We Believe in Allah. And bear witness that we are devoutly surrendered<sup>(75)</sup> ‘to Him’”. ﴿53﴾ “Our Lord, we have Believed in what you have brought down<sup>(76)</sup> and we have sent the Messenger, so write us down among the witnesses<sup>(77)</sup>”.

وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيَّنَّ يَدَيَّ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ  
وَلِأَحِلَّ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ  
وَأَطِيعُوا ۝٥٠ إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ  
هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ۝٥١

\* فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَىٰ مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ  
مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ  
نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّ  
مُسْلِمُونَ ۝٥٢ رَبَّنَا ءَمَّا أَنْزَلْتَ وَأَتَّبَعْنَا  
الرَّسُولَ فَأَكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ۝٥٣

70 He charted out the way to God’s Pleasure clearly to them.

71 *Aḥassa*, translated literally here, means realized. (al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 52)

72 The Deniers among the Children of Israel.

73 Those who are willing to help him carry out the mission.

74 *al-Hawāriyyūn* (sig. *ḥawārī*) are Jesus’ closest companions. The term was later applied to all those who are close followers of Prophets. It is said that they were so called, among other things, because they used to ‘*yuḥawwirūna*’ (to whiten) robes and other garments, i.e. bleach whites through washing as a sign of their purity. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p.464)

75 *Muslimūn*, lit. Muslims.

76 The Evangel.

77 Those who testify to the Truthfulness of the Messages coming from God.

﴿54﴾ They plotted and Allah planned—Allah is verily the best of planners<sup>(78)</sup>. ﴿55﴾ When Allah said: “‘Isā, I shall bring your term ‘on Earth’ to an end, elevate you to Me<sup>(79)</sup>, purify you from those who Denied<sup>(80)</sup> and make those who follow you ‘prevail’ over those who Deny until the Day of Judgement<sup>(81)</sup>. Then your ‘humans’ return will be to Me and I shall judge between you over that which you used to differ”. ﴿56﴾ “As to those who Denied<sup>(82)</sup>, I shall Punish them severely in this worldly life, and in the Hereafter, they shall have no helpers”. ﴿57﴾ “As to those who Believed, and did good deeds, He<sup>(83)</sup> shall pay them their rewards in full—Allah likes not the wrongdoers”.

وَمَكْرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾  
 إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يٰعِيسَىٰ إِنِّي مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ  
 إِلَيَّ وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَجَاعِلُ  
 الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى  
 يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ  
 بَيْنَكُمْ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَأَمَّا  
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَاَعِدْ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فِي  
 الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّن نَّاصِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾  
 وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ  
 فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

78 The Deniers among the Children of Israel schemed to kill Jesus (ﷺ) but God had other plans: He prevented them from seizing Jesus and instead facilitated that they seized a look-alike without their realizing it (cf. 4: 157-159). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr)

79 He was raised, both body and soul, to the Heavens. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, 4: 323, Ibn ‘Uthaymīn)

80 Save you from the evil of the Deniers. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāsiṭī, Ibn Kathīr)

81 This is a promise from God that true Believers who follow the Message and the path of the Prophets shall always have the upper hand. It is also a glad tidings from God to Jesus (ﷺ) whereby people of high aspirations care not only for what is immediate to them but also for generations to come. (al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, 4: 421)

82 The ones who refused to accept Jesus’ Message.

83 Notice the pronoun shift in this instance. The shift between the first and third person pronouns is meant to signify loftiness and authority. (al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, 3: 216)

﴿58﴾ This<sup>(84)</sup> 'is what' We recite to you as Signs and 'a testimony to the Truthfulness' of the Wise Reminder<sup>(85)</sup>.

﴿59﴾ Indeed the example of 'Īsā with Allah is like that of Adam; He created him from dust and said: "Be!" and he was".

﴿60﴾ "This is" The Truth 'coming' from your Lord, so be not one of the doubters. ﴿61﴾ Whoever argues with you regarding him<sup>(86)</sup> after the knowledge that came to you, say 'to them': "Come along and let us call our children and yours, our women and yours and ourselves and yours and then pray earnestly that Allah brings down His Damnation upon the liars". ﴿62﴾ This is indeed the true narration; there is no god but Allah—indeed Allah is the All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿63﴾ But if they take to their heels, then Allah knows well the corrupters.

﴿64﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "People of the Book<sup>(87)</sup>, come to a common word<sup>(88)</sup> between us and you,

ذٰلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْآيٰتِ وَالذِّكْرِ  
الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٥٨﴾

اِنَّ مِثْلَ عِيْسٰى عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ كَمِثْلِ اٰدَمَ  
خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٥٩﴾  
الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾  
فَمَنْ حَآجَكَ فِيْهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ  
فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ اٰبَاءَنَا وَاَبَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا  
وَنِسَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَأْتِنَا وَاَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلُ  
فَنَجْعَلْ لِّغَتِ اللّٰهِ عَلَى الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اِنْ هٰذَا  
لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ وَمَا مِنْ اِلٰهٍ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ  
لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ  
بِالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾

قُلْ يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ تَعَالَوْا اِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ  
سَوَآءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ

84 These stories of old were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to prove to people, particularly those who argued with him with regards to these matters, the Truthfulness of his Message and the Qur'an.

85 *al-Dhikr al-Hakīm*, lit. the sagacious mention, is the Qur'an.

86 Jesus (ﷺ). (al-Wāḥidī)

87 The Jews and the Christians.

88 *Kalimatīn sawā'*, a standard, equal footing, mutually agreed upon word, i.e. the unadulterated Monotheistic declaration of Faith: "There is no god but God". Here all three parties, Muslims, Jews and Christians, are asked to jointly declare it while 'truly' Believing it. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāsiṭī, Ibn Kathīr)

that we will not worship anything besides Allah; do not Associate anything with Him<sup>(89)</sup>; do not take each other as Lords besides Allah<sup>(90)</sup>. If they take to their heels, then say 'Believers': "Bear you witness that we are devoutly surrendered<sup>(91)</sup> 'to Him'".<sup>(65)</sup> "People of the Book, why do you argue regarding Ibrāhīm<sup>(92)</sup>, while 'both' the Torah and the Evangel were only sent down 'long' after him?<sup>(93)</sup> Do you have no reason?"<sup>(66)</sup> "Here you are; you have argued about that of which you have knowledge, 'but' why would you argue about that of which you have no knowledge<sup>(94)</sup>? Allah knows and you do not know".

الْاَتَّعْبُدِ اِلَّا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكْ بِهِ سَيِّئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ  
بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا اَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللّٰهِ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا  
فَقُولُوْا اَشْهَدُوْا بِاَنَّا مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ يٰۤاَهْلَ  
الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تُحَاجُّوْنَ فِيْ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمَا اُنزِلَتْ  
التَّوْرَةُ وَالْاِنْجِيْلُ اِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِهِۦٓ اَفَلَا  
تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ هٰٓاَنْتُمْ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ حٰجَجْتُمْ فِيْمَا  
كُفِرْتُمْ بِهِۦٓ عِلْمٌ فَالِمُحٰجِّجُوْنَ فِيْمَا لَيْسَ  
لَكُمْ بِهِۦٓ عِلْمٌ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾

89 Hold them as gods besides God.

90 Who are worshipped besides God.

91 *Muslimūn*, lit. Muslims. The ones who totally surrender and devote themselves to God are the true Believers. True Belief is based on the foundation of worshipping God alone without claiming false deities besides Him, and following the example of the Prophet (ﷺ). Note that Muslims, just like Jesus' disciples before, were required to declare to the Deniers that they are "devoutly surrendered/ submitted" to God—they do not put their desires, whims, status, wealth or families before God's worship: "Say: *'If your parents, children, brothers, spouses, clans, hard earned money, a trade for which you fear damage, and homes that you adore are favoured to you over Allah, His Messenger, and striving in His cause, then lie in waiting until Allah brings His Command to pass—Allah guides not the transgressors'*" (9: 24).

92 Both the Jews and the Christians claimed Abraham as their own. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

93 That is after Abraham's time. All their arguments about Abraham were based on apocryphal stories and not solid, authentic accounts.

94 Regarding Abraham's true Faith. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurtubī)

﴿67﴾ Ibrāhīm was neither a Jew nor was he a Christian, but he was rightly oriented<sup>(95)</sup>, devoutly surrendered<sup>(96)</sup> and was not among the Associators. ﴿68﴾ Indeed those who can claim Ibrāhīm most are those who ‘truly’ followed him, ‘as well as’ this Prophet and the Believers<sup>(97)</sup>—Allah is the Ally of the Believers.

﴿69﴾ A faction of the People of the Book would love to mislead you—‘but’ they only mislead themselves without realizing it. ﴿70﴾ “People of the Book, why do you Deny Allah’s Signs, while you bear witness ‘to their Truth’?<sup>(98)</sup>” ﴿71﴾ “People of the Book, why do you confuse Truth with falsehood, and suppress the Truth knowingly?”<sup>(99)</sup>

مَا كَانَ اِبْرَاهِيْمُ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلٰكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُّسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾  
 اِنْ اَوْلٰى النَّاسِ بِاِبْرَاهِيْمَ لَلَّذِيْنَ اتَّبَعُوْهُ وَهٰذَا السَّبِيْحُ وَالَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا وَاللّٰهُ وِلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾

وَدَّتْ طٰٓئِفَةٌ مِّنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ لَوِ يُضِلُّوْكُمْ وَمَا يُضِلُّوْنَ اِلَّا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُوْنَ بِآيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَاَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لِمَ تَتْلُوْنَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالْحَقِّ وَاَنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾

- 95 *Hanīf*, is a very rich term but basically it means a pristine Believer. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness.
- 96 *Musliman*, lit. Muslim. The theme of true Belief (*Islām*) is carried on here.
- 97 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Believing community around him, have more right to Abraham than any other nation, because they are the ones who truly follow his path unwaveringly. A true follower of the religion of Abraham is a truthful Monotheist; he worships God alone without the slightest form of Association (polytheism).
- 98 Here they are reproached for publicly Denying the Truth with which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came to them, while they have it written in their Books but hide it from people.
- 99 In Ayas 64, 65, 66, 70 and 71 those who were given the Scripture are enticingly called by the honorific epithet, ‘People of the Book’, and gently implored to listen to reason.



﴿72﴾ A faction of the People of the Book ‘connivingly’ said: “Believe in what was sent down to the Believers early in the day, and then Deny it at the end of it<sup>(100)</sup>. So that they ‘Believers’ may retract”<sup>(101)</sup>. ﴿73﴾ “And confide only in those who follow your religion<sup>(102)</sup>—Say ‘Muhammad’: “‘True’ Guidance is surely the guidance of Allah”<sup>(103)</sup>—lest that anyone would be given the like of what you were given, or that they should use it as an argument against you in front of your Lord”<sup>(104)</sup>. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Grace<sup>(105)</sup> is in the Hand of Allah, He bestows it unto whomever He wills—Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing”.

وَقَالَتْ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ءَامَنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ عَلَيَّ الْيَتِيمَ ءَامَنُوا وَجْهَ النَّهَارِ وَكَفَرُوا ءَاخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَلَا تُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا لِمَن تَبِعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّا لَهْدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ أَن يَأْتِيَ بِنُورٍ أَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَا أُوتِينَاهُ أَوْ يُجَازِيَكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَسِعَ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴿٧٣﴾

100 At a later time in the day.

101 This is a privileged glimpse given to the Prophet (ﷺ) by God into the ways and wiles of his antagonists. In order to sow the seed of doubt in the minds of Believers, they hatched the plot of claiming to embrace Faith after giving the matter some thought, only to disclaim it as untrue shortly thereafter, seemingly as a result of much consideration and insider knowledge. They hoped that this would cause some Believers to waver on the ground that they would see these so-called knowledgeable people abandon the religion in such a way. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

102 They took a pledge to reveal their secrets and the Truth of what their Books really say only to those who follow their way and religion.

103 This is the reply to the Believers’ detractors: guidance is in the Hand of God, and whatever you do will be of no avail if He does not wish it to happen (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). This parenthetical interjection is meant to emphasize that their mischievous efforts and devious plans will be thwarted prematurely, even before they have the chance to bring them into action. (al-ALūsī)

104 They fear that people, if taught what their Books really say, would be on an equal footing with them in terms of knowledge, so they hid it, fearing either to lose this advantageous privilege or that it be used in argument against them. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

105 Guidance to Belief and the Straight Path. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿74﴾ He singles out for His Mercy whomever He wills—great is Allah’s Grace!

يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

﴿75﴾ Of the People of the Book are those whom if you entrust with hoards ‘of wealth’<sup>(106)</sup> they would restore it back to you, and ‘there are however’ of them others whom if entrusted with a ‘single’ dinar they would not restore it back to you unless you run after them ‘for it’. This ‘they do’ because they say: “We will not be held accountable for what we do to the illiterates<sup>(107)</sup>”. They ascribe ‘such’ fabrications to Allah willingly! ﴿76﴾ Nay but ‘better are’ those who honour their pledge and are Mindful—Allah loves the Mindful.

\* وَمِنَ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَن إِن تَأْمَنَّهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُودِعَهُ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ مِّنَ إِن تَأْمَنَّهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَا يُودِعُهُ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ذَلِكَ يَأْتِيهِمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ بَلَىٰ مَن أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

﴿77﴾ Those who trade off Allah’s pledge and their oaths<sup>(108)</sup> for a pittance, will have nothing to claim in the Hereafter and Allah will not talk to them; neither will He look at them nor purify them<sup>(109)</sup>— theirs is a painful Punishment.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ بَشَّرُوا بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأِيمَانِهِمْ تَمَنَّا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلْقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾

106 *Qinṭār*, is a huge amount of money, the exact measure of which is subject to debate. (al-Sijjistānī, *Gharib al-Qur’ān*, 1: 88; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 1: 28)

107 *al-Ummiyūn*, the Arabs, who had no grasp of reading and writing, expect a very few. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharib al-Qur’ān*, p. 101)

108 This pledge and oath is explained in Aya 81 below; that is, to Believe in the Prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) and support him. Yet the ruling applies to all those who break their binding oaths to gain what is not rightly theirs (cf. *Riḍā al-manār*).

109 Absolve their sins.

﴿78﴾ A party of them twist their tongues with the Book<sup>(110)</sup> so that you may think it 'part' of the Book; it is not 'part' of the Book! And they say: "It is from Allah!" But it is not from Allah! They ascribe such fabrications to Allah advertently! ﴿79﴾ It is not 'possible' for a human, to whom Allah gives the Book, 'sound' judgement and Prophethood, to then say to people: "Be my servants instead of Allah"<sup>(111)</sup>. But 'he would say': "Be godly, because of the Book you teach and because of your 'diligent' study 'of it'". ﴿80﴾ He would not bid you to take the angels and the Prophets as Lords<sup>(112)</sup>. Would he order you into Denial after you have become devoutly submitted 'Believers'?

﴿81﴾ 'Mention' When Allah took the oath of 'all' the Prophets<sup>(113)</sup>:

وَأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفِرِيقًا يُلوِّنَ السِّتْرَ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِ لِيَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّكُمْ عَلِيمُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا أَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْكَفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

وَأَذَّأَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ

110 The Book meant here is the Torah. "Twist their tongues with the Book", means they distort it by either muddling the pronunciation of its words or manipulating and misinterpreting its meaning. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'īdī)

111 al-Bayhaqī in *al-Dalā'il* (quoted in *al-Tafsīr al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 2:43) documents that Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Abū Rāfi' al-Qarazī said: "When the learned Jews and Christians came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he called them to Islam, they replied: "Do you Muhammad want us to worship you just like the Christians worship Jesus, son of Mary?"... The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I seek refuge by Allah that I shall call to the worship of any other besides Him. This is not what He sent me for!"

112 Worshipped besides God.

113 Ibn 'Aṭīyah (1: 463) says: "It is possible that this oath was taken at the time the offspring of Adam were taken out of his back as breaths 'cf. 7: 172', or taken from each Prophet at the time of his mission".

“For the Book and Wisdom I granted you, when a Messenger<sup>(114)</sup> comes to you confirming what you have, you should Believe in him and support him”. ‘Allah’ Said: “Do you affirm and take My solemn pledge for it?” They ‘the Prophets’ said: “We approve”. He ‘Allah’ said: “Then bear witness<sup>(115)</sup> and I bear witness with you ‘to this’”. <sup>(82)</sup> Whoever takes to his heels after this ‘solemn pledge’, then these are the transgressors.

<sup>(83)</sup> Would they seek other than the religion of Allah while to Him devoutly submitted whoever is on Earth and the Heavens willingly and unwillingly—and to Him they shall return?

لَمَّا آتَيْنٰكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ ۗ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ ۗ قَالَ ؕ اَقْرَبْتُمْ وَاَحَدْتُمْ عَلٰى ذٰلِكُمْ اِصْرِي ۗ قَالُوْا اَقْرَبْنَا قَالٍ فَاَشْهَدُوْا وَاَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشّٰهِيْدِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُوْلٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾

اَفَغَيَّرَ دِيْنَ اللّٰهِ يَبْعُوْنَ ۗ وَلَمْ يَسْأَلْ مِنْ فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَّكَرْهًا وَاِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾

114 al-Wāhidī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Taymiyyah (*al-Zuhd wa al-Wara' wa al-'Ibādah*, p. 157) are of the opinion that this Messenger is Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Alternatively, but less plausibly, because unlike Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) most Prophets were sent for a specific nation and only for a specified period of time, it could mean that each and every Prophet was made to take a solemn oath, and in turn bid his followers to Believe in and support any Prophet that comes with the like of what they have. The theme carries on from earlier ayas highlighting that although the People of the Book were fully aware of the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), because he was specifically mentioned in their books, they nonetheless hid the Truth for ulterior motives fearing to lose their privileged status. The Qur'an brings the scenario to a close as follows: “Those who follow the illiterate ‘gentile’ Prophet whom they find written in the Torah and the Evangel; he calls them to what is virtuous and warns them against vile deeds, makes lawful to them good things and forbids for them what is impure, and relieves them from their burdens and shackles. Those who Believe in him, bolster and support him and follow the Light that came with him, these are the Successful” (7: 157).

115 This pledge is to be honoured not only by the Prophets but, by extension, their followers too. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿84﴾ Say 'Muhammad<sup>(116)</sup>': "We Believe in Allah; what was sent down to us; what was sent down to Ibrāhīm 'Abraham', Ismā'īl 'Ishmael', Ishāq 'Isaac', Ya'qūb 'Jacob' and the Tribes<sup>(117)</sup>; and what was given to Mūsā 'Moses', 'Īsā 'Jesus' and the Prophets from their Lord, we make no distinction between them and to Him we are devoutly submitted".

﴿85﴾ Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam<sup>(118)</sup>, it will not be accepted from him and in the Hereafter he is one of the Losers.

﴿86﴾ How would Allah guide 'those' people who Denied after their Belief? They had borne witness that the Messenger<sup>(119)</sup> is true and clear evidences had come to them—Allah does not guide the unjust people.

قُلْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ ر\_Mُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

116 The main addressee is Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) but his followers are included by default. Hence, the plural form of the verbs in the dictated declaration.

117 *al-Asbāt* are the different tribes of the Children of Israel who are the offspring of the twelve sons of Jacob, in other words. Israel. (Ibn Kathīr)

118 'Islam' here, which may very well carry traces of its linguistic meaning, surrender/submission, is the religion of Muhammad (ﷺ). It is the final, most perfect Message that came from God: "Today 'the day of 'Arafāt' I have finalized your religion for you, perfected My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you" (5:3). The next aya, 3: 86, in which the to-be-followed 'Messenger' is again evoked, further underlines this. al-Biqā'ī (*Naẓm al-Durar*, 475) says: "...islām 'the lexical term and its derivatives' is mentioned repeatedly here 'in these thematically related ayas' because it falls within the bounds of the solemn pledge that was taken for the to-be-followed Messenger 'who was always to come'—he is to be followed with total surrender 'unconditionally'".

119 Muhammad (ﷺ). The epithet 'Messenger' reverberates the one mentioned in Aya 81 above.

﴿87﴾ The requital of those is that the damnation of Allah, the angels and all humans is on them.<sup>(120)</sup>

﴿88﴾ Forever they reside therein 'Hellfire'; their punishment will not be lightened nor will they be given respite. ﴿89﴾ Except those who repent<sup>(121)</sup> afterwards and make amends, then Allah is certainly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.<sup>(122)</sup>

﴿90﴾ Those who Denied after their Belief and then increased in Denial, their repentance will not be accepted<sup>(123)</sup>—those are the misguided.

أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ أَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ  
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ خَالِدِينَ  
فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ  
يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ  
وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ تَمُرُّ أَدُوًّا  
كُمُومًا لَنْ تَقْبَلَ تَوْبَتُهُمْ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ  
الضَّالُّونَ ﴿٩٠﴾

- 120 This severe requital is meant to further underline the significance of Islam, the accepted religion in God’s Sight, on the one hand, and the gravity of renouncing it, on the other. (al-Rāzī).
- 121 *At-Tawbah*, lit. repentance, is not only to feel regret for something one has done, but also to acknowledge the sinfulness of one’s past action or conduct by showing sincere remorse and undertaking to reform in the future. It comprises both feeling sorry for one’s sins and committing to not fall into them again.
- 122 According to Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) the reason for the revelation of Ayas 86-89 is that: “A man of the Anṣār professed Islam then he renounced it and became a Denier again. Then he felt sorry and sent to his folks to ask the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) if he could revert to Islam. They went to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said: “So-and-so has repented and he asks if he can come back to Islam”. Then the ayas: “How will Allah guide those who Denied after their Belief?” until: “All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”, were revealed. He was sent after and became Muslim again”. (al-Nasā’i: 4068, Aḥmad: 2218, Ibn Ḥibbān: 4477, al-Ḥākim: 8092)
- 123 As for those who renounce Islam and, by time, grow stauncher in Denial until the hour of death befalls them, their extemporaneous, spur-of-the-moment repentance will not be accepted (cf. 4: 17-18). Had this repentance been made earlier and more sincerely, it could have been accepted (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī). Ibn Taymiyyah says that this is the opinion of the majority of scholars (*Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, 1: 202).

﴿91﴾ Those who Deny and die as Deniers, 'as much as' Earth's fill of gold will not be accepted from any of them<sup>(124)</sup>, even if he were to ransom himself with it—for those is a painful Punishment and they will have no helpers.

﴿92﴾ You 'Believers' will not gain 'the reward of' sincere piety<sup>(125)</sup> until you spend out of that which you love. Whatever you spend, Allah knows about it very well.

﴿93﴾ All food was lawful for the Children of Israel except what Israel 'Jacob' made unlawful for

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَرَاءُ فَلَنْ  
يُقْبَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ مِلءُ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ  
أَقْتَدَى بِهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَمَا لَهُمْ  
مَنْ تَصِيرِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ لَنْ تَسَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا  
مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ ۚ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٢﴾

\*كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ  
إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ

124 Cf. 5:36 and 57:15. Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "On the Day of Judgement, Almighty Allah poses a question to the one who is being tormented the least among the denizens of Hellfire: "If you possess all that the Earth holds, would you ransom yourself with it?" He says: "Yes!" Then Allah says: "I wanted from you much less than that—that you do not Associate any other 'in worship' with Me, but you were bent on Associating with Me!" (al-Bukhārī: 6557, Muslim: 2805)

125 *al-Birr* is sincere piety which leads to great bounty, God's Grace and Paradise. Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Adhere to Truthfulness '*aṣ-ṣidq*' for it leads to sincere piety '*al-birr*', and sincere piety leads to Paradise". (al-Bukhārī: 6094, Muslim: 2607) *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, based on the opinion of the great Qur'an exegetes – Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, 'Aṭā', Mujāhid, 'Amr Ibn Maymūn and As-Suddī – actually has it that *al-birr* is Paradise itself in this instance. al-Qurṭubī says that rationalization of this opinion is such that it means: "You will not attain the reward of sincere piety until...". By contrast to the fate of the Deniers whose good deeds in this world, whatever these might be, will be of no avail to them, Believers are encouraged to choose for spending the best of theirs in order to be admitted into God's great Grace of Paradise. Sincere piety and its reward, Paradise, is only attained when one prevails over one's self, loves God more than anything else and is willing to sacrifice everything in His cause.

himself<sup>(126)</sup> before the Torah was sent down. Say 'Muhammad': "Bring the Torah and recite it if you are truthful!"<sup>(127)</sup> <sup>(94)</sup> Whoever fabricates lies against Allah after this, then those are the Unjust.

عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ۗ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ ۗ قُلْ فَأْتُوا  
بِالتَّوْرَةِ فَاتْلُوهَا ۖ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾  
فَمَنْ أَفْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكِبْرَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ  
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

126 After establishing Islam as the religion to be followed, the argument with the People of the Book continues here. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “A group of Jews came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said to him: “Abū al-Qāsim, tell us about a few things none but a real Prophet knows about”. Among the questions they asked was: “What food did Israel make unlawful for himself before the Torah was revealed?” He replied: “I ask you by Allah Who sent down the Torah to Moses, do you not know that Israel became very ill and his illness dragged on for a long time then he vowed that he would make unlawful for himself the drink and food he loved most should Allah cure him? The best food for him was camel meat and the drink he loved most was camel milk”. They said: “By Allah you are correct!”” (Aḥmad: 2471; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr*: 13012)

127 Saʿdī comments: “This is in answer to the Jews who claimed that abrogation is not lawful. They Denied the Messengership of Jesus and Muhammad (ﷺ) on this basis because they came with laws and doctrines different from those found in the Torah. So it is only fair to use their own Scripture in argument against them; this whereby the ruling that all types of food were lawful for the Children of Israel except what he made unlawful to himself and to which his children followed suit, that is before the Torah was sent down to Moses. But when the Torah was sent down, it made unlawful to them other types of food besides those made unlawful earlier by Israel. ‘Thus the ruling that all food was lawful to them was abrogated by the Torah itself.’ Then Allah commanded his Messenger (ﷺ) to ask them to bring the Torah and recite it if they persisted in denying”. (Cf. also al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān*, 2:321) In his translation of this aya Muhammad Asad has the following annotation: “This is a reference to the unwarranted Jewish belief that the Mosaic food restrictions were an eternal law decreed by God. As against this claim, the Qur’an stresses that no food restrictions had been imposed before the time of Moses and, secondly, that the restrictions arising from the Mosaic Law were imposed on the Children of Israel alone. To claim that they represent an eternal divine law is described here as “*inventing lies about God*””. This is further proof to the Children of Israel that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who utters nothing out of desire and is inspired by God Himself, was Truthful and confirmed what was in their Book. So the onus of Believing in him lays on them as he was also at the end of the road that their forefather, Abraham (cf. 2: 133), whom they claim as their own and profess to follow his doctrine, had lain.



﴿95﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Allah has stated the Truth! Hence follow the creed of Ibrāhīm<sup>(128)</sup>, who was rightly oriented<sup>(129)</sup> and he was not among the Associators.

قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

﴿96﴾ The first House 'of worship'<sup>(130)</sup> laid down for mankind is the one in Bakkah<sup>(131)</sup>, blessed and 'a beacon of' guidance<sup>(132)</sup> for all beings.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

﴿97﴾ In it 'the House' there are clear Signs: Ibrāhīm's climbing-stone<sup>(133)</sup>,

128 The creed of Ibrāhīm, *millata Ibrāhīm*, is the most primordial precursor to Islam, the religion with which Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent. The Qur'an states this in various places: 2: 35, 4: 125, 6: 161 and 16: 123.

129 *Hanīf* is a pristine Believer. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness.

130 Allusion here is made to the Jews' objection to the change in the direction of Prayer from Jerusalem to Makkah (cf. 2: 142). Muhammad Asad has this footnote: "The mention, in this context, of the Temple in Mecca - that is, the Ka'bah - arises from the fact that it is the direction of prayer (*qiblah*) stipulated in the Qur'an. Since the prototype of the Ka'bah was built by Abraham and Ishmael (see 2:125 ff.) - and is, therefore, much older than the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem - its establishment as the *qiblah* of the followers of the Qur'an does not only not imply any break with the Abraham tradition (on which, ultimately, the whole Bible rests), but, on the contrary, re-establishes direct contact with that Patriarch".

131 Another name of Makkah. Arab lexicographers rationalized this naming relying on the rules of the Arabic language (cf. among others al-Farāhīdī's *al-'Ayn*, al-Azharī's *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*, Ibn Fāris's *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). Archaeologists have it that it is an ancient name for Makkah (Barbara Ann Kipfer (2000) *Encyclopaedic dictionary of archaeology*. Springer, p. 342). Unlike in 48:24 where the then, and still, current name of the city, Makkah, was used, the ancient name of the city, Bakkah, is, in a sense, used here to drive home the message of the antiquity of the House and by extension the Islamic Monotheistic Message itself, which takes after the Abrahamic creed in its pristine state.

132 Of this, is that people direct themselves towards it in Prayer and head for it for 'umrah and Hajj. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhīdī, Ibn Kathīr)

133 *Maqām Ibrāhīm* is the stone on which Abraham (ﷺ) stood while building the Ka'bah. It is an everlasting Sign and evidence to all people of the relationship of Islam to Abraham's creed.

and whoever enters it becomes safe<sup>(134)</sup>. Pilgrimage to the House is ‘a duty’ owed to Allah by all people—‘especially’ those who have the means to undertake it. But those who Deny<sup>(135)</sup>, ‘should know that’ Allah is in no need of creation.

﴿98﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “People of the Book, why do you Deny Allah’s Signs, ‘while you know that’ Allah is witness to all that you do? ﴿99﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “People of the Book, why do you turn away those who have Believed from the path of Allah<sup>(136)</sup>; seeking to make it crooked while you are witnesses?<sup>(137)</sup> Allah is never unaware of what you do!

وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تُصَدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مِن ۚ ءَأَمِنَ تَبَعُونَهَا عَٰجِبًا وَأَنْتُمْ شُهَدَآءُ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

134 Cf. 29: 67, 106: 3-4. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that on the day of the liberation of Makkah the Prophet (ﷺ) declared: “This town was sanctified by Allah when He created the Heavens and Earth and for this it is sanctified until the Day of Judgement. It was not ever allowed for anyone before me to fight in it. Fighting ‘in it’ was only allowed for me for part of a day. ‘I repeat’ It is sanctified for its sanctification by Allah until the Day of Judgement. Its thorn ‘branches’ shall not be torn down ‘for fodder’, its game ‘/prey’ shall not be scared off, lost belongings in it should not be forfeited unless announced and its saplings shall not be cut down”. (al-Bukhārī: 1834, Muslim: 3189) These minor acts are categorically stated as forbidden, what then to say of something as grave as harming a human soul in the Sanctuary.

135 That Hajj is obligatory.

136 Cf. 3: 72.

137 They are chastised for cooking up schemes to deviate people from the Straight Path while being fully aware and secretly bearing witness to the Truth which is mentioned in their Books. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

﴿100﴾ You who Believe, if you obey a party of those who were given the Book, they will turn you back into Deniers after you have Believed. ﴿101﴾ 'But' How 'is it possible that' you will Deny while the Signs<sup>(138)</sup> of Allah are recited to you and 'while' His Messenger is in your midst? Whoever holds tight to Allah<sup>(139)</sup>, then he is guided to a Straight Path.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تُطِيعُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ ءَايَاتُ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ وَمَن يَعْتَصِم بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

﴿102﴾ You who Believe, be Mindful of Allah as He should be heeded and die not without being devoutly submitted<sup>(140)</sup>. ﴿103﴾ Hold tightly to the rope of Allah<sup>(141)</sup> all together, do not get splintered and remember Allah's favour on you when you were enemies and He made your hearts join then you became brothers by His Grace; you were on the brink of a pit of Fire and He saved you from it<sup>(142)</sup>—

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ ء وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ فَأَصْبَحْتُم بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَفَا حُفْرٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُم مِّنْهَا

138 Qur'anic ayas.

139 By holding tight to the surest of ties (*al-'urwatu al-wuthqā*) mentioned in 2: 256, i.e. Islam. Holding tight to *al-'urwatu al-wuthqā* is the surest way of deliverance even long after the Prophet's (ﷺ) demise. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet said: "I leave behind me two things. You will not go astray as long as you adhere to them: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah. They will not separate until they come to the Basin 'in the Hereafter'" (Mālik: 32)

140 *Muslimūn*, as Muslims.

141 A symbol of the Straight Path (cf. 6: 153) that leads to deliverance, Islam (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Zayd Ibn Arqam (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I'll leave with you behind me two grave matters. The first is the Book of Almighty Allah. It is the rope of Allah; whoever follows it is guided and whoever does not has gone astray". (Muslim: 2408)

142 After the Battle of Ḥunayn the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed his Anṣār Companions by saying: "Have I not found you: lost and Allah guided you

thus Allah makes clear His Signs so that you might be guided. <sup>104</sup> Let there be among you a legion calling for goodness; enjoining virtue and advising against what is unacceptable—those are the successful<sup>(143)</sup>. <sup>105</sup> Be not like those who became riven apart and fell into disagreement after clear evidences came to them—for those is a great Punishment. <sup>106</sup> On the Day<sup>(144)</sup> when some faces are illumined and others are darkened<sup>(145)</sup>; as for those whose faces become dark 'it is said': "Did you Deny after you became Believers? Taste then the Punishment of your Denial". <sup>107</sup> As for those whose faces become illumined, they will be 'admitted' in Allah's Mercy<sup>(146)</sup>, forever they reside therein. <sup>108</sup> Those are the Signs of Allah, We truthfully recite them to you 'Muhammad'; Allah wants not that injustice 'befall' any of the creation. <sup>109</sup> To Allah belongs all what is in the Heavens and Earth, and to Allah all affairs shall be returned.

كَذٰلِكَ يَبِيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ءَايٰتِهٖۤ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ اُمَّةٌ يَدْعُوْنَ اِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَاْمُرُوْنَ بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاُوْلٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ تَفَرَّقُوْا وَاخْتَلَفُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنٰتُ وَاُوْلٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوْهُ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوْهُ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اَسْوَدَتْ وُجُوْهُهُمْ اَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ اِيْمَانِكُمْ فَذُوْقُوْا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اَبْيَضَتْ وُجُوْهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ تِلْكَ ءَايٰتُ اللّٰهِ تَتْلُوْهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللّٰهُ يُرِيْدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وِلَلّٰهِ مَا فِى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ﴿١٠٩﴾

by me? Destitute and Allah made you well-to-do by me? Divided and Allah united you by me?" (Muslim: 1061)

143 'The successful', *al-muflihūn*, are those who succeed in attaining what they wish for; to be guided by God, and avoiding the evil of what they fear.

144 The Day of Judgement.

145 Cf. 10: 26-27, 75: 22-24 and 80: 40.

146 Paradise. (Ibn 'Uthaymīn)

﴿110﴾ You<sup>(147)</sup> are indeed the best nation the world has seen<sup>(148)</sup>: you enjoin virtue, advise against what is unacceptable and Believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book Believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are 'some' Believers, but most of them are Transgressors. ﴿111﴾ They will not harm you except by hurting you 'verbally' and if they fight you, they will take to their heels 'in flight'; then they would not be helped.<sup>(149)</sup> ﴿112﴾ Stamped on them is indignity wherever they are found. They are only spared 'this' by a rope from Allah and a rope from people<sup>(150)</sup>. They have incurred Allah's Wrath, and degradation<sup>(151)</sup> was stamped on them; this is for their Denial in Allah's Signs and killing the Prophets unjustifiably; this is for their rebelling and aggression<sup>(152)</sup>.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ  
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ  
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ  
لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِنْهُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ  
الْفٰسِقُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ لَنْ يَضُرُّكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى  
وَإِنْ يَفْتَلِكُ كُمْ يَوْلُوكُمْ لِأَدْبَارِهِمْ  
لَا يُضِرُّونَ ﴿١١١﴾ ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ  
مَا تَقْفُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلٍ مِنَ النَّاسِ  
وَبَاءَ وَبَغَضِبِ رَبِّ اللَّهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ  
الْمَسْكَنَةُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كٰفِرُونَ بِآيَاتِ  
اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا  
عَصَوْا وَأَكَانُوا عٰتِدُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

147 The nation of Muhammad (ﷺ).

148 *Ukhrijat lil-nās*, lit. brought forth to mankind.

149 This fact is mentioned here in lieu of their transgression, and with which the previous aya ended. (al-Tawhīdī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

150 That is by means of a peace pact and/or defence alliance following the laws of God, or by the authority of people.

151 Whereas they might be spared from humiliation by others, indignity, which springs from within, being as it is engrained in the person's consciousness, is not intermittent.

152 This fate was imposed on them by God, in part, in fulfilment of the Divine promise to Punish them severely, as found in 3:21.

﴿113﴾ They are not ‘all’ alike<sup>(153)</sup>, there are among the People of the Book a legion, upright, reciting the Signs<sup>(154)</sup> of Allah throughout the night<sup>(155)</sup> and they prostrate ‘in Prayer’<sup>(156)</sup>. ﴿114﴾ They Believe in Allah and the Last Day, enjoin virtue and advise against what is unacceptable and rush forth to do good—those are among the Righteous. ﴿115﴾ Whatever good they do they will not be denied it—Allah knows best the Mindful.

﴿١١٣﴾ لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ ءَانَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَدِّعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ مِنَ الصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَن يُكْفَرُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

﴿116﴾ Indeed neither the Deniers’ wealth nor their children will avail them against Allah—those are the company of the Fire, therein they abide forever. ﴿117﴾ The example of what they spend ‘charitably’ in this worldly life, is that of a howling ‘gusty’ wind which hits the crop of ‘certain’ people who wronged themselves and it decimates it ‘all’—Allah did not wrong them but they wronged themselves.

﴿١١٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتْهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَٰكِنْ أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

153 Reference is made here to those of the People of the Book who sincerely Believed in the Messengership of Muhammad (ﷺ), followed him and devoutly adhered to the dictates of his religion. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

154 Qur’anic ayas.

155 Reciting the Qur’an at night is a sign of their devoutness. At night one’s heart becomes more sincere and undivided as one retreats to the deepest recesses of one’s own home veiled from the eyes of others. (al-Nawawī, *al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Hamalat al-Qur’ān*, p. 63)

156 That is, they perform Prayers. Although prostration is only part of Prayer, it is used synecdochally. It is singled out because it is that part of Prayer that most demonstrates devotion and humility. Indeed, it is a becoming symbol of devout submission, i.e. Islam.

﴿118﴾ You who Believe, do not take as 'intimate' confidants<sup>(157)</sup> anyone who is not of your own: they will stop at nothing to cause you destruction; they wish you hardship; hatred reeks from their mouths<sup>(158)</sup> but what their breasts conceal is 'much' greater. We have explained the signs<sup>(159)</sup> clearly for you, if only you are perceptive<sup>(160)</sup>. ﴿119﴾ Here you are, you love them but they do not love you; you Believe in the whole Book<sup>(161)</sup>; "but" when they meet you they say: "We Believe!" yet when they are alone they bite their fingertips out of rage at you. Say 'Muhammad': "Die of your rage"; Allah knows what lurks in the chests! ﴿120﴾ Should a good thing come your way, they become saddened by it, and it elates them if a calamity befalls you. But if you forbear and are

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بَطَانَةً مِّن دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأُولُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُوًّا مَّا عِنْتُمْ قَد بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَد بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ هَآئِنْتُمْ ءَوْلَآءُ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتَوَمُّونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهٖ ؕ وَإِذَآ الْقَوْمُ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَآ خَلَوْا عَضُّوْا عَلَیْكُمْ الْاَنَامِلَ مِمِّنَ الْعَیْطِ قُلْ مُؤْمِنُوْا بِعَیْظِكُمْؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِیْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿١١٩﴾ اِنَّ تَمَسَّسَكُمْ حَسَنَةٌۢ لَّسُوْهُمْ وَاِنْ تُصِیْبَكُمْ سَیِّئَةٌۢ یُّفْرَحُوْا بِهَا

157 *Biṭānah* is used to denote someone's, especially an important person's, inner circle, who not only know all the insider information and secrets but also influence that person's opinion and are, at times, delegated some of the authority. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There is not a Prophet sent or a ruler installed by Allah without him having two inner circles: *biṭānah* (an inner circle) bidding and encouraging him to virtue and *biṭānah* bidding and encouraging him to evil. Whoever is spared is only saved by Allah's Grace". (al-Bukhārī: 7198)

158 No matter how hard they try to keep their true feelings secret, their tongues, slips or otherwise, prove otherwise.

159 The signs that lay bare these people's truths and reveal what they hide.

160 Muslims are encouraged to be perceptive to the tell-tale signs that, more often than not, reveal the reality of matters (cf. 2: 273). (al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Ashūr)

161 All Divinely-revealed Books. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

Mindful you will not be harmed in the least by their guile—Allah encompasses<sup>(162)</sup> what they do.

وَإِنْ تَصَبَّرُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَصْرُوكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾

﴿121﴾ ‘Recall Muhammad’ when you set off from your household at dawn, appointing the Believers their fighting positions—Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

وَإِذْ عَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ  
لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢١﴾ إِذْ هَمَّتْ  
طَّائِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا وَعَلَى  
اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

﴿122﴾ Then two groups of your own were about to falter<sup>(163)</sup>, ‘but’ Allah, their Ally ‘made them remain firm’—in Allah let the Believers put their trust.<sup>(164)</sup>

﴿123﴾ Indeed Allah made you ‘emerge’ victorious in Badr<sup>(165)</sup> when you were scorned<sup>(166)</sup>—be Mindful of Allah so that you may be thankful. ﴿124﴾ Then you ‘Muhammad’ said to the Believers: “Would it not suffice you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down ‘from the sky’?”

وَلَقَدْ فَتَرْنَا لِلَّهِ يَدًا وَأَنْشُرْنَا لَكَ إِذْ لَمْ فَتَقْ وَاللَّهُ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ بَنَاتِهِ ۗ الْفِ  
مَنْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ مُنْزَلِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

162 God knows all about their stratagems. He records it and they will be held accountable. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa’dī)

163 *Tafshal*, lit. fail; lose footing; these are the tribes of Banū Salimah and Banū al-Ḥārith.

164 After mentioning in the previous aya that holding one’s ground patiently and being Mindful of Allah is a means of victory over one’s enemies, God tacitly now reminds the Believers of the reason for their setback in the Battle of Uḥud. Essentially, the archers became impatient and left the positions that had been appointed for them by the Prophet (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī)

165 Now the telling turns to the great Battle of Badr to cite as example how Mindfulness and holding one’s ground (Aya 125) wins battles.

166 *Adhillah*, they were the weaker party, derided because they were lesser in number and armament than their enemy.



﴿125﴾ Indeed 'this would suffice'! Yet if you hold out and are Mindful, and should they 'your enemies' hasten to charge 'in full force' against you, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels, clearly marked.

﴿126﴾ Allah wanted this to be nothing more than good news to you so that your hearts become comforted, but 'truly' victory is to be found nowhere but with Allah, the All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿127﴾ 'This was so' To fell a flank<sup>(167)</sup> of those who Deny and to smite<sup>(168)</sup> them, so that they would draw back crestfallen. ﴿128﴾ You 'Muhammad' have no control to mention over this matter; might He relent towards them or Punish them 'as' they are indeed Unjust. ﴿129﴾ 'Indeed' To Allah belongs all that is in the Heavens and Earth, He forgives whoever He wills and Punishes whoever He wills—indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿130﴾ You who Believe, do not devour usury multiplied many times over<sup>(169)</sup> and be Mindful of Allah,

بَلَىٰٓ إِن تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ هَٰذَا يُمْدِدْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلَافٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُم بِهِ ۗ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١٢٦﴾ لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْبِتَهُمْ فَيَنْقَلِبُوا خَائِبِينَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَغْفِر لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٩﴾

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لَا تَاْكُلُوْا الرِّبٰۤاَ اَضْعَافًا مُّضَاعَفَةً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ

167 An image that depicts a number of them being struck down.

168 *Yakbita* is a very strongly emotive word; to smite, to depress. Indeed, the whole aya employs words that are highly charged, standing out from other likely alternatives in Arabic. Any attempt at an equivalent rendition in English will inevitably fall short of what is ideally portrayed.

169 al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr mention in their commentaries the manner in which usurious financial transactions were repeatedly multiplied. That

so that you may be successful.<sup>(170)</sup>  
 ﴿131﴾ Beware of the Fire that was prepared for the Deniers; ﴿132﴾ obey Allah and the Messenger so that you may be given mercy; ﴿133﴾ and rush forth to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden as wide as the Heavens and Earth prepared for the Mindful.

﴿134﴾ Those who spend at times of prosperity and adversity<sup>(171)</sup>, restrain 'their' anger<sup>(172)</sup> and pardon 'other' people—Allah loves good doers; ﴿135﴾ the ones who upon committing a 'gravely' vile deed or doing themselves an injustice<sup>(173)</sup>, they remember Allah and implore 'Him' for forgiveness for their sins – and who else would forgive sins besides Allah<sup>(174)</sup>—;

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَأَتَقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ  
 لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
 تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ \* وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن  
 رَبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ  
 أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ  
 وَالْكَاظِمِينَ الْغَيْظَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ  
 وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا  
 فَحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ  
 فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ  
 إِلَّا اللَّهُ

is, when the date of settlement arrived the lender would give the debtor the choice to either make an immediate payment or to delay the date of payment with an increase in the amount due. In this way, because of some debtors' lack of resources, delays would be granted many times over and, thus, the original amount of the loan would be blown out of proportion.

170 The issue of the socially abhorred, detrimental financial transaction, namely usury, is taken up here again (cf. *al-Baqarah*: 275-278 which talk about usury at great length and in the severest of terms) to further underline the sound foundations on which God intended to build the newly formed Believing community. Here it is mentioned to drive home the message that prevailing over one's greed, among other things listed here (Ayas 130-136), is a means to victory, thus subtly hinting at the greediness of the archers who left their positions to get their share of the spoils of war in the Battle of Uḥud (cf. *Riḍā al-Manār*). To be really Mindful, and as a result victorious, is to pay heed to these commandments (cf. *al-Sa'dī*).

171 At times of abundance and scarcity.

172 The image here is of 'swallowing one's anger', *kazm al-ghayz*.

173 By committing less grievous sins.

174 Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There is not a Muslim who commits a sin, then performs ablution, Prays two *rak'ahs* and asks

they do not persist in committing what they do knowingly<sup>(175)</sup>. ﴿136﴾ For those the reward is forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens under which rivers flow; forever they abide therein—great indeed is the reward of workers.

﴿137﴾ The laws<sup>(176)</sup> have come to pass before you, so walk the land and behold the end of the Disbelievers.

﴿138﴾ This is a clarification<sup>(177)</sup> to people, a guidance and an admonishment to the Mindful.

﴿139﴾ 'So' Do not feel helpless and sorrowful while indeed yours is the upper hand<sup>(178)</sup> if you are 'truly' Believers. ﴿140﴾ If a wound<sup>(179)</sup> touches you, indeed an equal wound has touched the clan<sup>(180)</sup>.

وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوْا عَلٰٓى مَا فَعَلُوْا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣٥﴾  
 اُوْلٰٓئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ  
 تَجْرٰى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا وَعَمَّ  
 اَجْرُ الْعٰمِلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

فَدَخَلْتَ مِنْ قِبَلِكُمْ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ  
 فَاَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿١٣٧﴾  
 هٰذَا بَيٰٓانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدٰى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ  
 لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَلَا تَهِنُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا اَنْتُمْ  
 الْاَغْلٰوْنَ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ اِنْ يَمَسُّكُمْ  
 فَضْحٌ مِّنَ الْقَوْمِ فَصَاحٌّ مِّثْلُهٗ

Allah for forgiveness without Allah forgiving him". "...the ones who upon committing a 'gravely' vile deed or doing themselves an injustice..." (3:135), and: "Whoever commits a misdeed or does himself an injustice, then he asks Allah for forgiveness, he will find Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (4: 110). (Abū Dāwūd: 1521, al-Tirmidhī: 406, Ibn Mājah: 1395)

175 They realize that what they did is sinful, and that they are liable to Punishment if they do not mend their ways. Repentance is mandatory on them, and God accepts such repentance. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr)

176 Those Divine laws and canons which stipulate that victory and defeat take turns and are ever interchangeable between Believers and Deniers. In this way, the reins are slackened for the Deniers to further lure them into the trap of their annihilation and the deliverance of the Believers is assured after putting them to the test. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

177 The Qur'an, of which the preceding ayas are part. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

178 *al-A'lawn*, those who are superior.

179 Suffered a blow, in the Battle of Uhūd.

180 *al-Qawm*, the other side who tasted bitter defeat during the Battle of Badr.

Those are the days<sup>(181)</sup> We rotate them between people so that Allah would take the measure of those who ‘truly’ Believe<sup>(182)</sup> and choose martyrs<sup>(183)</sup> from among you—Allah does not love the unjust. <sup>﴿141﴾</sup> And ‘so that’ Allah may purge the Believers and wipe out the Deniers.<sup>(184)</sup>

<sup>﴿142﴾</sup> Or you thought that you would enter Paradise without Allah making known those who fought ‘in His cause’ and those who are steadfast. <sup>﴿143﴾</sup> You ‘Believers’ were wishing for death before you met it; there you saw it with your own eyes!<sup>(185)</sup> <sup>﴿144﴾</sup> Muhammad is no more than a Messenger who comes in a line of Messengers<sup>(186)</sup>,

وَتِلْكَ الْاَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَيَعْلَمُ  
 اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَٰمَنُوْنَ وَيَتَّخِذُ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَآءَ  
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِيْنَ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ  
 اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ يَٰمَنُوْنَ وَيَمْحَقَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٤٢﴾

اَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ اَنْ تَدْخُلُوْا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللّٰهُ  
 الَّذِينَ جٰهَدُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمِ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٤٣﴾  
 وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ  
 فَقَدْ رَاَيْتُمْوْهُ وَاَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ  
 اِلَّا رَسُوْلٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ الرُّسُلُ

- 181 This is the nature of time.
- 182 *Li ya ‘lama Allāh*, lit. “so that Allah may know”. A literal translation would cut against the grain of the correct Muslim Belief that Allah is Omniscient. According to scholars, it is in this instance ‘ilm zuhūr or ‘ilm shahādah; the kind of knowledge that enables one to bear witness confidently. This not only entails that the witness knows things for a fact but also that enough conclusive evidence is found and known.
- 183 Thus God grants the lofty status of martyrdom ‘shahādah’ to some of His servants.
- 184 God consoles the Believers here for their setback in the Battle of Uḥud and tells them the Wisdom behind it. This, after the reasons behind it were spelled out in the previous ayas along with the remedy. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 185 This is a reminder to the Believers, who missed the Battle of Badr, of their talk about wishing to meet the enemy and be struck down by them when they saw the great status the martyrs of that battle attained. It is said somewhat reprovingly to highlight that, while the Battle of Uḥud is being alluded to here, solid intentions and steadfastness not mere fancy talk are what actually win battles. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 186 Messengers are nothing more than human. The laws of nature apply to them too.

should he die or be killed, would you 'then' turn on your heels?<sup>(187)</sup> Whoever turns his heels, he would not scathe Allah in the least. Allah will reward the thankful<sup>(188)</sup>.  
 ﴿145﴾ No soul will die without Allah's permission, 'theirs is' a preordained precise timing<sup>(189)</sup>. Whoever wants the reward of the worldly life, We will give him from it; and whoever wants the reward of the Hereafter, We will give him from it; We will reward the Thankful.

﴿146﴾ 'Like' Many a Prophet with whom a great many of the godly fought, they did not lose heart at what befell them in the cause of Allah, neither did they weaken nor cower down<sup>(190)</sup>—Allah loves the steadfast. ﴿147﴾ Their only say was that: "Our Lord, absolve us of our sins and our 'reckless' excesses, make firm our feet<sup>(191)</sup> and grant us victory over the Denying people"<sup>(192)</sup>.

أَفَاِذَا مَاتَ اَوْ قُتِلَ اَنْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلٰى اَعْقَابِكُمْ  
 وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلٰى عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَبْصُرَ اللّٰهَ شَيْئًا  
 وَسَيَجْزِي اللّٰهُ اللّٰسِكِرِيْنَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ  
 لِنَفْسٍ اَنْ تَمُوْتَ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ كَتَبْنَا  
 مُوْجَلًا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهٖ مِنْهَا  
 وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْاٰخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهٖ مِنْهَا وَسَيَجْزِي  
 اللّٰسِكِرِيْنَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

وَكَآيِنٍ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِضِيُوْنَ كَثِيْرٌ  
 فَمَا وَهَنُوْا لِمَا اَصَابَهُمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوْا  
 وَمَا اسْتَكْبَرُوْا وَاَللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ  
 قَوْلُهُمْ اِلَّا اَنْ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوْبَنَا وَاِسْرَافَنَا  
 فِيْ اَمْرِنَا وَتَبَّتْ اَقْدَامُنَا وَاَنْصُرْنَا عَلٰى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ  
 ﴿١٤٧﴾

187 This smacks of the faltering position that some Muslims, lurking in the ranks of whom were hypocrites, took when it was rumoured at one time during the Battle of Uḥud that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) had met his death.

188 Those who realize God's bounties on them and show practical thankfulness in striving for His cause. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

189 This fact is stated by way of encouraging the Believers to fight in Allah's cause.

190 Submit to their enemy.

191 Make us stand firm.

192 This Prayer is very similar to that of the godly soldiers who fought with Saul against Goliath (cf. 2: 250). True Believers, although realizing the difficulty of the circumstance they are put in, summon their courage to face the situation relying on God and Praying to Him to make them stand firm.

﴿148﴾ Allah gave them the reward of the worldly life and the most fine<sup>(193)</sup> reward of the Hereafter—Allah loves good doers.

﴿149﴾ You who Believe, if you obey the Deniers<sup>(194)</sup>, they would surely 'cause you to' turn on your heels and you would revert as losers. ﴿150﴾ Nay but Allah is your Ally—He is the best of helpers. ﴿151﴾ We will cast fright in the hearts of the Deniers for Associating with Allah that for which He made no authority<sup>(195)</sup>. Their resort is Fire; dire indeed is the domicile of the Wrongdoers. ﴿152﴾ Allah was true to His promise when you put them to death<sup>(196)</sup> with His permission, until you wavered, quarrelled over the matter and disobeyed, 'only' after 'Allah' showed you what you love<sup>(197)</sup>. Among you are those who seek this worldly life and among you are those who

فَاتَهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحَسَنَ ثَوَابِ  
الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ  
كَفَرُوا يُرَدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ  
فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ بَلِ اللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ  
وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ سَأَلْتُمُوهُ  
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا  
بِاللَّهِ مَا لَهُ يَنْزِيلٌ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَا وَلَهُمْ  
النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾  
وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ  
تَحْسَبُونَهُم بِأَذْنِهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ  
وَتَنَّ عُنُقُكُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ  
مَا أَرَاكُمْ مَا تُحِبُّونَ مِّنْكُمْ مَّن يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا  
وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن

193 Winning God's Pleasure and eternal bliss in the Heavenly abode of Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

194 When the Prophet (ﷺ) was rumoured dead, some Believers, as mayhem spread in their ranks, were understandably in search of assuagement. Hence, they lent their ears to some who were in actuality Denying hypocrites who volunteered 'consultation'.

195 The idols they worshiped besides God without having plausible reason to justify such deification.

196 The Qur'anic lexical term *tahussūnahum* is unique. In a sense, it is semantically related to 'sensing' whereby when one is killed, one loses one's sense of perception (cf. al-Shinqīṭī).

197 Victory after the Deniers rout from the battle-ground. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).

seek the Hereafter<sup>(198)</sup>. Then He turned you away from them<sup>(199)</sup> to test you. 'But now' He forgave you—Allah is bountiful to the Believers.<sup>(200)</sup> ﴿153﴾ When you took flight, heeding no one while the Messenger was calling you 'back to battle' from behind you. Then He rewarded you 'a greater' distress on top of 'your' distress, so that you may not grieve for what you missed or what befell you—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do.<sup>(201)</sup>

يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ \* إِذْ نَضَعُدُونَ وَلَا تَأْوَبْتِ عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَائِكُمْ فَأَتْبَبَكُمْ غَمًّا بِغَمٍّ لِكَيْلَا تَحْزَنُوا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

- 198 The first party are the archers who left their positions to collect the spoils, while the latter are those who remained at their posts. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 199 When their hearts turned away from obeying the Messenger (ﷺ), they were made to forget about their enemy and take due guard against them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'adī, Ibn 'Ashūr)
- 200 This is a synopsis of the events of the Battle of Uḥud, where succinctly put: 1) God fulfilled His promise of victory to the Believers and made them run down and kill their enemy; 2) yet, when they saw that their desired goal, victory, was accomplished some of the archers lost conviction upon seeing that the spoils of war were being collected; 3) so, they disputed with their leader, who was of the opinion that they remained put as they had been bid by the Prophet (ﷺ); 4) when they broke rank and left their positions, the enemy, who had been lying low in hiding, bore down on them; 5) thereafter a commotion ensued and the archers fled. The rest of the account carries on in the next aya.
- 201 The Believers were greatly distressed at losing ground in the battle and taking flight in the face of their enemy, but a greater concern that made them forget this one was now in store for them. At this very difficult juncture, news of the rumoured death of the Prophet (ﷺ), whom they loved more than anything in this world, hit them. They soon forgot the loot they missed out on and the defeat that had been inflicted on them. Thus, God soothed and comforted them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'adī). This is a prime example of post trauma group therapy, which was rounded off by the soothing feeling of sleepiness as in the next aya. It is human nature to brood over one's woes and easily forget about the many blessings that they are couched in. Such blessings are only appreciated when they are lost.

﴿154﴾ Then He descended on you after distress comforting sleepiness engulfing a group of you<sup>(202)</sup>, and another group<sup>(203)</sup> of you were ‘very’ concerned about themselves, they think of Allah that which is not true; thoughts of ignorance<sup>(204)</sup>. They say: “Do we have a say in this affair?” Say ‘Muhammad’: “The whole affair belongs to Allah”<sup>(205)</sup>. They hide in their hearts what they do not reveal to you. They say: “Had we had a say in this, we would not have been killed here”. Say: “Had you been in your homes, those who were decreed to be killed would have made their way to their mowing down ‘places’. ‘You were lead to come’ So that Allah would test what lurks in your chests and put what is in your hearts to trial—Allah is Knowledgeable of what the hearts hold.

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمَنَةً نُّعَاسًا يَغَشِّيٰ طَآئِفَةً مِنْكُمْ وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَلْ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ مَا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَّا قُتِلْنَا هَهُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَىٰ مَضَاجِعِهِمْ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٥٤﴾

202 The real Believers.

203 In other words, the hypocrites (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). Those who were so consumed by their thoughts of the state they found themselves in. They were too tense and anxious to feel such a comforting, subtle sleepiness. In essence, their hearts were not pure enough to receive the blessing.

204 *al-Jāhiliyyah*, the age of ignorance; the life the Arab pagans lead before the advent of Islam in which their perceptions about God were, to say the least, muddled. Here, seeing the Believers take the blows, they thought that God would not come to their help: “*Nay but you thought that the Prophet and Believers would never go back to their homes, and that ‘thought’ was to take hold of your hearts; you caught the evil thought—indeed you are people laid to waste*” (48:12).

205 The infinitely Wise God Almighty disposes of matters as He wills.



﴿155﴾ Those who fled on the day when the two hosts met 'did so because' Satan had entrapped them owing to some sins 'they committed', but Allah forgave them—Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing.

﴿156﴾ You who Believe, do not be like those who Denied and said to their brothers<sup>(206)</sup> when they<sup>(207)</sup> set about travelling 'in trade' or on a raid<sup>(208)</sup>: "Had they been with us, they would not have died or gotten killed"<sup>(209)</sup>. Thus Allah makes their hearts remorse-stricken; Allah 'alone' gives life and causes death—Allah is All-Seeing of what you do. ﴿157﴾ If you are killed in the cause of Allah or 'yet' died, 'be sure that' forgiveness from Allah and mercy are better than what they hoard.<sup>(210)</sup> ﴿158﴾ Whether you die or get killed certainly to Allah you shall be rallied<sup>(211)</sup>.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَمَّتِ الْجَمْعَانِ  
إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا  
وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا  
غَزَى لَوْ كُنَّا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا وَمَا قُتِلُوا  
لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكْ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ  
يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾  
وَلَئِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مِتُّمْ لَمَعْفَرَةٌ  
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَلَئِنْ  
مُتُّمْ أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

206 Their brethren with whom they find a certain bond.

207 The latter.

208 *Ghuzzan* is the plural of *ghāzī*, the one who sets out on a fighting foray. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharib al-Qur'ān*, p. 114, al-Sijjīstānī, *Gharib al-Qur'ān*, p. 354)

209 Here God makes the Believers privy to this devilishly inspired soliloquy of lament and deep regret of the Deniers/hypocrites at the misfortune that hit their so-called brothers. Without God, the lives they lead were utterly inconsolable! A Believer should know for certain that all matters, including life and death, are in the Hands of God alone.

210 The reward with God for those who dedicate themselves to His cause is, by far, better than any worldly gain.

211 For Reckoning.

﴿159﴾ By Allah’s Mercy you ‘Muhammad’ relented<sup>(212)</sup> to them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted<sup>(213)</sup>, they would have disbanded from around you. Pardon them and pray for forgiveness for them and seek their counsel in affairs<sup>(214)</sup>. If you are resolved then put your trust in Allah<sup>(215)</sup>—Allah loves those who put their trust in Him. ﴿160﴾ If Allah helps you, then there is no one to defeat you; if He forsakes you, who would then help you thereafter? In Allah let the Believers put their trust.

فِيمَا رَحِمَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ رَاحِمًا لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَافْتَضُوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَسَأَوْنَهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾  
 إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمُ وَإِنْ يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

﴿161﴾ No Prophet ever misappropriates<sup>(216)</sup>, whoever

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكْتَسِبَ

- 212 In the wake of the Battle of Uḥud, the Prophet (ﷺ) was, by God’s Grace, made to show leniency to the Believers who disobeyed his commands.
- 213 *Ghalīz al-qalb*, lit. thick-hearted.
- 214 The principle of *shurā*, consultation/deliberation, is a cornerstone of the Islamic community. One of the greatest traits of the Believing community is that: “...their affairs are deliberated among them...”. (42: 38)
- 215 The final decision, after deliberations, is left to the leader of the community.
- 216 *Yaghull* is to stealthily, illegally seize possession of something; in this instance, spoils of war in particular. Exegetes differed upon the reason for the revelation of this aya. One opinion by the great exegetes al-Kalbī and Muqātil, found in al-Baghawī’s *Tafsīr*, puts it in context. They have it that the aya was revealed with regards to: “the spoils of the Battle of Uḥud. When the archers left their positions to seize some of the loot, they thought: “We fear that the Prophet will say: “Whatever one takes is his”, and he may not divide the loot among his Companions like he did at the Battle of Badr”. They then abandoned their positions and got their hands busy with the loot. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to them: “Did I not command you not to leave your positions until I said so?” They replied: “We left the rest of our brothers stationed in their positions!” He (ﷺ) said: “No! But you thought that we would seize possession of it and not give you your share!” Thus this aya was revealed”.

misappropriates 'something' comes with that which he misappropriated on the Day of Judgement<sup>(217)</sup>; then every soul shall be requited what it earned—they shall not be wronged. ﴿162﴾ Would the one who pursues Allah's Pleasure be like the one who is blighted with Displeasure from Allah; his is Hellfire as a resort—dire indeed is the destination. ﴿163﴾ They 'both parties' are of 'varying' degrees before Allah<sup>(218)</sup>—Allah is All-Seeing of what they do. ﴿164﴾ Allah has favoured the Believers when He sent among them a Messenger of their kind<sup>(219)</sup>; He recites His Signs<sup>(220)</sup> to them, purifies them, and teaches them the Book and Wisdom<sup>(221)</sup>—indeed they were utterly lost before.

وَمَنْ يَعْلَلْ يَأْتِ بِمَا عَمِلَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى  
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾  
أَفَمَنْ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِّنَ  
اللَّهِ وَمَا أُوذِيَ جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾ هُمْ  
دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾  
لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ  
رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ  
وَيُرَكِّبُهُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ  
وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾

217 Abū Ḥumayd al-Sā'idī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “By Allah none of you wrongfully appropriates part of it [collected mandatory alms] without him meeting Allah on the Day of Judgement carrying it. And I shall know everyone of you who meets Allah carrying a camel grunting, a cow lowing or a goat bleating...” (al-Bukhārī: 6979, Muslim: 1832). al-Qurtubī (4: 256) comments: “He comes carrying it [illegally appropriated effects] on his back and neck, tormented by its weight, horrified by its atrocious sound, and berated by making his dishonesty known to all people...”.

218 Those who seek God's Pleasure and those who deserve His Displeasure are not of one and the same grade; some are better than others while others are worse than others. Any certain grade is won by a person's deeds, whether good or bad. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

219 That is a human being, just as much as they are, and where there is a human connection and mutual understanding at all levels of familiarity (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Tafsīr Āyāt Ashkalat*, 1: 226-227, Ibn Kathīr). God could have sent them an angel as Messenger but the nature of that creation would have come in the way of communication and the safe delivery of the Message (cf. 17: 95).

220 Ayas.

221 The Qur'an and the Sunnah.

﴿165﴾ Would you whenever a calamity befalls you<sup>(222)</sup> – when you have inflicted twice as much of it<sup>(223)</sup> – say: “Where does this come from?”<sup>(224)</sup> Say ‘Muhammad’: “You brought this upon yourselves!” Indeed Allah is Able over everything. ﴿166﴾ What befell you on the day when the two hosts met with Allah’s permission, so that He makes known the ‘real’ Believers, ﴿167﴾ and those who pretend<sup>(225)</sup>. It was said to them: “Come and fight in the cause of Allah, or ‘at least’ push back<sup>(226)</sup>”. They said: “Had we any knowledge of a fighting, we would have followed you”<sup>(227)</sup>. They were on that day closer to Denial than Belief. They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts—Allah knows best what they hide. ﴿168﴾ Those who remained behind and said to their brothers: “Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed”. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Ward off death from yourselves, if you are speaking the truth!”

أَوَلَمَّا أَصَبْتُمْ مُمْسِكَةً ۖ قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مَتَّيِبَةً  
 قُلْتُمْ أَنَّى هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ  
 اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ  
 الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾  
 وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا  
 فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ ادْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالَ  
 لَا تَبَعْنَاكُمْ ۗ هُمْ لِلْكَفْرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ  
 لِلْإِيمَانِ يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ  
 وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا  
 لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قَاتَلُوا قُلْ  
 فَأَدْرَأُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
 صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

222 Seventy Muslims were killed in the setback during the Battle of Uḥud. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

223 That is when they routed their enemy in the Battle of Badr killing seventy men and taking another seventy prisoners. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

224 They incredulously asked the reason behind this setback. Then their answer came.

225 *al-ladhīna nāfaquū*, the hypocrites lurking within the Believing community.

226 Defend yourselves.

227 Their lame excuse being that they did not think the Believers would actually engage the Deniers in battle. They claimed that they saw battle as only a remote possibility. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿169﴾ Do not think that those who got killed in the cause of Allah<sup>(228)</sup> are dead. Nay but they are alive with their Lord 'being handsomely' provided for<sup>(229)</sup>.

﴿170﴾ Delighted with what Allah gave them from His Grace and are cheerful 'in anticipation' for those who did not yet join them; that behind them they<sup>(230)</sup> will have no fear nor will they feel sorrowful; they are cheerfully anticipant of Bounty and Grace from Allah and that Allah casts aside not the reward of the Believers.

﴿172﴾ Those who responded to 'the call of' Allah and the Messenger after they have been deeply wounded<sup>(231)</sup>; of whom these who do well and are Mindful, theirs is a great reward.

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا  
بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَرِحِينَ بِمَا  
ءَاتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ  
لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ \* يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ  
الَّتِي وَفَّضَ لَهَا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ  
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ  
الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرٌ  
عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٢﴾

228 Martyrs.

229 Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When your brothers were struck down in the Battle of Badr, Allah placed their souls in the 'abdominal' cavities of green fowls, they drink from the rivers of Paradise, eat from its fruits and come back at the end of the day to repose in chandeliers hung in the Shadow of the 'Majestic' Throne. For all of this, they 'the martyred Believers' said: "Who would tell our brothers about us; that we are in Paradise being handsomely provided for so that they may not give up fighting in the cause of Allah or cower in war?" Allah Almighty said: "I will tell them on your behalf". Then He revealed: "Do not think that those who got killed in the cause of Allah are dead. Nay but they are alive with their Lord 'being handsomely' provided for". (Abū Dāwūd: 2520, Aḥmad: 2388; another version is found in Muslim: 1887)

230 The latter.

231 Those of the Believers who did the Prophet's (ﷺ) bidding and chased after the retreating Makkan army until they reached the outpost of Ḥamrā' al-Asad, on the outskirts of Madinah. These Believers had been deeply wounded and bruised in the Battle of Uḥud. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿173﴾ Those who ‘when’ people said to them: “People have regrouped for you, so fear them”<sup>(232)</sup>, their Belief ‘only’ grew firmer and they said: “Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers”<sup>(233)</sup>.  
 ﴿174﴾ They returned with Grace and Bounty from Allah<sup>(234)</sup>, touched not by harm; they followed Allah’s Pleasure<sup>(235)</sup>—Allah is of a Great Bounty. ﴿175﴾ It is indeed Satan sowing fear of his allies<sup>(236)</sup>. Do not fear them but fear Me, if you are ‘true’ Believers.

﴿176﴾ Let not ‘Muhammad’ those who rush forth towards Denial grieve you<sup>(237)</sup>; they would not harm Allah in the least. Allah wants not a share for them in the Hereafter and theirs is a great Punishment.

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَأَنْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمَسَّ لَهُمْ سُوءٌ وَأَتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾ إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَآءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا مِنِّي إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

وَلَا يَخْزِيكَ الَّذِينَ يَسْأَلُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَن يَصْرِوْا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ الْأَلَمَجَلَّ لَهُمْ حَظًّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾

- 232 The Deniers’ army, under the leadership of Abū Sufyān, were reported to be bracing themselves for another attack. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 233 This pronouncement is one of the greatest forms of *Dhikr* (remembrance) during times of hardship. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “*Hasbunā Allāh wa ni‘ma al-Wakīl* (Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers), was said by Ibrāhīm (رضي الله عنه) when he was thrown in the fire and was said by Muhammad (ﷺ) when it was said: “*People have regrouped for you, so fear them*”, their Belief ‘only’ grew firmer and they said: “*Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers*.”” (al-Bukhārī: 4563)
- 234 Their obedience to God and His Messenger (ﷺ) and their pursuit of the enemy won them great rewards upon their return.
- 235 They did what leads to the Pleasure of God and won it. (al-Ṭabarī)
- 236 The allies of the Devil are the warring Deniers. Satan uses them to intimidate Believers. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 237 The adversity that overcame the Believers showed the real mettle of the hypocrites, who found the time opportune to lay bare their true colours. This is in stark contrast to the stance of the real Believers who did not loiter in responding to the Prophet’s (ﷺ) bidding.

﴿177﴾ Those who exchanged Belief for Denial would not harm Allah in the least and theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿178﴾ Let not those who Deny think that the rein We give them<sup>(238)</sup> is better for them. We only give them allowance so that they would accumulate sins; theirs is a humiliating Punishment.

﴿179﴾ Allah would not have left the Believers as you were, until He sorted out the bad from the good<sup>(239)</sup>. Allah would have not revealed the Unseen to you, but He chooses from His Messengers whoever He wishes<sup>(240)</sup>, so Believe in Allah and His Messengers. If you Believe and are Mindful then yours is a great reward. ﴿180﴾ Let not those who are miserly<sup>(241)</sup> with what Allah has 'bountifully' bestowed on them from His Grace think that this is better for them.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا  
 اللَّهَ شَيْئًا ۖ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٧﴾ وَلَا يَخْسَبَنَّ  
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۖ إِنَّمَا نَمَلِي لَهُمْ خَيْرًا لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ ۖ إِنَّمَا  
 نَمَلِي لَهُمْ لِيَزِدُوا إِتْمَانًا ۖ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾  
 مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ  
 حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ  
 لِيُزِيلَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِي مِنْ  
 رُسُلِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ ۚ فَتَمَنُّوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۚ وَإِنْ  
 تَوَمَّنُوا ۖ وَسَفَّوْا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٩﴾ وَلَا يَخْسَبَنَّ  
 الَّذِينَ يَخْتَلُونَ ۖ بِمَاءِ أَنفُسِهِمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ  
 هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُمْ

238 The fact that God does not quicken their punishment and seize them for their misdeeds (cf. Ayas 196-197 below).

239 In its formative days, the early Believing community was not as clearly differentiated as one might think; hypocrites were living in its midst pretending to be Believers and lying low wishing for the worst to come upon the real Believers. In order to separate the wheat from the chaff, God decreed the calamity that befell the Believers in the Battle of Uḥud; this, so the hypocrites could be told apart (cf. al-Rāzī).

240 God chooses from among His Messengers those whom He entrusts with some knowledge of the Unseen (*al-Ghayb*). In this instance, He told Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who the hypocrites really were so that he may be on guard against them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*)

241 Believers are encouraged to spend out of their wealth as much as they are encouraged to put their own lives on the line in God's cause.

Nay, but it is evil for them; they will be collared 'around their necks' with what they withheld on the Day of Judgement. For Allah is the inheritance of the Heavens and Earth—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do.

بَلْ هُوَ سَرُّهُمْ سَيِّئُونَ مَا بَخَلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ  
الْقِيَامَةِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاتُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ  
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٨٠﴾

﴿181﴾ Allah heard the saying of those who said<sup>(242)</sup>: “Allah is poor and we are rich”<sup>(243)</sup>. We will record what they said and their killing of the Prophets unjustifiably<sup>(244)</sup>, and We will say: “Taste you the torment of burning!”<sup>﴿182﴾</sup> That ‘torment’ is because of what your hands sent forth<sup>(245)</sup>—Allah certainly does not deal ‘with His’ servants unfairly.<sup>﴿183﴾</sup> Those who said: “Allah took our pledge not to Believe in any Messenger unless he gives us a sacrificial offering ‘to be’ consumed by fire”<sup>(246)</sup>.

لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ  
وَحُمْنٌ أَغْنِيَهُ سَتَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ  
الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلُ دُوقُوا عَذَابَ  
الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٨١﴾ ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيكُمْ  
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴿١٨٢﴾ الَّذِينَ  
قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عٰهَدَ إِلَيْنَا آلَاؤُمْنَ لِرَسُولٍ  
حَقِّ يَأْتِينَا بِقُرْبَانٍ تَأْكُلُهُ النَّارُ

242 Now that the lessons from the setback in the Battle of Uḥud have all been thrashed out, argumentation with the Jews of Madinah once more picks up.

243 al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī reports that when the Jews of Madinah heard the previous ayas, which encourage Believers to spend in the cause of God, they said: “If He ‘God’ asks people to spend in His cause to achieve His goals, then He must be a wretched pauper!” (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurṭubī, al-Rāzī)

244 Cf. Aya 21.

245 What they committed.

246 Muhammad Asad has the following comment in his translation: “... in other words, unless he conforms to Mosaic Law, which prescribes burnt offerings as an essential part of divine services. Although this aspect of the Law had been left in abeyance ever since the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, the Jews of post-Talmudic times were convinced that the Messiah promised to them would restore the Mosaic rites in their entirety; and so they refused to accept as a prophet anyone who did not conform to the Law of the Torah in every detail”.



Say 'Muhammad': "Many a Messenger before me came to you<sup>(247)</sup> with clear evidences, and with what you 'just' said. Why did you kill them if only you are truthful? ﴿184﴾ If they call you a liar, then many a Messenger before you were called liars; 'even though' they came 'to them' with clear evidences, the 'Sacred' Writs and the Luminous Book<sup>(248)</sup>.

﴿185﴾ Every soul shall taste death<sup>(249)</sup> and you will be paid your rewards in full on the Day of Judgement; whoever is dragged away<sup>(250)</sup> from Hellfire and entered into Paradise, then he is a winner—life is nothing but an illusory enjoyment.

قُلْ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّن قَبْلِي بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ  
وَبِالَّذِي قُلْتُمْ فَلِمَ قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ  
صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٨٤﴾ فَإِن كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ  
رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ  
وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ  
أَجْرَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَن زُحِرَ عَنِ  
النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا  
الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَمَتَعُ الْعُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾

247 To your ancestors.

248 The Sacred Writs *al-Zubur* (lit. books, sing. *zabūr*) and *al-Kitāb al-Munīr* (the Luminous Book) refer to the Heavenly revealed Books.

249 Although mention of this fact here can be construed as a way of alleviating the suffering and hurt the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers endured from their enemies' hands and tongues (al-Ṭabarī), in Ibn 'Āshūr's considered opinion it is further meant to sooth the pain that the Believer's found at losing their brothers in battle, on the one hand, and on the other refutes the narrative of the hypocrites who said that their brothers would not have been killed had they not come out of their homes for battle.

250 The scene being painted here is graphic. The word *zuḥẓiḥa* embodies its meaning within its own phonic makeup; drawing its form and throwing its shadow in the process. Hellfire as found here possesses a gravitational power, dragging to it whoever and whatever gets near. Any person who is caught within its radius is in need of someone to drag him (*yu-zahẓiḥ-uhu*) away little by little, in order to set him free from its energy sapping pull. Whoever is to be dragged away from its radius, freed from the tentacles of its gravity and admitted to Paradise has made it. This is a powerful and full coloured depiction of helplessness, of vehemently tugging, pulling and dragging in order to reach safe haven.

﴿186﴾ You shall be tested in your wealth and yourselves<sup>(251)</sup> and you will hear much that is hurtful from those who were given the Book before you and the Associators<sup>(252)</sup>, but if you remain steadfast and are Mindful, then that is real fortitude.

﴿186﴾ لَسْتَبْلَوْنَ فِيْ اَمْوَالِكُمْ وَاَنْفُسِكُمْ  
وَلَتَسْمَعْنَ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ  
مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْا اَذٰى كَثِيْرًا  
وَ اِنْ تَصْبِرُوْا وَتَتَّقُوْا فَاِنَّ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ  
الْاُمُوْر ﴿١٨٦﴾

﴿187﴾ ‘Mention’ When Allah took the pledge of those who were given the Book that you should make it plain to people rather than suppress it<sup>(253)</sup>; they tossed it behind their backs and traded it off for a pittance—miserable indeed is what they buy.

﴿187﴾ وَاِذْ اَخَذَ اللّٰهُ مِيْثَاقَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ  
لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنّٰسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوْنَهُ فَنَبِذُوْهُ وَّرَآءَ  
ظُهُوْرِهِمْ وَاَشْتَرُوْا بِهٖ ثَمَنًا قَلِيْلًا فَبِئْسَ  
مَا يَشْتَرُوْنَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَفْرَحُوْنَ  
بِمَا اَتَوْا وَيُحِبُّوْنَ اَنْ يُحْمَدُوْا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوْا  
فَلَا تَحْسَبْتَهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ  
عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٨٨﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ  
وَ الْاَرْضِ ۗ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١٨٩﴾

﴿188﴾ Do not think that those who delight in their actions<sup>(254)</sup> and are pleased with unwarranted praise<sup>(255)</sup>, are at a ‘great’ distance from Punishment—theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿189﴾ To Allah belongs the ownership of the Heavens and Earth—Allah is Able over everything.

251 Cf. 2:155.

252 The Arab pagans.

253 The Divine Book.

254 Full of conceit over their evil-doing.

255 Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrates that the reason for the revelation of this aya was such that: “Some hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) would stay behind when he used to set out on forays, and they were pleased with this. Upon his return, they would forge excuses and swear to them. They even loved to be praised for what they did not do ‘i.e. being Believers and part of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) army’. Thus this aya was revealed”. (al-Bukhārī: 4567, Muslim: 2777)

﴿190﴾ Indeed there are in the creation of the Heavens and Earth and the alternation of night and day Signs<sup>(256)</sup> for people of reason. ﴿191﴾ Those who mention Allah 'while' standing, sitting and 'lying' on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the Heavens and Earth 'declaring': "Our Lord, You did not create 'all of' this in vain. Glorified be You, shield us from the torment of Fire; ﴿192﴾ Our Lord, disgraced indeed is the one You commit to Hellfire; there are no helpers for the evildoers; ﴿193﴾ Our Lord, we heard a caller<sup>(257)</sup>, summoning to Belief, saying: "Believe in your Lord!" and we Believed, so our Lord forgive us our sins and expunge our misdeeds, and bring our lives to termination 'joining us' with the Righteous;

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ  
الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾ الَّذِينَ  
يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَفُجُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ  
وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا تُسَبِّحُكَ فَقِينَا  
عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن تُدْخِلُ النَّارَ فَقَدْ  
أَخْرَجْتَهُ، وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿١٩٢﴾ رَبَّنَا  
إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ  
ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا  
وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَقَّتْ مَعَ الْآبِرَارِ ﴿١٩٣﴾

256 These are so-called cosmic Signs (*āyāt kawniyyah*). They, along with the Qur'anic Signs (*āyāt Qur'āniyyah*), work together to prove to Believers the Truth of the Message and thus strengthen their Faith. Believers are encouraged to think about these Signs and use their reason when considering them (cf. *Riḍā al-manār*). Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "I slept once over at 'my aunt' Maymūnah's 'the Prophet's wife' home, while the Prophet was there, in order to see how he Prays at night. He (ﷺ) talked with his wife for a while and then slept. When there remained only the last third of the night, or a part of it, he woke and sat up, looked at the sky and recited: "Indeed there are in the creation of the Heavens and Earth and the alternation of night and day Signs for people of reason". He then performed ablution, rinsed his mouth with *siwāk* 'atwig' and Prayed eleven *rak'ahs*. When Bilāl called for Prayer, he (ﷺ) performed two *rak'ahs*, went out and lead people in the Fajr Prayer". (al-Bukhārī: 7452)

257 Muhammad (ﷺ). (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

﴿194﴾ Our Lord, bestow on us what You promised us through your Messengers and do not disgrace us on the Day of Judgement—indeed You never break Your promise”.

﴿195﴾ Their Lord responded to them that: “I shall never render useless the deeds of any doer of you, male or female; you are each other’s other part<sup>(258)</sup>. Those who migrated, were expelled from their lands, persecuted in My cause, fought and got killed, I shall expunge their misdeeds and admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow”; a reward from Allah—indeed with Allah is the best of rewards.

﴿196﴾ Do not be deceived by the revelling<sup>(259)</sup> of those who Deny in the land; ﴿197﴾ “this is but” a passing enjoyment, then their resort is Hellfire—ghastly indeed is this bed! ﴿198﴾ But those who are Mindful of their Lord, theirs are Gardens under which rivers flow, eternally they abide therein; a domicile coming from Allah—what is with Allah is best for the Righteous. ﴿199﴾ Indeed there are among the People of the Book those who Believe in Allah,

رَبَّنَا وَآتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا  
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿١٩٤﴾  
فَأَسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ  
عَمَلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثِيَ بَعْضُكُمْ  
مِّنْ بَعْضٍ فَأَآلِدِينَ هَاجِرُونَ وَأُخْرَجُوا مِنْ  
دِيَارِهِمْ وَأَوْذُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا  
لَا كُفْرَانَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَا دُخْلَنَّهُمْ  
جَنَّتِ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا  
مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾

لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي  
الْبِلَادِ ﴿١٩٦﴾ مَتَّعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ  
وَبئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٩٧﴾ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا  
رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا  
الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ  
اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْآبِرَارِ ﴿١٩٨﴾ وَإِنَّ  
مَنْ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ

258 Both men and women are born of each other and are looked upon equally. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

259 By the fact that the Deniers were living unchecked, enjoying complete freedom of movement and all that life has to offer (cf. Aya 178 above).

what has been sent down to you<sup>(260)</sup> and what had been sent down to them, humbling themselves before Allah and do not trade off the Signs of Allah for a pittance; for those is their reward with their Lord—Allah is swift in reckoning. ﴿200﴾ You who Believe, be forbearing<sup>(261)</sup>, remain firm<sup>(262)</sup>, guard your lands<sup>(263)</sup> and be Mindful of Allah so that you may be successful<sup>(264)</sup>.

وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ خَشِيعَاتٍ  
لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا  
أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩٩﴾ يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ  
ءَامَنُوا أَصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا وَاتَّقُوا  
اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾



260 The Qur'an. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

261 Be patient in the face of life's trials and tribulations. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

262 When you face your enemy in battle. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

263 *Rābiṭū* from *ribāṭ*, i.e. the fact of 'tying up' one's war steed at outposts to protect the borders from enemy attack. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Sa'dī)

264 This aya sums up the keys for being victorious which are repeated throughout *Āl 'Imrān*. It is given in answer to the Believer's Prayer to God to make them prevail over the Deniers found at the very end of *al-Baqarah*. (Cf. 'Key' in the Introduction to this sura.)

سُورَةُ النِّسَاءِ

*al-Nisā'*  
(Women)



## *al-Nisā'* (Women)

**Title:** *al-Nisā'* (in Muslim: 772, 800 and 1617; al-Bukhārī: 5055) makes many references to womenfolk, covering their rights and other domestic rulings in detail, along with inheritance matters and how to administer the affairs of any dependents. The details regarding these matters are sufficiently extensive for it to be known as *al-Nisā' al-Kubrā* (the more detailed *al-Nisā'*), whereas Sura *al-Ṭalāq* is known as *al-Nisā' al-Quṣrā* (the less detailed *al-Nisā'*) (cf. al-Bukhārī: 4909). It is important to note that the title *Women* is both an emblematic and concrete token of the sura's ideational central theme. That women were, to say the least, downtrodden and ill-treated in Arabian societies before the advent of Islam is well-known, and that they are given such great rights here is a manifest declaration of a break away from the then prevalent habit of treating them like commodities. The title, and by extension these new laws, symbolize the establishment of a well-demarcated community, one that is worlds apart from the heaving bosom of ignorance and darkness that surrounded it. Essentially, it is a firmly disciplined community built upon Mindfulness, piety and justice for all.

**Merit:** 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever owns the first seven suras of the Qur'an '*al-sab' al-uwal*' is truly learned" (Aḥmad: 24575). Wāthilah Ibn al-Asqa' (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I was given the seven lengthy suras '*al-sab' al-ṭiwāl*' in lieu of the Torah" (Aḥmad: 24575). 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said: "There are five ayas in *al-Nisā'* that I would not replace for the world. And I know for certain that those of knowledge would not pass by them without recognizing them. 'They are': "*If you 'Believers' avoid the major ones 'of the sins' that you are warned against, We will absolve you of your 'lesser' misdeeds and We will have you enter a Noble Entrance 'Paradise'*" (4: 31); "*Verily Allah does not deal 'anyone' unjustly as much as a mote's weight; if it is a 'one' good deed done, then He multiplies it and grants from His own 'additionally' a great reward*" (4: 40); "*Allah does not forgive that He is Associated with, but He forgives what is lesser than that for whoever He wills*" (4: 48); "*Had they – when they wronged themselves – come to you and sought Allah's forgiveness and the Messenger sought forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful*" (4: 64); and, "*Whoever commits an ill deed or wrongs himself, then seeks forgiveness from Allah shall find Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful*" (4: 110). (al-Ṭabarānī: 9069; al-Ḥākim: 3194)



**Theme:** this is the third Madinan sura in a row, establishing and strengthening sincere Faith (*īmān*) in *al-Baqarah* and *Āl 'Imrān* respectively, and now cultivating and nurturing Mindfulness (*taqwā*), through daily practice at home. *al-Nisa*'s purpose is to safeguard the sanctity of the basic building block of society, and to establish a fair and equitable, wholesome, Mindful community of Believers. It opens with the very call to humans to be Mindful of God Who created them all from one, thus standing them on equal ground. Mindfulness, very much like charity, begins at home, and the test of true Mindfulness can only be attained through overcoming one's own weaknesses, fears and trepidations.

**Key:** set against the backdrop of the early formative days of the Believing community, *al-Nisā'* charts out a well-defined identity for the community, one that affirms boundaries. The basic foundational principles are stated and reiterated throughout this sura: 1) The community is to be built upon the bulwarks of its inner sanctity; a pious observance of Mindfulness, which is the overruling principle underlying each and every action carried out by the individual members of the community, as also the absolute upholding of justice, and complete obedience of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), who is the head of this community. 2) The line is clearly drawn between sincere Belief and its opposites; those who profess Islam and are living among Deniers have to migrate to Madinah to preserve their faith and strengthen the ranks of Believers around their leader. 3) The enemy latent within the community, namely the hypocrites, need to be exposed and told apart so that Believers are aware of their dangerous stratagems - incessant conniving and morale dampening - on the one hand, and whereby they are offered the opportunity to see reason and align themselves with the Believers wholeheartedly. 4) Believers are encouraged to fight for what they stand for. Furthermore, given this community will inevitably come to blows with the surrounding forces that do not condone of the way of life the Muslims now publicly practice, war protocols and rules of engagement are clearly demarcated. 5) The People of the Book's beliefs must be rebutted so as to counter their argumentative prowess, and dispossess them of their claim to moral superiority. In this way, the ground on which the Faith stands was to be affirmed.

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*

﴿1﴾ O people, be Mindful of your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it He created its mate<sup>(1)</sup>, and from both of them He dispersed scores of men and women<sup>(2)</sup>; be Mindful of Allah, by Whom you appeal to each other<sup>(3)</sup> and 'honour' the wombs<sup>(4)</sup>—verily Allah is Watchful over you.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ  
وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا  
وِنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١﴾

﴿2﴾ 'Guardians!' Give out to the orphans their money, do not exchange the bad for the good<sup>(5)</sup>, and do not devour their money along with yours—indeed this is a heinous sin. ﴿3﴾ If you fear you will not be fair to 'your' orphan

وَأٰتُوا الْيَتٰمٰى اَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْحٰثِثَ بِالطَّيِّبِ  
وَلَا تَأْكُلُوْا اَمْوَالَهُمْ اِلَىٰ اَمْوَالِكُمْ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ حُوْبًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٢﴾  
وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ اَلَّا تَقْسُطُوْا فِى الْيَتٰمٰى

- 1 Adam, the single soul, and Eve its mate (ﷺ) (cf. 8: 98; 9: 189; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). That all people are the offspring of the same parents provides all the more reason for them to show leniency and compassion towards each other (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 2 “Among His signs is that He created you from dust. Then, behold, you are human beings ranging far and wide” (30:20).
- 3 Knowing how great God is in the heart of the entreated, the addresser would say: “I implore you by Allah (*as’aluka bi Allāh*) to do this or that”. The God Who is glorified in this way should also be heeded with equal homage (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). Alternatively, it means: “By Whom you ‘solemnly’ bind each other ‘in your dealings and transactions’”. (Cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*: 32: 113)
- 4 *al-Arḥām*, lit. the wombs, metonymically means relations of kinship. These relations are to be surrounded with care. They are to be safeguarded not severed. People’s rights, especially those of kith and kin, are to be honoured as much as God’s own rights (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī), and hence why they are mentioned in conjunction with honouring the Almighty’s Name.
- 5 Do not choose the most valuable property belonging to the orphans under your care and confiscate it as your own, leaving the less worthy of it to them, (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

'prospective wives'<sup>(6)</sup>, then marry 'instead' whoever you like of women: two, three and four. But if you fear that you will not be fair 'in your treatment of all your wives' then one 'is enough' or those that your right hands possess<sup>(7)</sup>—this is prescribed lest you commit injustice.<sup>(4)</sup> Give women their dowry willingly as a right 'of theirs', but if they allow you some of it contentedly then eat it pleasurably with good cheer.<sup>(5)</sup> Do not hand over to the feeble-minded your money which Allah made as sustenance for you; 'yet' spend on them from it, clothe them and speak to them gently.<sup>(6)</sup> Test the orphans<sup>(8)</sup>, so that when they reach maturity – if you perceive them discerning – give them their money. Do not hastily devour or squander it fearing that they should 'in time' grow up. Whoever of you is well off,

فَأَنْكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مِمَّنِّي وَتَلَّتْ وَرَبِعَ  
فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ  
ذَلِكَ أَذَىٰ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَأَتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدَقَاتِهِنَّ  
نِحْلَةً فَإِنْ طِبَّنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ مِّنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ  
هَنِيئًا مَّرِيئًا ﴿٥﴾ وَلَا تُوَفُّوا السَّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي  
جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَمًا وَارْزُقُوهُنَّ فِيهَا وَالْكُسُوفُهَا وَقُولُوا  
لَهُنَّ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٦﴾ وَأَبْتَلُوا أَيْتَانِي حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا  
الْبِكَاحَ فَإِنْ ءَانَسْتُمْ مِنْهُمُ رَشَدًا فَأَدْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ  
أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا وَبِدَارًا أَنْ يَكْبُرُوا

- 6 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said that: "This aya came down regarding any man under whom there is an orphan girl for whom he is both guardian and inheritor, while she has money and with no one to argue in her favour. This guardian is enjoined not to marry her for her money, nor is he to beat or molest her in the process. In this respect, Allah says: "Should you fear that you would not be fair to 'your' orphan 'prospective wives', then marry 'instead' whoever you like of women". That is, He, the Almighty, is saying: "These I made lawful for you, and leave out those that you may be unfair to". (Muslim: 3018; al-Bukhārī: 4573)
- 7 The bondswomen that you own. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)
- 8 Take measure of those orphans over whom you are guardian so as to ascertain that they are discerning enough to be given their money and will not squander it due to lack of mental maturity. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī)

let him forbear 'in dignity'; whoever of you is needy let him eat off 'of it' proportionately<sup>9</sup>. Should you hand over their money to them, let there be witnesses to bear to this—Allah is sufficient as Reckoner.

﴿7﴾ To men 'rightly' belongs a share in the 'inheritance' left behind by the parents and 'bequeathing' relatives, and 'like so' to women 'rightly' belongs a share in the 'inheritance' left behind by the parents and 'near' relatives, be it large or small<sup>10</sup>—a share ordained 'by Allah'<sup>11</sup>. ﴿8﴾ If, at the time of the division 'of inheritance', 'other' relatives<sup>12</sup>, orphans and the needy attend, then give them some of it, and speak to them gently. ﴿9﴾ Let those who fear 'future harm' for their helpless posterity when they leave them behind 'as orphans after

وَمَنْ كَانَ عَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فَأَشْهِدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ﴿٧﴾

لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ﴿٨﴾ وَإِذَا حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينُ فَأَرْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ﴿٩﴾ وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكَوْا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّةً ضِعَفًا خَافُوا عَلَيْهِمْ

- 9 In proportion with what is socially agreed as enough to meet the poor guardian's necessary need, without excess. (Ibn 'Āshūr, Ibn 'Uthaymīn)
- 10 No matter how small or large the bequeathed sum to the inheriting relatives might be, both males and females have their due rights in it (cf. al-Ṭabarī). This is a revocation of the practice that was common in Arabia before the advent of Islam, known as the age of ignorance when women and younger boys were barred from inheritance. This with the justification that they do not ride horses that need to be dearly cared for, provide for those in need of assistance, ward off enemies, nor give out of their money to dependents (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Jazā'irī).
- 11 This 'ordained share' is detailed in Ayas 11-12 below.
- 12 Those relatives who have no lawful share in the inheritance. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

their death', be Mindful of Allah, and 'only' say what is fair<sup>(13)</sup>.  
 ﴿10﴾ Those who devour the money of orphans unjustly, only consume fire in their bellies—they will experience a Fiery Furnace<sup>(14)</sup>.

﴿11﴾ Allah advises<sup>(15)</sup> you regarding 'your inheritance to' your children: a male should have the equal share of two females;

فَلْيَسْتَقُوا اللَّهَ وَيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۖ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا

يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَيْنِ

- 13 In the same way as any parent seeks to ensure just treatment of their offspring after their death, any guardian of orphans will do well to remember this and treat those entrusted to them with care and kindness. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 14 *Sa'ir* is another name for Hellfire (cf. al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'an*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Beware of the seven most cardinal sins: Associating other deities with Allah, sorcery, annihilating a sacrosanct soul without having the right to, devouring usury, consuming an orphan's money, fleeing in battle, and accusing chaste, pure in heart, Believing women 'of lewdness'". (Cf. al-Bukhārī, 6857; Muslim, 89)
- 15 *al-Waṣiyyah* (lit. advice) is to strongly suggest a way of going about things for another person. 'Advice' from God, on the other hand, is a command, a dictate, that must be carried out. Furthermore, 'advice' also underlines the significance of the matter at hand and the great care taken by the person so advising (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). Given how crucial all this is, God makes a point of 'dictating' the division of inheritance Himself. No one besides the All-Knowing, All-Fair Creator is more knowledgeable of human nature and more capable of a just judgement regarding this very complex, emotionally charged, divisive matter. The reason behind this aya's revelation, as in al-Bukhārī (4577) and Muslim (1616), is the hadith that Jābir Ibn 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "The widow of Sa'd Ibn al-Rabī' came to the Prophet (ﷺ) accompanied by their two daughters. She said: "Messenger of Allah, these are the two daughters of Sa'd Ibn al-Rabī', their father met his death as martyr with you in the Battle of Uḥud. Their uncle took their money, leaving nothing for them. Being destitute, they will not find husbands!" He 'the Prophet (ﷺ)' said: "Allah shall judge their case!" Then the Aya of Inheritance (*āyat al-Mirāth*) came down. At this, the Prophet (ﷺ) sent for their uncle to come to him. 'When he came' He 'the Prophet (ﷺ)' said to him: "Give the daughters of Sa'd two thirds and another eighth to their mother, then what is left is yours"".

'but' if they are a 'number' of women more than two<sup>(16)</sup>, then theirs is two thirds of what he 'the parent' leaves 'behind'; if she is only one, then she should have half of it; and to his parents for each one a sixth of what he leaves, that is if he has children; but if he has no children and his parents inherit him, then to his mother belongs a third<sup>(17)</sup>; 'but' if he has siblings, then his mother receives a sixth; 'that is all' after a bequest he made 'is fulfilled'<sup>(18)</sup> and a debt 'of his is paid off'. Among your parents and your children you do not know who are more beneficial to you<sup>(19)</sup>; a division from Allah—verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

فَإِنْ كُنَّ نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ وَلِأَبَوَيْهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ إِنْ كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَهُ آبَاؤُهُ فَلَهُمُ الثُّلُثُ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِأُمِّهِ السُّدُسُ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ ؕ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ نَفَعًا فَرِيضَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنْ أَلَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١١﴾

- 16 That is in a scenario whereby the offspring of the deceased are only females and more than two. If there are two daughters they are to be given two thirds because the Prophet (ﷺ) gave the two daughters of Sa'd Ibn al-Rabi' two thirds, (al-Sa' dī points to this).
- 17 The remainder is for the father. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 18 The bequeathed amount should, in all cases, not exceed a third of the inheritance, (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī). Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) said: "I was taken seriously ill and the Prophet (ﷺ) came to visit me, and I said to him: "Prophet of Allah, I am going to leave behind me 'considerable' wealth, and only one daughter; shall I give out two thirds of it and leave a third 'for her'?" He replied: "No". Then I said: "Then may I give out a half and leave her the other?" He said: "No". Then I said: "Then may I will a third and leave the other two thirds for her?" He said: "A third 'you may give out', yet 'even' one third is too much"". (al-Bukhārī: 5659; Muslim: 1628). Furthermore, a person who legally inherits does not need to be included in the will. Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) said: "I heard the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) say during the Farewell Sermon: "Allah, Almighty, gave every owner of right their right, there is no will for an inheritor"". (Cf. al-Tirmidhī: 2020; Abū Dāwūd: 2870; Ibn Mājah: 2713)
- 19 Since you do not know who is going to be of a greater use to you in your life and after your death, do not favour anyone over the others and act by God's division of inheritance, which is the more just and equitable. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

﴿12﴾ (20) To you belongs half of what your spouses<sup>(21)</sup> leave behind, 'that is' if they do not have children; but if they have children then yours is a quarter of what they leave behind, 'that is all' after 'fulfilling' a bequest they made and 'paying their' debt. Theirs 'widows' is a quarter of what you 'men' leave behind, if you do not have children; 'but' if you have children, theirs is an eighth of what you leave behind, 'that is all' after 'fulfilling' a bequest you made and 'paying your' debt. If he is a childless parentless man<sup>(22)</sup>, or 'be her' a woman, and he has a brother or sister, then each one receives a sixth; 'but' if they are more than that, then they share a third, 'that is all' after 'fulfilling' a bequest made and 'paying' a debt; 'given that this bequest or debt' is not detrimental 'to an inheritor'<sup>(23)</sup>.

وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ  
 إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ  
 لَهُنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمْ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتْنَ مِنْ  
 بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِيَنَّ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ  
 وَلَهُنَّ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ  
 لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ  
 فَلَهُنَّ الثُّمُنُ مِمَّا تَرَكَتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ  
 تُوصُونَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ  
 يُورَثُ كَلِلاً أَوْ امْرَأَةً وَوَلَّهُ أَخٌ أَوْ أُخْتُ  
 فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ فَإِنْ كَانُوا  
 أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فِي  
 الثُّلُثِ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصَى بِهَا  
 أَوْ دَيْنٍ غَيْرِ مُضَارٍّ

20 Whilst the previous aya details the shares of inheritance of blood relatives (*al-wirāthah bi al-nasab*), this one explains the shares of those related through marriage (*al-wirāthah bi al-muṣāharah*). (Abū Ḥayyān)

21 Wives.

22 A person who has no living children or parents is known as *kalālah* (from *iklīl*, wreath, as his brothers and sisters surround him like a wreath surrounds the head). Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: "I was the last person to see 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and I heard him say: "Mine is the final word! *al-kalālah* is the person who has neither children nor parents". (Ibn Abū Ḥātim; its chain of narrators was deemed authentic by Aḥmad Shākir in *'Umdat al-Tafsīr*).

23 al-Rāzi in his *Tafsīr* says: "A will can be detrimental to inheritors in a number of ways: 1) whereby the testator bequeaths more than a third of the money; 2) whereby he/she bequeaths all their money to non-relatives; 3) whereby he/she falsely declares a debt to preclude heirs from the

‘This is’ An advice<sup>(24)</sup> from Allah—Allah is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing. ﴿13﴾ Those<sup>(25)</sup> are the boundaries of Allah, whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will be admitted into Gardens under which rivers flow—indeed that is the great triumph. ﴿14﴾ Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, and flouts His boundaries, will be admitted into a Fire, forever he abides therein—his is a humiliating Punishment.

﴿15﴾ Those of your women, who commit vice<sup>(26)</sup>, seek four witnesses from among you to testify against them; if they testify then confine them in ‘their’ houses until death claims them, or ‘else’ Allah may make a ‘n other’ way for them<sup>(27)</sup>.

وَصِيَّةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾  
تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ وَمَن يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ  
وَرَسُولَهُ، يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي  
مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا  
وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾ وَمَن يَعَصِ  
اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ  
نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿١٤﴾

وَالَّتِي يَأْتِينَ الْفَحِشَةَ مِن نِّسَائِكُمْ  
فَأُتَشْهَدُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةٌ مِّنكُمْ  
فَإِن شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ فِي الْبُيُوتِ  
حَتَّى يَتَوَفَّاهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ  
لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥﴾

inheritance; 4) whereby the testator declares that a debt due to him/her was settled while it was not; 5) whereby someone sells something valuable for a pittance, or buys some worthless item and pays dearly for it with the intention of depriving heirs of the money; 6) whereby the testator bequeaths a third of the wealth not with pure intention but rather to lessen the share of the inheritors”.

24 A binding commandment which you have to comply with. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

25 All of the aforementioned rulings and dictates. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

26 *al-Fāḥishah*, vice: alluded to here is adultery/fornication (cf. al-Sam’ānī).

27 This aya and the next, which deal with the ruling regarding adultery, are unanimously deemed abrogated (Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh al-Qur’ān*). The abrogating aya is: “*The fornicator and the fornicatress flog each of them a hundred lashes*”. (24: 2) ‘Ubādah Ibn al-Sāmit (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Take it from me, take it from me! Allah has made a way for them. If an unmarried man fornicates with an unmarried woman, then ‘their penalty is’ a hundred lashes ‘each’. If a married man commits adultery with



﴿16﴾ Any two of you who engage in it 'vice', offend them both<sup>(28)</sup>, but if they repent and mend their ways, then turn away from them—verily Allah is surely All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿17﴾ Repentance is due by Allah for those who commit evil out of ignorance<sup>(29)</sup> then hasten to repent<sup>(30)</sup>. From these Allah accepts their repentance—Allah is surely All-Knowing, All-Wise.

وَالَّذَانِ يَأْتِيَنِهَا مِنْكُمْ فَقَادُوا هُمَا فَإِنَّ  
تَابَا وَأَصْلَحَا فَأَعْرَضُوا عَنْهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ  
تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ  
لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ  
مِنْ قَرِيبٍ فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

a married woman, 'their penalty is' a hundred lashes 'each' and stoning". (Muslim: 1690). To prove that such a gravity occurred four witnesses of required legal competence have to come forward and testify that they saw with their own eyes the accused actually engage in intercourse, with the private parts not only meeting but where insertion actually took place.

That this ruling comes immediately after the laws of inheritance have been elaborated, highlights how greatly unscrupulous adultery is, because it wreaks havoc on familial relationships on which major rights and responsibilities are based. Besides this, women who have been given all their rights and been treated with utmost respect in the previous ayas as also in forthcoming ones, are warned, in the strongest of terms, against marital treachery and betrayal of trust (cf. al-Shawkānī).

- 28 By speaking harshly to them and verbally reproaching them so that they realize the immorality of their actions. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa' dī)
- 29 That is *jahālah*, i.e. inability to fully realize the serious consequences of one's actions, despite knowing that such acts are forbidden. Every act of disobedience is *jahālah* (ignorance/carelessness/lack of good judgement) whether intended or not. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī)
- 30 God, the Most Merciful, accepts a person's *tawbah* (repentance) as long as he is alive and before seeing death with his own eyes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī). 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah accepts the repentance of a servant, as long as he is not gurgling 'while suffering the throes of death'". (al-Tirmidhī: 3537; Ibn Mājah: 4253; Aḥmad: 6160) There are five conditions for accepting a person's repentance: 1) sincerity and seeking only God's Pleasure; 2) regretting having committed sins; 3) abandoning sins; 4) having the true intention of not committing sins in the future, and 5) committing to repentance prior to death's arrival (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

﴿18﴾ 'Whereas' Repentance is not 'due' for those who carry on committing 'many a grave' evil, until death comes upon one of them, whence he says: "Now I repent!" Nor is it 'due' for those who die Denying—for those We have prepared a painful Punishment.

وَلَيْسَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ إِنِّي تُبْتُ الْإِسْلَامَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارًا أُولَٰئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٨﴾

﴿19﴾ <sup>(31)</sup> You who Believe, it is not allowed for you to inherit women hatefully<sup>(32)</sup>. Do not 'neither' impound them forcibly to win back some of what you offered them<sup>(33)</sup>, unless they commit a flagrant vice<sup>(34)</sup>. Keep company with them agreeably<sup>(35)</sup>; if you come to dislike them, then it may be you dislike a thing and Allah endows it with good plenty<sup>(36)</sup>.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَن تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ كَرِهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلوهُنَّ لَتَدْهُنَّ أَوْ بِبَعْضِ مَا ءَاتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَن يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ فَإِن كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ فَعَسَىٰ أَن تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾

- 31 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) says that the reason behind this aya's revelation had to do with Arab practice during the age of ignorance whereby: "When a man dies, his close male relatives claimed more of a right to his wife than her own family. If they wished, they could marry her 'to one of them', or marry her off to anybody, or hold her back from marriage". (al-Bukhārī: 4579)
- 32 The fact of the matter is that these women hate what is being done to them and are forced into it, against their will. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 33 Men are also enjoined not to make life hard for their wives. They are not to force them to ransom themselves with a part of the dowry, gifts or any other rights they received from their husbands so that they may divorce them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 34 Such as proven adultery not just an accusation. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, al-Jazā'irī)
- 35 That a person associates with his wife agreeably means that he speaks kindly to her, does not hurt her or frown in her face, deals with her generously, makes himself pleasing to her and provides for her according to societal norms. (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī) 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The best of you are the best to their wives and I am the best of you to my wives". (al-Tirmidhī: 3895)
- 36 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "A Believing husband should not feel averted to his Believing wife. If he dislikes a certain trait of hers, he may like another". (Muslim: 1469)

﴿20﴾ If you wish to exchange one wife for another –and you have given one of them a hundredweight<sup>(37)</sup> 'in dowry' – then take not 'back' any part of it—would you take it falsely and with blatant sin! ﴿21﴾ How 'ever' would you take it 'back' when each one of you 'both' intimated<sup>(38)</sup> yourselves with each other, and they 'women' held you to a solemn pledge!<sup>(39)</sup>

﴿22﴾ Do not marry women whom your fathers had previously married, excepting those in aforesaid<sup>(40)</sup>—indeed this is a vice and a foulness of an evil path. ﴿23﴾ Unlawful for you 'Believers in marriage' are: your mothers, daughters, sisters, maternal aunts, paternal aunts, daughters of your brothers, daughters of your sisters<sup>(41)</sup>,

وَأِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَسْبِدَّالْزَوْجَ مِمَّكَانَ زَوْجٍ  
وَأَتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَاهُنَّ قَطْرًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ  
شَيْئًا أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتَانًا وَإِذَا مُمِيتَنَا  
وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَى بَعْضُكُمْ  
إِلَى بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا عَلِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ  
مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ  
فَاحْشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٢﴾ حُرِّمَتْ  
عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ  
وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ  
الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ

37 Used here in place of *qinṭār* (i.e. a unit of measure akin to a hundredweight) which is a large amount of something, usually a pricey item like gold or silver. Needless to say, this ruling also applies to smaller amounts of dowry (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

38 *Afḍā* is to engage in acts of intimacy which are sexual in nature (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).

39 This 'solemn pledge' is the marriage contract which stipulates their rights and bases the relationship on the principle to: "...either hold them in agreeably or let 'them' go gracefully". (2:229) (Cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī) Such a break up which is based on harassing the wife to give up some of her rights and/or return back some of the dowry is far from 'graceful'!

40 During the age of ignorance. In other words, before the advent of Islam and what took place before this ruling was revealed. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

41 The women who are unlawful for a man to marry through lineage (*nasab*) are his: mother (including his maternal and paternal grandmothers), daughters (including the daughters of his children and their daughters), sisters (including half sisters from the father's or the mother's side), paternal

your mothers who nursed you, your sisters through nursing<sup>(42)</sup>, mothers of your wives<sup>(43)</sup>, those girls who are brought up under your care – the daughters of your wives whom you have been intimate with – but if you were not intimate with them 'their mothers' then you would not be guilty of sinning 'should you marry them'<sup>(44)</sup>, the wives of your sons who are from your 'own' loins<sup>(45)</sup>, and that you shall marry two sisters at the same time excepting those in aforesaid—indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَأُمَّهَاتِكُمُ اللَّاتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتِكُمْ  
مِنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ  
وَرَبَائِبِكُمُ اللَّاتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ مِّنْ  
نِّسَائِكُمُ اللَّاتِي دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَإِن لَّمْ  
تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
وَاحْتِلَامِ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِّنْ  
أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَن تَتِمَّوْا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ  
إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ  
عَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٢٣﴾

aunts (including the sisters of grandfathers), maternal aunts (including the sisters of grandmothers), and paternal and maternal nieces (including their daughters) (cf. *al-Taḥsīn al-Muyassar*).

42 That is milk mothers and sisters. The Prophet (ﷺ) made unlawful in marriage women through breastfeeding (*raḍā'ah*) as much as those who are unlawful through lineage (*nasab*) (cf. Muslim: 1445).

43 Such women are always unlawful, regardless of whether marriage to their daughters was consummated through sexual intercourse or not (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). Such scenarios, as also those that follow, are unlawful because of *muṣāharah* (marriage).

All of this aims at purifying the Believing household. Categorically stating what constitutes unlawful marriages is a sure path to calm hearts and ensures stable relationships. It does not take much imagination to realize how fraught with emotion and unsettled households would be if marriages to such very close relatives were made legal.

44 In the case of the daughters of wives who are brought up in one's household (*al-rabā'ib*), it is unlawful to marry any of them if one has had sexual relations with the mother, but if not, one is allowed to marry any of them once marriage to their mothers is terminated. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

45 The wives (*ḥalā'il*, lit. legals/lawfuls) of your own sons who are the fruits of your own loins, whether their marriage was consummated through sexual intercourse or not, are unlawful for you. This ruling does not apply to adopted or claimed sons. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

﴿24﴾ 'It is unlawful for you also to marry' Married women, save those whom your right hands possess<sup>(46)</sup>; this is the ordainment of Allah for you 'so defy it not'. Yet it is lawful for you 'to marry' all besides these given that you should desire chastity<sup>(47)</sup> with your money not licentiousness. Whoever of these 'women' you enjoy, then give them their 'bridal' dues as an obligation. You will not be sinning should you mutually agree to what is 'to be offered' after 'fulfilling' this obligation<sup>(48)</sup>—verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

﴿25﴾ Whoever of you has not the means to marry free Believing women, then 'let him take a wife' from among what you own of your Believing maids<sup>(49)</sup>;

\* وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ  
 أَيْمَانُكُمْ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأُحِلَّ لَكُمْ  
 مَا وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ مُحْصِنِينَ  
 غَيْرَ مُسْلِفِينَ فَمَا اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْهُنَّ  
 فَآتُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
 فِي مَا تَرَضَيْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْفَرِيضَةِ إِنَّ  
 اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ  
 مِنْكُمْ طَوْلًا أَنْ يَنْكَحَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ  
 الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ فَمِنْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِنْ  
 فِتْيَانِكُمُ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ

46 These are female captives of war. It has to be made sure, however, that those of them who had husbands are not pregnant before marriage is consummated. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

47 To shelter and save yourselves and your wives from falling into lewdness. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa' dī)

48 The husband and wife can agree among themselves to increase the dowry, decrease it, waive it altogether or postpone it; that is after the woman's due has been fully acknowledged and committed to. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

49 Such a man, who has no financial means to marry a free Believing woman, is allowed to marry a slave Believing woman should he fear distress from restraining his bodily needs. Given this allowance, he need not feel qualms about this union on the basis of the reality of the woman's true Belief, which God only knows about, or her social standing because all people are born equal, being the descendants of the same parents, and whereby Believers are Muslim brothers and sisters. This marriage is also solidified by basing it on vows of chastity, handing over the woman's dues to her, her

Allah knows best 'the state of' your Belief, you are each other's other part. Wed them then with the permission of their folk and give them their dues as per what is socially-agreed; 'marry those of whom who seek' joining 'together' under 'holy' matrimony not 'those of whom' seeking open love or secret lovers. But if they marry and commit a vice<sup>(50)</sup>, then their punishment is half of that of free married women. This 'marriage permission' is for those who fear distress<sup>(51)</sup> from among you, but if you forbear it is better for you<sup>(52)</sup>— Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿26﴾ 'By this<sup>(53)</sup>' Allah wants to explain to you, guide you to the laws<sup>(54)</sup> of those who came before you and redeem you— Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِإِيمَانِكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ  
فَأَنْكِحُوهُنَّ بِإِذْنِ أَهْلِهِنَّ وَءَاوَهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ  
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ مُخَصَّنَاتٍ غَيْرِ مُسْلِفَاتٍ  
وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ فَإِذَا أَحْصِنَّ فَإِنَّ أَتَيْنَ  
بِفَاحِشَةٍ فَعَلَيْهِنَّ نِصْفُ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْصَنَاتِ  
مِنَ الْعَذَابِ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ خَشِيَ الْعَنَتَ مِنْكُمْ  
وَأَنْ تَصْبِرُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ  
رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ  
رِجْسَ الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَيَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾

knowledge that she should remain faithful on pain of punishment, and that their marriage is declared and approved of by her owner.

- 50 Commit adultery.
- 51 *al-‘Anat* is extreme hardship and distress due to restraining one's self from fulfilling sexual needs.
- 52 Although such a hard pressed man is allowed to marry a slave Believing woman, it is better for him to control his urges and forbear, because such a scenario could lead to his children being enslaved by the mother's owner, or even she being sold off, which would lead to greater distress and heartbreak (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 53 The detailing of these rules and prohibitions.
- 54 *Sunan* (sing. *sunnah*) are the laws, course and the followed path (cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*; al-Kafawī, *al-Kulliyāt*). "The laws of those who came before you," is the most laudable course that earlier honourable Prophets of God (ﷺ) and their rightly-guided followers took in life (cf. 42: 13; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

﴿27﴾ Allah wants to redeem you, but those who follow 'their' lusts want you to greatly deviate far away 'from the right course'<sup>(55)</sup>.

﴿28﴾ Allah wants to lighten your load<sup>(56)</sup>—indeed humans are but created weak!

﴿29﴾ You who Believe, do not devour each other's property unlawfully<sup>(57)</sup> – unless you engage in mutually agreed trade<sup>(58)</sup> – and do not kill yourselves<sup>(59)</sup>—verily Allah is Most Merciful to you.

﴿30﴾ Whoever of you commits this<sup>(60)</sup> out of transgression and injustice, We will make him suffer a Fire—indeed that is easy for Allah<sup>(61)</sup>.

وَاللَّهُ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الشَّهَوَاتِ أَنْ تَمِيلُوا  
مِيلًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٧﴾ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُخَفِّفَ عَنْكُمْ  
وَخَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ضَعِيفًا ﴿٢٨﴾

يَتَّيِبُهَا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ  
بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبَاطِلِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً  
عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْكُمْ وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَنْ  
يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ عَدْوَانًا وَظُلْمًا فَسَوْفَ نُصَلِّيهِ  
نَارًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾

55 Those who are ungodly try hard to make the Believers follow their path and relinquish that of God's, so that they will stand on an equal, immoral, footing. So, disarm them of their moral authority to guide or berate them for their corruption (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).

56 The 'load' is God's commandments and prohibitions. Allowing hard-pressed Believers to marry bondage women is one such manifestation of how God lightens the load of Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). The overall rule is that Allah, the All-Knowing Knows how weak humans are and: "*has placed no hardship for you 'Believers' in the religion*". (22: 78)

57 The matter of money, with which people secure their needs, and the way to obtaining it is mentioned here to show that those who are in pressing need, to get married for instance, can do so through legitimate means only, i.e. labour and trade, not by misappropriation or by shedding blood (cf. al-Tawhīdī).

58 Trade is based on mutual consent. This is why it is a lawful act. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Trade has to be mutually agreed". (Ibn Hībbān: 4967)

59 Do not annihilate your own souls (through suicide or extreme negligence) or those of others. God says: "*Do not kill the soul that Allah has made sacrosanct, except having a right to*". (17: 33) 'Yourselves' entails all other Believers because whoever kills any of his brethren is killing himself—religious brotherhood makes them one and the same (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'adī).

60 Usurping people's money and killing them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

61 This is a reminder that nothing is hard for God; He is Able over everything and none can escape His justice.

﴿31﴾ If you 'Believers' avoid the major ones 'of the sins' that you are warned against, We will absolve you of your 'lesser' misdeeds and We will have you enter a Noble Entrance<sup>(62)</sup>.

إِنْ تَجْتَنِبُوا كَبَائِرَ مَا تُنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ نَكْفُرْ  
عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَنُدْخِلْكُمْ مُدْخَلًا  
كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

﴿32﴾ Do not harbour covetous desires for what Allah favoured some of you with over the others<sup>(63)</sup>, to men belongs a share of what they earned and to women belongs a share of what they earned<sup>(64)</sup>; ask Allah for His favours<sup>(65)</sup>—indeed Allah

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهِ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلَى  
بَعْضٍ لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا  
وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبْنَ وَسَأَلُوا  
اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ

62 Paradise. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

63 Believers are warned against envy and wishing for what others are favoured with just as much as they are warned against usurping other's money and shedding their blood. This is an act of the heart ('amal al-qalb), with which one attains inner peace. Thus a real Believer's outward actions become a truthful reflection of his inward thoughts. (al-Rāzī, al-Tawhīdī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

64 The reason for revelation is as narrated by Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه): "A woman came to the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) and said: "Prophet of Allah! A man gets twice the share of a woman 'in inheritance'. A man's testimony equals that of two women 'in a court of justice'. Is it so that if a woman does a good deed, it will be considered a half of a good deed 'hasanah'?" Allah then revealed: "...to men belongs a share of what they earned and to women belongs a share of what they earned". (Cf. Ibn Abū Hātim; documented by al-Ḍiyā' in al-Aḥādīth al-Mukhtārah and its chain of narrators was deemed authentic by Aḥmad Shākir in 'Umdat al-Tafsīr) A person need not be eaten by worry and brooding over what he/she is missing out on. God, the Most Generous of all givers, keeps an immaculate register (20: 52) of a person's good deeds for him/her, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant they are, and rewards him/her for them bountifully: "Whoever does an mote's weight of good, he will come to see it". (99: 7)

65 This is a reminder and a call for people, particularly the less favoured, to get out of their shell of self remorse and meet the world armed with a sincere prayer and a heart full of hope and faith in God. One can open up the doors to God's favours through supplicating to Him; asking Him earnestly and repeatedly for whatever one is hopeful of. It is conditional that the person



has knowledge of everything. ﴿33﴾<sup>(66)</sup> To everyone there are the closest of kin 'who inherit' from what the parents and relatives have left behind; those with whom you have solemn pledges<sup>(67)</sup>, give them their share—Allah is indeed witnessing everything.

﴿34﴾ Men are in charge of women<sup>(68)</sup>, because Allah favoured one over the other and of the money they 'men' spend. Pious, devout wives are 'trustworthy' keepers of what is hidden<sup>(69)</sup>

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٣﴾  
وَلِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مَوْلَىٰ مِمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ  
وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ عَقَدْتُمْ أَيْمَانَكُمْ  
فَاتُّوهُمْ نَصِيحَةً إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ  
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدًا ﴿٣٣﴾

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ  
بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ  
أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَأَلْصِقْ لِحْتِكَ حَفِظَتْ  
لِلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ

who supplicates to God does so with good faith and firm belief that God will respond to him. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Ask Allah while you firmly believe that He will respond to you. And know that Allah does not respond to an inattentive, wandering heart". (al-Tirmidhī: 3479)

66 This drives the message home that all those who are favoured with wealth already have their next of kin to inherit them, so none need harbour ill thoughts about receiving their share of wealth after relatives die (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

67 Literally, those with whom your right hands have ties; those with whom you have *hilf*, i.e. an alliance (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). Before Islam, the Arabs used to repeat the following mantra when they wanted to forge an alliance with someone: "Your blood is my blood, your destruction is my destruction, your revenge is my revenge, your war is my war, your peace is my peace, and you inherit me and I inherit you". (Cf. al-Jazā'irī)

The majority of scholars are of the opinion that the ruling of this aya is abrogated by Aya 8: 75 (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Nawāsikh al-Qur'ān*). Besides this, after the advent of Islam, alliances between any two parties which are not inclusive of the rest of the community are not permissible (cf. Muslim: 2530).

68 The Qur'anic word employed here is *qawwāmūn*, which entails taking care of the affairs of those whom one is in charge of. This is the ordainment of God, the Wise Creator Who knows best the nature of humans, and whereby order can be established in the house by the man assuming the rule of head caretaker.

69 Such wives are completely trustworthy in not betraying their husbands behind their backs both in terms of their chastity and with regards to dealing with their husband's property and other affairs. They are guided to this by the Grace of God, or else humans are but created weak (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). A wife possessing these noble characteristics is to be cherished and held in honour by her husband (cf. al-Jazā'irī).

by Allah's protection 'and guidance'. As for those 'wives of whom you fear 'disdainfulness and' rebelliousness, caution them 'first', 'but if they persist' abandon them in bed and 'if they further persist' hit them 'lightly'<sup>(70)</sup>. But if they obey you, seek not a means 'to transgress' against them<sup>(71)</sup>—indeed Allah is verily Most High, Most Grand.

وَالَّذِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ  
وَأَهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَأَضْرِبُوهُنَّ  
فَإِنِ اطَّعْتَكُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

<sup>70</sup> This is a complete, three-step behaviour management recipe for waywardness, drawn up by the All-Wise Creator of humans. A husband who notices signs of rebelliousness in his wife, which is sure to disturb order in the house, may take the following steps: 1) reason with his wife, but if she refuses to heed the warning; 2) he can take the passive and practical measure of abstaining from sexual relations with her. 3) Should this also fail, the husband is given permission to use a corporal measure, but scholars are unanimous that this 'hitting' should not be *mubarriḥ* (physically painful; cf. Muslim: 1218). The reason behind this Divine license to apply such measures, even though some think them extreme, is to preserve family ties, especially when children are involved. It also comes within the context of appointing the head of the family (the husband), and preserving the rights of women and ensuring that they receive a fair hearing (an arbiter from her side) should the disagreement escalate and no longer be contained within the bounds of the household. Equally, the husband is strongly reminded not to transgress against his wife should she mend her ways, and that God, the Most High, Most Grand, is Higher and Mightier than he.

One also cannot pass by this particularly and hotly debated issue without pointing to 'Ā'ishā's (رضي الله عنها) Hadith which says: "Never has the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) ever hit anything with his hand, nor a woman, nor a servant, except when he was fighting in the path of Allah" (al-Bukhārī: 3149; Muslim: 1057). Believers need only to bear this example in mind at times of marital fissures, knowing that the Messenger of God (ﷺ) is our perfect role model did not ever hit a wife of his: "*Indeed, you have in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful example for those who hope for Allah and the Last Day, and remember Allah much*" (33: 21).

<sup>71</sup> Do not blame them for their refractory behaviour, or dwell on their shortcomings. Furthermore, you have no permission to beat them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿35﴾ If you fear that they 'husband and wife' are in dissention<sup>(72)</sup>, then nominate an arbiter from his folk and an arbiter from her folk. If they 'sincerely' want to reconcile, Allah will join them in harmony—indeed Allah is All-Knowing, Most Knowledgeable.

وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ شِقَاقَ بَيْنِهِمَا فَأَبْعَثُوا حَكَمًا  
مِّنْ أَهْلِهِ وَحَكَمًا مِّنْ أَهْلِهَا إِنْ  
يُرِيدَانِ إِصْلَاحًا يُوَفِّقُ اللَّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾

﴿36﴾ (73) Worship Allah 'alone' and Associate none with Him<sup>(74)</sup>, and be beneficent to your parents<sup>(75)</sup>, to relatives, to orphans, to the needy, to the close 'relative' neighbour, to the adjoining neighbour<sup>(76)</sup>,

\*وَأَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا  
وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَبِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ  
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ  
وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ

72 Whereby their disagreements cannot be resolved and the situation could lead to divorce. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

73 This is known as the Aya of the Ten Rights (*al-huqūq al-‘ashrah*), i.e. those of: God, parents, relatives, orphans, the destitute, relative neighbours, close neighbours, close companions, the stranded (*ibn al-sabīl*), and one's slaves. A Believer's benevolence should not be limited to the bounds of his household, but should include all those around him (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Tawḥīdī). It is only through extended benevolence that a community can achieve real social harmony. For this reason Islam values and cherishes benevolence (cf. 2: 83, 2: 195).

74 The worship of God alone without any form of Association is the fountainhead of all good (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Tawḥīdī). The Prophet (ﷺ) said to Mu'ādh (رضي الله عنه): "Do you know what the right of God on people is?" He replied: "Allah and His Messenger know best!" He (ﷺ) said: "That they should worship Him and never Associate anything with Him". He (ﷺ) then asked: "Do you know what the right of people on God if they did that? That He would not Punish them". (al-Bukhārī, 6267; Muslim, 30)

75 To highlight the significance of being kind, considerate and a good company to one's parents, God, in many occurrences in the Qur'an (cf. 2: 83, 17: 23 along with this aya) instructs people to be benevolent to their parents (*birr al-wālidayn*) immediately after enjoining them to worship Him alone. Are they not the cause of one's own existence and one's first benefactors after God?

76 Respectively, the neighbour with whom you have family relations (*al-jār dhī al-qurbā*) and those whose homes are close to yours but who are not

to the companion at your side<sup>(77)</sup>, the stranded<sup>(78)</sup> and those whom your right hands possess<sup>(79)</sup>— verily Allah does not like any who is proud and boastful<sup>(80)</sup>;

وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُورًا ﴿٣٦﴾

one's own relatives (*al-jār al-junub*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī). Neighbours in Islam have a great right. One very famous Prophetic saying is narrated by 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) whereby the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Gabriel would always emphasize the right of the neighbour until I thought he would ask for giving him a share of the inheritance!" (al-Bukhārī: 6015; Muslim: 2625) Neighbours are of three types: one who has three rights, one who has two rights and one who has one right. The one who has three rights is the Muslim relative neighbour; he has the rights of Islam, relationship and neighbourhood. The one who has two rights is the Muslim non-relative neighbour; he has the rights of both Islam and neighbourhood. The one who has one right is the non-Muslim neighbour; he has the right of neighbourhood (cf. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, *Jāmi' al-'Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam*, 1: 138).

- 77 *al-sāhib bi al-janb* is a person's constant companion, like one's wife and travel companions. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī)
- 78 *Ibn al-sabīl* (lit. the son of the road) is the wayfarer, especially the one who is left without means to provide for himself.
- 79 *Mā malakat aymānukum* are one's male and female slaves. This point is emphasized and elaborated in innumerable traditions, in which the Prophet is quoted as urging considerate and sometimes even equal treatment for slaves, denouncing cruelty, harshness, or even discourtesy, and recommending the liberation of slaves; here are a few: "Your brothers, your helpers, Allah brought them under your hands. Any of you who has a brother under his hand let him feed him from the food he 'the master' eats and clothe him from the clothes he wears. Do not burden them with what they cannot bear. If you charge them with a task, help them", (al-Bukhārī: 30, Muslim: 1661). "When his slave brings him his food, if he 'the master' would not let him share his company, then 'at least' let him share a morsel or two of it with him. He 'the slave' did the hard work of preparing it." (al-Bukhārī: 2557) "To the slave 'give' his food and clothes, and do not overburden him with what he cannot bear." (Muslim: 1662) "It is enough as sin that a man withholds the sustenance of the day from those he owns." (Muslim: 996)
- 80 Magnanimous people who observe such acts of kindness and extend them to others are urged not to be boastful about them. It was a habit of the Arabs at the time to gleefully mention their good deeds and charitable acts. (al-Tawḥīdī)

﴿37﴾ those who are miserly, encourage people to miserliness<sup>(81)</sup>, and hide what Allah gave them of His Bounty<sup>(82)</sup>. We have prepared a humiliating Punishment for the 'faithless' Deniers; ﴿38﴾ those who spend their money 'in charity only' to show off to people and do not 'in sincerity' Believe in Allah and the Last Day<sup>(83)</sup>—whoever is a fellow of Satan, then sordid indeed is the fellowship. ﴿39﴾ What irks them should they 'just' Believe in Allah and the Last Day, and spend out of Allah's provisions for them! Indeed Allah is All-Knowing about them.

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ  
وَيَكْتُمُونَ مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ  
وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿٣٧﴾  
وَالَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ رِئَاءَ النَّاسِ  
وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ  
وَمَنْ يَكُنِ الشَّيْطَانُ لَهُ قَرِينًا قَرِيبًا ﴿٣٨﴾  
وَمَا دَا عَلَيْهِمْ لَوْ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ  
وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِهِمْ  
عَلِيمًا ﴿٣٩﴾

81 Benevolence to people inevitably entails spending out of one's own money.

82 Fearing that people will ask them for financial help or blame them for their greediness misers try their best to hide God's bountiful favours on them. These are called 'Deniers'! The Qur'an gravely warns against miserliness (cf. 3: 92 and 180, 9: 75-77, 47: 38, 59: 9, 64: 16, 92: 8-11). Lack of generosity is caused by lack of sincere Faith and trust in God, the Ever-Able Sustainer, Who took it upon Himself to provide for all His creatures.

Greediness and money hoarding disrupts the flow of income and aggravates the reversal of fortune of the down-trodden segments of society, who will harbour ill-feelings and grudges towards the more affluent in the community. At any opportunity, these feelings will boil and escalate into outright violence and the disruption of calm and life. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Be warned of miserliness: it caused those who came before you to shed one another's blood; it caused those who came before you to abandon one another 'severing relationships of kin'; it caused those who came before you to desecrate the sacred". (al-Albāni, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb*: 2603)

83 Such people fall within the sphere of hypocrisy, and the sincerity of their Faith is in doubt. They are the companions of Satan, who enjoins ungodly acts and drives those who fall under his command away from acts of virtue. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿40﴾ (84) Verily Allah does not deal 'anyone' unjustly as much as a mote's weight<sup>(85)</sup>; if it is a 'one' good deed done, then He multiplies it and grants from His own 'additionally' a great reward. ﴿41﴾ (86) How 'will they fare', when we bring forward a witness from every nation,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظُنُّ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ وَإِن تَكَ  
حَسَنَةً يُضْعِفْهَا وَيُؤْتِ مِنْ لَدُنْهُ أَجْرًا  
عَظِيمًا ﴿٤١﴾ كَيْفَ إِذَا جِئْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ بِشَهِيدٍ

- 84 There is great hope of salvation in this aya. Both the great exegetical Companions Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنهما) are of the view that this aya is one of a few that are better than all that the sun shines on (cf. al-Jazā'irī). 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said: "There are five ayas in *al-Nisā'* that I would not replace for the world. And I know for certain that those of knowledge would not pass by them without recognizing them. 'They are': "If you 'Believers' avoid the major ones 'of the sins' that you are warned against, We will absolve you of your 'lesser' misdeeds and We will have you enter a Noble Entrance 'Paradise'," (4: 31); "Verily Allah does not deal 'anyone' unjustly as much as a mote's weight; if it is a 'one' good deed done, then He multiplies it and grants from His own 'additionally' a great reward," (4: 40); "Allah does not forgive that He is Associated with, but He forgives what is lesser than that for whoever He wills," (4: 48); "Had they – when they wronged themselves – come to you and sought Allah's forgiveness and the Messenger sought forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful," (4: 64); and, "Whoever commits an ill deed or wrongs himself, then seeks forgiveness from Allah shall find Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful," (4: 110) (al-Ṭabarānī: 9069; al-Hākim: 3194). A number of Qur'anic ayas underline the fact that God will not deny people the least amount of the good they do and that He accounts for the most seemingly insignificant of deeds (cf. 21: 47, 31: 16, 99-6-8). 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "None who bears the weight of a mustard seed of faith in his heart will enter Hell". (Muslim: 91)
- 85 *Dharrah*, often translated as atom, is a very small and insignificant amount. It is said to mean young ants, weightless things, a spec of dust that the air lifts easily and/or those minute particles that can be seen when a beam of light penetrates through gaps (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijjīstānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'Arūs*).
- 86 That God does not wrong anyone by the smallest amount, entails that He brings witnesses to testify either for or against those who are held to account on the Day of Judgement. These witnesses are no less than the most honourable Prophets that God sent to each nation to show them His Straight Path that leads to His Pleasure (cf. al-Rāzī).

and We bring you 'Muhammad' as witness against these<sup>(87)</sup>! ﴿42﴾ On that Day, those who Denied and rebelled against the Messenger wish to be levelled to the ground; they will not be able to hide a word from Allah<sup>(88)</sup>.

﴿43﴾ <sup>(89)</sup>You who Believe! Do not come near Prayers while intoxicated 'but wait' until you realize what you are saying<sup>(90)</sup> or 'places of Prayer' in a state of ceremonial impurity<sup>(91)</sup>, unless passing through, until you bathe<sup>(92)</sup>. 'But' If you are ill<sup>(93)</sup>,

وَجِئْنَا بِكَ عَلَى هَؤُلَاءِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٤٢﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ  
يُودُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَعَصُوا الرَّسُولَ لَوْ تُسَوَّىٰ  
بِهِمُ الْأَرْضُ وَلَا يَكْتُمُونَ اللَّهَ حَدِيثًا ﴿٤٣﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْرُبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاللَّهُ  
سُكْرَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ وَلَا جُنْبًا  
إِلَّا عَابِرِي سَبِيلٍ حَتَّىٰ تَغْتَسِلُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
مَرْضَىٰ

87 Your nation.

88 They wish they could just vanish because they know that they will be held accountable for all their past actions and they can say nothing but the truth on that Day (cf. 36: 65; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr al-Sa'dī).

89 After describing how grave standing between the Hands of God on the Day of Judgement will be, and that only those who are pure in heart will be spared His Punishment, now the ayas refer to the best observance in standing between the Hands of God in this worldly life, during Prayers. It requires total devotion and untainted purity. (al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*)

90 This ruling is abrogated by the aya that forbids consuming intoxicants altogether: "Indeed intoxicants, gambling, 'setting up' altars 'for idols' and divining arrows are obnoxiously vile – Satan's own doing, so shun them; may you prosper". (5: 90) (Cf. al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*; al-Zuhrī, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*) This aya was revealed within the context of building the then emerging community, getting them ready for the total ban that was to follow.

91 *Janābah* (ceremonial impurity), that state which follows after having sex or discharge of sperm because of arousal.

92 While in a state of ceremonial impurity, one is allowed to pass through a place of Prayer but not stay in it, unless *ghusl* (washing) is performed. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

93 An illness which hinders people from using water. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

travelling, or any of you goes to a low place<sup>(94)</sup> 'to relieve himself', or touched women<sup>(95)</sup> and you cannot find water then seek clean earth, wiping your faces and your hands with it<sup>(96)</sup>—indeed Allah is Most Pardoning, All-Forgiving.

﴿44﴾ Have you 'Muhammad' not seen those who were given a share of the Book, they purchase misguidedness and want you 'Believers' to swerve off the path 'of guidance'! ﴿45﴾ Allah knows best your enemies—certainly Allah is sufficient 'for you' as Ally; Allah is sufficient as Supporter. ﴿46﴾ Among the Jews are those who distort discourse from its 'proper' position; they say: "We listen and we disobey", "listen 'to us', 'may' you not be told!"<sup>(97)</sup> and "rā'inā";

أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ  
أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا  
صَعِدًا طَيِّبًا فَأَمَسَ خُوفُ يَدَيْكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا ﴿٤٣﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِنَ الْكِتَابِ  
يَشْتَرُونَ الضَّلَالَةَ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَضَلُّوا  
السَّبِيلَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِأَعْدَائِكُمْ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَلِيًّا  
وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ نَصِيرًا ﴿٤٥﴾ مِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا  
يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ  
سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ غَيْرَ مُسْمِعٍ وَرَاعَيْنَا

94 *al-Ghā'it* originally means a depression in the land or ground lower than the surrounding area. When relieving themselves by urinating or excreting, Arabs of the time used to seek a low place in order to be hidden from the view of others. Later, the meaning was metonymically extended to mean the act of relieving one's self. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*)

95 This could figuratively mean having sexual contact with them or literally just touching them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Jurists are of different opinions on this but the great Companion exegete, known as the interpreter of the Qur'an, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) opines that it is a metonym for sexual intercourse used euphemistically (cf. Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*).

96 That is perform the act of dry ablution or *tayammum*.

97 They play on words. It could be that they are saying that a person of your status cannot be told to listen in spite of himself (cf. Muḥyī ad-Dīn Darwīsh, *I'rāb al-Qur'ān wa Bayānuhu*), or they pray that he (رضي الله عنه) becomes deaf or even dies so that he loses his sense of hearing (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).



twisting their tongues and stabbing at 'your' Religion. Had they said; "we listen and we obey", "listen 'only'" and "*unzurnā*"<sup>(98)</sup> it would have been better for them and more upright. But Allah damned them for their Denial; little do they Believe.

﴿47﴾ You who were given the Book, Believe in what We sent down<sup>(99)</sup> confirming the truth of what you have, 'that is' before we deface some countenances and twist them towards the rear, or We Damn them like we Damned the companions of the Sabbath<sup>(100)</sup>—indeed the Command of Allah always comes to pass. ﴿48﴾ Allah does not forgive that He is Associated with, but He forgives what is lesser than that for whoever He wills. Whoever Associates with Allah perpetrates an egregious sin.

﴿49﴾ Have you 'Muhammad' not seen those who glorify themselves!<sup>(101)</sup>

لَيَّا بِالسِّنِّهِمْ وَطَعْنَا فِي الدِّينِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا  
سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَسْمَعُ وَأَنْظُرْنَا لَكَانَ خَيْرًا  
لَّهُمْ وَأَقْوَمَ وَلَكِنْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ  
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٤٦﴾

يَتَّبِعُهَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ ءَامِنُونَ بِمَا نَزَّلْنَا  
مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَطْمِسَ  
وُجُوهًا فَتَرُدَّهَا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهَا أَوْ نَلْعَنَهُمْ كَمَا  
لَعَنَّا أَصْحَابَ السَّبْتِ وَكَانَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ  
مَفْعُولًا ﴿٤٧﴾ إِنْ أَرَادَ اللَّهُ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ  
وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ  
بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ أَفْرَضَ إِثْمًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٤٨﴾

لَعَنُوا إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزُكُّونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ

98 One word for seeking the Prophet's permission, i.e. *rā'inā* (lend us your ear), is replaced by another, i.e. *unzurnā* (bear with us), as *rā'inā* could be twisted and used derogatorily to mean something else which is inappropriate (from *ru'ūnah*, foolishness). Some of the Madinan Jews used to address the Prophet (ﷺ) by subtly twisting their tongues when uttering *rā'inā* to mean: "You are foolish!" (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

99 The religion of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

100 The details of this story are given in 7: 163-165.

101 These are the Jews who like to think of themselves as 'chosen' or a cut above the rest. They say: "*We are the children of Allah and His beloved!*" (5: 18); "*The Fire will not touch us except for a limited number of days!*" (2: 80). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, al-Sa'dī)

Nay but Allah glorifies whoever He wishes<sup>(102)</sup>—they will not be wronged 'even by the measure of' a hair on a date seed<sup>(103)</sup>.  
 ﴿50﴾ See how they fabricate lies against Allah—enough for this 'to be' as flagrant sin!<sup>(104)</sup>  
 ﴿51﴾ Have you 'Muhammad' not seen those who were given a share of the Book believing in 'all sorts of' idols<sup>(105)</sup> and false gods<sup>(106)</sup> and say about those who Deny: "These are more guided in their ways than those who Believe!"<sup>(107)</sup>

بَلِ اللَّهِ يُرِيكُم مِّنْ بَشَرٍ لَّا يَظُنُّونَ فِتْيَانًا  
 أَنظُرْ كَيْفَ يَقْتُرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَكَفَى  
 بِهِ إِتْمَانًا مَّيْمِينًا ﴿٥٠﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا  
 نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْحَيَاتِ  
 وَالطُّغُوتِ وَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هَؤُلَاءِ  
 أَهْدَىٰ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا سَبِيلًا ﴿٥١﴾

- 102 God is the One Who really knows the truth of matters, and thus He lauds whoever is deserving of His creation: "Do not glorify yourselves; He knows best those who are 'truly' Mindful", (53: 32). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 103 That is to say as much as a hair's breadth.
- 104 By glorifying themselves in such a manner and claiming honour falsely. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 105 *al-Jibt* is a word used for all sorts of false and groundless things and everything that is worshipped besides God. (al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)
- 106 *al-Ṭāghūt* taken from *ṭughyān*, i.e. transgression and wrongdoing. All that transgresses against God. Anyone who condones being worshipped besides God is a *ṭāghūt*. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)
- 107 The reason for the revelation of this aya is narrated by Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) whereby: "When 'the Jewish scholar' Ka'b Ibn al-Ashraf came to Makkah, the Quraysh asked him: "You are the best of the people of Madinah and their master. Aren't you?" He replied: "Yes!" They then said: "What do you think of this sonless outcast 'alluding to the Most Noble Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)' claiming that he is better than us when we are the custodians of pilgrims and the caretakers of the House of God!" He said: "You are indeed better than him!" Then the following ayas were revealed: "Indeed, your hater is the one cut off", (108: 3) and: "Have you 'Muhammad' not seen those who were given a share of the Book believing in 'all sorts of' idols and false gods and say about those who Deny: "These are more guided in their ways than those who Believe!\*"Those are the ones whom Allah Damned—whoever Allah Damns will find no helper""'. (al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 11707; Ibn Ḥibbān: 6572)

﴿52﴾ Those are the ones whom Allah Damned—whoever Allah Damns will find no helper. ﴿53﴾ (108) Or do they have a share in the kingship 'of Allah'? Had they, they would not give 'other' people 'of it as much as' a groove on a date seed! ﴿54﴾ Or do they envy 'other' people for the bounties Allah granted them? (109) 'But then' (110) We did grant the House of Abraham the Book and Wisdom (111), and We granted them a great kingship (112). ﴿55﴾ Among them are those who Believe in him 'Muhammad and/or the Qur'an' and those who look the other way (113)—Hell suffices for a blazing fire! ﴿56﴾ Those who Deny Our Signs, We will have them scorched by a Fire; whenever their skins are burned away, We replace them with other skins to make them taste the Punishment 'anew'—indeed Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يَلْعَنِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ مَجْدَ لَهُ وَنَصِيرًا ﴿٥٣﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِنَ الْمُلْكِ فَإِذَا لَا يُؤْتُونَ النَّاسَ نَقِيرًا ﴿٥٤﴾ أَمْ يَحْسُدُونَ النَّاسَ عَلَى مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ فَقَدْ آتَيْنَا آلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَآتَيْنَاهُمْ مُلْكًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٥٥﴾ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ آمَنَ بِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ صَدَّ عَنْهُ وَكَفَى بِجَهَنَّمَ سَعِيرًا ﴿٥٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَوْفَ نُضَلِّيهِمْ نَارًا كَمَا نُضَلِّتْ جُلُودَهُمْ بَدَلًا فَهُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ أَلَعَدَابُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٥٨﴾

108 Those who willingly subscribe to such outright lies and fabrications are consumed by deep set greed and lack of goodwill. Naturally, they want no good to come by others (cf. al-Rāzī).

109 That Prophethood came to Muhammad (ﷺ), a non-Jew. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

110 God reminds them of His favours to their forefathers. The One, the Most Generous, Who is the sole Owner of kingship, can shower with favour whoever He wills and without asking permission from anybody, especially those who claim a right to it.

111 All that was revealed to them besides the Scriptures. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

112 Like that of Solomon's (ﷺ).

113 *Ṣadd a'an* either means they turned their own faces away from it, or prevented others from setting their sights on it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

﴿57﴾ Those who Believe and do good deeds, We will admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow, forever they abide therein; there they will have purified spouses and We will admit them into shadowy shade<sup>(114)</sup>.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ  
جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا  
أَبْدًا لَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَنُدْخِلُهُمْ ظِلًّا  
ظَلِيلًا ﴿٥٧﴾

﴿58﴾ <sup>(115)</sup> Indeed Allah commands you that you should hand over trusts<sup>(116)</sup> to their "rightful" owners and should you judge among people<sup>(117)</sup>, judge fairly. Exalted indeed is what Allah exhorts you to—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing. ﴿59﴾ You who Believe obey Allah, obey the Messenger and those who are in charge among you<sup>(118)</sup>.

\* إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا  
وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعْمًا بِعِظْمِكُمْ بِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا  
بَصِيرًا ﴿٥٨﴾ تَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا  
الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

- 114 *Zill zalil* means an everlasting shade which the sun does not dissipate; a shade in which no biting cold, sultry heat, glaring light, gusty wind or heat wave passes through. (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*; al-Kafawī, *al-Kulliyāt*)
- 115 To be trustworthy and fair are two great traits that all Believers need to carry. This is, in a way, an allusion to those who did not pass fair judgement when they declared that Deniers are more guided than Believers; they betrayed their trust (cf. al-Rāzī, *Riḍā*).
- 116 Believers are instructed to give back what they have been entrusted with to its rightful owners: whole and without delay. (Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sa'dī*)
- 117 Judge with fairness among disputants.
- 118 As much as those who are in charge (*ulī al-amr*) are instructed to be fair and equitable and to uphold justice, those who receive their judgement are encouraged to obey (al-Rāzī, al-Tawḥīdī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Believers are told to obey those who are put in charge of their affairs given that what they tell them to do or follow is in accordance with the precepts of Islam, as detailed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and is fair and equitable: "No one of the creation is ever to be obeyed in sinning against the Creator. Obeying only applies to what is deemed acceptable". (Muslim: 1840, cf.

'But' Should you dispute over a matter, then refer it to Allah and the Messenger, that is if you 'truly' Believe in Allah and the Last Day; that is better and of a more desirable end<sup>(119)</sup>.

﴿60﴾ Have you 'Muhammad' not seen those who falsely claim that they Believe<sup>(120)</sup> in what was sent down to you and what was sent down before you<sup>(121)</sup>; 'yet still' they want to resort to false gods<sup>(122)</sup> to adjudicate 'their disputes', when they were commanded to reject it<sup>(123)</sup>—Satan wants to swerve them far off the path 'of guidance'. ﴿61﴾ When it is said to them: "Come to what Allah has sent down and to the Messenger!" you see the hypocrites turn away from you with fervour.

فَإِنْ تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ يَزْعُمُونَ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَحَكَّمُوا إِلَى الظَّالِمِينَ وَقَدِ امْرَأَةٌ آتَتْكَ بِوَدْعِ غَيْرِهَا فَأَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهَا مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَيُضِلُّنَّهَا وَتُضِلُّهُمْ صَلَائِلًا بَعِيدًا ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ رَأَيْتَ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْكَ صُدُودًا ﴿٦١﴾

also al-Bukhārī: 7145) 'Ubādah Ibn al-Ṣāmit (رضي الله عنه) said: "We swore an oath of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that we should listen and obey under all circumstances whether we like it or not, that we will not defy those who are in charge of us, and that we stand for what is right wherever we might be and never fear blame to carry out what Allah commands". (al-Bukhārī: 7199, Muslim: 1840)

- 119 Rebelling against commands and unruly behaviour cuts against the grain of social order.
- 120 The hypocrites whose hearts are diseased.
- 121 The Qur'an and earlier Scriptures, respectively.
- 122 According to 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) this aya was revealed with regards to a group of the Aslam tribe, who professed Islam, then went to Abū Zurārah al-Aslamī, the soothsayer, to settle a dispute. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 123 Judgement which is not in accordance with what God sent down to His Messenger (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿62﴾ How 'then will they fair' when disaster strikes them because of what their hands sent forth, and 'then' they 'will' come to you<sup>(124)</sup> swearing by Allah: "We only meant to do good and set matters straight!" ﴿63﴾ Those are the ones about whom Allah knows what lurks in their hearts, so turn away from them<sup>(125)</sup>, warn them and say to them profound words about themselves<sup>(126)</sup>. ﴿64﴾ We only sent Prophets to be obeyed, by Allah's permission. Had they – when they wronged themselves – come to you and sought Allah's forgiveness and the Messenger sought forgiveness for them, they would have surely found Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿65﴾ Nay by your Lord! They will not truly Believe until they seek your judgement in their disputes and then they find no scruples in them from your judgement and they give in totally.

﴿66﴾ Had We ordained they kill themselves or abandon their lands, they would 'surely' not have done so;

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا أَصَبْتَهُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ جَاءَكَ يَخْفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ آرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانَ وَتَوَفِّيقًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَعِظْهُمْ وَقُلْ لَهُمْ فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا نَّبِيغًا ﴿٦٢﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا لِيُطَاعَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ إِذْ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ جَاءُوكَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْتَغْفَرَ لَهُمُ الرَّسُولُ لَوَجَدُوا اللَّهَ تَوَّابًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٦٣﴾ فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّىٰ يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِيمَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٦٤﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّا كَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ أَنْ اقْتُلُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ أَوِ اخْرُجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ مَا فَعَلُوهُ

- 124 At times of hardship they know only too well to whom they should resort; the one who possesses the truth and is able to alleviate their affliction by praying to the True God.
- 125 That is, do not take measures to punish them for their insincerity. As long as they did not make manifest the Denial that they are really bent on, there is no way against them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Jazā'irī).
- 126 *Qawl balīgh* is penetrating speech that reaches people's hearts because of its frankness and persuasiveness. For it to be so, it has to be true and to the point. (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)

except for a few of them<sup>(127)</sup>. But should they do what they are commanded to, it would be better for them and a stronger confirmation of their Faith<sup>(128)</sup>.  
 ﴿67﴾ Then We would have given them a great reward from Our own; ﴿68﴾ and would have guided them to a Straight Path.  
 ﴿69﴾ Whoever obeys Allah and the Messenger, then those are among the ones on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace—of the Prophets, the Affirmers of Truth, the martyrs and the pious<sup>(129)</sup>—

إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَآوَانَهُمْ فَعَلُوا مَا يُوعَظُونَ  
 بِهِ لَٰكِن خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَأَشَدَّ تَثْبِيثًا ﴿٦٦﴾  
 وَإِذَا آتَيْنَاهُم مِّن لَّدُنَّا أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٦٧﴾  
 وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ صِرَاطًا مُّسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٦٨﴾ وَمَن يُطِيعِ  
 اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَعَ الَّذِينَ أَنعَمَ  
 اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ وَالصِّدِّيقِينَ  
 وَالشُّهَدَاءِ وَالصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

127 God, who would not charge a soul with more that it can bear (2: 286), is not tasking them with an augean task such as killing themselves or deserting their homes to test their Faith. Rather, He is asking them to perform a much simpler act of obedience, whereby they resort to the judgement of the Messenger (ﷺ), which is very crucial to affirming his leadership of the community and to their unequivocal approval of it. Yet their Faith is so shaky that they cannot find it in themselves to follow the ordinances of God, no matter or how unburdening they are how much is at stake.

128 The result of obedience is increase in Faith: Faith (*Īmān*) increases with obedience and decreases with rebelliousness (cf. al-Jazā'iri).

129 *al-Ṣiddiqīn* (the Affirmers of the Truth) are those whose truthfulness and affirmation of Truth are no less than perfect; they realized the Truth and confirmed it with certitude in their hearts, stuck to it and embodied it with their words and actions. *al-Shuhadā'* (the martyrs) are those killed on the path of God to make His word stand above everything else. *al-Ṣāliḥīn* (the pious) are those whose outward actions are a truthful manifestation of their inner Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

When reciting *al-Fātiḥah*, the opening sura of the Qur'an, in every unit (*rak'ah*) of their five mandatory daily Prayers, Believers are asking God Almighty to lead them to the way of these on whom He bestowed His Grace. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: "Never was there a Prophet who falls 'terminally' ill without him given the choice to 'either be healed and given more time in' this worldly life or 'taken by death to' the Hereafter". "During the illness from which he passed away, he (ﷺ) suffered severe hoarseness and I heard him say: "...among the ones

indeed the companion of these is well off. ﴿70﴾ That is the Favour<sup>(130)</sup> of Allah—sufficient is Allah “indeed” as All-Knower.

﴿71﴾ <sup>(131)</sup>You who Believe take your “necessary” precautions and charge forward in “separate” groups or as a whole. ﴿72﴾ “And know that” Indeed among you will be those<sup>(132)</sup> who drag their feet<sup>(133)</sup> and when a disaster strikes you<sup>(134)</sup>, he says: “Allah has blessed me that I was not there with them”. ﴿73﴾ But should a favour<sup>(135)</sup> from Allah come your way, he – as if there is no affection between you!<sup>(136)</sup> – would certainly say:

وَحَسَنَ أَوْلِيَّكَ رَفِيقًا ﴿٦٩﴾ ذَلِكَ الْفَضْلُ  
مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ عَلِيمًا ﴿٧٠﴾

يَتَأَيَّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا خُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ  
فَأَنْفِرُوا ثُبَاتٍ أَوْ أَنْفِرُوا جَمِيعًا ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِنَّ مِنْكُمْ  
لَمَنْ لَيَبْطِئَنَّ فَإِنْ أَصَابَكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا قَدْ  
أَعْرَأَ اللَّهُ عَلَيَّ إِذْ لَمْ أَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿٧٢﴾  
وَلَيْنِ أَصَابَكُمْ فَضْلٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ لَيَقُولَنَّ

on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace—of the Prophets, the Affirmers of Truth, the martyrs and the pious”. I knew then that he had been given the choice “between life and death””. (al-Bukhārī: 4586)

- 130 The rewards of obeying God and His Messenger (ﷺ) are plentiful both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter, not least being raised to the lofty status of Prophets and their worthy companions in Paradise. The virtue of obedience is all too obvious for a community in the making.
- 131 The command to rebel against one’s lethargy, prevail over one’s self and engage in the ultimate act of heroism of fighting in the cause of God, the toughest of all commands, which could lead to loss of life and martyrdom, comes just after the ayas that detail the advantages and rewards of obeying the commands of God and His Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. al-Tawhīdī, al-Rāzī).
- 132 The hypocrites. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 133 *Yubaṭṭi’anna* because of a hidden object (*al-maḥfūl al-mustatīr*) entails both slowing down one’s own pace as well as encouraging others to do the same. (al-İṣṫahānī, *al-Mufradāt*; al-Kafawī, *al-Kulliyāt*)
- 134 Being defeated or killed by your enemies. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 135 Winning victory over your enemies. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’ dī)
- 136 *Muwaddah* (affection) comes as a result of a sense of belonging to a group. In such a scenario, the insincere will speak from their hearts and reveal their innermost thoughts in spite of the outwardly ‘affectionate’ relationship that binds them with Believers. All pretence of affection wonderously abandons them in that moment of truth (cf. al-Jamahksharī, al-Baiḍāwī).



“Alas, had I been with them I would have won a great deal!”

﴿74﴾ Let those who trade this worldly life for the Hereafter fight in the path of Allah. Whoever fights in the path of Allah and is killed or attains victory We will reward him greatly<sup>(137)</sup>. ﴿75﴾ Why would you ‘ever’ not fight in the path of Allah, and ‘for the sake of’ the victimized men, women and youngsters who say: “Our Lord, forge for us a way out of this town<sup>(138)</sup> whose dwellers are wrongful and find us from Your side an ally, find us from Your side a helper”. ﴿76﴾ Those who Believe fight in the path of Allah, whereas those who Deny fight in the path of false idols. Fight then the allies of Satan—indeed the machinations of Satan are frail.

﴿77﴾ Have you ‘Muhammad’ not seen those to whom it was said: “Hold back your hands<sup>(139)</sup>,

كَأَن لَّمْ تَكُن بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُ مَوَدَّةٌ بَلَيْتَنِي  
كُنْتُ مَعَهُمْ فَأَفُورٌ فُورًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٤﴾  
\* فَأَيُّ قِتْلٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يَشْرُونَ  
الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ وَمَنْ يُقْتَلْ فِي  
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيُقْتَلْ أَوْ يَغْلِبْ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ  
أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧٥﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ لَا تُقَاتِلُونَ فِي  
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ  
وَالْوِلْدَانِ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ  
الظَّالِمِ أَهْلُهَا وَاجْعَل لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا وَاجْعَل  
لَّنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ نَصِيرًا ﴿٧٦﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُقَاتِلُونَ  
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُفَاتِنُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ  
الطَّاغُوتِ فَقَاتِلُوا أَوْلِيَاءَ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّ كَيْدَ  
الشَّيْطَانِ كَانَ ضَعِيفًا ﴿٧٧﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ قِيلَ لَهُمْ كُفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ

137 Whatever the result of the fight might be, given that the sincere in heart strove in the cause of God, whether they won or lost, they will surely be handsomely rewarded.

138 Makkah, which was then still in the grip of idol worshippers who fiercely pitted themselves against the emerging Faith and sought all means to destroy this fledgling Believing community. These are the Believers who could not migrate to Madinah. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

139 At the beginning they were asked to refrain from fighting their Denying enemies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). Because they were not ready or in possession of the means to so prevail, they were asked instead to first engage in a self disciplinary regime to prevail over their own weaknesses, by keeping up Prayers and dutifully giving out the prescribed alms.

keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms”; and when fighting was prescribed for them, a party of them feared people as much as Allah is feared or even more. They said: “Our Lord, why did You prescribe fighting for us? Would You not delay it for a short while?” Say ‘Muhammad’: “The enjoyment of the worldly life is ‘but so’ little. But the Hereafter is better for the Mindful; you will not be wronged ‘even by the measure of’ a hair on a date seed”.

﴿78﴾ “Wherever you might be, death will catch up with you; even if you are in fortified towers!” When good ‘fortune’ comes their way, they say: “This is from Allah”, but when a misfortune befalls them, they say: “This is from you ‘Muhammad’!”<sup>(140)</sup>

Say ‘Muhammad’: “All ‘good and bad fortune’ is from Allah”. What is wrong with these people, they can hardly grasp what is said ‘to them’!

﴿79﴾ Whatever good comes your way is from Allah<sup>(141)</sup> and whatever is bad comes from your own<sup>(142)</sup>.

وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ فَامَّا كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ إِذَا فُرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ يَخْشَوْنَ النَّاسَ كَخَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ أَوْ أَشَدَّ خَشْيَةً وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا لِمَ كَتَبْتَ عَلَيْنَا الْقِتَالَ لَوْلَا أَخَّرْتَنَا إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ قَرِيبٍ قُلْ مَتَّعَ اللَّهُ دُونَكُمْ لَوْلَا أَلَّخِرْتُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّمَن اتَّقَىٰ وَلَا تُظَاهِرُونَ فَتِيلًا ﴿٧٨﴾ إِنَّمَا تَكُونُونَ يُدْرِكُكُمُ الْمَوْتُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُرُوجٍ مُّسَيَّدَةٍ وَإِن تُصَبِّهُمُ حَسَنَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَإِن تُصَبِّهُمُ سَيِّئَةٌ يَقُولُوا هَذِهِ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قُلْ كُلُّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ فَمَالِ هَؤُلَاءِ الْقَوْمِ لَا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ حَدِيثًا ﴿٧٩﴾ مَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِنْ سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِن نَّفْسِكَ

140 Implying that the Prophet (ﷺ) had nothing whatsoever to do with the good that came their way. When they hit a rough patch, however, they hastened to point their fingers of blame at him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). The same was said to Prophets Moses (131 :7) (ﷺ) and Ṣāliḥ (47 :27) (ﷺ). Because of their insincere Belief and hidden Denial they think of the Prophets, who they view with unsettling apprehension, as bad omens who augured ill for them.

141 As a blessing and a favour from God. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

142 As a result of a sin that was committed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). “Whatever calamity befalls you is from your hands doing; ‘but’ He overlooks many another ‘of your sins’”. (42: 30)

We sent you to people as a Messenger 'no more'<sup>(143)</sup>—sufficient is Allah 'indeed' as Witness.

﴿80﴾ Whoever obeys the Messenger obeys Allah<sup>(144)</sup>, whereas those who turn away, We have not sent you 'Muhammad' as overseer over them<sup>(145)</sup>. ﴿81﴾ They<sup>(146)</sup> say: "We obey!" But when they emerge from your place, a section of them nurture in the dead of he night something contrary to what you said<sup>(147)</sup>. Allah keeps record of what they nurture, so turn away from them<sup>(148)</sup>

وَأَرْسَلْنَاكَ لِلنَّاسِ رَسُولًا وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿٧٩﴾

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ وَمَنْ تَوَلَّى  
فَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ  
طَاعَةٌ فَإِذَا بَرَزُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ بَيَّتَ طَائِفَةٌ  
مِنْهُمْ غَيْبًا لَدَى تَقْوَى وَاللَّهُ يَكْتُبُ مَا يُبَيِّنُونَ  
فَاعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ

143 The Prophet's (ﷺ) mission was solely to deliver the Message that God entrusted him with (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī). Whether it is really Believed in or not is known by God Who witnesses everything and rewards or punishes accordingly. Thus, the Prophet (ﷺ) cannot hold people to account over what is hidden from him.

144 Obeying the infallible Prophet (ﷺ) is tantamount to obeying God Almighty Himself Who entrusted him with the delivery of His Message. Whatever the Messenger (ﷺ) bids is by the bidding of God, for he says nothing out of his own accord but every word he utters is revealed to him by God (cf. 53: 3-4; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Tawhīdī, Ibn 'Āshūr). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever obeys me obeys Allah. Whoever disobeys me disobeys Allah". (al-Bukhārī: 7137, Muslim: 1835)

145 You are only tasked with delivering the Message, not to holding them accountable for their disobedience.

146 The hypocrites. (al-Wāhīdī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah)

147 After having paid the Prophet (ﷺ) lip service and left him, a group of them convene later in the evening (*bayyata*) and deliberate among themselves resolving to contravene the Prophet's bidding (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).

148 They are in reality no more than a distraction from the main purpose of building a solid community out of the numerous individual Believers. The hypocrites were staunch in their stance and efforts to convince them otherwise was an unnecessary waste of time, especially as the danger they

and put your trust in Allah—sufficient is Allah 'indeed' as Trustee. ﴿82﴾ Would they not contemplate the Qur'an; had it been from another 'source' besides Allah, they would have found many a discrepancy in it!<sup>(149)</sup> ﴿83﴾ When comforting or unsettling news comes to them, they would 'hasten to' spread it out 'widely'<sup>(150)</sup>. Had they referred it to the Messenger and those in charge among them, those of them who are discerning of the truth of matters would have 'really' found it out<sup>(151)</sup>. Had it not been for Allah's Grace and his Mercy on you 'Believers'<sup>(152)</sup>, you would have followed Satan, except for a few.

وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿٨١﴾  
 أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ  
 عِنْدَ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ﴿٨٢﴾  
 وَإِذَا جَاءَهُمْ أَمْرٌ مِنَ الْأَمْنِ أَوِ الْخَوْفِ أَذَاعُوا بِهِ  
 وَلَوْ رَدُّوهُ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ وَإِلَى أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْهُمْ  
 لَعَلِمَهُ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَنْبِطُونَهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَوْلَا  
 فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَاتَّبَعْتُمُ  
 الشَّيْطَانَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٨٣﴾

presented was not imminent, even if it had to be held in check. So the Prophet (ﷺ) is told not to busy his thoughts with them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). God, the All-Sufficient Helper, will take care of this matter.

- 149 The hypocrites will not ponder upon the Qur'an which is abundant enough as evidence of the Divine source of Muhammad's (ﷺ) Messengership, and reason enough for them to follow his orders. Orders that are for the best interests of the whole community. They simply cannot see this glaring Truth because their discerning faculty is clouded by cancerous doubt; there are locks on their hearts (47: 24).
- 150 These are the blabbers, a fifth column, within the ranks who are only too eager to spread whatever news comes their way aiming to stir up unrest. Talk is still of the behaviour of the insincere in times of war. Letting the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers in on all of this is by way of boosting their immunity against such disheartening guiles.
- 151 When one receives news in times of turbulence, the best action is to relay it confidentially to the commander and/or those in a position of responsibility. Those of sound judgement among these realize the truth behind it and act accordingly.
- 152 By guiding you to the best course of action (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿84﴾ Fight then 'Muhammad' in the path of Allah – you are tasked with no one but yourself – and hearten the Believers 'to fight'; may Allah curb the might of the Deniers—Allah is indeed Mightier and severer in inflicting punishment.

فَقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا تُكَلِّفُ إِلَّا نَفْسَكَ  
وَحَرِّضِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَكْفِ بِأَسْ  
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَاللَّهُ أَشَدُّ بِأَسَا وَأَشَدُّ  
تَنْكِيلًا ﴿٨٤﴾

﴿85﴾ Whoever intercedes for a good cause will have a share of it<sup>(153)</sup>, whereas whoever intercedes for an evil cause will have a portion of it—verily Allah is Keeper over everything.  
﴿86﴾ <sup>(154)</sup>When you are offered a greeting then salute back with a better greeting or 'at least' return it back 'in the same measure'<sup>(155)</sup>—

مَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَعَةً حَسَنَةً يَكُنْ لَهُ  
نَصِيبٌ مِّنْهَا وَمَنْ يَشْفَعْ شَفَعَةً سَيِّئَةً يَكُنْ  
لَهُ كِفْلٌ مِّنْهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا ﴿٨٥﴾  
وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِتَحِيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا  
أَوْ رُدُّوهَا ﴿٨٦﴾

153 The person who helps others in time of need, will be rewarded handsomely for his good efforts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Abū Musā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه) said: "When someone in need comes to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) or when he was asked for something, he would announce 'to his Companions': "Intervene and you will be rewarded!" (al-Bukhārī: 1432) Yet the person who knowingly extends a helping hand to someone who intends evil is considered a partner in that misdeed and thus will reap a portion of that evil harvest (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). "Help one another in piety and Mindfulness; and do not help one another in sin and transgression." (5: 2)

154 In this context, this obviously refers to an offer of peace by people with whom the Believers are at war as well as to individual people who, while possibly belonging to the enemy, have, to all outward appearances, peaceful intentions and could very well be Believers. This is in accordance with the Qur'anic injunctions: "If they incline to peace, you should incline to it as well" (8:61), and "If they hold back 'from fighting', only the wrongdoers shall be transgressed against". (2:193) (cf. al-Rāzī, Asad; also see Ayas 90, 91 and particularly 94 below.) The greeting of Islam is that of Peace (Salām). This is further explained in Aya 94 below.

155 'Imrān Ibn al-Ḥuṣayn (رضي الله عنه) said: "A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: "Assalāmu 'alaykum 'Peace be upon you"". He was replied to 'by the same greeting' and sat down. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Ten 'ḥasanahs'". Then another one came and said: "Assalāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatu Allāh 'Peace

verily Allah is Reckoner of everything. <sup>﴿87﴾</sup> Allah, there is no god but Him, will gather you 'all' on the Day of Judgement, in which there is no doubt, whose speech is more truthful than Allah's!

<sup>﴿88﴾</sup> What is with you regarding the hypocrites 'that you divide into' two 'opposing' groups!<sup>(156)</sup> But Allah debased them because of what they earned. Do you wish to guide those whom Allah has sent astray?—whoever Allah sends astray, you will not find a way for him. <sup>﴿89﴾</sup> They desire that you 'Believers' Deny and then you will be 'their' equals. Do not take any of them as allies, until they migrate in the path of Allah<sup>(157)</sup>.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَسِيبًا ﴿٨٦﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُجْمَعُ كَوْمُكُمُ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَمَنْ أَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حَدِيثًا ﴿٨٧﴾

\* فَمَا لَكُمْ فِي الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِتْنَيْنِ وَاللَّهُ أَرْكَسَهُمْ بِمَا كَسَبُوا أَتُرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَهْدُوا مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿٨٨﴾ وَدُّوا لَوْ تَكْفُرُونَ كَمَا كَفَرُوا فَتَكُونُوا سَوَاءً فَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ﴿٨٩﴾

be upon you and Allah's Mercy””. He was replied to 'by the same greeting' and sat down. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Twenty ‘*hasanahs*’”. Then another one came and said: “*Assalāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatu Allāh wa barakātuhu* ‘Peace be upon you and Allah’s Mercy and His Blessings’”. He was replied to 'by the same greeting' and sat down. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Thirty ‘*hasanahs*’”. (Abū Dāwūd: 5195, al-Tirmidhī: 2689, Aḥmad: 19948) The more courteous the reply, the more the reward one receives for it. The form of greeting that was ordained by God is: *Assalāmu ‘alaykum wa rahmatu Allāh* ‘Peace be upon you and Allah’s Mercy’ (cf. al-Bukhārī: 6227).

- 156 *Fi’atayn* two different parties who show their backs to each other, but who unite when consolidation is needed (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*; al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Believers differed among themselves regarding the hypocrites: a group declared them Denying, while another was of the opinion that they were not Denying. The fact of the matter, however, was that God debased them (*arkasahum*, lit. turned them upside down) turning them into outright Deniers as a result of their own hands doing; doubting, rebelling and plotting against Believers (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 157 For a form of reconciliation to happen with the Believers, the ‘hypocrites’ have to redeem themselves by nurturing sincere intentions of becoming true Believers as well as making a physical move from Denial and its environs into Belief and its environs. Only then are Believers allowed to relent towards them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

But if they turn away, then take them and kill them wherever you find them, and take neither an ally nor a helper from among them<sup>(158)</sup>. ﴿90﴾ Except those 'of them' who reach out 'in refuge' to people with whom you have a 'peace' pact<sup>(159)</sup>; or those who come to you with their hearts heavy<sup>(160)</sup>: should they fight you or fight their own people! Had Allah willed, He would have set them on you and they would have fought you. But if they keep their distance, withhold from fighting you and wave you peace, then Allah has made no 'justifiable' means for you against them. ﴿91﴾ You 'Believers' will find other ones<sup>(161)</sup> who want to feel safe from you and their 'own' people; whenever they are sent back to temptation<sup>(162)</sup>,

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا مِنْهُمْ وِلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٩٠﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ يَصِلُونَ إِلَى قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ أَوْ جَاءُوكُمْ حَصِرَتْ صُدُورُهُمْ أَنْ يَقْتُلُوكُمْ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوا قَوْمَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَسَاطَهُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ فَلقَتَلُوكُمْ فَإِنْ اعْتَزَلُوكُمْ فَلَمْ يَقْتُلُوكُمْ وَآلَقُوا إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ فَمَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩١﴾ سَتَجِدُونَ ءآخِرِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَأْمَنُوكُمْ وَيَأْمَنُوا قَوْمَهُمْ كُلَّ مَا رُدُّوْا إِلَى الْفِتْنَةِ

- 158 Since they undoubtedly made their enmity clear, despite the repeated and peaceful moves the Believers made towards them, they are to be considered as warring enemies and where the rules of war apply.
- 159 Believers are encouraged to honour their pledges. If a party with which Believers have a peace treaty accepts those who come to them seeking refuge, then, by extension, the treaty includes them as well (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).
- 160 *Ḥaṣirat ṣudūruhum*; they are greatly perturbed and this dilemma is overweighing them.
- 161 Unlike the group who sincerely want peace, this group is more cunning and deceitful. To ensure their safety, they play both the Believers, by outwardly showing themselves as Believers, and their own Denying people by following their heathen ways (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).
- 162 *Fitnah* (trial) here is Denial. Originally it means trying and testing, which, in turn, is derived from the verb *fatana*, i.e. to throw gold in a fire to test its mettle (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).

they are 'readily' shoved into it. If they do not keep their distance, wave you peace, and hold back their hands then take them and kill them wherever you find them—these against whom We have made for you clearly evident authority.

أَرْكَبُوا فِيهَا فَإِن لَّمْ يَبْعَثْ لَكُمْ وَيُلْقُوا  
إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ وَيَكْفُرُوا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَخُذُوهُمْ  
وَاقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ جَعَلْنَا  
لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٩١﴾

﴿92﴾ (163) A Believer may never kill a 'fellow' Believer, except by mistake<sup>(164)</sup>. Whoever kills a Believer by mistake, then 'the onus on him is' manumitting a Believing slave and handing over blood money to his family, unless they forgo it as an act of charity. If he 'the deceased' belongs to a people who are your enemies<sup>(165)</sup> —

وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَن يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً  
وَمَن قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَاً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ  
مُّؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُّسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا  
أَن بَصَدَّقُوا فَإِن كَانَ مِنَ قَوْمٍ عَدُوِّكُمْ

That is, they readily fall into Denial when given the least opportunity. Not only that, but when faced with any test of Faith, they flounder deeper into Denial, as the word *urkisū* (shoved into) entails (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

163 Whereas the previous ayas deal with scenarios in which killing those who only pretend to be Faithful is allowed and under what circumstances, Ayas 92-94 turn to set the boundaries for killing a Believer, inadvertently or otherwise. Since He (ﷻ) prescribed fighting for the Believing community, God spells out the protocols of engaging in fights that could lead to loss of life; what is allowed, under what conditions and what is not (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, Riḍā).

164 Inadvertent manslaughter.

165 *Kuffār ḥarbiyyah*, i.e. warring, hostile Deniers. They are not to be given blood money because the deceased in actuality belongs more to the Believing community than to these, and lest they use the money as a resource for fighting Believers. However, in honour of the pledge, and knowing that the money would not be used against Believers, if the person killed is from a side with which Believers have a peace treaty (*mu'āhadūn*), they are to be given the blood money as will be said shortly (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).



yet he was a Believer – then ‘the onus on the killer is’ manumitting a Believing slave. But if he belongs to a people with whom you have a ‘peace’ pact, then ‘the onus on him is’ handing over blood money to his fellows and manumitting a Believing slave. Whoever cannot find ‘a means to manumitting a Believing slave’<sup>(166)</sup> then ‘the onus on him is’ fasting two consecutive months, as a penance from Allah—verily Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.<sup>﴿93﴾</sup> Whoever kills a Believer intentionally, then his punishment is Hellfire, forever he abides therein<sup>(167)</sup>; Allah is Wrathful with him, Damns him and prepares for him mighty Punishment.<sup>﴿94﴾</sup> You who Believe, when you set about ‘the land fighting’ in the path of Allah be sure and say not to any who offers you peace<sup>(168)</sup>: “You are not a Believer!”

وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَإِنْ  
كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ  
فَدْيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ  
مُؤْمِنَةٍ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ  
مُتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ  
عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٩٣﴾ وَمَنْ يَقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا  
مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيهَا  
وَعَذَابُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَهُوَ لَعَنَهُ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُ  
عَذَابًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا  
إِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَتَبَيَّنُوا  
وَلَا تَقُولُوا لِمَنْ ءَلَقِيَ إِلَيْكُمْ السَّلَامَ  
لَسْتَ مُؤْمِنًا

166 This covers a situation when the killer cannot find a Believing slave or raise the necessary funds to free one. He is to fast every day of these two months without a break; this is a punishment for not being cautious enough (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

167 *Khālidan* (residing forever) here is said to mean for an indefinitely extended period of time. None who has the least amount of *Imān* (Faith) in his heart will reside in Hellfire forever (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). God forgives all sins except that He is Associated with in worship (4: 48).

168 This is a person who withholds from fighting and declares that he is a Believer (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *al-Muyassar*). al-Rāzī says: “Exegetes are unanimous that this aya was revealed with regards to a group of Believers who met some people who declared themselves Muslim. They killed them claiming that they only declared Faith out of fear and to ward off death”.

hoping for fleeting worldly gains<sup>(169)</sup>, but with Allah are plentiful windfalls. Thus you 'yourselves' were before Allah favoured you<sup>(170)</sup>, so be sure—indeed Allah is fully aware of what you do.

تَبْتَغُونَ عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَعِنْدَ  
اللَّهِ مَعَانٍ كَثِيرَةٌ كَذَلِكَ كُنتُمْ  
مِن قَبْلُ فَمَتَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿٩٤﴾

﴿95﴾ They are not equal: those of the Believers who are staying back – except those with hindrances<sup>(171)</sup> – and those who strive in the path of Allah with their money and lives. Allah favours those who strive with their money and lives over the inert by a rank<sup>(172)</sup> –

لَا يَسْتَوِي الْقَاعِدُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ غَيْرَ أُولِي الضَّرَرِ  
وَالْمُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ  
فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَلَى  
الْقَاعِدِينَ دَرَجَةً ﴿٩٥﴾

169 The spoils of war in this case.

170 God reminds the Believers, now a strong community capable of asserting its presence in the face of belligerence, of how they themselves were when they used to hide their Faith amidst hostile Denying communities (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

171 al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib (رضي الله عنه) said about the revelation of this aya: "When: "They are not equal: those of the Believers who are staying back – except those with hindrances – and those who strive in the path of Allah", came down the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Call so-and-so scribe to me". The scribe came carrying the inkpot and the tablet (or shoulder blade), and the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: "Write: "They are not equal...". 'Abdullāh Ibn Umm Maktūm (رضي الله عنه) said: "Messenger of Allah, I am blind!" Then: 'except those with hindrances', was revealed". (al-Bukhārī: 459, Muslim: 1898). Those people who fall behind and do not join the ranks of fighting Believers are exempted given the validity of their excuses and the sincerity of their hearts (cf. al-Jazā'iri). Jābir Ibn 'Abdillāh al-Anṣārī (رضي الله عنه) said: "We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) in a foray and he (ﷺ) said: "Indeed in Madinah are now men who are with you 'by their hearts' no matter what distance you cover or valley you cross. They were held back by illness"", (cf. Muslim: 1911, al-Bukhārī: 2684).

172 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever Believes in Allah and His Messenger, keeps up the Prayers and fasts Ramadan, Allah guarantees that He will admit him into Paradise, whether he migrates in the path of Allah, or remains still in the land where he was born". Those who

'but' to both Allah promises what is most pleasing<sup>(173)</sup>; Allah favours those who strive over the staying back with a great reward: ﴿96﴾ 'lofty' ranks 'conferred' by Him, and forgiveness and mercy<sup>(174)</sup>—verily Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿97﴾ <sup>(175)</sup>Those who wronged themselves, as the angels take their souls they say 'to them':

وَكَلَّا وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ وَفَضَّلَ اللَّهُ الْمُجَاهِدِينَ  
عَلَى الْقَاعِدِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ دَرَجَاتٍ مِنْهُ  
وَمَغْفِرَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿٩٦﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْنَاهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ ظَالِمِي  
أَنْفُسِهِمْ قَالُوا

were with him said: "Messenger of Allah, shall we tell this 'happy news' to people!" He (ﷺ) said: "There are one hundred ranks in Paradise which Allah prepared for those who strive in His path. The distance between one rank and the next is like that between heaven and Earth. When you pray to Allah 'for Paradise' ask Him for *al-Firdaws*... it is the highest 'rank' in Paradise, above it is the Most Merciful's Throne, and the rivers of Paradise gush forth from it". (al-Bukhārī: 7423, Muslim: 1884)

173 That is Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

174 These are spelled out in the following ayas: "*You who Believe! Shall I direct you to a commerce that will save you from a painful Punishment: \*that you Believe in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the path of Allah with your money and your souls? That is better for you, if you but knew. \*He will forgive you your sins and cause you to enter Gardens under which rivers flow, and goodly dwellings in the Gardens of Eden—that is the great triumph!*" (61: 10-12)

175 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) explains the reason behind this aya's revelation as: "Some Muslims were among the Associators increasing their multitudes against the Messenger of Allah in battle. An arrow comes and hits one of them and he dies, or he gets hit by a sword and perishes. Upon this Allah sent down: "*Those who wronged themselves, as the angels take their souls...*" (al-Bukhārī: 7085). Such people 'wronged themselves' by doing what was not in their best interests, nor in the best interests of the then emerging community of Believers. Staying in the midst of the Deniers, they helped increase the Deniers' numbers at a time when the Believers needed to bolster their numbers in readiness for battle in that very defining juncture in Islam's history. Additionally, not having a really valid excuse to remain in the land of the ungodly, they were naturally unable to declare their Faith and practice it openly. Indeed, they might have had to pay lip service to the Deniers. In order to justify their lack of positive action, they concocted lame excuses (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

“What was this ‘misery that’ you were in!” They reply: “We were victimized in the land!” They ‘the angels’ say: “Was not Allah’s land wide enough for you to migrate in?”<sup>(176)</sup> The ‘final’ resort of these is Hellfire—awful indeed is the destination! <sup>(98)</sup> Exempted ‘from this are’ the victimized men, women and youngsters who have no means ‘of escape’ nor could they find a way ‘out’<sup>(177)</sup>. <sup>(99)</sup> These Allah may well pardon them—verily Allah is All-Pardoning, Most Forgiving. <sup>(100)</sup> Whoever migrates in the path of Allah will find many a safe haven and a breakthrough. Whoever sets out from his home migrating to Allah and His Messenger – but death catches up with him – his reward is securely assured by Allah<sup>(178)</sup>—verily Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.

فِيمَ كُنْتُمْ قَالُوا كُنَّا مُسْتَضْعَفِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضَ اللَّهِ وَسِعَةً فَهَاجِرُوا فِيهَا قَالُوا لَيْتَ مَاؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٩٧﴾  
إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ وَالنِّسَاءِ وَالْوِلْدَانِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ حِيلَةً وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩٨﴾  
قَالُوا لَيْتَ عَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَفْعُو عَنْهُمْ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفْوٌ عَفُورًا ﴿٩٩﴾ \* وَمَنْ يَهَاجِرْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يَجِدْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُرْعًا كَثِيرًا وَسِعَةً وَمَنْ يُخْرَجْ مِنْ بَيْتِهِءَ مُهَاجِرًا إِلَى اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ يُدْرِكْهُ الْمَوْتُ فَقَدْ وَقَعَ أَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللَّهِ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٠﴾

176 “My Believing servants! My land is indeed vast, so worship Me ‘and Me alone’.” (29: 56)

177 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that: “The Prophet (ﷺ) used ‘at times’ to pray earnestly after saying: “Allah listens to who thanks Him ‘*sami‘a Allāhu li man ḥamidah*’”, in the last *rak‘ah* of the ‘Ishā’ Prayer, saying: ‘O Allah, salvage ‘Ayyāsh Ibn Abū Rabī‘ah. O Allah, salvage al-Walīd Ibn al-Walīd. O Allah, salvage Salamah Ibn Hishām. O Allah, salvage the victimized Believers. O Allah, toughen your infliction on Muḍar ‘the residents of Makkah and its environs, who were mainly Qurayshites’. O Allah, blight them with severe droughts like those during the time of ‘Prophet’ Joseph’”, (al-Bukhārī: 6393, Muslim: 675). The Prophet (ﷺ) named these specifically because he knew how sincere in their Faith they were, and how unable they were of fleeing Makkah. These individuals are in sharp contrast to the ones spoken of here who lacked real sincerity and thus deserved harsh chastisement (see Aya 89 above).

178 Knowing the true nature of his intentions, God will grant him the reward of a person who actually reached his desired destination. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿101﴾ When you 'Believers' set about the land 'travelling'<sup>(179)</sup>, you will not be sinning by shortening the Prayer<sup>(180)</sup>, should you fear that the Deniers will try you<sup>(181)</sup>—indeed the Deniers are but an open enemy to you.

﴿102﴾ When you 'Muhammad' are among them 'on a campaign' and you call them to rise for Prayer,<sup>(182)</sup>

وَإِذَا صَرَيْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٠١﴾  
وَإِذَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ

179 That is travel in general (cf. 73: 20, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī) or, more specifically in this instance, either the one involved in migrating or fighting in the path of God (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

180 *Qaṣr al-ṣalāh*, not in the way it is usually shortened while travelling during normal, peaceful times, but here expressed in times of fear in particular. That is, what is meant is shortening the manner of Prayer (*qaṣr kaifiyyat al-ṣalāh*) (cf. Ibn Kathīr who quotes Muǧāhid, al-Ḍaḥḥāk and al-Suddī who are of this opinion). al-Shinqīṭī (*Aḍwā' al-Bayān*: 1: 248) further explains: "Shortening the manner of Prayer (*qaṣr kaifiyyat al-ṣalāh*) denotes what is most permissible therein which is not allowed during Praying peacefully. For example: some of them join the Imām in Prayer for one *rak'ah*, then the Imām 'upon finishing the first *rak'ah*' remains standing and another group joins him and he Prays with them the second *rak'ah*; also they can Pray only by gesturing 'the usual moves of Prayer' on their mounds or feet and without facing the direction of Prayer '*al-qiblah*'".

181 *Yaftinakum* (lit. to try and test you), that is standing between you and seeking to prevent you from carrying out your religious duties properly. Potentially, then, by attacking you while you are busy performing Prayer (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shinqīṭī).

182 This is the manner in which *ṣalāt al-khawf* (Prayer in danger) is performed. Abū 'Ayyāsh al-Zuraqī (رضي الله عنه) said: "We were with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in 'Uṣfān 'the town near Makkah', when the Deniers faced us... standing between us and the direction of Prayer (*qiblah*). They 'the Deniers' said to themselves: "We caught up with them at an opportune time and shall take them by surprise! Prayer is approaching and it is dearer to them than their own children and lives!" Upon this Gabriel (جبرائيل) came down with these ayas: "*When you 'Muhammad' are among them 'on a campaign' and you call them to rise for Prayer...*". When it was time for Prayer, the Messenger (ﷺ) commanded them 'his Companions' to take up their arms. We stood behind him in two rows. When he bowed down we all bowed down, and when he straightened up we all straightened up. Then, he prostrated along with the row that was closest to him and the other row

let a section of them rise with you<sup>(183)</sup> holding on to their arms<sup>(184)</sup>. When they prostrate, let them withdraw 'to be on guard' behind you<sup>(185)</sup>, and let another section, who did not Pray, come and Pray with you<sup>(186)</sup>;

فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ مَّعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا  
أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِن  
وَّرَائِكُمْ وَلَتَأْتِ طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَىٰ لَمْ يُصَلُّوا  
فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ

remained standing guarding them. When they were done with prostrating and rose up, the others 'who were on guard' prostrated where they were. Then they switched positions 'the ones in the back row coming to the front and the ones in the front row going behind to guard them'. Then he (ﷺ) bowed down 'after rising for the second *rak'ah*' and they all bowed down, then they all straightened up. Then he prostrated along with the row that was closest to him and the other row remained standing on guard. When he sat 'for *Tashahhud*' the ones on guard, prostrated and joined them 'for *Tashahhud*'. Then he (ﷺ) greeted off Prayer '*salām*' and left". Abū 'Ayyāsh adds: "The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) Prayed like this twice: once in 'Isfān and once in the lands of Banī Sulaym" (Aḥmad: 16630; al-Ṭabarānī: 5132; al-Dāraquṭnī: 2/200). This is one manner of the Prayer in danger (cf. also the Hadith of Jābir Ibn 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه), Muslim: 840), the other, which is similar to the method mentioned in this aya, is the one whereby the Prophet (ﷺ) Prayed during the sortie of the Day of Dhāt al-Riqā'. This was carried out as follows: "A section formed a row with him 'in Prayer'. The other section faced the enemy. He (ﷺ) Prayed with the ones with him one *rak'ah*, then 'upon commencing the second *rak'ah*' he remained standing, and they 'the section that was Praying with him' completed their Prayer and went off to face the enemy. Then the second section 'which was guarding them at first' came and joined him and completed with him the *rak'ah* that was remaining of his Prayer. He, then remained seated 'during *Tashahhud*' and waited for them while they Prayed their second *rak'ah* and he greeted off Prayer '*salām*' with them". (al-Bukhārī: 4129; Muslim: 842; see also al-Bukhārī: 942; Muslim: 839)

- 183 The other section of the army shall remain on guard.
- 184 There are two different opinions as to which of the two sections the command to hold on to their arms applies to (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah). Some state that these are the section who are Praying given that the weapons they took were light enough not to hinder them from Praying properly. Others, for obvious reasons, state that the ones meant here are the ones on guard.
- 185 Once the group who Prayed with the Prophet (ﷺ) first had finished Praying the first *rak'ah*, they were to stand on guard behind the other group. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)
- 186 The second group, who were on guard first, were to join the Prophet (ﷺ) in Prayer. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

and let them be on guard and hold on to their arms. The Deniers dearly wish that you be heedless of your arms and your belongings, for then they would swoop headlong on you. You will not be sinning should you be troubled by 'heavy' rain or are ill that you lay aside your arms, 'but' be on your guard—indeed Allah has prepared for the Deniers a humiliating Punishment. <sup>103</sup> When you finish Praying mention Allah standing, sitting and 'lying' on your sides<sup>(187)</sup>. And when you feel safe then keep up the Prayer 'as it should be'; indeed Prayer is mandated on Believers at specified timings. <sup>104</sup> Be relentless<sup>(188)</sup> in pursuing the clan<sup>(189)</sup>, if you feel pain they also feel pain as much as you do<sup>(190)</sup>, 'but' you rightfully hope from Allah what they do not hope for<sup>(191)</sup>—verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ وَذَٰلِكُمْ يَدَّبَّرُونَ  
كَفَرُوا لَوْ تَغْفُلُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ  
فَيَحْمِلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَمْلَآةً وَّاحِدَةً وَلَا جُنَاحَ  
عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ كَانَتْ بِكُمْ آذَىٰ مِنْ مَطَرٍ  
أَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَرَضَىٰ أَنْ تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ  
وَخُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ  
عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ فَإِذَا قُضِيَتِ الصَّلَاةُ فَادْكُرُوا  
اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَفِعْوًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ فَإِذَا  
أَطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ  
كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْفُوتًا ﴿١٠٤﴾  
وَلَا تَهِنُوا فِي ابْتِغَاءِ الْقَوْمِ إِنْ تَكُونُوا  
تَأْمِنُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَأْمِنُونَ كَمَا تَأْمِنُونَ  
وَتَرْجُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَرْجُونَ وَكَانَ  
اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٠٤﴾

187 Believers are enjoined to remember God and mention Him at all times, because it nurtures vigilance of Him in their hearts and draws them nearer to Him. This is even more so in times of trouble and fighting because such remembrance helps boost spiritual strength which is more important than relying on material power alone (cf. al-Jazā'irī).

188 Although a number of ayas in this sura urge Believers to fight in the path of God, they also urge them to be cautious. This caution is not to be mistaken with, nor is it a license to be overly careful to the extent that Believers slacken or proceed with heavy feet (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

189 Your enemy.

190 Cf. 3:140: "If a wound touches you, indeed an equal wound has touched the clan".

191 The most generous reward of God. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿105﴾ (192) We have indeed sent down the Book to you 'Muhammad' with the Truth<sup>(193)</sup> so that you may judge among people with that which Allah has shown you. Do not be an advocate for the treacherous<sup>(194)</sup>. ﴿106﴾ Seek forgiveness from Allah—verily Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿107﴾ Do not argue on behalf of those who betray themselves<sup>(195)</sup>—indeed Allah loves not who is an unwavering betrayer, committed sinner. ﴿108﴾ They try to hide 'their wickedness' from people, but try not to hide from Allah, while indeed He is with them when they nurture in the dead of night speech<sup>(196)</sup> which He approves not—verily Allah is encompassing<sup>(197)</sup> of what they do.

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِتَحْكُمَ  
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِمَا أَرَاكَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَكُنْ  
لِلْكَافِرِينَ حَصِيمًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَأَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَلَا تُجَادِلْ عَنِ  
الَّذِينَ يَخْتَلُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ  
مَنْ كَانَتْ حَوَآئِنَا أَيْمَانًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ بَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ  
النَّاسِ وَلَا يَسْتَخْفُونَ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مَعَهُمْ  
إِذْ يُبَيِّتُونَ مَا لَا يَرْضَى مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَكَانَ  
اللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطًا ﴿١٠٨﴾

- 192 One's judgement, even with one's own enemies, should be fair and in accordance with the ruling of God in His Book, the Qur'an; those who belong to one's own religion and are on one's side should not be favoured over the other side in legal proceedings (cf. al-Rāzī). God's precious religion should be protected from inside by upholding justice under all circumstances, as much as it should be protected from outside threats (cf. Riḍā).
- 193 The Qur'an is the Truth from God; it contains the Truth, tells the Truth and comes with justice. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 194 *al-Khā'inīn* are those who claim as theirs what is not. Alternatively, they deny what others have by right. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)
- 195 *Yakhtānūn anfusahum*: they betray their own persons by intentionally being treacherous (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī). This command is not exclusive to the Prophet (ﷺ), but it entails all those who follow the commands of God; traitors are to be found everywhere throughout time. Although he is the most perfect and just of all humans, the Prophet (ﷺ) is addressed here so as to heighten the effect of the warning against this trait, a trait which is common among rulers, they being human (cf. Riḍā).
- 196 Such as forging a defence that vindicates the culprit and incriminates the innocent. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'dī)
- 197 God knows all about their stratagems. He keeps a record of everything and they will eventually be held accountable. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'dī)



﴿109﴾ Here you are, you have argued on their behalf in this worldly life<sup>(198)</sup>, who then would argue with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Judgement; who would be their agent?

هَآئِنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ جَدَلْتُمْ عَنْهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ  
الدُّنْيَا فَمَنْ يُجَادِلُ اللَّهَ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ  
أَمْ مَنْ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَيلًا ﴿١٠٩﴾

﴿110﴾ Whoever commits an ill deed<sup>(199)</sup> or wrongs himself<sup>(200)</sup>, then seeks forgiveness from Allah shall find Allah All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿111﴾ Whoever earns a sin, then he earns it 'only' against himself<sup>(201)</sup>—verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. ﴿112﴾ Whoever earns a misdeed or a sin<sup>(202)</sup>, then hurls it at an innocent person, then he has shouldered a grievous forgery and a flagrant sin. ﴿113﴾ Had it not been for Allah's Grace<sup>(203)</sup> on you 'Muhammad', and His Mercy a section of them would have misled you, but they only mislead themselves,

وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا أَوْ يَظْلِمْ نَفْسَهُ ثُمَّ  
يَسْتَغْفِرِ اللَّهَ يَجِدِ اللَّهَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١١٠﴾  
وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُ بِهِ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ  
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١١١﴾ وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ  
خَطِيئَةً أَوْ إِثْمًا ثُمَّ يَرْمِ بِهِ بَرِيئًا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلَ  
بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُبِينًا ﴿١١٢﴾ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ  
عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَتُهُ رُلَّهَمْتَ طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ  
أَنْ يَضِلُّوكَ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ

198 In other words: "Assuming that you Believers argue on their behalf in this worldly life...". (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

199 *Sū'* includes, as in this instance, all sins both major and minor. It is called *sū'* (lit. ill/bad/unpleasant) because it is a bad deed which rebounds back on the committer with a punishment that he will not be pleased with. (al-Sa'adī, Ibn 'Ashūr)

200 By earning what he deserves God's Punishment for, such as sinning and Associating with God. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'adī)

201 "No burdened soul will bear the burden of another: even if a heavily laden soul should cry for help, none of its load will be carried, not even by a close relative." (35: 18)

202 *Khaṭī'ah* is an unintended misdeed, while *ithm* is an intended one. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, al-'Askarī; *al-Furūq al-Lughawiyah*)

203 By exposing the traitors to the Prophet (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'adī)

and they will not harm you in the least. Allah sent down to you the Book and Wisdom<sup>(204)</sup>, and taught you that which you did not know<sup>(205)</sup>—indeed the Grace of Allah on you is great.

﴿114﴾ There is no good in much of their secret talk<sup>(206)</sup>, except for him who bids for charity<sup>(207)</sup>, or virtue<sup>(208)</sup>, or reconciliation between people. Whoever does this seeking ‘only’ the Pleasure of Allah, then We will grant him a great reward. ﴿115﴾ Whoever takes sides against the Messenger, only after guidance was made clear to him, and follows a path different to that of the Believers, We will lead him ‘all alone’ towards what he headed for<sup>(209)</sup> and We will scorch him in Hellfire—awful indeed in the destination.

وَمَا يَضُرُّوكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَكَ مَا لَمْ تَكُن تَعْلَمُ وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٣﴾

\* لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ نَّجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ اتِّبَاعًا مَّرْصَاتٍ اللَّهُ فَسَوْفَ نُوْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۗ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾

204 The Sunnah and knowledge of the intricacies of the rulings of Islam. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa‘dī)

205 Cf. 28: 86; 29: 48; 42: 52, and 93: 7.

206 Such stratagems are a direct result of confidential counsels (*najwā*) carried out behind closed doors at the dead of night. Plotting and scheming in private is a characteristic of the insincere of Faith and who never express such evil thoughts in public (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

207 *Sadaqah* is giving out, extending to people useful things such as money, knowledge, kindness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

208 *al-Ma‘rūf* is all that is good and encouraged by God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

209 If he chooses to follow that path, then God will abandon him and leave him out there all on his own. “We turn their hearts and eyes away” from the truth as they refused to Believe at first, leaving them to wander blindly in their defiance”. (6: 110); “When they went astray, God left their hearts to stray.” (61: 5)

﴿116﴾ Allah does not forgive that He is Associated with, but He forgives what is lesser than that for whoever He wills. Whoever Associates with Allah has indeed strayed far away 'from the right path'. ﴿117﴾ They invoke none besides Him but females<sup>(210)</sup>; they only pray to a rebelliously defiant Devil<sup>(211)</sup>; ﴿118﴾ Allah Damned<sup>(212)</sup> him, and he retorted: "I shall surely take to myself from Your servants my due share<sup>(213)</sup>!" ﴿119﴾ "I shall surely mislead them, make them ever vainly wishful<sup>(214)</sup>,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَغْفِرُ أَنْ يُشْرَكَ بِهِ ۗ وَيَغْفِرُ مَا دُونَ ذَلِكَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١١٦﴾ إِنْ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِلَّا إِنثًا وَإِنْ يَدْعُونَ إِلَّا الشَّيْطَانَ مَرِيدًا ﴿١١٧﴾ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَقَالَ لَا تَخُذْنَ مِنْ عِبَادِكَ نَصِيبًا مَفْرُوضًا ﴿١١٨﴾ وَلَا ضَلَّتْهُمْ وَلَا مَتَّبَعَتْهُمْ

- 210 The most well-known idols the Arabs worshipped in the age of ignorance were goddesses with female names, like: *al-Lāt, al-'Uzzā, Manāt* (53: 19-20), which is curious given that female inferiority was engrained in the then Arab psyche (16: 58-59). This contradiction is pointed out here, using their own logic against them.
- 211 They only worship false idols because Satan has tricked them into this (cf. 71: 23; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).
- 212 *La'anahu* expelled and shut him off from His Mercy. "He said: "Be gone from it 'Paradise'; you are truly an outcast. \*My Damnation is upon you until the Day of Reckoning"." (38: 77-78)
- 213 Take to himself followers from among Adam's offspring. He will make them do his bidding spreading corruption and deviation from the Godly path in this worldly life, but which will eventually lead them to Hellfire in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). This was his vow in the wake of God's Damnation of him: "He 'Satan' said: "Then, by Your Glory, I shall lead them all astray, \*except the 'truly' devoted servants of Yours among them"". (38: 82-83)
- 214 Satan whispers hollow promises to his followers. He engages them in an everlasting chase of illusory mirages of hope for better things to come and realization of wishes. He never intends to fulfill his promises even if he has the means to, because this would mean losing his power over them. "As for the Deniers, their deeds are like a mirage in a barren desert, which the thirsty perceive as water, but when he comes upon it, he finds it to be nothing." (24: 39)

and I shall command them to cut off the ears of livestock<sup>(215)</sup>, and I shall command them to alter the creation of Allah!<sup>(216)</sup>” Whoever takes Satan as a patron instead of Allah, has indeed suffered a tremendous loss. <sup>(120)</sup> He promises them and makes them ever vainly wishful; Satan promises them nothing but delusion<sup>(217)</sup>. <sup>(121)</sup> The resort of those is Hellfire; they will find no escape therefrom. <sup>(122)</sup> Whereas those who Believe and do good deeds, He will admit them into Gardens, under which rivers flow, forever they abide therein. ‘This is’ The true promise of Allah, and whose word is more truthful than Allah’s!

وَلَا مَرْتَبَهُمْ فَلْيَبْتِكُنَّ ءَاذَانَ الْاَنْعَامِ  
وَلَا مَرْتَبَهُمْ فَلْيَغْيِرْنَ خَلْقَ اللّٰهِ وَمَنْ  
يَتَّخِذِ الشَّيْطٰنَ وَلِيًّا مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ فَقَدْ  
خَسِرَ خُسْرًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿١١٩﴾ يَعْدهُمْ  
وَيُمَيِّتُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْدهُمْ الشَّيْطٰنُ اِلَّا  
عُرُوْرًا ﴿١٢٠﴾ اٰتٰنِكَ مَا ؤُوْهُمُ جَهَنَّمَ وَلَا يَجِدُوْنَ  
عِنْتَهَا مَجِيْبًا ﴿١٢١﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوْا  
الصّٰلِحٰتِ سَنُدْخِلُهُمْ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرٰى مِنْ  
تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا اَبَدًا وَعَدَّ  
اللّٰهُ حَقًّا وَمَنْ اَصْدَقُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ قِيْلًا ﴿١٢٢﴾

215 It was a custom of Arab idolaters to cut off the ears of cattle as a sign that such were dedicated to their gods, making them unlawful to eat; they called such cattle *baḥīrah*. All of which is contrary to God’s commandment that made the eating of cattle lawful (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa’adī). So doing, they followed the path of Satan not that of God.

216 This could be outwardly with regards to appearance, and inwardly with regards to He innate state of creation (*fiṭrah*, cf. 30: 30, 91: 10): from serving God alone to Association, from certitude to doubt and from following God’s guidance to turning away from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’adī).

217 “Satan will say ‘to his followers on the Day or Judgement’ after the matter has been settled: “Indeed Allah has made you a true promise and I too made you a promise, but I broke my promise. I did not have any authority over you. I only called you, and you responded to me. So do not blame me but blame yourselves. I cannot salvage you, nor can you salvage me. Indeed, I denounce your previous Association of me with Allah ‘in worship’. Surely the wrongdoers will suffer a painful punishment.” (14: 22)

﴿123﴾ It<sup>(218)</sup> is neither after your 'Believers' wishes nor is it after the wishes of the People of the Book<sup>(219)</sup>; whoever does evil will be requited for it<sup>(220)</sup>—he would never find besides Allah an ally or helper. ﴿124﴾ Whoever does 'all one can' of 'various' good deeds – whether male or female<sup>(221)</sup> – while Believing, those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged 'as much as the measure of' a groove on a date seed!

﴿125﴾ Whose religion is better than he who 'devoutly' submits his face for Allah, while perfecting 'his deeds' and following the creed of Ibrāhīm 'Abraham', the rightly oriented<sup>(222)</sup>

لَيْسَ بِأَمَانِيَّتِكُمْ وَلَا أَمَانِيَّةِ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ  
 مَنْ يَعْمَلْ سُوءًا يُجْزَ بِهِ وَلَا يَجِدْ لَهُ  
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ  
 يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ  
 وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ  
 وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا ﴿١٢٤﴾ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ دِينًا  
 مِمَّنْ أَسَاءَ وَجْهَهُ لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ وَاتَّبَعَ  
 مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا ﴿١٢٥﴾

- 218 Salvation and attaining good things in both this life and the life to come (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī), is earned through firm, unwavering Belief in God, worshiping Him in accordance with the dictates of Islam and following the rightly-oriented creed of Abraham, not through wishful thinking.
- 219 "They said: "None will enter Paradise but those who are Jews or Christians". Those are their 'vain' wishes. Say to them: "Produce your proof if you are truthful!" (2: 111)
- 220 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said: "When: "...whoever does evil will be requited for it" was revealed, it came down hard on Muslims. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Try your best! Whatever befalls a Muslim expiates his sins; every calamity he stumbles upon or thorn that pricks him". (Muslim: 2574)
- 221 Islam makes no distinction between men and women in matters of faith. Nor is there any distinction in what they are commanded to carry out.
- 222 The creed of Ibrāhīm, *millata Ibrāhīm*, known as *al-Hanīfiyyah*, is the most primordial, pristine, uncorrupted precursor to all heavenly-revealed religions. However, the Qur'an particularly underlines Islam's close relation to it in various places: 2: 35, 4: 125, 6: 161 and 16: 123. "None would forsake the creed of Ibrāhīm except one who fools himself. We have chosen him in the worldly life and in the Hereafter he is one of the Righteous." (2: 130) 'Rightly oriented' is *hanīf*. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness (cf. Ibn

—indeed Allah took Ibrāhīm as a close friend<sup>(223)</sup>. ﴿126﴾ To Allah belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—Allah encompasses everything<sup>(224)</sup>.

﴿127﴾ <sup>(225)</sup> And they seek your counsel<sup>(226)</sup> pertaining women,

وَأَخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَوَلَّيَهُ مَا فِي  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ  
بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطًا ﴿١٢٦﴾

وَيَسْتَفْتُونَكَ فِي النِّسَاءِ

Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-Arīb*). Abraham, the example set for humanity for those who seek to find the right path of God (cf. 2: 124), was neither a Jew nor a Christian (cf. 3: 67).

223 *Khalīl* from *kullah* which is the highest state, of untainted love (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Ibn Taymiyyah (*al-'Ubūdiyyah*, p. 107) has it that: “*Khullah* is the epitome of perfect love, which entails perfection of servitude ‘to the Lord’ from the servant, and from the Lord, Glory be to Him, the perfection of Lordship for His servants whom He loves and is loved by them”. God Almighty, the Sole Owner of the Heavens and Earth, does not need the friendship of anyone, let alone a mere mortal, but He bestowed this lofty status on Ibrāhīm as an accolade for his perfect servitude (cf. al-Tawhīdī, al-Rāzī).

224 Nothing is ever hidden from Him. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

225 The subject of the best course of conduct to pursue with regards to the weaker segments of society, as well as other related subjects touched upon at the beginning of the sura, is taken up again here so as to expunge certain societal habits and practices that were prevalent before the advent of Islam. A Believing household has to be built on preserving the dignity and ensuring the full rights of all its parties, lest any lack of respect for these leads to discord and disunion, and where the more helpless members of the family (and society at large) are the most affected. Being the basic building block of a strong, close-knit society, the family’s wholesomeness has to be preserved at all costs.

226 ‘Urwah Ibn al-Zubyr (رضي الله عنه) asked ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) about the following aya: “*Should you fear that you would not be fair to ‘your’ orphan ‘prospective wives’, then marry ‘instead’ whoever you like of women: two, three and four*”. (4: 3) She replied: “My nephew! This is regarding an orphaned girl who is under the care of her guardian and shares her money. He then likes her for her beauty and money and intends to marry her but without giving her her full dues or as much as she would normally be given by another suitor. These guardians are prohibited from marrying these orphans without giving them their dues in full, or even matching the maximum customary amount. Else they are enjoined to marry whoever they like of other women instead”. ‘Urwah (رضي الله عنه) adds that ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) continued:

say 'Muhammad': "Allah decrees to you with their regard and 'regarding' what is recited for you in the Book in 'the affairs of' orphaned women, to whom you give not what is ordained for them, and you want/want not to marry them<sup>(227)</sup>, and 'with matters of' helpless children: that you should uphold justice absolutely in the affairs of orphans<sup>(228)</sup>— whatever good you do, verily Allah Knows all about it.

قَالَ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِيهِنَّ وَمَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ فِي يَتِمَىٰ الْمَسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا تَوْلُونَهُنَّ مَا كُتِبَ لَهُنَّ وَرَغِبُونَ أَن تَنْكِحُوهُنَّ وَالْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الْوَالِدِينَ وَأَن تَقُومُوا لِلْيَتَامَىٰ بِالْقِسْطِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِهِ عَلِيمًا ﴿١٢٧﴾

“After that people came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) seeking his counsel 'yet further' regarding this matter, and Allah, Glory be His, revealed: “*And they seek your counsel, say 'Muhammad': 'Allah decrees to you with their regard and 'regarding' what is recited for you in the Book in 'the affairs of' orphaned women, to whom you give not what is ordained for them, and you want/want not to marry them'*”. 'She carries on: “What Allah meant by what is recited for them in the Book is the previous aya (4: 3) in which He says: “*If you fear you will not be fair to 'your' orphan 'prospective wives', then marry 'instead' whoever you like of women'*”. She adds: “What is said in this current aya, “*...and you want to marry them'*”, is that feeling of aversion 'yarghab 'an' to marrying an orphaned girl under one's care if she has no money or beauty, or wanting to 'yarghab fi' marry the one who has beauty and money, and whereby the guardian has to uphold justice 'to both by securing them their full rights'”. (Muslim: 3018; al-Bukhārī: 3494)

227 *Targhbūna* (third-person singular masculine verb: *yarghab*) takes on either one of two particles with oppositional (*mutadāddah*) meanings and, thus, could mean either: *yarghab 'an*, feeling averted to something, or *yarghab fi*, desiring something. As alluded to in 'Urwah Ibn al-Zubayr's (رضي الله عنه) hadith above, in the first case, the guardian who feels averted to 'yarghab 'an' marrying an orphaned girl under his care is warned against holding back the rights that were 'ordained' by God for her. These rights include the right to their inheritance, to marry another person for fear of losing control over their money, or to the full amount of their dowry. By comparison, in a scenario that he desires to 'yarghab fi' marry her, he needs to give her the dowry in full. Believers are commanded to uphold justice in all the affairs of orphans. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

228 Who are also to be given their inheritance in full. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿128﴾ If a woman fears 'disdainfulness and' rebelliousness from her husband, there is no blame for them both to come to a settlement; reconciliation is better<sup>(229)</sup>. 'Given that' Extreme care for self interest is ever close to your souls, 'it is better still' that you extend generosity and are Mindful<sup>(230)</sup>—verily Allah is fully aware of what you do. ﴿129﴾ You 'men' would not be equally fair to 'your' women, despite your best efforts<sup>(231)</sup>. So do not lean all the way through 'to one wife' and leave her 'the other one' hanging. That you conciliate and are Mindful, then surely Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿130﴾ 'Yet' Should they depart each other, then Allah will 'generously' provide for each of them out of His abundance<sup>(232)</sup>—verily Allah is Most Abundant, Most Wise.

وَإِنْ أَمْرًا خَافَتْ مِنْ بَعْلِهَا نُشُورًا أَوْ إِعْرَاضًا  
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يُصْلِحَا بَيْنَهُمَا  
صُلْحًا وَأُصْلِحَ خَيْرٌ وَأُخْضِرَتِ الْأَنْفُسُ  
الشَّخَّ وَإِنْ تُحْسِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ  
بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيعُوا أَنْ  
تَعْدُوا بَيْنَ النِّسَاءِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتُمْ فَلَا تَمِيلُوا  
كُلَّ الْمِيلِ فِتْرَ وَهَآكَ الْمَعْلَقَةُ وَإِنْ  
تُصْلِحُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا  
رَحِيمًا ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَإِنْ يَتَفَرَّقَا يَغْنِ اللَّهُ كُلَّآ مَنِ  
سَعَتِهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ وَسْعًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٣٠﴾

229 That is, coming to a mutual agreement that ensures their relationship continues. This is better than breaking up.

230 It is quite understandable that self-interest is innate to human nature. This makes giving up on some of one's rights very difficult, yet it is better still that both parties extend generosity to each other in order to reach a common, agreeable ground (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn). Men are especially reminded of this and whereby they must be Mindful of God and fair to their wives (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

231 This provides yet another window into human nature. A man who has more than one wife will inevitably prefer, in his own heart, one over another. However, men are reminded to be Mindful of God and to be moderate and treat their wives on an equal footing. Having said this, it is mandatory for a man to be absolutely even-handed in securing each wife her given marital rights, or else he will do better taking on only one wife: "But should you fear that you would not be fair 'in your treatment of all your wives' then one 'is enough'". (4: 3)

232 Sa'ah here is abundant Godly provisions or another spouse. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)



﴿131﴾<sup>(233)</sup> To Allah belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth; indeed We have advised<sup>(234)</sup> those who were given the Book before you 'Believers' and you to be Mindful of Allah; but if you Deny then 'still' to Allah belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—verily Allah is Free of Need, All-Praiseworthy<sup>(235)</sup>. ﴿132﴾ To Allah belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—sufficient is Allah 'indeed' as Trustee<sup>(236)</sup>. ﴿133﴾ Should He wish to, He would do away with you people and come up with others<sup>(237)</sup>—verily Allah is Able over that. ﴿134﴾ Whoever seeks the reward of this worldly life,

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّيْنَا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَإِيَّاكُمْ أَنْ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَإِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَنِيًّا حَمِيدًا ﴿١٣١﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَكَفَى بِاللَّهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٣٢﴾ إِنْ يَشَأْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ وَيَأْتِ بِآخَرِينَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى ذَلِكَ قَدِيرًا ﴿١٣٣﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيدُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا

233 That God is the Omnipotent, Sole Owner of the dominions of the Heavens and Earth is repeated three times in this central thematic unit (Ayas 131-134). This is a strong reminder to all people not to be heedless of His 'advice' and commandments, but rather to be Mindful of Him (Riḍā). In other words, His commandments are not to be taken lightly.

234 Cf. note on Aya 4: 11 above.

235 "And Moses said: "Even if you, together with everybody else in Earth, Deny then Allah is Free of Need, All-Praiseworthy" (14: 8); "That was because their Messengers used to come to them with clear proofs, but they said: "How can humans be our guides?" So they persisted in Denial and turned away. Allah is not in need "of them"—Allah is Free of Need, All-Praiseworthy." (64: 6)

236 *Wakīl* (*al-Wakīl*) is one of the most Beautiful Names of God Almighty. It means, particularly in this instance, the Sustainer of the Universe, its Preserver, the Dispenser of its affairs with His Knowledge and Ability, and the Witness of everything, Glory be His. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). This Name entails that God Almighty is Most Trustworthy, dependable Advocate of perfect resolution.

237 Such replacements will be more heedful of commandments: "If you turn away, He will replace you with other people. And they will not be like you." (47: 38)

then 'know that' with Allah is 'both' the reward of this worldly life and the Hereafter<sup>(238)</sup>—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

﴿135﴾ (239) You who Believe, be 'staunch' upholders of absolute justice; witnesses for 'the sake of' Allah<sup>(240)</sup> even against yourselves or your parents and relatives. Whether he is rich or poor, Allah has more of a right to them both<sup>(241)</sup>. Then follow not your 'whims and' desires not to act justly<sup>(242)</sup>. But should you twist 'your tongues'<sup>(243)</sup> or abstain 'from testifying',

فَعِنْدَ اللَّهِ ثَوَابُ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَكَانَ  
اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿١٣٥﴾

\*يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ  
شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ  
وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ  
بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدُوا وَإِنْ  
تَلَّوْا أَوْ تَعْرِضُوا

- 238 People who are heedless of God are too eager to gain that which is worldly and think not of the life to come. Here, God reminds them that it is with Him that the wins and gains of not only this worldly life but also that of the Hereafter lie. All the more reason, then, for them to pay Him heed (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). "Some people would say: "Our Lord give us in this worldly life", having no share in the Hereafter; \*yet" some of them say: "Our Lord, give us what is good in this worldly life and what is good in the Hereafter, and spare us the Punishment of the Fire". \*Those are the ones who have a share of what they earned; surely Allah is swift in reckoning." (2: 200-202)
- 239 Here, the theme of upholding justice absolutely, no matter what the odds might be, is reiterated. This reinforces the main principles on which the Believing community is built: justice to all which is akin to Mindfulness (underlined in the previous group of Ayas 131-134).
- 240 Giving testimony should only be meant to please God alone; not to show off or brag. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 241 When testifying, the rich should not be favoured for his wealth nor the poor in consideration of his condition. A Believer needs only to give his upright testimony and leave the rest to God, the Creator and Dispenser of affairs. He knows best. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 242 "You who Believe, stand firm for Allah and uphold just testimony. Do not let 'your' enmity for 'some other' people lead you to injustice. Be just! That is closer to Mindfulness. And be Mindful of Allah. Surely Allah is well aware of what you do." (5:8)
- 243 Distorting facts while testifying. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

then indeed Allah is fully aware of what you do. ﴿136﴾ (244) You who Believe, Believe 'unwaveringly' in Allah, His Messenger, the Book that He sent down 'piecemeal' to His Messenger<sup>(245)</sup>, and the Book<sup>(246)</sup> He sent down 'in full' before. Whoever Denies Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day, then he has indeed strayed far away 'from the right path'. ﴿137﴾ Those who Believed then Denied, then Believed them Denied, then 'further' increased in Denial, Allah will never forgive them, or guide their way<sup>(247)</sup>.

﴿138﴾ (248) Give the hypocrites the tidings that theirs is a painful Punishment; ﴿139﴾ these who take the Deniers as allies rather than the Believers<sup>(249)</sup>. Do they seek

فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١٣٦﴾  
يَتَّيِّبُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ  
وَالْكِتَابِ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَالْكِتَابِ  
الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِاللَّهِ  
وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
الْآخِرِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٣٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا  
ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ ءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ كَفَرُوا ثُمَّ  
كَفَرُوا لَمْ يَكُنِ اللَّهُ لِيُغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَلَا لِيُهْدِيَهُمْ  
سَبِيلًا ﴿١٣٨﴾

بَشِّرِ الْمُنَافِقِينَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣٩﴾  
الَّذِينَ يَتَّخِذُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ  
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ءَاتَبَتُوهُنَّ

244 The most significant testimony is the one held towards God, i.e., the declaration of Faith. The uprightness of all other testimonies springs from this fountainhead of true, unshakeable Belief (al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).

245 The Qur'an. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

246 *Kitāb* (sig.) here is a generic noun which entails all the Holy Scriptures that were revealed by God prior to the Qur'an. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

247 God will not overlook or forgive their misdeeds because of their ardent Denial, which represents the most insurmountable block to His Godly leniency. Denial in itself is a punishment which will not be lifted until the doomed meets his death without being given the chance to repent (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). They willingly chose the path of loss, so God left them to it (cf. 4:115 above).

248 In what follows (Ayas 138-147) the hypocrites are further exposed for what they are. They are told to make a final stand and align themselves unequivocally with the Believing community.

249 Cf. note on Aya 2: 28.

honour<sup>(250)</sup> with them? Then to Allah belongs all honour<sup>(251)</sup>. ﴿140﴾ He sent down 'in' the Book<sup>(252)</sup> to you that should you hear the Signs of Allah being Denied or ridiculed 'by some', then remain not with them unless they engage in a conversation other than that. 'If you still stay with them' Then you are 'just' like them—indeed Allah will gather the hypocrites and the Deniers in Hellfire altogether. ﴿141﴾ These 'hypocrites' who lie low in wait for you; should you be granted victory from Allah, would say: "Were we not with you?<sup>(253)</sup>" 'Conversely' should the Deniers have a share 'of victory over you', they would say: "Did we not enwrap you 'in our aid' and shield you from the Believers?<sup>(254)</sup>" Allah will judge

عندهمُ الْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَقَدْ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الْكِتَابِ أَنْ إِذَا سَمِعْتُمْ آيَاتَ اللَّهِ يُكْفَرُ بِهَا وَيُسْتَهْزَأُ بِهَا فَلَا تَقْعُدُوا مَعَهُمْ حَتَّى يَخُوضُوا فِي حَدِيثٍ غَيْرِهِ وَإِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَامِعُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْكَافِرِينَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ جَمِيعًا ﴿١٤٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَرْتَضُونَ بِكُمْ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فَتْحٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَكُنْ مَعَكُمْ وَإِنْ كَانَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ نَصِيبٌ قَالُوا أَلَمْ نَسْتَحِذْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَنَمْنَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فَاللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ

250 *al-Izzah* is a state of being shielded against defeat and standing aloof from humiliation. (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyis al-Lughah*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)

251 Dignity and honour can only be found with God, the All-Powerful, Supreme Ruler over all His creation. "Whoever desires honour, then all honour is Allah's own" (35: 10); "They 'the hypocrites' say: "When we return back to Madinah, the more honoured shall evict the more humiliated from it!" "In fact 'To Allah 'truly' belongs honour, and to His Messenger and to the Believers, but the hypocrites know not." (63: 8)

252 The Qur'an; as in Aya 6: 68: "And when you see those who engage in vain discussion about Our Signs, turn away from them till they engage in other discourse. If Satan should cause you to forget, then once you have remembered, sit not in the company of wrongdoers". (Ibn 'Uthaymīn)

253 Cf. Aya 72 above.

254 They greatly aided and abetted the Deniers: spreading rumours, acting as decoys, discouraging Believers, spying, and employing all manner of devious wiles and ploys to demoralize the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

among you 'both parties'<sup>(255)</sup> on the Day of Judgement—Allah will surely not give the Deniers a way 'to prevail' over the Believers<sup>(256)</sup>.  
 ﴿142﴾ Indeed the hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, 'but in reality' He Deceives them; when they rise up for Prayer, they rise sluggishly<sup>(257)</sup> 'only' showing off to people and little do they 'truly' mention<sup>(258)</sup> Allah. ﴿143﴾ They are wavering<sup>(259)</sup>; neither 'belonging' to these nor to these—whoever is misguided by Allah, you will surely find no way 'out' for him.

بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَنْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٢﴾ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كُسَالَى يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾ مُدْبِدِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَمَنْ يُضِلِلْ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾

- 255 God, the Most Just of all judges, will make known by His verdict those who are sincere and those who are not. He will admit the former to Paradise and consign the latter to Hellfire (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 256 God will not grant the Deniers leave to have an absolute upper hand over the Believers; to completely route and eradicate them. There will always, throughout all times, be a group of Believers who will be victorious by virtue of their true and unshakable Belief. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 257 God is sharing a tell-tale sign of their insincerity, lack of will and lethargic action in carrying out His biddings. This is by way of ‘deceiving’ them and drawing Believers’ attention to their deception.
- 258 This pertains to their engagement in *dhikr* (remembrance) during Prayers; they do not mention God with their tongues, their hearts and body parts are not humbled, and their minds are wandering. This is because what is topmost in their minds is not Pleasure of God, but rather an intent to please other mortals. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 259 The hypocrites live in a state of perpetual quandary and constant perplexity. They are stricken with doubt and always experiencing a state of dilemma: “*In their hearts there is disease and thus* ‘because of it’ *Allah has increased their disease*”. (2:10) ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The example of the hypocrites is that of a sheep, which comes in the middle of two herds; this time it joins this herd and shortly after it joins the other”. (Muslim: 2784) For a fuller description of the squalid, worry-stung lives they lead see 2: 8-20.

﴿144﴾ You who Believe, take not the Deniers as allies rather than the Believers, do you want to give Allah clearly evident authority against you?<sup>(260)</sup> ﴿145﴾ Indeed the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the Fire—you will never find them a helper. ﴿146﴾ Except those who repent, mend 'their ways', hold fast to Allah and purify their religion, then these are with the Believers—indeed Allah will grant the Believers a great reward. ﴿147﴾ Of what use to Allah is your Punishment, if you are thankful and Believe—verily Allah is Thankful, All-Knowing.

﴿148﴾ Allah likes not speaking of evil openly<sup>(261)</sup> except for one who is wronged<sup>(262)</sup>—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿149﴾ Whether you declare what is good or conceal it, or pardon an evil, then Allah is All-Pardoning, Most Able<sup>(263)</sup>.

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْكَافِرِينَ  
أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أُرِيدُونَ أَنْ  
تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا مُبِينًا ﴿١٤٤﴾ إِنَّ  
الْمُنَافِقِينَ فِي الدَّرَجَةِ الْأَسْفَلِ مِنَ النَّارِ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ  
لَهُمْ نَصِيرًا ﴿١٤٥﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا  
وَاعْتَصَمُوا بِاللَّهِ وَأَخْلَصُوا دِينَهُمْ لِلَّهِ  
فَأُولَئِكَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَسَوْفَ يُؤْتِ اللَّهُ  
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٤٦﴾ مَا يَفْعَلُ اللَّهُ  
بِعَذَابِكُمْ إِنْ شَكَرْتُمْ وَءَامَنْتُمْ وَكَانَ  
اللَّهُ شَاكِرًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٧﴾

\*لَا يُحِبُّ اللَّهُ الْجَهْرَ بِالسُّوِّءِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ  
إِلَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ سَمِيعًا عَلِيمًا ﴿١٤٨﴾  
إِنْ تَبَدُّوا خَيْرًا أَوْ لَخِفُوهُ أَوْ تَعَفَّوْا عَنْ سُوءٍ  
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَفُورًا قَدِيرًا ﴿١٤٩﴾

260 *Sultān* is a false-cut justification for God to punish you. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

261 *al-Sū'* is everything which is hurtful and unpleasant (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*); 'speaking evil' is swearing, foul mouthing, being profane, hurling accusations, slandering, backbiting, etc. (cf. al-Jazā'irī). Having exposed the hypocrites at length in this sura already, God draws the Believers' attention so that they hold their peace and are careful not to speak evil to them openly (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

262 A person who is aggrieved or done wrong by may, with the caveat as in the next aya, vent his grievance by supplicating against his aggressor or complaining to others about him, but he may not fabricate lies to win sympathy. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

263 This is mainly addressed to the one who is wronged (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). This is a very subtle call for them to have good things topmost in their minds

﴿150﴾ Those who Deny Allah and His Messengers and want to separate between Allah and His Messengers saying: “We Believe in some and Deny some”, wishing to strike a middle road in between!<sup>(264)</sup> ﴿151﴾ Those are indeed the Deniers truly—We have prepared ‘an ever present’ humiliating Punishment for the Deniers. ﴿152﴾ “But” Those who Believe in Allah and His Messengers and do not separate between any of them, He will grant them their rewards—indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ اللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَيَقُولُونَ نُؤْمِنُ بِبَعْضٍ وَنَكْفُرُ بِبَعْضٍ وَيُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَتَّخِذُوا بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٥٠﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ حَقًّا وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُّهِينًا ﴿١٥١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَلَمْ يُفَرِّقُوا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ أُولَٰئِكَ سَوْفَ يُؤْتِيهِمُ اللَّهُ أَجْرَهُم بَدَلًا وَعَدَدًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٥٢﴾

﴿153﴾<sup>(265)</sup> The People of the Book ask you ‘Muhammad’ to send down to them a Book from the sky!<sup>(266)</sup>

يَسْأَلُكَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَنْ تُنزِّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ كِتَابًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ

and to think positively. For this reason ‘good’ is brought to the foreground and ‘evil’ is relegated to the background. Although the previous aya only talks of ‘evil’; a change of perspective is much needed in situations where emotions run high. What is more, people are encouraged to pardon an injury and remember that God, Who is Most Able to punish a wrong done towards Him, is also All-Pardoning.

<sup>264</sup> Thinking that such a ‘compromise’ would put them on the road that leads to God’s Pleasure and salvation. Had they really Believed in some Messengers of God and listened to them with due care and attention, they would naturally have Believed in the rest of the Messengers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

<sup>265</sup> The following three passages (Ayas 153-170) provide the leader of the community, the Messenger of God (ﷺ), with the necessary certainty, through repeated assurances (in particular passage ending ayas: 162, 166 and 170) about the authenticity of his mission. His Messengership is the bulwark, the centre of gravity, which is the source of strength that the whole community draws on and builds its legitimacy around.

<sup>266</sup> In order to believe in him, they asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to send down a Book from the sky, in whole and written in a heavenly hand just like the tablets

Indeed they had asked Moses what is even more than that, they said: “Show us Allah before our own eyes!<sup>(267)</sup>” so the thunderbolt struck them<sup>(268)</sup> for their wrongdoing. Then you took ‘to worshipping’ the calf<sup>(269)</sup> ‘only’ after clear evidences<sup>(270)</sup> came to them but We forgave that<sup>(271)</sup> and We gave Moses clearly evident authority<sup>(272)</sup>. ﴿154﴾ We raised the mountain above them<sup>(273)</sup> to ‘make them honour’ their pledge and We said to them: “Enter through the gate prostrating”<sup>(274)</sup>, and We said to them: “Do not transgress on the Sabbath”<sup>(275)</sup>, and We took from them a tough<sup>(276)</sup> pledge.

فَقَدَسَأَلُوا مُوسَىٰ أَكْبَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالُوا أَرَنَا اللَّهَ جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِظُهُورِهِمْ ثُمَّ أَخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ أَلْبَيْتًا فَعَمَقْنَا عَنْ ذَلِكَ وَإَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ سُلْطَانًا مُّبِينًا ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَهُمُ الطُّورَ بِمِثْقَلِهِمْ وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ ادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ لَا تَعْدُوا فِي السَّبْتِ وَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ مِيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ﴿١٥٤﴾

of the Torah. This was just a ruse, a smoke-screen meant to draw attention away from their lack of will to respond to the call of Belief (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

267 *Jahrah* is clearly apparent; the origin of *jahr* is exposing by bringing something into light (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). This demand and all of the other Israelite infringements mentioned here are detailed in Sura *al-Baqarah*, especially Ayas 50-66. (For this one cf. Aya 2: 55.)

268 Cf. 2: 55-56.

269 Cf. 2: 51.

270 The miracles that Moses (ﷺ) was made able to perform before their own eyes. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

271 Cf. 2: 54.

272 “Indeed We gave Moses nine clear signs. Ask ‘Muhammad’ the Children of Israel.” (17: 101)

273 Cf. 2: 63.

274 Cf. 2: 58.

275 The details of story are given in 7: 163-165.

276 *Ghalīz* is rugged and rough, the opposite of smooth (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).



﴿155﴾ 'Damned they were'<sup>(277)</sup> Because of their reneging on their pledge, Denying Allah's Signs, killing the Prophets unjustifiably<sup>(278)</sup> and saying: "Our hearts are encrusted"<sup>(279)</sup>, nay but Allah sealed them because of their Denial—little do they Believe. ﴿156﴾ 'And' Because of their Denial, their grossly vile slander against Maryam 'Mary'<sup>(280)</sup>; ﴿157﴾ and their saying 'boastfully': "We have killed the Messiah, 'Īsā 'Jesus', son of Maryam, the Messenger of Allah", they neither killed him nor did they crucify him, but it was only made to appear like so to them<sup>(281)</sup>. Indeed those who differed regarding him are 'extremely' doubtful about him; they have no 'real' knowledge about him; they are only following guesses. Certainly they did not kill him, ﴿158﴾ but Allah raised him up unto Himself<sup>(282)</sup>—indeed Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise.

فِيمَا نَقَضَهُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ وَكَفَرِهِمْ بِبَيْتِ اللَّهِ وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بَغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَقَوْلِهِمْ قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ بَلْ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهَا بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥٥﴾ وَيَكْفُرُهُمْ قَوْلُهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَرْيَمَ بُهْتَانًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَقَوْلِهِمْ إِنَّا قَتَلْنَا الْمَسِيحَ عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوهُ وَلَٰكِن شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مَا لَهُمْ بِهِ مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِلَّا اتِّبَاعَ الظَّنِّ وَمَا قَتَلُوهُ يَقِينًا ﴿١٥٧﴾ بَلْ رَفَعَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَيْهِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٥٨﴾

277 Cf. 2: 88, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr.

278 Cf. note on 2: 21.

279 Cf. 2: 88.

280 Accusing her of fornication; cf. 19: 28.

281 One interpretation of *shubbiḥ lahum* (He/it was only made to appear like so to them) is that another person was made to assume his likeness, so they mistook him for Jesus (ﷺ) (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī).

282 He ascended to Heaven (cf. 3: 55; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿159﴾ 'Yet' Everyone of the People of the Book, none excepted, will absolutely Believe in him 'Jesus' before his death<sup>(283)</sup>, and on the Day of Judgement, he 'Jesus' will be a witness against them. ﴿160﴾ Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews, We have made unlawful for them good 'provisions' that had been made lawful to them<sup>(284)</sup>, and because of their frequently repeated turning 'many' away from the path of Allah<sup>(285)</sup>. ﴿161﴾ And 'because of' their taking usury when they were forbidden from it, and their devouring people's money wrongfully—indeed We have prepared for the Deniers among them 'an ever present' painful Punishment. ﴿162﴾ But those who are firm in knowledge among them<sup>(286)</sup> and the Believers Believe in what was sent down to you 'Muhammad' and what was sent down before you;

وَإِن مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا لِيُؤْمِنَنَّ بِهِ قَبْلَ  
 مَوْتِهِ ۖ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٥٩﴾  
 فَيُظَاهِرُ مِنَّا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا حَرَمًا عَلَيْهِمْ طَيِّبَاتٍ  
 أُحِلَّتْ لَهُمْ وَبِصَدِّهِمْ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ﴿١٦٠﴾  
 وَأَخَذَهُمُ الرِّبَا وَقَدْ نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَأَكْلِهِمْ  
 أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ بِالْبُطْلِ ۚ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ  
 مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦١﴾ لَكِنِ الرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ  
 مِنْهُمْ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا  
 أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ

283 The prevalent interpretation of this is that all the People of the Book, even the Jews, will come to Believe in Jesus' Messengership, his neither being 'an impostor' nor 'the son of God', when he descends to Earth from Heaven at the end of time (cf. al-Bukhārī: 3448; Muslim: 155; al-Ṭabarī; Ibn Kathīr).

284 For more details cf. 6: 146.

285 They never spared any effort in driving people away from the path of God: lying about God, distorting and concealing parts of the Scriptures and Denying Prophets Jesus and Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

286 Not all the Jews were the same but the godly among their learned are excluded as per this aya. Their true knowledge led them to be among the ranks of Believers who Believed in the Prophet's (ﷺ) Messengership and those of all the Messengers that preceded him and all of the Holy Scriptures (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

and those who 'dutifully' keep up Prayers, give out the prescribed alms<sup>(287)</sup>, and are 'sincere' Believers in Allah and the Last Day; those We will grant them a great reward.

﴿163﴾ We have sent revelation to you 'Muhammad, just' like<sup>(288)</sup> We sent revelation to Nūḥ 'Noah' and the Prophets after him. We 'also' sent revelation to Ibrāhīm 'Abraham', Ismā'il 'Ishmael', Ishāq 'Isaac', Ya'qūb 'Jacob', the Tribes<sup>(289)</sup>, 'Īsā 'Jesus', Ayyūb 'Job', Yūnus 'Jonah', Hārūn 'Aaron', Sulaymān 'Solomon' and We granted Dāwūd 'David' a Sacred Writ<sup>(290)</sup>.

وَالْمُفِيْمِيْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَالْمُوْتُوْبَ الرَّكْوَةَ  
وَالْمُوْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ اُولٰٓئِكَ سَنُوْتِيْهِمْ  
اَجْرًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿١٦٣﴾

﴿١٦٣﴾ اِنَّا اَوْحَيْنَا اِلَيْكَ كَمَا اَوْحَيْنَا اِلَى نُوْحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّنَ  
مِنْ بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَاَوْحَيْنَا اِلَى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ  
وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ وَاَلْاَسْبَاطِ ۗ وَعِيسٰى  
وَاَيُوْبَ وَيُوْسُفَ وَهٰرُوْنَ وَسُلَيْمٰنَ ۗ وَاَتَيْنَا  
دَاوُدَ زَبُوْرًا ﴿١٦٣﴾

287 Keeping up Prayers (*iqāmat al-ṣalāh*) and giving out prescribed alms (*itā' al-zakāh*) are observable manifestations of one's Belief. In contrast to the hypocrites who rise up to Prayers sluggishly (cf. 4: 142 above), sincere Believers do so willingly, devoutly and without delay.

288 This is a direct reply to the Jews of Madinah regarding their demand (4: 153 above) from the Prophet (ﷺ) to send them down from the sky a Book, in full, written in a heavenly hand. That the majority of these Messengers of God (ﷺ), did not receive Books as described in the demand, and where Messengerships were not rebuffed, is highlighted here to underline their lack of sincere intention. They were only arguing for the sake of argument and to cast aspersions (al-Rāzī).

289 *al-Asbāt* are the Prophets among Jacob's descendants (cf. al-Sa'dī). They were called *asbāt* because everyone of them was a *sibt*, who weighed in good qualities that of a whole tribe (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

290 *al-Zabūr* is the Book revealed to Prophet David (ﷺ) (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Originally *al-zabūr* is every book that contains wisdom (*zabur* for plural, 3: 184), a Sacred Writ.

﴿164﴾ 'These in addition to' Messengers We have narrated to you 'Muhammad' and Messengers We have not narrated to you; and 'indeed' Allah certainly spoke to Moses directly<sup>(291)</sup>. ﴿165﴾ 'These' Messengers 'were sent as' deliverers of glad tidings and warnings<sup>(292)</sup>, so that people would have no pretext against Allah after the Messengers 'coming to them'<sup>(293)</sup>—verily Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿166﴾ 'Nay' But 'in spite of the Deniers'<sup>(294)</sup> Allah 'Himself' bears witness to what He sent down to you – He sent it with His Knowledge – and the angels bear witness 'to it' too—sufficient is Allah 'indeed' as Witness.

وَرُسُلًا قَدْ قَصَصْنَاهُمْ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ  
وَرُسُلًا لَمْ نَقْصُصْهُمْ عَلَيْكَ وَكَلَّمَ اللَّهُ  
مُوسَىٰ تَكْلِيمًا ﴿١٦٥﴾ رُسُلًا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ  
لِيَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ  
وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٦٦﴾ لَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَشْهَدُ  
بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكَ أَنْزَلَهُ بِعِلْمِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ  
يَشْهَدُونَ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا ﴿١٦٧﴾

- 291 Use of the absolute subject (*al-maf'ūl al-muṭlaq*), *kallama taklīmān*, is meant to impart certainty to the occurrence of the actual 'speaking'; God addressed Moses directly, in a manner befitting His Glory, without a medium, in words that he heard and understood (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Uthaymīn). "And when he 'Moses' came upon it, he was called from the right bank of the valley, at the blessed site, from the tree: "Moses! Truly I am Allah, the Lord of all-beings!" (28:30) This was a very special privilege imparted to Moses (ﷺ).
- 292 Messengers are sent by God to give people the good news of felicity and prosperity in this life and the Hereafter for those who obey Him and follow His commandments, and to warn them against His Punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).
- 293 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "None likes to pardon more than Allah. This is why He sent down the Book and dispatched Messengers". (Muslim: 2760) When they find themselves in a tight corner, people always resort to scapegoating. "Had We destroyed them through punishment before this Messenger came, they would have said: "Our Lord, if only You had sent us a Messenger, we could have followed Your revelations before we suffered humiliation and disgrace!" (20: 134)
- 294 Cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī.

﴿167﴾ Those who Denied and turned 'people' away from the path of Allah, they have indeed strayed far away 'from the right path'. ﴿168﴾ Those who Denied and dealt unjustly, Allah will not forgive them, or guide them to the way 'of truth'; ﴿169﴾ except the way to Hellfire<sup>(295)</sup>; forever they abide therein—indeed that is easy for Allah. ﴿170﴾ O people, surely the Messenger 'Muhammad' has come to you with the truth from your Lord, so Believe 'in him' for your own good<sup>(296)</sup>. But if you Deny, then to Allah belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—verily Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
 قَدْ ضَلُّوا ضَلَالًا بَعِيدًا ﴿١٦٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
 وَظَلَمُوا لَئِن كُنِ اللَّهُ يَتَغَفَّرُ لَهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيَهُمْ  
 طَرِيقًا ﴿١٦٨﴾ إِلَّا طَرِيقَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا  
 أَبَدًا وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿١٦٩﴾ يَأْتِيهَا  
 النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَهُمُ الرُّسُولُ بِالْحَقِّ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ  
 فَتَأْمَنُوا خَيْرَ الْكُفْرِ وَإِن تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ  
 مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا  
 حَكِيمًا ﴿١٧٠﴾

﴿171﴾ People of the Book<sup>(297)</sup>, do not take an extremely hard line on your religion<sup>(298)</sup> and say nothing

يَأْتَاهُمُ الْكِتَابُ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ وَلَا تَقُولُوا

295 "We turn their hearts and eyes away 'from the Truth' as they refused to Believe at first, leaving them to wander blindly in their defiance." (6: 110)

296 "Whoever does good, whether male or female, and is a Believer, We will surely bless them with a good life, and We will certainly reward them according to the best of their deeds." (16: 97)

297 This passage is addressed to the fourth major category of the Arabian community, the Christians, who did not exist in large concentrations in the vicinity of Madinah, hence the delay in their mention until now (cf. their argumentation with the Prophet ﷺ) which is a major theme of Sura *Al 'Imrān*). Their beliefs, along with those of the Jews, the idolaters and the hypocrites, had to be dealt with in a clear-cut manner, both for their and the Believer's benefits. The Believing community had to build its relationships with its bordering neighbours on a well-defined set of terms, Divinely-revealed instructions as to where everyone stood regarding matters of creed and Faith.

298 "They have taken their rabbis and monks as well as the Messiah, son of Mary, as Lords besides Allah, even though they were commanded to

about Allah except the truth; the Messiah, 'Isā son of Maryam is no more than a Messenger of Allah<sup>(299)</sup>, and His word<sup>(300)</sup> that He cast to Maryam, and a soul from Him<sup>(301)</sup>. Believe then in Allah and His Messengers, and say not: "Three"<sup>(302)</sup>. Desist 'from saying this' for your own good; indeed Allah is none but one God,

عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقُّ إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى  
ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى  
مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ فَآمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ  
وَلَا تَقُولُوا ثَلَاثَةً إِنَّهُوَ خَيْرُ الْكُفْرِ إِنَّمَا  
اللَّهُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ

*worship none but the One God. There is no god 'worthy of worship' except Him. Glorified is He above 'all' what they Associate 'with Him'!*" (9: 31)

- 299 "The Messiah, son of Maryam, was only a Messenger; other Messengers had come and gone before him; his mother was a virtuous woman; both ate food 'like other mortals'. See how clear We make these Signs for them; see how deluded they are." (5: 75) 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Do not be excessive in praising me as much as the Christians go into raptures about the son of Maryam. I am no more than His servant. So say: "The Servant of Allah and His Messenger". (al-Bukhārī: 3445)
- 300 He was created by the word, 'Be!', that the Archangel Gabriel delivered to Mary (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). "Indeed the example of 'Isā with Allah is like that of Adam; He created him from dust and said: "Be!" and he was." (3: 59)
- 301 That is Jesus' spirit was created by God (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). al-Baghawī, in his interpretation of this aya, says: "He 'Jesus' is a soul just like any other soul but Allah added him to Himself "a soul from Him" to honour him". al-Shawkānī is also of this opinion. Commenting on this aya, al-Alūsī has it that: "Because Jesus was created by a blow 'of air', not by a drop 'of sperm', he was called a 'soul'." In other words, this stresses the purely human nature of Jesus and refutes the belief in his divinity. The Qur'an makes clear that Jesus is just like all other human beings, whose spirit was created by God.
- 302 The claim that there are three Gods. "They certainly Deny, those who say: "Truly Allah is the third of three", while there is no god save the one God. If they desist not from what they say, a painful Punishment will befall those among them who Deny." (5: 73).

far exalted is He above having a child<sup>(303)</sup>. To Him 'Allah' belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—sufficient is Allah as Keeper. <sup>﴿172﴾</sup> The Messiah would not disdain to be a servant of Allah, nor would the drawn-near angel. Whoever disdains from worshipping Him and becomes arrogant, He will rally them all to Him 'on the Day of Judgement'. <sup>﴿173﴾</sup> As for those who Believe and do good deeds, He will grant them their rewards in full and will give them more from His Grace, but those who disdained and became arrogant, He will consign them to a painful Punishment—they will never find an ally or helper besides Allah. <sup>﴿174﴾</sup> O people, there has come to you a 'conclusive' proof<sup>(304)</sup> from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a Glaring Light<sup>(305)</sup>. <sup>﴿175﴾</sup> As for those who Believe in Allah and hold fast to Him, He will admit them into a Mercy and Grace<sup>(306)</sup> from Him, and will guide them to a Straight Path.

سُبْحٰنَهُۥٓ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ لَهُۥ وَلَدٌ لَّهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ  
وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيلًا ﴿١٧٢﴾  
لَنْ يَّمْسِنَكَفَ الْمَسِيْحُ اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ عَبْدًا  
لِلّٰهِ وَلَا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ الْمُقَرَّبُوْنَ وَمَنْ يَّمْسِنَكَفَ  
عَنْ عِبَادَتِهٖۤ ؕ وَيَسْتَكْبِرْ فَسَيَحْشُرُهُمْ  
اِلَيْهِ جَمِيْعًا ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوْا  
الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَيُوْفِيْهِمْ اُجُوْرَهُمْ وَيَزِيْدُهُمْ  
مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖۤ ؕ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ اَسْتَكْفَرُوْا  
وَأَسْتَكْبَرُوْا فَبِعَذْبِنَاۤ اِلَيْمًا وَلَا  
يَجِدُوْنَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وٰلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿١٧٤﴾  
يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بُرْهٰنٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ  
وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْكِتٰبَ نُوْرًا مُّبِيْنًا ﴿١٧٥﴾ فَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ  
ءَامَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَعَصَمُوْا بِهٖۤ فَسَيُدْخِلُهُمْ فِي  
رَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُۥ وَفَضْلٍ وَيَهْدِيْهِۤ اِلَيْهِ صِرَاطًا  
مُّسْتَقِيْمًا ﴿١٧٥﴾

303 "Say: He is God, Unique. \*God is the Oft-Beseeded. \*He begot none, nor was He begotten. \*None is equal to Him." (Sura al-Ikhlās, 112: 1-4) "Allah is 'The Originator of the Heavens and Earth. How could He have children when He has no mate? He created all things and has 'perfect' knowledge of everything." (6: 101)

304 People have been given enough evidence that should guide them to the truth. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

305 The Qur'an which should guide people to the Straight Path if they only walk in its light. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

306 Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿176﴾ (307) And they seek your counsel, say 'Muhammad': "Allah decrees to you regarding 'the inheritance from' a childless parentless person; if a man dies and he has no children and he has a sister, then to her belongs half of what he leaves behind; 'in turn' he inherits her if she has no children; if there are two 'sisters' then theirs is two thirds of what he leaves behind; if there are 'a number of' brothers and sisters, then a male should have the equal share of two females". Thus Allah explains to you lest that you stray—Allah is All-Knowing of everything.

يَسْتَفْتُونَكَ قُلِ اللَّهُ يُفْتِيكُمْ فِي الْكَلَالَةِ  
 إِنْ أَمْرٌ أُوهِدَ لَكَ لَيْسَ لَهُ وُلْدٌ وَلَا هُوَ أُخْتُ فَأَهْيَا  
 نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ وَهُوَ يَرِثُهَا إِنْ لَرَّ يَكُنْ لَهَا وُلْدٌ  
 فَإِنْ كَانَ ثَلَاثَتِ نِسَاءٍ فَلَهُمَا الثُّلُثَانِ مِمَّا تَرَكَ  
 وَإِنْ كَانُوا إِخْوَةً رِجَالًا وَنِسَاءً فَلِلَّذَكَرِ مِثْلُ  
 حَظِّ الْأُنثِيَيْنِ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَضَلُّوا  
 وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾



307 The legal setting of the very charged issue of inheritance is revisited in the sura's conclusion so as to sum up and highlight its importance in setting apart the new order which the community should follow as distinct from earlier heathen practices. 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) said: "The issue of most importance that I leave behind is that of *al-kalālah* 'a person with no living parents and who is without children'. I have never asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) with regards to an issue more than this, and he has never been rougher with me with regards to an issue more than this. He 'eventually' poked my chest with his finger and said: "'Umar! Is not the aya of summer 'which was revealed in summer-time' at the end of *al-Nisā* enough 'as a ruling' for you?" (Muslim: 567)

Moreover, this aya can be seen as a prelude to the next sura which carries on explaining the laws and rules for the Believing community, in yet greater detail.





سُورَةُ الْمَائِدَةِ

*al-Mā'idah*  
(The Table Laid)



## al-Mā'idah (The Table Laid)

**Title:** *al-Mā'idah* (as found in al-Bukhārī: 347, Muslim: 368, Imām Aḥmad: 25547, al-Nasā'ī: 11073, al-Ḥākim: 3210) is titled after the heavenly feast which the disciples of 'Īsā (ﷺ) asked him for as comforting proof of the Truthfulness of his Messengership. Having established their sincerity, he obliged them by praying to God on their behalf (cf. 5: 112-115). The adverse circumstances, stiff opposition and fierce enmity which this exemplary earlier community of true Believers faced smack of those which the later Believers endured during their identity consolidating Madinan days. It is a tacit way of assuring the Believers that God's support and help is ever close at hand when they remain sincere and stand their ground rallying around their leader. The feast is a tangible and reassuring Sign from God. Its essence is a delightfully hearty, comforting proof and an everlasting cause of hope; it is meant to be a constant reminder of sincere Belief and how it always fares against all odds.

**Merit:** 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Whoever owns the first seven suras of the Qur'an '*al-sab' al-uwal*' is truly learned" (Imām Aḥmad: 24575). Wāthilah Ibn al-Asqa' (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I was given the seven lengthy suras '*al-sab' al-tiwāl*' in lieu of the Torah" (Imām Aḥmad: 24575). It is the last revealed sura of the Qur'an; Jubayr Ibn Nufayr narrated that 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "Jubayr, are you reading *al-Mā'idah*? I said: "Yes". She then said: "Know then that it is the last sura of the Qur'an that was revealed. So whatever you find lawful in it is conclusively lawful, but whatever you find unlawful in it is conclusively unlawful" (Aḥmad: 25547, al-Nasā'ī: 11073, al-Ḥākim: 3210; 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) also states the same: cf. al-Tirmidhī: 3063, al-Ḥākim: 3211, al-Bayhaqī: 13979). One of the distinctive characteristics of this sura is that it is the most detailed with regards to Islamic laws and regulations. al-Tawḥīdī (4/157) has it that *al-Mā'idah*: "...contains 18 laws that no other sura mentions". Ibn 'Āshūr (6/72) adds: "This sura details numerous laws, which leads to the conclusion that it came down to round up the laws of Islam".

**Theme:** the laws, the rules of how to deal with others, the deviance of earlier nations, the stories of the struggle between good and evil and the reminder of the Day of Judgement are all meant to educate the rebellious human nature into willingly accepting what is right and good; the story of Cain and Abel, Adam's sons, is the embodiment of this purely human struggle.

**Key:** *al-Mā'idah* carries on from the sura that precedes it, *al-Nisā'*. However the differences are significant: whereas *al-Nisā'* is community founding and identity forming, *al-Mā'idah* is identity affirming and community solidifying; whereas *al-Nisā'* begins with the call "O People!" addressing human nature to be Mindful of God, *al-Mā'idah* begins with "O Believers!" appealing in its own right to the Believing spirit to honour its obligations to God and man. The members of the community are called on as 'Believers', no less than 16 times throughout this sura so as to cement their bond around a defining *imān* (Sincere Faith). Inasmuch as the many laws in *al-Nisā'* were meant to announce the birth of a new community, the set of laws detailed in *al-Mā'idah* are meant as ever abiding regulations for a Believing community which, once and for all, is ready to stand the test of time.

*In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*

﴿1﴾ You who Believe, honour obligations<sup>(1)</sup>. Livestock<sup>(2)</sup> 'consuming' has been made lawful to you, expect what is recited to you<sup>(3)</sup>. You should not pronounce hunting lawful while you are in a state of sanctity<sup>(4)</sup>—indeed Allah decrees

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَوفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ  
بِهَيْمَةَ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُنْتَلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ  
مُجْلَىٰ الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْزِي

- 1 *al-'Uqūd* (lit. contracts) are the pledges that one has with God and other human beings (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī). They denote solemn undertakings or engagements involving more than one party. This opening command is a strong reminder to the Believers of their binding obligations and is meant to put them in the right frame of mind to receive the commandments that are to come. Belief is a 'contract' between God and the Believers and it has to be honoured.

Alternatively, these first two ayas can also be understood within the context of what is known as '*umrat al-qaḍā'*' (the '*umrah*' of recompense) (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*, 1/59), which took place in the sacrosanct month of Dhū al-Qi'dah on the year that followed the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah (the stipulates of which are probably the 'obligations' alluded to in this aya). As per the treaty, the Prophet (ﷺ) along with the Muslims were turned back from performing '*umrah*', only to be given license to perform it the following year. The Prophet (ﷺ) was accompanied on it by a 2,000 strong contingent of lightly armed well-built men, a fact which was pointed out to the Deniers. The call for self-restraint to curb aggression out of 'resentment' particularly in a sacrosanct month, not harming those who are also performing the rites, whilst probably not Muslim but nevertheless peaceful, as well as the 'garlanded' offerings, a pilgrimage practice that existed before Islam, lead to this reading. Yet it has to be stressed that these two ayas cannot be circumscribed by any historical reference but rather have timeless, general import as is the case with all Qur'anic ayas.

- 2 The Qur'anic term used here is *bahīmat al-an'ām*. The word *bahīmah* refers to creatures which cannot speak and/or cannot be understood, while *al-an'ām* is a collective denomination for such edible grazing animals as camel, cows, goats and sheep (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijjīstānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).
- 3 That is the forbidden food explained in Aya 3 below. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 4 *Hurum*, in a state of sanctity, means whether you are donning *ihrām* to perform Hajj or '*umrah*', or whether you are within the inviolable precincts, the *haram* area (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

whatever He wants<sup>(5)</sup>. <sup>(2)</sup> You who Believe,<sup>(6)</sup> do not pronounce lawful 'violation of the sanctity of: Allah's Symbols<sup>(7)</sup>, the sacrosanct month<sup>(8)</sup>, gifted offerings<sup>(9)</sup>, garlanded sacrifices<sup>(10)</sup>, those heading for the Sanctified House who seek favour<sup>(11)</sup> and pleasure from their Lord; 'however' when you come out of *iḥrām* then you 'may' hunt. Do not let resentment

مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحِلُّوا  
شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ  
وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا أَعْيُنَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ  
فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا

- 5 A Believer's duty is to listen and obey whatever God's command is: "It is not for a Believer – man or woman – when Allah and His Messenger decree a matter to have any other choice in the matter. Indeed, whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has clearly gone far astray" (33: 36). The ethos of Sincere Faith, which is lead by the heart, is being evoked here.
- 6 These are some of the obligations of the Believers towards God and man.
- 7 *Sha'ā'ir* (lit. symbols) is the plural of *sha'īrah*, which denotes everything that God made as a sign for His worship. Particularly, they also mean the rites and duties of Hajj (cf. al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). The command here warns against the violation of God's laws and any irreverence of Divinely ordained rites, including those of Hajj (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 8 *al-Shahr al-ḥarām* is any of the four sacrosanct months (*Dhū al-Qi'dah*, *Dhū al-Hijjah*, *al-Muḥarram* and *Rajab*, cf. al-Bukhārī: 4662, Muslim: 1679): "Indeed, the number of months ordained by Allah is twelve—in Allah's Record since the day He created the Heavens and the Earth—of which four are sacrosanct. That is the Right Way. So do not wrong one another during these months" (9: 36). The command here is not to start a fight, nor to transgress and commit sinful deeds during these months (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 9 *al-Hady*, lit. sacrificial animals gifted to God. The term is limited to those animals intended for slaughter during Hajj or 'umrah.
- 10 *al-Qalā'id* are *hady* (gifted offerings) which are collared around the neck. A garland of bark, taken from the trees of the inviolable precinct of Makkah, (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*) were put around the necks of unaccompanied offerings: hence, they were safe to roam and graze freely (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).
- 11 *Faql* here means gains from lawful trade. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

for the folk who had turned you away from the Sanctified Mosque tempt you into aggression and band together in sincere piety<sup>(12)</sup> and Mindfulness, but do not band together unjustly and out of aggression and Be Mindful of Allah—indeed Allah is severe in Punishment.

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ اَنْ صَدُّوْكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ اَنْ تَعْتَدُوْا وَتَعَاوَنُوْا عَلٰى الْبِرِّ وَالْتَّقْوٰى وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوْا عَلٰى الْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوٰنِ وَاْتَقُوا اللّٰهَ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾

﴿3﴾ (13)Forbidden for you is carrion<sup>(14)</sup>, 'spilled' blood<sup>(15)</sup>, the flesh of swine, what was offered 'as sacrifice' to others besides Allah<sup>(16)</sup>,

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ اَلْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيْرِ وَمَا اَهْلٌ بِغَيْرِ اللّٰهِ بِهِ ؕ

12 Cf. note on Aya 3: 92.

13 What follows are the types of forbidden livestock which may not be taken as food; the exception mentioned in Aya 1 above (cf. al-Rāzī). This aya can be understood in light of this: "O Believers, eat of the good things which We provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if you indeed worship Him 'alone'. \*Indeed He 'Allah' made unlawful for you carrion, blood, swine flesh, and what was intended 'as sacrifice' for others than Allah; 'yet' whoever is forced 'by necessity' - neither transgressing nor going to excess - he is not guilty of sin—certainly Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (2: 172-173).

14 *al-Maytah* (lit. 'the meat of' dead 'animals'). The ruling here does not include dead sea creatures consumed as food. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ), when asked about performing *wuḍū'* from sea water, replied: "Its water is purifying '*tahūr*' and its dead '*maytah*' is lawful" (Mālik: 45, Abū Dāwūd: 83, al-Tirmidhī: 69).

15 What is unlawful is running blood but not the blood captured in vessels after slaughter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīfī): "Say 'Muhammad': "I do not find in what has been revealed to me anything forbidden to eat except carrion, running blood, swine's flesh - which is impure - or a sinful offering in the name of any other than Allah. But if someone is compelled by necessity - neither driven by desire nor exceeding immediate need - then surely your Lord is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful" (6: 145). This aya was revealed prior to the more detailed 5:3 here wherein God 'perfected' the religion for Believers.

16 *Uhilla li-ghayr Allāh bih* is any sacrificial offering over which any name other than Allah's has been invoked (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).



the strangled<sup>(17)</sup>, the battered, the fallen, the rammed, what is mangled by beasts of prey – except those “of these” that you slaughter “before their dying”<sup>(18)</sup> – what is slaughtered at the altars of idols, and that you allot shares “of meat” by drawing lots<sup>(19)</sup>; “all of” that is a serious contravention<sup>(20)</sup>. Today<sup>(21)</sup> the Deniers have despaired

وَالْمُنْخَفَقَةُ وَالْمَوْفُودَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ  
وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ  
عَلَى التُّصْبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَمِ ذَٰلِكُمْ  
فِسْقٌ يَوْمَ يَبْسُ

- 17 The following five categories of animals are unlawful to eat because they expired for specific reasons: *al-munkhaniqah* is the one that perishes because of insufficient oxygen intake, either as a result of strangulation or suffocation; *al-mawqūthah* is killed by hitting with a heavy, blunt object; *al-mutaraddiyah* is the one that falls to death from an elevated place; *al-naṭīḥah* is the one that perishes because of ramming and/or butting; *mā akala al-sab'* is that which meets death as a result of being bitten by a carnivore (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).
- 18 This exception applies specifically to animals which meet death for certain reasons; should one catch it before it gasps its last breath and one runs the blade through its neck and spills its blood while there is still life in it (*dhakāh shar'iyah*), then it is lawful to eat (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).
- 19 This was an Arab habit before Islam. It is called *al-istiḡsām bi al-azlām* (lit. divining by casting lots), whereby they had three lots (flat marked pieces of wood) dedicated for divinations. On each there was written either: “My Lord commanded me”, “My Lord forbade me”, or nothing at all. A person would abide by what the lot told him, but if he drew the empty one, he recast again until he drew either one of the other two (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). Essentially here, they are forbidden to eat meat that has been divided by casting lots or other means of fallacious divination (cf. al-Jazā'irī).
- 20 *Fisq* is serious infringement of God's laws. The word is derived from the imagery of a palm date coming out of its protective covering (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Rebellious against God's ordained laws exposes one in the same way as an uncovered palm date is exposed to the elements.
- 21 The day spoken of here is that of 'Arafah during the Prophet's (ﷺ) Farewell Pilgrimage (*hajjat al-wadā'*) in the tenth year of Hijrah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī) after the great conquest of Makkah and its fall to the

of 'undermining' your religion, so fear them not but fear Me<sup>(22)</sup>; today I have perfected your religion for you<sup>(23)</sup>, finalized My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you<sup>(24)</sup>. 'But' Whoever is forced by wasting hunger 'to eat of what is forbidden', not swayed by sin<sup>(25)</sup>, then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَحْشَوْهُمْ  
وَأَخْشَوْنَ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ  
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا  
فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ  
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

Believers, and which is known as the greatest conquest (*al-fath al-a'zam*). Seeing the huge numbers of Believers around the Prophet (ﷺ) on that day, their strength and the solidity of their faith, the Deniers realized, to their great dismay, that Islam as a religion was a reality they had to live with and that it would not be unravelled given the perfection of its laws.

- 22 Now that Believers have seen how strong they are, at last having the upper hand against their enemy, they are told to turn a new page in their history. They are to have no fear in applying the laws of God or in staunchly adhering to them as they were revealed without the slightest alteration.
- 23 That is by making them perform the final pillar of Islam, Hajj, which they were unable to perform before (cf. Ibn Rajab, *Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif*, p. 279; Ibn 'Āshūr). Now that the community was ready to receive these rulings, which were either incomplete or not in place before, God has finalized, with full explanation, their religion.
- 24 This is the crowning statement of the whole sura. Ṭāriq Ibn Shihāb (رضي الله عنه) said: "A Jewish man went to 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and said: "Leader of Believers, there is an aya in your Book which you recite, had it been revealed to us Jews, we would have dedicated the day on which it was revealed for festivities". 'Umar replied: "Which aya?" The Jew said: "... today I have perfected your religion for you, finalized My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you". 'Umar then said: "Indeed I know the day on which it was revealed and the place in which it was revealed. It came down to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in 'Arafāt on a Friday" (al-Bukhārī: 45, Muslim: 2017).
- 25 The forbidden categories stated above can be consumed in such a scenario whereby a person is compelled by overbearing necessity. He should not be irreverent or careless of the matter, and should only eat the necessary amount to repel danger to life (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿4﴾ (26) They 'the Believers' ask you 'Muhammad' about what is lawful for them 'to eat'; say: "Lawful for you are 'all' good provisions<sup>(27)</sup>, and what 'is caught by' the hunting animals<sup>(28)</sup> that you trained according to what Allah taught you; then eat of what they catch for you<sup>(29)</sup> and mention Allah's Name over it; and be Mindful of Allah—Indeed Allah is swift in reckoning". ﴿5﴾ Today 'all' good provisions are made lawful for you; and the food of the People of the Book is lawful for you<sup>(30)</sup>, and your food is lawful for them<sup>(31)</sup>.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أَحَلَّ لَهُمْ قُلْ أَحَلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُم مِّنَ الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلَّبِينَ تَعْلَمُونَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا أَمْسَكَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ وَادْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥﴾ الْيَوْمَ أَحَلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَلَّلَ لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حَلَّلَ لَهُمْ

- 26 Since what is forbidden as food is explained in the previous passage, it is only appropriate to explain what is lawful in answer to the Believers' query. (al-Shawkānī)
- 27 *al-Ṭayyibāt* is all food which is useful and enjoyable causing no harm to the body or the intellect. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 28 *al-Jawāriḥ* (plural of *jāriḥa*) are animals and birds of prey such as dogs and falcons. The word originates from *ijtirah* which means to acquire something. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)
- 29 'Adiyy Ibn Ḥātim al-Ṭā'iyy (ؓ) said he said to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ): "Messenger of Allah I set my dog on a prey and mention Allah's Name (*tasmiyah*)". He replied: "When you set your dog and mention Allah's Name and he catches, kills and eats, then do not eat of the prey because he caught it for himself". Then I said: "Sometimes I set my dog on a prey and he gets joined by another dog 'which is not mine' and I do not know which one of them caught it". He answered: "Then do not eat it because you mentioned Allah's Name for your dog not the other". (al-Bukhārī: 5486, Muslim: 1929)
- 30 The People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb* / *alladhīna ūtū-l-kitāb*) of all nations are closer to and share a degree of commonality with the Believers because they are originally monotheistic, unlike the outright Associators, which makes eating their food and marrying their women lawful (Riḍā). This relationship is to be maintained, not severed.
- 31 Believers can feed them from their food. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

Chaste Believing women and chaste women of those who were given the Book before you 'are lawful to you' given that you hand over their dues to them, joining 'together with them' under 'holy' matrimony not seeking open love<sup>(32)</sup> or secret lovers<sup>(33)</sup>. Whoever rejects Belief then his deeds have come to naught and in the Hereafter he shall be one of the losers.

وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْنَهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسْلِفِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦﴾

﴿6﴾<sup>(34)</sup> You who Believe, when you rise up for Prayer wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe your faces, and 'wash' your feet up to the ankles. If you are in a state of ceremonial impurity<sup>(35)</sup> then purify yourselves<sup>(36)</sup>; 'but' if you are ill<sup>(37)</sup>, travelling, or any of you comes from a low place<sup>(38)</sup> 'to relieve himself',

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ

- 32 *Ghayr musāfiḥīn* not acting as wanton fornicators who know no limits. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī)
- 33 *Muttakhdhī akhdān* not taking them to be mistresses and paramours with whom you lay down in secret. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī)
- 34 All the rulings mentioned in this sura are part of the perfection of Islam.
- 35 *Janābah* (ceremonial impurity) is that state which follows after having sexual intercourse or discharge of sperm because of arousal.
- 36 *Fa-ṭṭaharū* means to wash yourselves. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)
- 37 An illness which hinders people from using water. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 38 *al-Ghā'it* originally means a depression in the land or ground lower than the surrounding area. Arabs of the time when needing to relieve themselves by urinating or excreting used to seek a low place in order to be hidden from the eyes of others. Later, the meaning was metonymically extended to mean the act of relieving one's self. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijjīstānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*)

or touched women<sup>39</sup>) and you could not find water then seek clean earth, wiping with it your faces and your hands<sup>40</sup>; Allah wants not to burden you, but He wants to purify<sup>41</sup>) you and perfect His favour on you<sup>42</sup>) that you may be thankful.

﴿7﴾ (43) And remember Allah's favour<sup>44</sup>) on you and the pledge<sup>45</sup>) by which He bound you when you said: "We listen and we obey"—be Mindful of Allah, indeed Allah knows best what the chests hide.

أَوَلَمْ تَسْتَمِئْ لِلنِّسَاءِ فَلَمَّا تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا  
صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ  
مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ  
وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ  
عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

وَأذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمِيثَاقَهُ  
الَّذِي وَاتَّقُمْ بِهِ إِذْ قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٧﴾

- 39 This could figuratively mean having sexual contact with them or literally merely touching them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Jurists hold different opinions on this, but the great Companion exegete, known as the interpreter of the Qur'an, Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) opines that it is a euphemism for sexual intercourse (cf. Ibn al-'Arabī, *Ahkām al-Qur'an*, Ibn Abū Ḥātim, Jaṣṣāṣ, *Ahkām al-Qur'an*).
- 40 That is perform the act of dry ablution or *tayammum*.
- 41 Both bodily and spiritually. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 42 By making His laws clear and easy. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 43 This passage which strongly reminds the Believers of their binding pledge with God, including that of respecting His ordained laws, is central to the Believing community. The coming passages which talk about the 'pledges' God had with earlier nations and how they reneged on them are illustrative examples that are meant to drive the message home (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 44 Remembering God's countless favours and our sincere gratitude to Him make it easier for those of Sincere Faith to follow His commands (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).
- 45 To Believe in His Messenger (ﷺ) follow and support him, uphold his religion and deliver the Message to other people (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). 'Ubādah Ibn al-Ṣāmit (رضي الله عنه) said: "We swore an oath of allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that we should listen and obey under all circumstances whether we liked it or not, that we would not defy those in charge of us, and that we would stand for what is right wherever we might be and never fear blame to carry out what Allah commanded" (al-Bukhārī: 7199, Muslim: 1840).

﴿8﴾ You who Believe, be firmly upright<sup>(46)</sup> for Allah, witnesses of justice, and do not let your resentment for 'some' people hold you back from being just; be just, that is closer to Mindfulness. Be Mindful of Allah—Allah is indeed Knowledgeable of what you do.

﴿9﴾ Allah has promised those who 'truly' Believe and do good deeds forgiveness and a great reward.

﴿10﴾ As for those who Deny and reject our Signs, then these are the companions of the Raging Fire<sup>(47)</sup>.

﴿11﴾ You who Believe remember Allah's favour on you, when some people intended to raise their hands against you and He held their hands back from 'harmony' you and be Mindful of Allah—on Allah let the Believers rely.

﴿12﴾ Indeed Allah had taken the pledge of the Children of Israel and We appointed twelve chieftains<sup>(48)</sup> from among them. 'Then' Allah<sup>(49)</sup> said: "I am with you!

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ  
شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ  
قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ ءَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ءَاعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾  
وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ  
لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ  
كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ءَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ  
الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٠﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا ءَذْكُرُوا  
نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ءِذْ هَمَّ قَوْمٌ ءَن يَبْسُطُوا  
ءِلَيْكُمْ ءَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ ءَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾

\* وَلَقَدْ ءَخَذَ ءَلَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَءِيلَ  
وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ ءَنتَىٰ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا  
وَقَالَ ءَلَّهُ ءِنِّي مَعَكُمْ

46 *Qawwāmūn li Allāh* is to be ardent upholders of God's rights, not seeking fame or worldly gain. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

47 *al-Jahīm* (lit. raging fire) is Hellfire.

48 *Naqīb* is the head of a clan. They were charged with taking the oaths of those for whom they were responsible such that they would listen to and obey God's commandments They were also required to guide and encourage Believers to adhere to these commandments. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

49 The shift from the first person to the third person pronoun, appending God's Most High Name, Allah, to the statement of the pledge that follows in its exact wording is meant to underline the solemnity of its purport and the gravity of its dishonoring

If you keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms, Believe in My Messengers and strongly support them<sup>(50)</sup>, and loan Allah a comely loan<sup>(51)</sup>, I shall atone you of your sins and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow. Whoever of you Denies after this, then he has lost the right path”.<sup>(13)</sup> Because of their renegeing on their pledge We Damned them and caused their hearts to harden<sup>(52)</sup>; they distort discourse from its ‘proper’ position<sup>(53)</sup> and forgot a portion of what they were reminded<sup>(54)</sup>.

لَيْتَ أَقَمْتُمْ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ  
وَأَمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمْ  
اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ  
سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي  
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ  
مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١٣﴾  
فِيمَا نَقَضْتُمْ بَيْتَكُمْ لَعْنَتَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا  
قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ  
مَوَاضِعِهِ ۚ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ ۗ

- 50 ‘Azzara is to strongly support them against their enemies. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 51 *al-Qarḍ al-ḥasan* is spending in the cause of Allah in expectation of nothing but His reward (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “*Would there be one who loans Allah a comely loan, so that Allah would multiply it for him manifold—Allah tightens and loosens, and unto Him you shall return*” (2: 245).
- 52 *Qulūbuhum qāsiyah* means that they were made hard-hearted and heedless to admonition. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)
- 53 *Yuharrifūna al-kalima ‘an mawāḍi’ih*; they distort the purport of God’s revealed words (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). The description employed here of how the Jews distorted the purport of their Scriptures is a very delicate one. *Yuharrifu* means to slant, to skew and to steer something away from its direction. Moreover, al-Rāzī makes a distinction between *yuharrifūna al-kalima ‘an mawāḍi’ih* (distort discourse from its ‘proper’ position) as found in this aya and *yuharrifūna al-kalima min ba’di mawāḍi’ih* (distort discourse from its ‘fully-known proper’ position) as found in Aya 41 below. al-Rāzī holds it that the first means they distorted the purport and misinterpreted the Words of God; whereas the second means that they both distorted the Words of God and physically removed them from their Scriptures.  
The Qur’an details some examples of forms through which this ‘distortion’ takes shape.
- 54 God’s revelation to them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

You 'Muhammad' will always unearth a deception of theirs, except few of them. So forgive and pardon them—indeed Allah loves the good doers<sup>(55)</sup>. ﴿14﴾ And from those who declare themselves Christians<sup>(56)</sup>— We had taken their pledge but they forgot a portion of what they were reminded; then We incited enmity and hatred among them until the Day of Judgement<sup>(57)</sup>—indeed Allah will 'come' to tell them of what they had been crafting.

﴿15﴾ People of the Book, here is Our Messenger coming to you to reveal<sup>(58)</sup> to you much of what you used to hide of the Book and overlooks much<sup>(59)</sup>—indeed there has come to you a Light from Allah and a clarifying Book<sup>(60)</sup>; ﴿16﴾ by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace<sup>(61)</sup> and delivers them

وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَآئِبَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنَّهُمْ وَأَصْفَحْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرِيٓمُ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَهُمْ فَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم

55 *al-Muhsinīn* are those who overlook any harm done to them and pardon those who injured them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

56 *Naṣārā* in a sense means those who stick up for the Truth (*yaṣūrūna al-ḥaqq*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). The nomenclature is highlighted here to underline the contradiction between their words and deeds (al-Baghawī).

57 The ever-raging conflict and sectarian violence among Christians is God inflicted.

58 *Yubayyinu* (lit. to explain).

59 That is those segments of earlier scriptures which are of no particular use anymore. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

60 The Qur'an. (Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

61 *Subul al-salām* are the laws of Islam which lead those who Believe to deliverance and peace in this life and the Hereafter until they are safely admitted into Paradise, the Home of Peace (*Dār al-Salām*: cf. 10: 25). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭiyyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī)



from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path<sup>(62)</sup>.

﴿17﴾<sup>(63)</sup> Deniers indeed are those who say: “Allah is the Messiah, son of Maryam”. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Who had it in his power to have withheld Allah from annihilating the Messiah son of Maryam and his mother, and ‘for that matter’ all that exists on Earth! To Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth and all there is between them, He creates whatever He wills—Allah is indeed Able over everything.

﴿18﴾ The Jews and Christians said: “We are the children of Allah and His beloved”. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Why then would He Punish you for your sins?” Nay, but you are indeed humans like the rest of them that He created; He forgives whomever He wills and Punishes whomever He wills—

مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ  
وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٧﴾  
لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ  
الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ  
مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ  
ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ  
جَمِيعًا وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ  
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى  
نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبُّونَهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ  
بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ  
يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

62 This aya is central for understanding much of what is to come. The Qur’an being a Light, a Clarifying Book and the last revealed Scripture to humanity will set about detailing laws which lead people to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light. In the process it ‘reveals’ some laws found in earlier Scriptures, which were either lost or distorted beyond recognition, and overlooks many such other laws that were abrogated by those of Islam. This is meant to prove to people, the People of the Book in particular, the Truthfulness of Islam and to guide them via its Messenger (ﷺ) to God’s Pleasure, the path of peace and to the Straight Path.

63 The self-assuring claims of the People of the Book are debunked in this passage. This brings them back to reality with a hard-hitting logic whereby they are made to see sense, purify their Faith and join the ranks of Believers.

to Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth and all there is between them, and to Him will be the 'final' Return.<sup>64</sup> (19) People of the Book, here is Our Messenger coming to you after a long interval has lapsed<sup>64</sup> since the last Messenger, lest that you say: "There never came to us a harbinger of good news nor any warner!" There has come to you 'now' a harbinger of good news or a warner—Allah is Able over everything.

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا  
وَأَيُّهُ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ  
رَسُولُنَا يَمِينُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فِتْرَةٍ مِّنَ الرَّسُلِ أَنْ  
تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِن بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ  
بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾

﴿20﴾ (65) 'Mention Muhammad' When Moses said to his people: "My people, remember Allah's favour on you when He made amongst you Prophets and kings<sup>66</sup>

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ ۖ يَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ  
اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا

64 The first and only Prophet of God that was sent to humanity after Jesus (ﷺ) was Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. al-Bukhārī: 3442, Muslim: 2365). 'Iyād Ibn Ḥimār al-Mujāshī'ī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said in one of his sermons: "Indeed my Lord has commanded me to tell you something which you do not know about which He told me today. 'Allah glory be His said: '... 'I created all My servants rightly-oriented 'to the true religion', then the devils came and swerved them away from their religion; they made unlawful for them what I made lawful and bade them to Associate with Me that for which I made no authority'. 'The Messenger (ﷺ) continued' "Then Allah looked at the dwellers of Earth and He held them all in disfavour, Arabs and non-Arabs, except some remaining few of the People of the Book and He said: 'I sent you to try you and try by you and I sent down to you a Book that will not be washed with water; you read it awake and asleep...'" (Muslim: 2865).

65 The following passage intertextually follows the 'mentions' series found in *al-Baqarah* (e.g. 2:40-43; 87-96) which list the recurrent flouting of the Israelites of their pledge with God. This one here tells of how they reneged on their pledge to 'strongly support' the Messenger of God found in Aya 5:12 above.

66 *Mulūk* (lit. kings) could have a number of meanings here. Among these are: 1) they were made masters served on by others (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī);

and He gave you that which He had not given any humans "besides you". <sup>21</sup> "My people, enter the sacred land<sup>67</sup> that Allah decreed for you and do not turn back on your heels for then you will be the losers." <sup>22</sup> They said: "Moses, there are mighty people in it. We will not enter it until they come out of it and only then shall we enter". <sup>23</sup> Two 'Allah-' fearing men – whom Allah favoured<sup>68</sup> – said: "Enter you the gate upon them! Shall you 'only' enter it, you will surely have the upper hand. Put your trust in Allah if only you are 'truly' Believers". <sup>24</sup> They said: "Moses, we shall not enter it as long as they are in it. Go then you and your Lord and fight, we are staying put here". <sup>25</sup> He said: "My Lord, surely I am master of none expect myself and my brother. Set us then apart from the transgressing people".

وَأَاتَكُمْ مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِ أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾  
يَقُومُوا أَدْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي  
كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِكُمْ  
فَتَكُونُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ قَالُوا يَمْوَسَىٰ إِنَّ  
فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَنَنَدْخُلُهَا حَتَّىٰ  
يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِنَّا  
دَاخِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ  
يَخَافُونَ أَعْمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا  
أَدْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ  
فَأَلْزَمْتُمُوهُمُ وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فِتْنَةٌ لَّوْ إِن  
كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالُوا يَمْوَسَىٰ إِنَّا  
لَنَنَدْخُلُهَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَاذْهَبْ  
أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَدِيتَلَا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾  
قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَإِنِّي  
أَخِيفُ قَائِفٌ مِّنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

2) some were really made as sovereigns who ruled over people (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah); 3) they were granted their freedom, owning their own destiny, free from slavery to other people (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī). One has to keep in mind that this interaction between Moses (ﷺ) and his people came immediately after they were delivered by God from the tyranny of Pharaoh and his people. This fact is reflected in their reaction to Moses' admonition, as will be discussed shortly.

67 *al-Ard al-muqaddasah* is Jerusalem according to Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī and al-Shinqīṭī in *al-Adhb al-Namīr* (1/111).

68 God favoured these two individuals by guiding them to obedience and fear of Him. Thus, they were able to stand up for the Truth (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿26﴾ He 'Allah' said: "It is then forbidden for them for forty years<sup>69</sup>. They shall be lost 'wandering' in the land. Be grieved<sup>70</sup> not for the transgressing people".

قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَتِيَهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

﴿27﴾ Recite for them 'Muhammad' the notable news of the two sons of Adam<sup>71</sup>

\*وَأْتَلُ عَلَيْهِمُ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ\*

- 69 God, the Most Wise, decreed that they should be lost in the land for a period of 40 years as punishment for their shaky, wavering Faith. This is the generation of Israelites that accompanied Moses (ﷺ) in their exodus from Egypt, where they were subjected to the 'worst of suffering' (*sū' al-'adhāb*: 2: 49) so much so that they lost their dignity and were accustomed to humiliation and cowardice. The result of these decades of humiliation and suffering was their stance, as related in this passage, that when asked to only muster up whatever courage they had left and make a push for the city's gate thereby giving them victory, they had nothing left to do just that much. Their attitude is all the more striking in light of the fact that they had very recently seen, and lived through, the most norm-defying of miracles (the splitting of the sea being the most obvious) and were in the assuring company of the great Prophet who was decisively instrumental in their deliverance. Such a generation would never carry out God's command and, therefore, they had to be replaced with a new and better one that was not at home with servitude. This new generation had to be raised in the wild, strong and free, away from oppression and lack of self dignity (cf. al-Sa'dī as well).
- 70 Naturally, the Messenger of God (ﷺ), who was sent only as a "mercy to all-beings" (21: 107), would be saddened by those who stubbornly rebuffed his repeated calls being aware of the awfully grim fate that awaited them. Knowing how hard this came down on His Messenger (ﷺ), God repeatedly reminded him of not falling prey to sadness on account of their ardent Denial.
- 71 This story (believed to be that of Cain and Abel, or Qābil and Habīl (cf. Ibn Kathīr and al-Shinqīṭī)) encapsulates the all too familiar human struggle between good and evil. While numerous lessons can be drawn from this story, it all boils down to the fact that when a person is so weak as not be able to prevail over their own self then this only leads to wickedness, not the least of which is committing murder, and in the end to regret and sorrow. The moral of the story can indeed be expanded beyond the singular into the collective and remains ever relevant.

truthfully<sup>(72)</sup> when they each made out an offering, it was accepted from one but not the other. He 'the latter' said: "I shall willingly kill you!" He 'the former' replied: "Indeed Allah accepts only from the Mindful".<sup>(28)</sup> "If you raise your hand to kill me, I shall not raise my hand to kill you; I fear Allah, the Lord of all-beings."<sup>(29)</sup> "I want you to be burdened with my sin<sup>(73)</sup> and your sin, then you become one of companions of the Fire; that is the 'just' requital of the wrongdoers."<sup>(30)</sup> His 'evil whispering' self lured him into killing his brother; he killed him and he became one of the losers<sup>(74)</sup>.<sup>(31)</sup> Then Allah sent a raven scratching the ground to show him how to hide his brother's 'naked' corpse<sup>(75)</sup>. He then said: "Woe is me! Was I so unable as to not be like this raven and hide my brother's 'naked' corpse!" He only then became 'deeply' remorseful.

بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبِلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا  
وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ  
قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ لَئِن  
بَسَطَ الْيَمِّ يَدَكَ لِتَقْتُلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ  
يَدِي إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ  
الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَمُوتَ أَيَّامِي وَإِنَّكَ  
فَتَكُونُ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاؤُ  
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ  
أَخِيهِ فَتَتَلَّهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾  
فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ  
كَيْفَ يُوَارِي سَوْءَ أَخِيهِ قَالَ يُوَابِلَعِي  
أَعَجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ  
فَأُوَارِي سَوْءَ أَخِي فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

72 *Bi al-haqq* exactly as it happened without addition, deletion or alteration. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

73 The grave sin of killing. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*)

74 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "No soul ever gets killed unjustifiably, unless the early son of Adam gets some of the burden of its blood, for he was the first human to spill blood 'on Earth'". (al-Bukhārī: 3335, Muslim: 1677)

75 It is said that this raven was rummaging through the ground to bury another of its kind. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'dī)

﴿32﴾<sup>(76)</sup> For this reason We decreed for the Children of Israel that whoever kills a person – unless for killing another or spreading corruption in the land – it shall be as if he killed all people and whoever saves a life then it is as if he gave life to all people. Indeed our Messengers came to them with clear evidences, and then many of them still committed excesses<sup>(77)</sup> in the land.

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَن قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّا كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

76 Given the millennia that separate this episode of Adam's two direct descendants and the setting down of Jewish laws, what, then, is the coherence between Ayas 31 and 32? Specifically, how was the story of Cain and Abel causative to the law passed to the Children of Israel? The relevance of this aya is better grasped with reference to Aya 15 above: "People of the Book, here is Our Messenger coming to you to reveal to you much of what you used to hide and overlooks much—indeed there has come to you a Light and a clarifying Book". A similar wording of this aya (5: 32; with the notable exception that the Qur'an talks about all humans and not just Israelites,) is found in the Talmud (particularly in the Mishnah which is known as the Oral Law) in a comment on Genesis 4:10 when it is said that God spoke admonishingly to Cain for killing his brother. The exact statement is: "Therefore but a single person was created in the world, to teach that if any man has caused a single life to perish from Israel, he is deemed by Scripture as if he had caused a whole world to perish; and anyone who saves a single soul from Israel, he is deemed by Scripture as if he had saved a whole world" (Mishnah, Sanhedrin, 4:5; emphasis added). Clearly what is being brought to the fore here, which brings out the connection between the story of Cain and Abel and the Children of Israel, is textual *par excellence*. They 'committed excesses' in shedding blood and committing sins and thus this legal stipulation of theirs, which they willingly overlooked or distorted from its proper position, was 'revealed' in the Qur'an, which is 'a Light and a Clarifying Book'.

One other point that needs to be clarified here and in light of the above is the applicability of this law to Muslims. The fact that this verse was 'revealed' as an aya of the Qur'an and not 'overlooked' for being irrelevant, given the overruling nature of the Islamic law, God's last revealed canon, underlines its universal validity. The stern punishment in the next aya (5: 33) follows from the grave nature of murder which is highlighted in this aya.

77 *Musrifūn* (lit. wasteful) means unreservedly committing gravely vile deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿33﴾ (78) Indeed the 'only just' recompense for those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and walk the land spreading corruption is that they should be relentlessly<sup>(79)</sup> killed, crucified<sup>(80)</sup>, their hands and feet be cut off on alternate sides<sup>(81)</sup> or they should be exiled from the land<sup>(82)</sup>. That is disgrace for them in the worldly life, and in the Hereafter theirs is a great Punishment.

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُجَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خِلْفٍ أَوْ يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

78 This passage, which legalizes and regulates judicious killing, deals especially with those who disrupt peace in society and willingly and wastefully destroy the lives and livelihoods of others. It is well known that this aya details the penal code for such acts as highway robbery and banditry (cf. al-Sa'dī), known in Islamic law as *ḥadd al-ḥirābah* (lit. the penal code of waging war). Such heinous violations of God's laws and the rights of others are taken as waging war against God and His Messenger, because they brazenly breach religious teachings.

The particle *aw* (or) denotes that those in charge of the rule of law may choose from these detailed forms of punishment whatever they deem befitting, given the seriousness of the crime and the circumstances surrounding it, to make an example of the perpetrators so that no one will think of following their example (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī).

79 This word, 'relentlessly', is used to compensate for the hyperbolic form (*ṣiḡhat al-mubālaghah*) in which these types of punishment come, i.e. *yuqattalū* (killed), *yaṣallabū* (crucified), *tuqatta'a* (cut off). The form employed here underlines the sternness with which these punishments are to be carried out (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

80 *Yuṣallabū* means crucified either prior to their killing or after their killing. It is a corrective measure that displays them as examples for others. (Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

81 *Min khilāf* that is the culprit's right hand along with his left foot or vice versa; but not two limbs on the same side. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Uthaymīn)

82 *Yunfaw min al-arḍ* is to be expelled from his country of residence to another (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī); or expelled from the country where he committed his crime (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Qurtubī, Ibn 'Uthaymīn); or that he be incarcerated (cf. al-Ṭabarī).

﴿34﴾ Except those who repent before you overpower them, then know that Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهِمْ  
فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

﴿35﴾ <sup>(83)</sup>You who Believe, be Mindful of Allah, seek the means 'to be nearer' to Him<sup>(84)</sup> and strive in His path, that you may be successful. ﴿36﴾ Indeed those who Deny if they have in their possession all that the Earth holds and double the measure, so that they would ransom themselves with it, it will not be accepted from them—theirs is a Painful Punishment<sup>(85)</sup>. ﴿37﴾ They want to come out of the Fire and never will they ever come out of it—theirs is an ever-lasting Punishment.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا  
إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ  
مَعَهُ لَيَفْتَدُوا بِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ  
الْقِيَامَةِ مَا تَقْبَلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾  
يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرَجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا هُمْ  
بِخَارِجِينَ مِنْهَا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

83 This passage is parenthetical, separating the two thematically related passages that precede and follow it and whereby both deal with the severe punishment incumbent on aggression against others (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). To be encouraged to carry out these penalties, hard as they, Believers have to be reminded of the wider issues involved: being Mindful of God and seeking His Pleasure through submission to His will, as well as the severe Punishment that God promises the Deniers who rebel against His will. Should perpetrators sincerely repent, however, and make amends, they are to be pardoned (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*): thus, the judicious employment of God's Most Elevated Attributes – “All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” – in both instances.

84 *Ibtaghū ilaihi al-wasīlah* is to do one's absolute best and seek out the ways and means to be closer to Godliness; by doing what pleases God Almighty. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

85 “Those who Deny and die as Deniers, ‘as much as’ Earth’s fill of gold will not be accepted from them, even if they were to ransom themselves with it—for those is a painful Punishment and they will have no helpers.” (3: 91; 13:18 and 39:47)



﴿38﴾ The male thief and the female thief<sup>(86)</sup> cut off their hands in retribution for what they earned; a 'deterrent' chastisement<sup>(87)</sup> from Allah—Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿39﴾ Whoever repents after his wrongdoing and makes amends then Allah relents towards him—indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿40﴾ Did you<sup>(88)</sup> not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth, He Punishes whoever He wills and forgives whoever He wills—Allah is verily Able over everything.

﴿41﴾ <sup>(89)</sup>O Messenger do not be

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا  
جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ  
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَمَن تَابَ مِّن بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ  
وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ  
مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُعَذِّبُ مَن  
يَشَاءُ وَيَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ  
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ \*

- 86 That the female thief (*al-sāriqah*) is specifically mentioned here is meant to leave no doubt in the minds of the receivers that the ruling applies to both sexes without discrimination. It comes from the fact that the Arabs at the time of revelation shunned women and deliberately excluded them from such grave documents of legalization and did not strictly apply their penal codes to them (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 87 *Nakāl* is penalization which is set as an example for others. Originally the word *nakala* means to prevent; it is called *nakāl* because it deters both the one who is punished from carrying out the crime at a subsequent time as also others from doing it. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*)
- 88 The addressee here is singular. It could mean the Prophet (ﷺ) and by the same token anyone who is legally competent (*mukallaf*) or the person who thinks lightly of theft and other such felonies (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, *al-Qurṭubī, al-Baghawī*).
- 89 This passage and the few following ones deal with the dialectical relationship that holds between the Qur'an, the final, overruling Book of God and the earlier ones. It establishes that those who were given the Book before Islam are better off either following the doctrines of the Qur'an or reinstating their own respective Scriptures in their pristine, uncorrupted conditions and devoutly acting and ruling by them. al-Barā' Ibn 'Āzib (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "The Prophet (ﷺ) passed by a Jew whose face was blackened 'with charcoal' and who had been flogged. Seeing this, the Prophet (ﷺ) invited the Jews and asked them: "Is this the penalty of the adulterer that

grieved by those who rush forth to Denial of those who said “We Believe” ‘only’ with their tongues, while their hearts Believe not; and among the Jews are those who eagerly listen to falsities and readily lend their ears to other people who did not come to you<sup>90</sup>, they distort discourse from

لَا يَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ  
مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ  
تُؤْمِن قُلُوبُهُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا  
سَمِعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمْعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ  
آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتَوْكَ بِحَرْفٍ مِّنَ الْكَلِمَةِ

you find in your Book?” They replied: “Yes”. Then he (ﷺ) summoned a learned man of theirs and said to him: “I ask you by Allah Who sent the Torah down to Moses, is this the penalty of the adulterer that you find in your Book?” He replied: “No! Had you not appealed to me in such a manner I would not have told you. The penalty that we find in our Book is stoning, but it became common in our people of high social standing and then when we caught them we used to release them. However, when we caught the beggarly in the act, we would apply the penalty ‘of stoning’ on them. Then we said let’s convene and agree on a penalty that can be applied on both the notables and the beggarly equally and so we agreed to replace stoning by blackening the face and flogging”. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “O Allah, I shall be the first to restore Your command, when they buried it”. Then he (ﷺ) ordered the adulterer to be stoned. Then Allah sent down: “O Messenger do not be grieved by those who rush forth to Denial... If you are given ‘the like of’ this take it.” They ‘their scholars’ used to say: “Go to Muhammad, and if he orders you to blacken the face and flog, then do it. But if he orders you to stone, then be wary”. Then Allah sent down: “Whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the Deniers” (5:44); “Whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the wrongdoers” (5: 45); “Whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the transgressors” (5:47). All of these were revealed regarding the Deniers” (Muslim: 1700).

90 They attentively heed the words of warning of other conniving men of religion who were so averse that they did not even make the effort to go to the Prophet (ﷺ) to hear what he had to say, in spite of the long period he spent in Madinah (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

The description of the insincere who eagerly and willfully lend their ears to falsities is a prime example of the social concept known as confirmation bias which highlights the tendency to search for, interpret and favour, information that affirms one’s prior beliefs and biases. To highlight how truly biased these people were, the Qur’an repeatedly employs the hyperbolic form (*ṣiḡhat al-mubālaghah*) *smmā’ūna* (eagerly listen to) which befittingly expresses the intensity of their aversion to the words of God’s Messenger (ﷺ).

its 'fully-known proper' position. They say: "If you are given this 'judgement' take it, but if you are not given 'the like of' it be on your guard. Whoever Allah wants to trip 'into misguidance' you can do nothing for him against Allah. Those are the ones whom Allah did not want to purify their hearts, theirs is disgrace in the worldly life and theirs in the Hereafter is a great Punishment. ﴿42﴾ They eagerly listen to falsities and wantonly devour illicit earnings<sup>(91)</sup>; if they come to you then either judge between them or deny them 'judgement'<sup>(92)</sup>. Should you turn away from them, they will not harm you in the least, 'but' if you judge between them, then judge in fairness<sup>(93)</sup>—Allah likes those who are fair 'in judgement'.

مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِينَا هَذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِن لَّمْ تَأْتِنَا فَاحْذَرُوا وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنْ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُطَهِّرْ قُلُوبَهُمْ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾ سَمِعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ أَكْثَرُونَ لِلسُّحْتِ فَإِن جَاءُوكَ فَأَحْكُم بَيْنَهُم فَأَعْرَضْ عَنْهُمْ وَإِن تُعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْئًا وَإِن حَكَمْتَ فَأَحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِالْقِسْطِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

91 *al-Suht* means all the money which is appropriated through illegal and devious means. *Suht* originally means eradication, as 'dirty money' never prospers (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). Those who are bent on legalizing money earned through illegal means will have a vested interest in not listening to the truth about its illegality.

92 The Prophet (ﷺ) had a choice to either pass his verdict in the case or withhold it since he was told by God that they would only carry out what confirms their bias.

93 *al-Qiṣṭ* is the passing of fair judgement. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Those who pass fair judgement (*al-muqṣiṭīn*) are placed on pulpits of light with Allah; on the Right Side of the Most Merciful – and both His Hands are Right Hands. These are the ones who are fair in their judgement and with their household and whatever they are in charge of". (Muslim: 1827)

﴿43﴾ But how would they seek your judgement while they 'already' have the Torah which contains Allah's judgement, and they after that turn their backs 'to it'<sup>(94)</sup>; nay but these are not Believing.

﴿44﴾ Indeed We have sent down the Torah in which there is guidance and light; by it the Prophets who devoutly submitted, the godly<sup>(95)</sup>, and the rabbis judge among the Jews because they were entrusted with preserving the Book of Allah and that they were witnesses to it. So do not fear people but fear Me and do not trade my Signs for a pittance<sup>(96)</sup>—whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the Deniers.

وَكَيْفَ يُحْكُمْ نَاكَ وَعِنْدَهُمُ التَّوْرَةُ  
فِيهَا حُكْمُ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ  
وَمَا أَوْلَيْكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ يُحْكَمُ  
بِهَا التَّيْبُوتُ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا  
وَالرَّبَّانِيُونَ وَالْأَخْبَارُ بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا  
مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ  
فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَأَخْشَوْنَ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا  
بَيَاتِي تَمَتَّ قَلِيلًا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ  
اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

94 This further underlines their insincerity; how could Muhammad (the addressee commencing Aya 41) be hopeful that they would resort to and abide by his code of law when they were irreverent of the very code of law (the Torah) they outwardly and to all appearances subscribed to!

95 *al-Rabbāniyyūn* (sin. *rabbānī*) are men of encyclopaedic knowledge both religious and worldly. This includes the wise scholar, the Mindful jurispudent, the reforming teacher and the person who enjoins others to uphold the lesser teachings of religion as much as the major ones (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

96 Those who were entrusted with preserving the Book of God, the Torah, at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) are especially cautioned not to make fear of influential people nor following their vain desires and greed put them off from fulfilling their task of safeguarding it against alteration and distortion (cf. Ibn 'Ādil). The guardians of Divine law should bear the fear of God first and foremost in their minds and not that of fellow men. They should pronounce the judgement of God as found in His Writ irrespective of the status or influence of the person who is affected by it. Nor are they to be swayed by bribes and worldly gains (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿45﴾ And We decreed<sup>(97)</sup> for them in it that: a life for a life, an eye for an eye, a nose for a nose, an ear for an ear, a tooth for a tooth and that wounds are reciprocated; whoever forgoes 'his right' out of charity then that would be an atonement 'of sins' for him<sup>(98)</sup>— whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the wrongdoers<sup>(99)</sup>.

وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا أَنَّ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ  
وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ  
بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ  
فَمَن تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَّهُ  
وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ  
هُم الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

﴿46﴾ And in their steps<sup>(100)</sup> We sent 'Isā 'Jesus', son of Maryam, confirming that which preceded him of the Torah<sup>(101)</sup> and We granted him the Evangel in which there is guidance and light and confirming that which preceded it of the Torah and guidance and admonishment to the Mindful<sup>(102)</sup>.

وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَى آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا  
لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ  
فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ  
التَّوْرَةِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

97 This aya alludes to the law known as *lex talionis* (law of retaliation/ reciprocal justice) which states that justice should be carried out: '*ayin tachat 'ayin*, "an eye for an eye", as told in the Torah (Exodus xxi, 24) but which was distorted from its proper, fully-known position. Here the Qur'an 'reveals' and re-establishes this principle and warns against distorting it.

98 A person who is injured should not be driven by vindictiveness and the desire to exact revenge. This spirit of forgiveness is not only encouraged by God but is also generously rewarded for (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).

99 *al-Zālimūn* also means the unjust. Those who judge between people with rulings other than those of God will inevitably do wrong to one of the two arbitrating parties.

100 That is in the steps of the "*Prophets who devoutly submitted*" (5: 44). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

101 *Muṣaddiq* is in one sense bearing out the Torah and its laws especially those that were not abrogated by the Evangel that he was given. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

102 Mindfulness (*taqwā*) is the main driver behind engagement in pious deeds. People will carry out acts of worship according to the degree of their Mindfulness; the more they have of it, the more devout they are and the firmer their Belief in God's revelations (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

﴿47﴾ Let the people of the Evangel judge according to what Allah sent down in it—whoever does not judge by what Allah sent down then those are the 'real' transgressors.

وَلِيَحْكُمُ أَهْلَ الْإِنْجِيلِ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ  
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ  
هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

﴿48﴾ And We sent down to you 'Muhammad' the Book with the Truth<sup>(103)</sup>, confirming that which preceded it of the Book<sup>(104)</sup> and a 'supreme' authority over<sup>(105)</sup> it. Judge then between them with what Allah sent down and do not follow their desires over the Truth that came to you. To each of you 'nations' we have given a 'different' law and way 'of life'; had Allah wished, He could have made you into one nation but He wants to test you by what He gave you<sup>(106)</sup>. Then vie in a race to good deeds,

وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا  
بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ  
فَأَحْكُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ  
عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ  
شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ  
أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَلَٰكِن لِّيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ  
فَأَسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ﴿٤٨﴾

103 The Qur'an was Truthfully sent down bearing nothing but the Truth (*bi al-ḥaqq*) (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā). "We have sent it 'the Qur'an' down in Truth, and with the Truth it has come down" (17: 105).

104 *al-Kitāb* is a generic noun for all previous Divinely revealed Scriptures.

105 *Muḥaymin* is encompassing the laws and dictates found in earlier Scriptures; establishing those which are still valid and overruling those which are not. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

106 This aya occurring in this final sura of the Qur'an sets the course for peaceful coexistence in the community. A fact borne out by millennia of example setting, and whereby non-Muslim societies (known as *dhimmiyyūn*) lived and prospered in peace amidst largely Muslim communities and states. Principally, although the law (*Shir'ah*) and way of life (*minhāj*) are different, the Divinely ordained religion is, in essence, the same. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I, amongst all people, have more of a right to Jesus, son of Maryam, both in this life and the Hereafter! Prophets are half brothers. Their mothers are different but their religion is the same" (al-Bukhārī: 3443, Muslim: 2365). God Almighty, to Whom all people are returned, will be the Judge between the different nations.

to Allah you shall all return and then He will tell you 'the Truth' of what you used to differ over.

﴿49﴾ Hence judge between them with what Allah sent down and do not follow their desires and beware of them lest they tempt you away from some of what Allah sent down to you. But if they turn away, know you then that Allah wants to afflict them with some of their sins—indeed a great many people are transgressors.

﴿50﴾ Is it so that they desire the ruling of ignorance<sup>(107)</sup>; 'but' who gives a better ruling than Allah to those of firm faith<sup>(108)</sup>!

﴿51﴾ <sup>(109)</sup>You who Believe, do not take the Jews and Christians as allies; they are the allies of one another. Whoever of you takes them as allies then he is one of

إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَأَنْ أَحْكَمُ بَيْنَهُمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ وَأَحْذَرُهمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنُوكَ عَنْ بَعْضِ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ وَإِنْ كَثُرَ مِنْ النَّاسِ لَفَتَنُوكُمْ ﴿٥٠﴾ أَفَحُكْمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْغُونَ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

\* يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى أَوْلِيَاءَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ

107 Those who do not submit to the ruling of God and His Messenger (ﷺ) are only opting for the ruling of ignorance (*hukm al-jāhiliyyah*) itself; nothing but groundless laws set by people following their vain desires and basing them not on any of the Books of God which are light and guidance to people.

108 Those of firm Faith (*yūqīnūna*), which is free from imperfection, will be led by their sincere Faith to seek out and abide by none but the ruling of God. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

109 This passage along with the next two beginning with the call: “*You who Believe*”, chart out another dimension for the Believing community, besides unquestioningly adhering to the rule of God, i.e. how to relate to others who oppose their religion. Having seen the hostility of the People of the Book towards the Messenger (ﷺ) and their stiff resistance to his Message and for the many ways in which they tried to defy Islam and steer it away from its course, Believers are told to not take these as *awliyā'* (lit. allies). *Wilāyah* (lit. alliance) is “built upon harmony and agreement...”, both of which are non-existent in such a relationship (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

them<sup>(110)</sup>—indeed Allah does not guide the wrongdoers. <sup>﴿52﴾</sup> You ‘Muhammad’ see those in whose hearts is disease<sup>(111)</sup> ‘eagerly’ rush to ‘align themselves with’ them. They say: “We fear that the cycle will turn against us!” Then may Allah bring victory or an affair<sup>(112)</sup> from His Own that they will become regretful for what they secretly harboured. <sup>﴿53﴾</sup> ‘Upon that’ The Believers will say: “Are these ‘really’ the ones who swore by Allah with their most solemn oaths that they were ‘in all honesty’ with you?”<sup>(113)</sup> Their deeds were rendered void, and they became losers<sup>(114)</sup>.

<sup>﴿54﴾</sup> You who Believe, whoever of you renounces his religion<sup>(115)</sup>, then Allah will ‘soon enough’

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُسْرِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَى أَنْ نُصِيبَ نَادِيَهُ فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ وَأَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُصِيبُوا عَلَى مَا آسَرُوا فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَن يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ

- 110 Whoever aligns himself with them, aids them against the Believers and opts for their religion over Islam is one of them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 7/194, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 111 The hypocrites whose faith is insincere. (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn)
- 112 In the likely case that God grants His sincere servants victory over their enemies or that He should cause an affliction to befall their detractors, these feigned ‘precautionary measures’ of the hypocrites will turn into regrets. (al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 113 Upon seeing how deeply regretful and sorrowful the hypocrites will be when the pathetic charade that they maintained is blown apart, the Believers will ask this question wonderingly. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurṭubī)
- 114 Besides earning the Wrath of God and having their thin cover blown, all what they bargained for and threw their weight behind came to nothing. Thus, the magnitude of their loss.
- 115 Flouting the commandment of not aligning one’s self with the enemies of the Believers is considered a renouncement of religion.



bring forth 'in your stead' people whom He Loves and they 'truly' love Him, lenient to the Believers, stern towards the Deniers, they strive hard in the path of Allah fearing no reproach from anyone who reproaches; that is the Grace of Allah, He grants it to whoever He wishes—Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

Indeed your 'true' ally is none but Allah, His Messenger and the Believers; they keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms and 'humbly' prostrate 'themselves'<sup>(116)</sup>.<sup>55</sup> Whoever takes Allah, His Messenger and the Believers as allies then the party of Allah are ever-victorious.

<sup>57</sup> (117) You who Believe, do not take those who playfully take your religion as 'an object of' mockery and scorn among those who were given the Book before you and the Deniers as allies—be Mindful of Allah if only you were 'truly' Believers.

بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
أَعَزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن  
يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٥﴾ إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ  
وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ  
وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَمَن يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ  
وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ  
الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا  
دِينَكُمْ هُزُوعًا وَلَعِبًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ  
مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَفَّارَ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا  
مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

116 "The Believers, both men and women, are allies of one another. They enjoin good and forbid evil, keep up Prayer and give out the prescribed alms, and obey Allah and His Messenger. It is they who will be shown Allah's Mercy. Surely Allah is Almighty, All-Wise." (9: 71)

117 In the face of deeply set opposition and profound hostility, the bar of counterargument is raised over the next few ayas up to Aya 81. It leaves no doubt in the minds of the addressee as to where each party stands; what is spoken of here is justification enough for not taking them as allies besides the Believers.

﴿58﴾ When you call for Prayer<sup>(118)</sup> they playfully take it 'as an object of' mockery and scorn. That because they are people who do not reason<sup>(119)</sup>. ﴿59﴾ Say: "People of the Book, do you begrudge us only because we Believed in Allah, what was sent to us and what was sent before and 'hold' that most of you are transgressors? ﴿60﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Shall I tell you of a worst case before Allah? Those whom Allah Damned, became Wrathful with, and who He turned some of them into apes, swine and worshippers of 'false' idols. These are in a worst position and are further away from the right path"<sup>(120)</sup>. ﴿61﴾ When they come to you they say: "We Believe!" While 'in fact' they entered with Denial 'in their hearts', and 'truly' they have come out with it<sup>(121)</sup>—Allah knows most what they used to hide.

﴿62﴾ You see 'Muhammad' many of them rushing into sin, aggression and devouring illicit earnings—sordid indeed is what they are used to committing.

وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ أَخَذُوا بِهَا هُزُوا وَلَعِبًا  
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿58﴾ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ  
الْكِتَابِ هَلْ تَنْصُمُونَ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ  
وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلُ وَإِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ  
فَلْسِفُونَ ﴿59﴾ قُلْ هَلْ أُنبِئُكُمْ بِشَرِّ مِمَّنْ ذَلِكُمْ مَثُوبَةٌ  
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ لَعْنَةِ اللَّهِ وَعَظْبِ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ  
مِنْهُمْ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطُّغُوتِ أُولَئِكَ  
شَرُّ مَكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ عَن سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿60﴾ وَإِذَا  
جَاءَ وَكُرِّقَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَقَدْ دَخَلُوا بِالْكَفْرِ وَهُمْ قَدْ  
خَرَجُوا بِهِ ءَالَهُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿61﴾

وَتَرَى كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْأَثْمِ  
وَالْعُدُونِ وَأَكْبَهُمُ السُّحْتِ لَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا  
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿62﴾

118 *al-Salāh* (Prayer) is singled out because it is the most outwardly distinctive feature that defines the Believing community and sets it apart from the rest.

119 Taking those who attend to Prayer for laughing stock just shows how ignorant these people were; either they just could not grasp the essence of devotional worship (cf. Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sa'dī*), or they were so taken away by antipathy that they derided what they knew was real.

120 These home truths cum historical allusions are brought up here in rebuttal of the opposition and to bring them to see reason (cf. Ibn Jazarī).

121 For an example of this stratagem cf. 3: 72.

﴿63﴾ Would not the godly and the rabbis admonish them against speaking sinfully and devouring illicit earnings? Sordid indeed is what they are used to doing<sup>(122)</sup>. ﴿64﴾ The Jews said: “The Hand of Allah is shackled!”<sup>(123)</sup> May their ‘own’ hands be shackled and Damned they are for their saying. Nay but His Hands are ‘widely’ outstretched; He spends as He wills<sup>(124)</sup>.

لَوْلَا يَنْهَدُهُمُ الرَّبُّ رَبَّنَا عَنْ قَوْلِهِمُ  
الْإِثْمَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السَّحْتِ لَبَئْسَ مَا كَانُوا  
يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ  
أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلَعْنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ  
يُنْفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ

122 There is a subtle difference between the two verbs used in Ayas 62 and 63, translated as ‘committing’ and ‘doing’, respectively. The employment of each is very becoming of the case at hand. The first *ya‘mala* (lit. to do) is said of the actions of the ordinary folk whose ‘doing’ is usually spurred by instinct and is not much thought-out. Whereas *yaşna* (lit. to do) in the latter aya is said of the men of letters among them. The ‘makings’ of the educated who are leaders of society, contrary to the former, are usually deliberate and well-thought-out beyond the mundane and expected (cf. al-‘Askari, *al-Furūq al-Lughawiyah*).

123 By this, they metaphorically accused Almighty God, Glory be His, of meanness, close-fistedness and parsimony, meaning that He withholds His benevolence from them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Jawāb al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 4/412-413, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). This utterance echoes their equally macabre saying in 3: 181: “*Allah is poor and we are rich*”. This is yet another example highlighting how audacious they had become in their rebelliousness against God, not only by their sinful actions and their flouting of His law but more seriously by slandering and speaking profanely against His Most Exalted Self. For this, they deservedly earned His Wrath and Damnation.

124 People, especially the less religiously devout, will easily deny the innumerable bounties that God bestowed on them and will only look at what He withheld from them out of His infinite Wisdom, or the affliction that was made to befall them: “*And He has granted you all that you asked Him for. If you tried to count Allah’s Blessings, you would never be able to number them. Indeed humankind is truly unfair, totally ungrateful*” (14: 34). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “*Verily the Right Hand of Allah is full and spending cannot diminish it. It incessantly exudes day and night. Might you ponder all that He spent since He created*

Surely what was sent to you 'Muhammad' from your Lord will increase many of them in rebellion and Denial<sup>(125)</sup>. We have cast enmity and hatred<sup>(126)</sup> among them until the Day of Judgement; whenever they flame the fire of war Allah extinguishes it<sup>(127)</sup>; they walk the land sowing corruption—Allah Loves not the corruptors.

﴿65﴾ (128) Had the People of the Book 'truly' Believed and were Mindful, We would have surely absolved them of their misdeeds and admitted them into the Gardens of bliss<sup>(129)</sup>;

وَلَيُرِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ  
طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا وَالْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ  
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ كَلِمًا أَوْ قَدُورًا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ  
أُطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا وَاللَّهُ  
لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا  
لَكَفَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَا دَخَلَتْهُمْ  
جَنَّتِ النَّعِيمِ ﴿٦٥﴾

the Heavens and Earth, then 'know that' that did not decrease 'naught' of what His Right Hand holds" (al-Bukhārī: 7419, Muslim: 993).

- 125 Their hearts, being so permeated with disease, will only interpret God's most luminous Signs that were revealed to His Messenger as confirmation of their doubts: "Whenever a sura is revealed, some of them ask 'mockingly': 'Which of you has this increased in Faith?' As for the Believers, it has increased them in Faith and they rejoice. \*But as for those with sickness in their hearts, it has increased them only in wickedness upon their wickedness, and they die as disbelievers" (9: 124-125); "Say, 'Muhammad': "It 'the Qur'an' is a guide and a healing to the Believers. As for those who Deny, there is deafness in their ears and blindness to it 'in their hearts'" (41:44).
- 126 "Their 'the Jews' malice for each other is intense: you think they are united, yet their hearts are divided" (59:14). Compare with 5: 15 above.
- 127 As a result of their internal division and lack of unity they failed to prevail over their enemies. Whenever they intended to wage war their efforts were frustrated and they could not join ranks or rally forces; God wanted them to fail (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Wajīz, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 128 The crux of the matter and the essence of the difference is that the People of the Book were not humble enough to be able to see the Truth and purify their Faith, with the notable exception of those mentioned in Ayas 82-83 below. The Messenger of God (ﷺ) is urged to starkly lay this fact bare for them. This passage sums up much of the above.
- 129 Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

﴿66﴾ and had they upheld the Torah and the Evangel and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would have eaten 'blissfully' from above them and from under their feet<sup>(130)</sup>; among them there is an upright<sup>(131)</sup> nation, yet many of them are vile indeed for what they commit. ﴿67﴾ O Messenger, convey what came down to you from your Lord 'fully'<sup>(132)</sup>, but if you do not do 'that', then you have failed to deliver His Message; Allah will 'certainly' shield you from people—surely Allah does not guide the Denying people<sup>(133)</sup>.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا مِن فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِن تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ مِّنْهُمُ أُمَّةٌ مُّقْتَصِدَةٌ ۗ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾  
 \*يَأْتِيهَا الرِّسُولُ بِلَغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِن رَّبِّكَ ۗ وَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

- 130 God will bless those who devoutly follow His doctrines with plentiful provisions, rain and all sorts of produce which grows because of it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī). This is a lasting promise of God's: "Had the people of the towns Believed and been Mindful, We would surely have opened unto them blessings from Heaven and Earth" (7: 96); "I 'Noah' said, "Ask forgiveness of your Lord: He is Ever-Forgiving. \*He will send down abundant rain from the sky for you; \*and He will support you with wealth and children, and make for you gardens and rivers". (71: 10-12).
- 131 *Muqtaṣidah* carrying out their duties without adding to or overlooking what is asked of them (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī). The word relates to *iqtiṣād* which is a state of being moderate not going to extremes (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Kafawī, *al-Kulliyāt*).
- 132 The Prophet (ﷺ) is urged to deliver the Message in full without holding any of it back out of fear of people or other worldly considerations (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said: "Whoever tells you that Muhammad (ﷺ) held back any part of what came down to him, then he surely lies 'to you'. 'How so when' Allah says: "O Messenger, deliver what came down to you from your Lord 'fully'..." (al-Bukhārī: 4612).
- 133 "Truly those for whom the Word of your Lord has come due will not Believe, \*even if every Sign were to come to them—until they see the painful Punishment" (10: 96-97).

﴿68﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "People of the Book! You stand on no 'solid' ground unless you uphold the Torah and the Evangel and what was sent down to you from your Lord; verily what was sent down to you 'Muhammad' from your Lord will 'only' increase many of them in rebellion and Denial<sup>(134)</sup>, so do not be grieved for the Denying people.

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَسْتُمْ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ تُقِيمُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ وَلَيَبْئِذَن كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَيْنًا وَكُفْرًا فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

﴿69﴾ Certainly, the Believers<sup>(135)</sup>, the Jews, the Sabians and the Christians whoever 'truly' Believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good among them, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve<sup>(136)</sup>.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئُونَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

134 This sad fact is reasserted here after its first mention in 5: 64 above, so that the deliverer of the Message is prepared for their reaction, and so that it does not come any harder for him (ﷺ).

135 Among the followers of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

136 This aya is almost a verbatim replica of Aya 3: 62. This applies to those who came before Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent. Thereafter, whoever seeks a religion other than Islam it will not be accepted from him and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers (2: 85), (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr). "The religion with Allah is Islam. The ones who were given the Book only differed after 'true' knowledge came to them, out of transgression among themselves. Whoever Denies Allah's Signs, then Allah is swift in reckoning. \*If they argue with you 'Muhammad', say: "I have devoutly submitted my face to Allah along with those who follow me". Say to those who were given the Book and the illiterates: "Do you devoutly submit?" If they devoutly submit then they are guided, but if they turn away, then you are tasked with nothing more than delivering 'the Message' and Allah is indeed All-Seeing of 'His' servants" (3: 19-20). Furthermore, Ibn 'Āshūr opines that this aya is meant to show these people that the Door to God is easy to arrive at and that seeking refuge with Him is not beyond their reach, but they have to Believe, align themselves with the Believers and do good deeds.

﴿70﴾ Indeed, We took the pledge of the Children of Israel<sup>(137)</sup> and We sent them Messengers. Whenever a Messenger brought them that which was not to their liking, they declared false a party `of the Messengers` and another party they would kill. ﴿71﴾ They thought that there would be no trial<sup>(138)</sup>; they were blinded and deafened, then Allah relented on them, after that a great many of them were blinded and deafened—indeed Allah is All-Seeing of what they commit.

لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَرَأْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ  
رُسُلًا كَلَّمْنَا بَأْسًا بِيَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلًا مِمَّا لَا تَهْوَى  
أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُوا وَفَرِيقًا يَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾  
وَحَسِبُوا الْأَتَّكَونَ فِيْئِنَّهُمْ فَعَمَّوْا وَصَمَّوْا ثُمَّ نَبَّ  
أَللهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ عَمَّوْا وَصَمَّوْا كَثِيْرًا مِنْهُمْ  
وَاللهُ بَصِيْرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾

﴿72﴾ Deniers indeed are those who say: “Allah is the Messiah, son of Maryam”.<sup>(139)</sup> `While` The Messiah `himself` said<sup>(140)</sup>: “Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed whoever Associates with Allah, then Allah will surely forbid him `entry into` Paradise and his home will be Hellfire—the wrongdoers will never have helpers”.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيْحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ  
وَقالَ الْمَسِيْحُ يَبْنِي إِسْرَائِيْلَ عِبُدُوا اللهَ  
رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهٗ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ  
اللهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ وَمَا  
لِلظَّالِمِيْنَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٧٢﴾

137 Cf. 5: 12 above.

138 They deceived themselves by airily thinking that they would not be `tried` for their grievous offences. Such self-deceit blinded and deafened them to seeing and hearing the Truth, thus they will not find a way to it. Even after God relented towards them and guided them at a certain juncture of time, a great many of them still fell back into their old ways (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

139 Aya 5: 17 and its subject – the Christian creed – is revisited here. The specific aspects addressed being Jesus' Lordship and the Trinity.

140 Cf. Luke 4: 8; Mathew 4: 10.

﴿73﴾ Deniers indeed are those who say: "Allah is one of three!" There never would ever be a God but One<sup>(141)</sup>. If they do not desist from what they say, those of them who Deny will be touched by a painful Punishment. ﴿74﴾ Would they not 'then' repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness! Indeed Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿75﴾ The Messiah son of Maryam is no more than a Messenger who comes in a line of 'many' Messengers and his mother is an affirmer of Truth<sup>(142)</sup>, they both used to eat food<sup>(143)</sup>. Look how We lay plain the Signs for them and look how they turn away 'from the Truth'. ﴿76﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Do you worship besides Allah 'any' who can neither harm nor benefit you! Allah is the one who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَلَاثَةٌ ۚ وَنَالُوا اللَّهَ مَا يَنْتَهُوْنَ  
وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ ۚ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنْتَهُوْا  
عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ  
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ  
وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونَ لَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ مَا  
الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ  
الرُّسُلُ وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ ۗ كَانَا يَأْكُلَانِ الطَّعَامَ  
ۗ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ نَبِّئِنَّ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ أَنْظِرْ أَنَّى  
يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ قُلْ اتَّعَبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَّا  
يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ  
الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٧٦﴾

141 "Allah has never had 'any' offspring, nor is there any god besides Him. Otherwise, each god would have taken away what he created, and they would have tried to dominate one another. Glorified is Allah above 'all' what they claim!" (23: 91); "Had there been other gods besides Allah in the Heavens or the Earth, both 'realms' would have surely been corrupted. So Glorified is Allah, Lord of the Throne, far above what they claim" (21: 22).

142 She holds the high rank of *ṣiddiqūn* (Affirmers of the Truth, cf. 4: 69 and 66:12). She cannot, however, be venerated way beyond this rightful station to that of divinity, cf. 5: 116 below.

143 Emblematic of their mortality is that both Jesus and his mother needed food for their sustenance. Very much unlike the self-sustaining God, Glory be His, in order to remain alive they had to depend on other creatures and vegetation etc. for food. A real God is not this helpless. "He 'Allah' feeds, and never is He fed" (6: 14). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)



﴿77﴾ (144) Say: “People of the Book, do not take an extremely hard line on your religion, that is besides the Truth, and do not follow the desires of ‘those’ folk<sup>(145)</sup> who ‘themselves’ had become misguided before, lead a great many astray and missed the right path ‘themselves’”.

﴿78﴾ The Deniers among the Children of Israel were damned by the tongue of Dāwūd ‘David’ and ‘Isā son of Maryam<sup>(146)</sup> for their disobedience and persistent aggression. ﴿79﴾ They would not admonish each other for the vile deeds they committed—sordid indeed is what they used to do. ﴿80﴾ You ‘Muhammad’ will see many of them align themselves with the Deniers; sordid indeed is what they have laid themselves out for, that which Allah abhorred, and forever will they abide in Punishment. ﴿81﴾ Were they truly Believing in Allah, the Prophet and what was sent down to him<sup>(147)</sup>,

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ  
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا  
كَثِيرًا وَضَلُّوا عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٧٧﴾

لَعْنَةُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ  
عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ذَلِكَ  
بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ كَانُوا  
لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ لَبِئْسَ  
مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ تَرَى كَثِيرًا  
مِنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَبِئْسَ  
مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ أَنْ سَخِطَ  
اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي الْعَذَابِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾  
وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ

144 Cf. 4: 171: “People of the Book, do not take an extremely hard line on your religion and say nothing about Allah except the Truth; the Messiah, ‘Isā son of Maryam is no more than a Messenger of Allah, and His word that He cast to Maryam, and a soul from Him. Believe then in Allah and His Messengers, and say not: “Three”. Desist ‘from saying this’ for your own good; indeed Allah is none but one God, far exalted is He above having a child. To Him belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth—sufficient is Allah as Keeper.”

145 Their misguided/misguiding religious leaders. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

146 Cf. the diatribe of the hypocritical Israelite priests as in for instance Matthew 23: 13-38.

147 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Message. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

they would not have taken them as allies, but many of them are 'in Truth' transgressors.

﴿82﴾ (148) You 'Muhammad' will find the bitterest of people in their enmity to Believers are the Jews and those who Associate, while you will find the nearest in affection towards the Believers are those who declare themselves Christians. That is because among them are 'sincere' priests and monks<sup>(149)</sup> and that they do not disdain 'the Truth'. ﴿83﴾ When they hear what was sent down to the Messenger<sup>(150)</sup>, you will see their eyes swell with tears because of the Truth they knew.

مَا اتَّخَذُوهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَكِنَّ كَثِيرًا  
مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

\* لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِلَّذِينَ  
ءَامَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا وَلَتَجِدَنَّ  
أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَّوَدَّةً لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا الَّذِينَ قَالُوا  
إِنَّا نَصْرِيَّ ذَلِكَ بَأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قِسِيَسِيَت  
وَرُهْبَانًا وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾  
وَإِذَا سَأَعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ تَرَى  
أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ

148 Here, the preceding lengthy argumentation with the People of the Book is rounded off. The Prophet (ﷺ) is told of the reality of the matter in assertive terms: while those who have vested interest in Denying, seeing that the new Message clashes with their worldly gains and benefits will admit nothing but acrimony towards it and thus will never admit the Truth, those who are purer in Faith, being humble and sincere disciples of the Scripture (*qissisīn/priests*) and/or strict applicers of its dictates (*ruhbān/monks*), will open up their hearts to the Truth, admit it willingly and bear witness to it.

149 The reason being that the former (*priests*) are devoted to learning while the latter (*monks*) are those who have renounced the world and lead ascetical lives (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). One such godly scholar was Warāqah Ibn Nawfal; 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) in the hadith of the beginning of *wahy* (revelation) said: "When the Prophet (ﷺ) went back to 'his wife' Khadijah 'after receiving the first Message via Gabriel (جبرائيل)' with a trembling heart' she took him along to Warāqah Ibn Nawfal, who had become Christian reading the Evangel in Arabic. He asked him: "What do you see?" When he told him, Warāqah said: "This is the *nomos* (*al-nāmūs*) that Allah sent down to Moses. Would your day 'of hardship' come upon me, I shall surely stand firmly by your side!" (al-Bukhārī: 3392, Muslim: 160).

150 The Qur'an that was sent down to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

'Hence' They say: "Our Lord we Believe, so count us among the witnesses." ﴿84﴾ Why should we ever not Believe in Allah and the Truth that came to us<sup>(151)</sup>; we are desirous that our Lord will admit us 'into Paradise' along with the righteous. ﴿85﴾ Allah rewarded them for their saying Gardens under which rivers flow, forever they abide therein—that indeed is the reward of the good doers. ﴿86﴾<sup>(152)</sup> As for those who Deny and reject our Signs, then these are the companions of the Raging Fire.

﴿87﴾<sup>(153)</sup> You who Believe, do not pronounce unlawful the good provisions that Allah made lawful for you<sup>(154)</sup>; do not transgress,

يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَأَقْتَرِبَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿٨٧﴾

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَحْرَمُوا طَيِّبَاتٍ مَّا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا

151 "Indeed there are among the People of the Book those who Believe in Allah, what has been sent down to you 'Muhammad' and what had been sent down to them, humbling themselves before Allah and do not trade off the Signs of Allah for a pittance; for those is their reward with their Lord—Allah is swift in reckoning" (3: 199); "As for those 'Faithful' to whom We had given the Book before this 'Qur'an', they do Believe in it. \*When it is recited to them, they declare: "We Believe in it. This is definitely the Truth from our Lord. We had already submitted before this" (28: 52-53).

152 This aya reflects Aya 5: 10 above.

153 Now that the all important issue of the creed of the People of the Book has been made plain, the discourse again picks up on the laws that are set for the Believing community, reiterating and expounding them. This is to drive home the Message that these laws are ever binding and should not be taken liberty with. Nor are they to be disregarded, or licentiously treated with, as did earlier nations.

154 "Do not falsely declare with your tongues: "This is lawful, and that is unlawful", fabricating lies against Allah. Indeed, those who fabricate lies against Allah will never succeed" (16: 116). Anas Ibn Mālik narrated that: "Some men came upon the chambers of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) asking about his worship. When answered they felt that it was not enough 'for them'. Then they said to themselves: "How great the difference is between

surely Allah Loves not the transgressors. ﴿88﴾ Eat of what Allah provided for you, that is lawful and good, and be Mindful of Allah in Whom you Believe<sup>(155)</sup>. ﴿89﴾ <sup>(156)</sup> Allah will not hold you accountable for thoughtlessly swearing 'by Him'<sup>(157)</sup> but He will hold you to account over the solemn oaths you make; the atonement of which is feeding ten destitutes out of the average 'food' that you feed your households, or clothing them, or manumitting a slave; whoever could not find 'the means to any of these' then let him fast for three days. That is the atonement of 'breaking' your oaths if you swear; 'but' guard your oaths—thus Allah explains to you His Signs so that you might be thankful.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَكُلُوا  
مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ  
الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ  
اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ  
بِمَا عَقَدْتُمُ الْاَيْمَانَ فَكَفَرْتُمْ بِإِطْعَامِ عَشْرَةِ  
مَسْكِينٍ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تَطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ  
أَوْ كَسَوْتُمْهُمْ أَوْ خَرَّيْتُمْ رِقَبَةً فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ  
فَصِيَامَ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ذَلِكَ كَفْرَةٌ أَيْمَانِكُمْ  
إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ وَأَحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ يَبَيِّنُ  
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾

us and the Prophet (ﷺ), he was forgiven all his past and future misdeeds by Allah!" Then one of them said: "I shall Pray all night long and never sleep!" Another said: "I shall fast all year long and never break it!" And a third said: "I shall shun women and never ever marry!" The Prophet (ﷺ) then came and said: "Are you the ones who said so and so? By Allah I am the most fearful and Mindful of Allah among all here, but I fast and I break my fasting, I Pray and I sleep and I marry women. Whoever renounces my way (Sunnah) has nothing to do with me!" (al-Bukhārī: 5063, Muslim: 1401).

- 155 "Believers, eat of the good things which We provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if you indeed worship Him 'alone'" (2: 172); "Eat and drink, but do not waste. Surely He does not like the wasteful" (7: 31).
- 156 It is not unusual that some would, in a fit of rage or by way of affirming their commitment, casually swear to something which may be considered as a breach of God's boundaries. Although God will call to account only over those oaths which one takes whilst being fully aware of their gravity (cf. 2: 225), Believers are nonetheless told to guard their oaths (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 157 Unintentionally saying: "Yes, by God", or: "No, by God" out of habit. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Bukhārī: 6663)

﴿90﴾ (158) You who Believe, intoxicants, gambling, altars of idolatry<sup>(159)</sup> and casting lots for divination<sup>(160)</sup> are nothing but defilement of the making of Satan, so steer clear from it 'all', so that you might be successful. ﴿91﴾ Satan wants nothing but to sow enmity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling, and repel you from the remembrance of Allah<sup>(161)</sup> and Prayer, will you not 'then' desist? ﴿92﴾ Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and be on your guard. But should you turn away, then know that Our Messenger's duty is nothing but clear delivery 'of the Message'.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ  
وَالْأَنْصَابُ وَالْأَزْلَامُ رَجَسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ  
فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ  
الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ  
فِى الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ  
ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ  
مُنْتَهُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ  
وَأَحْذَرُوا فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا عَلَى  
رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٩٢﴾

- 158 Some of what they used to habitually consume and practice in the age of ignorance, before the advent of Islam is picked up on here to clearly demarcate the boundaries of the Believing society. The awful reality of what had been the norm is exposed and is warned against in the strongest of terms (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 159 *al-Anṣāb* are stones or idols which are erected for worship and sacrificial offerings. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*)
- 160 Cf. 5: 3 above.
- 161 *Dhikr Allah* is the remembrance and mentioning of God. In Islam it is a noteworthy act of worship through which one gains His Pleasure and great reward, wards off the devil and disquieting thoughts, and gains comfort and peace in one's heart and life: "Verily in mentioning Allah do hearts find comfort" (13: 28); the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked: "Which deed is seen as the best by Allah?" He replied: "That you die with your tongue moist with mentioning Allah" (al-Bukhārī, *Khalq Af'āl al-'Ibād*: 281; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Kabīr*: 93); Mu'ādh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Never has a human done a thing more likely to save him from Allah's Punishment than mentioning Allah, Glory be His" (Aḥmad: 4/239). Ibn al-Qayyim in *al-Wābil al-Ṣayyib* lists more than a hundred benefits and advantages for this act of worship. Little wonder, then, that Satan, man's arch-enemy, is bent on driving people away from it and other acts of obedience to God, notably Prayer.

﴿93﴾ (162) There is no 'blame of' sin for those who Believe and do good deeds over what they used to savour<sup>(163)</sup> 'in the past' if they: became Mindful, Believed and did good deeds; then became Mindful and Believed; then became Mindful and perfected 'their deeds'—Allah loves those who perfect 'their deeds'<sup>(164)</sup>.

﴿94﴾ You who Believe, Allah shall test you with some game 'well' within the reach of your hands and spears, so that Allah may Know<sup>(165)</sup> he who fears Him in secret<sup>(166)</sup>. Whoever transgresses after this, then his is a painful Punishment.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعَمُوا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَءَامَنُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِيَبْلُوكُمْ اللَّهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَسَالُهُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَرِمَاحُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَخَافُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ فَمَن أَعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَلَهُ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٤﴾

162 The reason for this aya's revelation is narrated by Anas (رضي الله عنه) whereby: "I was doling out wine to others in the house of Abū Ṭalḥah when the Messenger (ﷺ) ordered someone to call out to people that wine was made unlawful. At that Abū Ṭalḥah said to me: "Get out and drain the wine 'vessels'". I went out and drained them and they ran in the roads of Madinah. Then some people said 'wonderingly': "Some 'of us' were killed while it was in their bellies!" Then Allah sent down: "There is no 'blame of' sin for those who Believe and do good deeds over what they used to savour if they..." (al-Bukhārī: 2464, Muslim: 1980). This aya is the last and final aya that was sent down regarding the ruling of wine and (other) intoxicant consumption and which forbids it once and for all. The other two being Ayas 2: 219 and 4: 43.

163 That is before the ruling came down. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa' dī)

164 These three parallel structures, along with the employment of the coordinator *thumma* (then), which signifies a longish separating period in-between, are meant to heighten the effect of the seriousness of this ruling (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). What used to take place before is pardoned, but Believers are made fully aware not to fall victim to this sin again, hence drawing deeply on the power of their Faith.

165 The kind of knowledge which is made apparent to people according to which some are rewarded and others punished. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

166 "Those who fear their Lord in secret, theirs is forgiveness and a great reward" (67: 12). Restraining one's self from sinning while hidden from the eyes of others and that the sin being so tantalizingly facile is a great test of Faith.

﴿95﴾ You who Believe, do not kill game while you are in a state of sanctity<sup>(167)</sup>, whoever kills any intentionally, then his penalty is 'to compensate for it with one of' the livestock equal to what he killed – so judged by two of you who are of sound judgement<sup>(168)</sup> – as a gifted offering reaching the Ka'bah<sup>(169)</sup>, or atoning 'for it with providing' food for the destitute, or the equivalent of that in fasting, so that he may taste the consequence of his action. Allah has overlooked what took place in the past, but whoever does it anew, then Allah takes revenge on him—Allah is All-Prevailing, capable of vengeance<sup>(170)</sup>. ﴿96﴾ The game of the sea and its food<sup>(171)</sup> is lawful to you; an enjoyment for you and other wayfarers;

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَاءٌ مِّثْلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ هَدْيًا بَالِغَ الْكَعْبَةِ أَوْ كَفَّرَهُ طَعَامًا مَسْكِينٍ أَوْ عَدْلٌ ذَلِكِ صِيَامًا لِيَذُوقَ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَمَّا سَلَفَ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ﴿٩٥﴾  
أَحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامُهُ مَتَّعَالِكُمْ  
وَاللِّسْيَانَ

167 *Hurum*, in a state of sanctity, refers to whether you are donning *ihrām* to perform Hajj or *'umrah*, or whether you are within the inviolable precincts, the *haram* area (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

168 *Dhawā 'adl* (lit. two possessors of fairness) are two people known for their upright character and fair-mindedness (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

169 This compensative offering (*hady*) should reach the sanctified precincts (*haram*), which is what is meant by the Ka'bah here (cf. al-Qurṭubī, who cites the unanimity of exegetes over this issue), be slaughtered within its bounds and distributed to the needy among its inhabitants. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

170 *Dhū intiqām* (revenge, vengeance, retribution), is not an absolute Attribute or Name of Almighty God, but rather is bound by limitation to certain instances (cf. Ibn 'Uthaymīn). Hence why I have chosen here not to capitalize it as I always do with other Divine Names or Attributes.

171 The game of the sea (*ṣayd al-baḥr*) and its food (*ta'āmuḥ*) are the sea creatures that you fish alive and the dead ones that you scoop out, respectively. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

'however still' unlawful to you is the game of the land as long as you are in a state of sanctity. Be Mindful of Allah to Whom you shall be gathered.

وَحَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدَ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرُمًا  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

﴿97﴾ (172) Allah made the Ka'bah, the Sanctified House, a bastion 'of well-being'<sup>(173)</sup>; as well as the sacrosanct month, gifted offerings, garlanded sacrifices 'are instituted for good cause'<sup>(174)</sup>. That, so you may know that Allah 'perfectly' Knows what is in the Heavens and Earth—verily Allah Knows everything.

\* جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَامًا  
لِلنَّاسِ وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَالْهَدْيَ وَالْقَلْبَةَ ذَلِكَ  
لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي  
الْأَرْضِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٧﴾

172 Although it seamlessly flows from the previous passage, this aya and the next can be further read within the light of Aya 5: 2 above. Here, the reason for how much stake God places on the violation of these Symbols of His (ﷻ) is stated; there has got to be a place and a time where all people and creatures feel safe and in harmony with their Creator's will.

173 *Qiyām* traces its meaning to erectness and/or taking care of affairs (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). That God made the Ka'bah *qiyāman li al-nās* signifies both their religious, e.g. Prayers, Hajj, 'umrah, etc., and worldly affairs, e.g. trade in all sorts of produce, getting together and knowing each other, etc., are upheld and safeguarded in and around it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī).

Even before Islam, the Sanctified House was a source of guidance to people through which some were constantly reminded of God, especially those known as *al-Ahnāf* (the rightly inclined), and a great source of worldly gains to all Arabs who visited it, but especially a great source of power, wealth and prestige to the Qurayshites (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). "They said 'to you Muhammad', "If we were to follow 'True' guidance with you, we would certainly be snatched away from our land!" Have We not established for them a safe haven 'in Makkah' to which fruits of all kinds are brought as a provision from Us? But most of them do not realize 'this favour'" (28: 57).

174 People will feel safe for their lives and livelihoods during the sacrosanct months, and thus prosper. They will also put these offerings to good use and from which they will eat and manufacture different artifacts from their hides (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī). These are also meant to instill the virtue of self restraint in people.



﴿98﴾ Know you 'all' that Allah is severe in Punishment and that Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿99﴾ The Messenger's duty is nothing but delivery 'of the Message'—Allah Knows what you reveal and what you conceal<sup>(175)</sup>. ﴿100﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "The evil and the good are not equal even though the abundance of the evil may fascinate you". So fear Allah, people of sound reason, so that you might be successful<sup>(176)</sup>.

أَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ  
عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩٨﴾ مَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ  
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ قُلْ  
لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ  
كَتْرُهُ الْحَبِيثُ قَاتِلُوا اللَّهَ يَأْتِؤُا لِي الْأَلْبَابِ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْقَهُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

﴿101﴾ (177) You who Believe,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا

175 Fully realizing that God surely watches over their actions and is aware of their intentions, and now that His Message has been clearly delivered by the Messenger (ﷺ), Believers are left to their consciences and are warned, on pain of a severe punishment, against violating His commands. However, they are also to realize that God overlooks the sins of those of His servants who repent to Him, and being the Most Merciful, He will not burden anyone with that which he cannot bear (cf. 3: 286).

176 People are reminded of this fact so that they persevere in the constant fight against temptation. Ironically, evil might be the more conspicuous of the two and readily strikes the eye, at which the person wonders and/or is allured (*a'jaba*) by it, but this does not make it the more virtuous of the two. Belief and Denial, obedience and rebellion, and lawful and forbidden deeds are not one and the same and that more people are, in fact, Denying, rebelling and committing forbidden deeds does not make evil justifiable or lawful. In the end, those who are Mindful and are really of sound enough reason to pay heed will be the ones who will eventually attain success. "And 'surely' *the final round is for the Mindful*" (7: 128).

177 Believers are urged here to uphold and hold tightly to what was delivered to them by the most trustworthy Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. 3: 103). Questions, and especially contrived questions, when responded to will inevitably widen the circle of Divine ordinances and this might make it difficult for Believers to act on them. God, in His infinite wisdom, perfected His religion, ensuring it was not onerous for people so that it would be easy for them to follow in order to win His great rewards: "Allah wants not to burden you, but He wants to purify you and perfect His favour on you that you may be thankful" (5: 6, cf. also 22: 78). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "People, Allah has ordained Hajj for you so perform it". A man stood up and said: "Every year, Messenger of Allah?" The Messenger did not answer

do not ask about matters, which if explained to you would displease you. But if you ask about them while the Qur'an is being sent down, they will be explained to you<sup>(178)</sup>. Allah overlooked them<sup>(179)</sup>—Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing<sup>(180)</sup>. ﴿102﴾ Some people asked about such matters before you, 'only' to reject them afterwards<sup>(181)</sup>.

لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنْ أَشْيَاءٍ إِنْ بُدِّلَ لَكُمْ تَسْؤُكُمْ وَإِنْ  
تَسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنَزَّلَ الْقُرْآنُ تُبَدِّلَ لَكُمْ  
عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهَا وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾ قَدْ سَأَلَهَا  
قَوْمٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَصْبَحُوا بِهَا كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

him until he repeated the question three times. Then he said: "Had I said: "Yes", then it would be binding and you would not be able to bear it". Then he added: "You should not be pestering me with questions when I hold my peace. What brought about the ruination of those who came before you is their persistence in asking questions and incessantly counselling their Prophets. If I command you something, do it as much as you can and if I warn you against a matter avoid it altogether" (Muslim: 1337). Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The bearer of the most grievous of sins among the Muslims is the one who asks a question about something which was not declared unlawful 'in the first place' but which was pronounced so because of this question" (al-Bukhārī: 7289, Muslim: 2358). This outlook captures the essence of Islam, the most perfect of all religions, which is very much in tune with human nature.

- 178 It is alright to ask sincere questions about a portion of the Qur'an that one cannot understand and/or to make sure of a particular ruling. Such questions deserve to be answered as much as they are warranted and legitimate (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Rajab, al-Sa'dī).
- 179 This could mean that: 1) God overlooked your questioning and does not hold you to account for your oversight (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī); 2) God warned you against such questioning but allows it once a revelation with its regard comes down from Him (Ibn 'Ashūr); 3) what was not mentioned in the Qur'an is part of what He pardoned so do not bring these up since they were not brought up by God Himself (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 180 "If Allah were to punish people for what they have committed, He would not have left a single living being on the back of the Earth. But He delays them for an appointed term. And when their time arrives, then surely Allah is All-Seeing of His servants" (35: 45).
- 181 These people did not ask these questions out of a genuine need for knowledge but instead due to a lack of sincere willingness to carry out what they were commanded to: it was just too convenient for them to disregard what was explained to them. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿103﴾ (182) Allah allowed none of the so-called *bahīrah*, nor *sā'ibah*, nor *waṣīlah*, nor *hām* but the Deniers fabricate lies against Allah; most of them have no sense. ﴿104﴾ When it is said to them: “Come to what Allah sent down and to the Messenger”. They say: “Good enough for us are the ways of our forefathers”. Would this be the case even if their forefathers had no knowledge nor were they able of finding the way<sup>(183)</sup>. ﴿105﴾ You who Believe, guard your own selves;

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَحِيرَةٍ وَلَا سَائِبَةٍ وَلَا وَصِيلَةٍ وَلَا حَامٍ وَلَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا أَوَلَوْ كَانَ آبَاءُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

182 As much as people are warned against asking questions about matters which were not ordained on them, they are not to abide by laws which were also not decreed by God (cf. Ibn 'Adil). The four categories mentioned in this aya are those states of livestock which Arab pagans forbade use of, or did so for specific idolatry practices. They are, as ordered here: *bahīrah*, a she-camel which has given five live births and whose ear they would slit and make its riding and milking forbidden; *sā'ibah*, a she-camel, a cow, goat or ewe which they would set free to roam and graze in fulfillment of an oath or as an act of obedience to their gods; *waṣīlah*, the seventh live birth of a livestock. If it were male they would slaughter it, but if it were female they would pronounce its meat and milk forbidden for women; *hām*, a male livestock which successfully breeds ten live births, which they would announce as 'protected' (or pensioned) and so not use it for riding or conveying loads (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). They inherited these groundless, seemingly devotional, laws from their forefathers, whom they venerated, but whom had no knowledge of God's laws. They lacked Divine inspiration, a fact which rendered them senseless, following their own desires and superstitions.

183 “Should they be told: “Follow what Allah sent down”, they would say: “Nay, we would only follow that which we found our fathers doing”; “Would they? Even if their fathers were mindless of everything, nor were they guided” (2: 170). Their pretext is ever-ready whenever they are called on to follow God's commands; they have their old habits to fall back on (cf. also 31: 20-21 and 37: 69-70).

those who lose the path will not harm you if you find the way<sup>(184)</sup>. To Allah you shall all return and then He will tell you 'the Truth' of what you used to do<sup>(185)</sup>.

﴿106﴾ <sup>(186)</sup> You who Believe, the testimony of any of you who is attended by death should be witnessed by two 'people' of sound judgement from within you –

لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن صَبَلَ إِذَا أَهْتَدَيْتُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ  
مَرَجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ  
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا شَهَدَةُ بَيْنِكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ  
أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَوْتُ حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا  
عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ

184 This is the limit of the Believers' duty of call and propagation of the laws of God. Once they have delivered the Message as it should duly be, they are not responsible for the actions of those who rebuff them. "You 'Muhammad' surely cannot guide whoever you like, but it is Allah Who guides whoever He wills, and He knows best who are 'fit to be' guided" (28: 56). (Ibn 'Āshūr)

185 God, Who Knows everything and has a minutely detailed record of it (cf. 18: 49), will be the final Judge. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

186 This aya and the two that follow are said to be the most complex and problematic in the whole Qur'an in terms of grammatical structure, interpretation and legal ruling (cf. Makkī Ibn Abū Ṭālib, *Mushkil I'rab al-Qur'an*, al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*). The great attention to detail found here indicates the importance of inheritance laws in Islam and which merited much detailed accounts in the Qur'an, especially in Sura *al-Nisā'*. Needless to say, no single translation can capture the totality of the complexity of the issues implicated in these ayas and over which scholars of Islam have long pondered. The reason for the revelation, as narrated by Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) does, however, shed light on the issue at hand: "A 'Muslim' man from the clan of Banū Sahm set out on a journey along with Tamīm al-Dārī and 'Adiyy Ibn Baddā' 'before they became Muslim'. This man died in a land where there were no Muslims. When his two companions came back with his inheritance, 'his folk' missed a 'pricey' silver bowl embellished with gold leaves. The Messenger (ﷺ) made them swear an oath 'when they were brought before him'. The bowl had been found in Makkah and its new owners had said: "We bought it from Tamīm and 'Adiyy". Then two relatives of the deceased stood witness and swore: "In all solemnity, our testimony is more worthy than their testimony; the bowl belonged to our dead relative". With this regard the aya was revealed" (al-Bukhārī: 2780).

or two from without you<sup>(187)</sup> – ‘that is’ at the time of making the will as you set about the land ‘travelling’ and the calamity of death befalls ‘any of’ you. Should you have doubts ‘about their testimony’<sup>(188)</sup> stand them<sup>(189)</sup> up from after the Prayer<sup>(190)</sup> and they ‘should’ swear by Allah that: “We do not seek ‘by this oath’ some monetary reward; ‘nor do we favour a beneficiary’ even if he were a relative ‘of ours’ and ‘that’ we would not withhold ‘any part of’ Allah’s testimony<sup>(191)</sup>. If we do that, then we are but sinful.”

﴿107﴾ ‘But’ If they are found ‘indeed’ sinful ‘perjurers’ then two other ‘witnesses’ of those entitled as immediate ‘inheritors’, should stand in their place, swearing

أَوْءَاخِرَانَ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ صَرَبْتُمْ  
فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَصَدَّبْتُمْ مُصِيبَةَ الْمَوْتِ  
تَحْسِبُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ الصَّلَاةِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ  
بِاللَّهِ إِنْ أَرْتَبْتُمْ لَأَنْتَشِرِي بِهِ تَمَنَّا وَلَوْ كَانِ  
ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَلَا نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذَا لَمِنَ  
الْأَثْمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ فَإِنْ عُرِّيَ عَلَيْهِمَا اسْتَحَقَّ إِثْمًا  
فَتَاخِرَانِ يُقِيمَانِ مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَحَقَّ  
عَلَيْهِمُ الْأُولَىٰ فَيُقْسِمَانِ

187 If two Muslims cannot be found at the time of a person’s death, being significant as it is, two non-Muslims can be asked to bear witness to the will. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

188 They are made to take such an oath because the judge has justifiable doubts about their truthfulness not because they are non-Muslim (cf. Riḍā, Ibn ‘Uthaymīn).

189 The two non-Muslim witnesses (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). When doubted, it has to be made absolutely sure that their testimony is trustworthy and that if challenged, albeit by Muslims, the challengers will undergo equally scrupulous measures.

190 That they deliver such a weighty testimony after Prayer shows the great solemnity of the oath being undertaken. Prayers are usually attended by a congregation of people, and one realizes the significance of one’s oath should one be brought before the public (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). On the other hand, those witnesses who are humbled by Prayer, and remembrance of God, would find it hard to give false testimony (cf. al-Rāzī).

191 *Shahādat Allāh*, the testimony is ascribed to God to indicate its significance and because He, Gory be His, commanded preserving and not withholding it. (Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Ādil)

by Allah that: “In all solemnity, our testimony is more worthy than their testimony; we did no wrong ‘to them’ or ‘else’ we are among the unjust”. ﴿108﴾ That ‘conduct with the witnesses’ is surer so that they<sup>(192)</sup> deliver the testimony truthfully, or fear that their oaths will be reverted ‘to the inheritors’ after they swore theirs<sup>(193)</sup>. Be Mindful of Allah and listen<sup>(194)</sup>—Allah does not guide the transgressors.

﴿109﴾ <sup>(195)</sup>On the Day when Allah gathers the Messengers and says ‘to them’: “What response did you receive?” They would say: “We have no knowledge<sup>(196)</sup>, verily You are the All-Knower of what is hidden.”

بِاللَّهِ لَشَهَادَتِنَا أَحَقُّ مِنْ شَهَادَتِهِمَا وَمَا  
 أَعْتَدَيْنَا إِنَّا إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ ذَلِكَ أَذِنَ  
 أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ عَلَىٰ وَجْهِهَا أَوْ يَخَافُوا أَنْ  
 تُرَدَّ أَيْمَنُهُمْ بَعْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَسْمَعُوا  
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

\*يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ  
 قَالُوا لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَالِمُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿١٠٩﴾

192 The two original witnesses. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

193 Knowing that they can be challenged by the deceased’s relatives, they will not be inclined to lie fearing that their testimony is overruled and they are exposed as liars. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

194 Listen to what you are being told and obey it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

195 When people are told to be Mindful of God and pay heed to His commands and adhere to His laws, they are reminded of the very weighty Day of Judgement on which they will be gathered before the All-Knower of all that is hidden from other people, Messengers included. Although, on the face of it, the ones who are being addressed are the most honourable infallible Messengers of God (ﷺ), those who are mostly intended by it are those to whom they were sent. In this way, a stark, subtly indirect warning is implicated. (cf. al-Rāzī).

196 This answer could mean: 1) that they had no knowledge of what their followers’ hearts really held; 2) that they had no knowledge of what their followers did after their deaths (this reading is borne out by Jesus’ (ﷺ) testimony before God as told in Aya 5: 117 below); 3) that what they had was perceived knowledge (*zann*) but not true knowledge that would stand in the trial on the Day of Judgement; 4) that they, being fully cognizant of God Almighty’s absolute Knowledge, Wisdom and Fairness and knowing that their answer would not be of real use, deferred the answer to Him out of homage (cf. al-Rāzī).

﴿110﴾ (197) When 'on that Day' Allah says: "Isā son of Maryam, remember my favour on you and your mother, when I aided you with the Holy Spirit; you were made to talk to people while in the cradle, and as a grown man; when I taught you the Book, the Wisdom, the Torah and the Evangel; when you used to form the shape of a bird from clay with My permission and you would blow 'your breath' into it and it became a 'living' bird with My permission; you would cure the born blind and the leper with My permission; when you would bring the dead to life with My permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from 'harming' you<sup>(198)</sup> as you brought them clear evidences, and those of them who Denied said 'indignantly': "This is nothing but sheer sorcery!"

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ لِبِعْسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ اذْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ إِذْ أَيَّدْتُكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْكَ إِذْ جِئْتَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْحَرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

197 For some detailed background on what follows cf. 3: 42-52. Jesus (ﷺ) of all the other Messengers is singled out here and is minutely 'questioned' because the most deserving of admonishment are those who claim to be his followers. Other nations may have Denied their Messengers but these made the single and most false claim about God Almighty Himself, whereby He has a wife and a child, and around which they built their whole religion. The favours detailed here show in reality that Jesus is no more than a mere human Messenger of God (cf. al-Rāzī). "Indeed the example of Jesus with Allah is like that of Adam; He created him from dust and said: "Be!" and he was" (3: 59).

198 "They plotted 'the Deniers among the Children of Israel' and Allah planned—Allah is verily the best of planners. \*When Allah said: "Isā, I shall bring your term 'on Earth' to an end, elevate you to Me, purify you from those who Denied and make those who follow you 'prevail' over those who Deny until the Day of Judgement. Then your 'humans' return will be to Me and I shall judge between you over that which you used to differ on" (3: 54-55).

﴿111﴾ And when I inspired<sup>(199)</sup> the disciples to Believe in Me and in My Messenger. They said: “We Believe, and bear witness that we are devoutly surrendered!”<sup>(200)</sup>

﴿112﴾ When the disciples said: “‘Isā son of Maryam, can your Lord send down to us a table laid<sup>(201)</sup> from the sky.” He said: “Be Mindful of Allah, if you are truly Believers!”<sup>(202)</sup> ﴿113﴾ They said: “We ‘just’ want to eat from it; and for our hearts to be comforted; and so we know ‘for certain’ that you tell us the Truth; and that we may be witnesses to it<sup>(203)</sup>.”

﴿114﴾ <sup>(204)</sup> ‘Isā son of Maryam said:

وَاِذَا وَاُوحِيَتْ اِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ اَنْ اٰمِنُوْا  
بِيْ وَبِرِسُوْلِيْ قَالُوْا ءَاٰمَنَّا وَاَشْهَدُ بِاٰنْتَنَا  
مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ اِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّوْنَ يٰعِيْسَى  
ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيْعُ رَبُّكَ اَنْ يُزَلِّ عَلَيْنَا  
مَائِدَةً مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ قَالِ اَنْتَقُوْا لِلّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ قَالُوْا نُرِيْدُ اَنْ نَّأْكُلَ مِنْهَا  
وَنَضْمِيْنَ قُلُوْبُنَا وَنَعْلَمَ اَنْ قَدْ صَدَقْتَنَا وَتَكُوْنُ  
عَلَيْهَا مِنَ الشَّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ

199 *Awhā* (lit. to inspire) means He (ﷺ) threw in their hearts. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

200 For a more detailed account of this incident see 3: 52-53: *When ‘Isā sensed their ‘ardent’ Denial, he said: “Who are my helpers ‘in the way’ to Allah?” The disciples said: “We are the helpers of ‘the way of ‘ Allah. We Believe in Allah. And bear witness that we are devoutly surrendered ‘to Him’ ”. \*‘‘Our Lord, we have Believed in what you have brought down and we have sent the Messenger, so write us down among the witnesses’’.*

201 *Mā'idah* in Arabic is a table laden with food. A table without food is called *khiwān*. What is asked for here is the food itself, which could metonymically be called ‘table’ (cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, Ṭaṭṭāwī, *al-Wasīf*): thus, my choice in the translation.

202 Given the illocutionary force of the Arabic original, Jesus’ response here amounts to a challenging retort meant to make them behave more sensibly and in accordance with their Faith.

203 They wanted to bear witness to this miraculous Sign and tell the others about it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr) thus extending their Faith to others with certitude.

204 There is no favour that God would ever bestow upon His allies that parallels this feast. Simple as it could have been, it provided the Believers with a most needed, assuring and timely evidence that God, with all His Might, was on their side as He always will be with those who are sincerely devoted to Him.



“O Allah, our Lord send down to us a table laid from the sky to be a festive occasion for us – the first and last of us <sup>(205)</sup> – and a Sign from You. Give us our sustenance; You are the best of providers.”  
 ﴿115﴾ Allah said: “I shall surely send it down to you, but any of you who Denies after this I shall Punish him ‘such’ a Punishment that I never inflict the like of which on any other in the world.”

﴿116﴾ When ‘on the Day of Judgement’ Allah says <sup>(206)</sup>: “‘Isā son of Maryam, did you, yourself, say to people: ‘Take me and my mother as two gods besides Allah?’” He said: “All glory is Yours!

اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِنَ السَّمَاءِ تَكُونُ  
 لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوْلَادِنَا وَأَخْرَانَا وَآيَةً مِنْكَ وَأَرْزُقْنَا  
 وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّزُقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَنَزَلُهَا  
 عَلَيْكُمْ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بَعْدُ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ  
 عَذَابًا لَا أُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١١٦﴾

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ لِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ أَنْتَ قُلْتَ  
 لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمَّيَ الْهَيْبِينَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ  
 قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ

However, this aya should be read within the context of the trying circumstance which Jesus and this company of his staunchest supporters found themselves in at the time of this request. Given their very small number and the great bloodthirsty mobs calling for the murder of their leader that they were pitted against, even the most devout of Believers can be shaken at such times (cf. the account of the psychological state of Believers when they saw their enemy in the Battle of the Trench/Confederates 33:10-11) but where their sincere Faith and trust in God got them through. This is an ever-lasting lesson to Believers that heartens them to stand firm in the face of adversity and prepares them for the trials they will come up against throughout all times and ages. Cf. the ‘title’ section to this sura’s introduction.

205 *Awwalinā wa ākhiranā* (lit. our first and last) means Jesus’ generation and those that were to come after it. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī)

206 This is further admonishment for those who claim to be followers of Jesus (ﷺ) but who distorted his teachings, albeit him being the direct addressee (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). God wants him to stand witness against them as will every Messenger against his nation: “How ‘will they fare’, when we bring forward a witness from every nation, and We bring you ‘Muhammad’ as witness against these” (4: 41).

Never will I say that which I have no right to. Had I said it, You would have known it. You Know what goes on within me and I do not know what You hold. You are verily the Knower of all that is Unseen.” ﴿117﴾ “I ‘only’ said to them what You told me to, that ‘you should’: “Worship Allah my Lord and your Lord”. I was a witness over them as long as I was among them, But when You brought my term ‘on Earth’ to an end<sup>(207)</sup>, You became ‘the sole’ Watcher over them<sup>(208)</sup>—You are Witness over everything”. ﴿118﴾ “If you Punish them, then they are ‘only’ Your servants, but if You forgive them, then You are truly the All-Prevailing, All-Wise.”

مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقِّ إِنْ كُنْتُ  
قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ  
مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿١١٧﴾ مَا قُلْتُ  
لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي  
وَرَبَّكُمْ وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ  
فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيْتَنِي كُنْتُ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنْتَ  
عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِنْ تُعَذِّبْهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ  
عِبَادُكَ وَإِن تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ  
الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١١٨﴾

207 “When Allah said: “‘*Īsā*, I shall bring your term ‘on Earth’ to an end, elevate you to Me...” (3: 55).

208 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “One day the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood before us delivering an admonishing sermon. He said: “People, you will be gathered before Allah ‘on the Day of Judgement’ barefooted, naked and uncircumcised: “*As We initiated the first creation, so shall We return it. It is a promise of Ours that We will do this*” (21:104)... A group of men among my nation will be brought and taken to the left flank ‘towards Hellfire’, and I say: “My Lord, my people!” And it will be said to me: “You do not know what they forged after you”. I will reply to that the very same reply that the righteous servant ‘Jesus (ﷺ)’ said: “*I was a witness over them as long as I was among them, But when You brought my term ‘on Earth’ to an end, You became ‘the sole’ Watcher over them—You are Witness over everything*” \* “*If you Punish them, then they are ‘only’ Your servants, but if You forgive them, then You are truly the All-Prevailing, All-Wise*” (5: 117-118). Then it will be said to me: “They kept on turning on their heels ‘away from your teachings’ ever since you left them””. (al-Bukhārī: 2447, Muslim: 2860)

﴿119﴾ Allah says: “This is the Day on which the Truthfulness of the Truthful avails them; for them are Gardens under which rivers flow forever after they abide therein; Allah is Pleased with them<sup>(209)</sup> and they are pleased with Him—that indeed is the greatest gain”.

قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمٌ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ  
لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا  
أَبَدًا رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ  
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١١٩﴾

﴿120﴾ To Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens, Earth and ‘all’ that is within them; He is Able over everything<sup>(210)</sup>.

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ وَهُوَ  
عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾



209 Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Then their Lord, Glory is His, will reveal Himself to them ‘the companions of Paradise’ and say: “Ask Me and I shall give you!” They ask Him for His Pleasure and He says: “My Pleasure admitted you into My abode ‘Paradise’ and bestowed on you honour from Me. Ask Me and I shall give you!” They ask Him ‘again’ for His Pleasure. Then He makes them bear witness that they gained His Pleasure”. (al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Targhīb*: 3761)

210 This is the message the Believers are forever after left with. It constitutes two parts, both of which are repeated several times in this sura. The first part is a reminder of God’s Absolute Sovereignty over the Heavens, the Earth and all that exists within them. It is repeated in Ayas 17, 18, 40 and 120, all coming after talk of God Almighty’s Ability to Punish as well as Forgive. The second part, whereby God is Able over everything, closely relates to the first one and follows after it as seen in the ayas where it is mentioned: 17, 19, 40, 117 and 120. Both amount to the same effect, i.e. the All-Sovereign, All-Able God disposes of the affairs of His creation at will and no force will ever be able to counter His will. So, people need to be fully Mindful of Him at all times no matter what the circumstances might be; no matter how adverse they come to be.

To be able to sincerely Believe in Him, be Mindful of Him and worship Him as closely and devoutly as possible, the next sura, *al-An‘ām*, provides a detailed account of God’s Oneness and the Uniqueness of His Attributes: none is worthy of worship besides Him.

سُورَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ

*al-An'ām*  
(Livestock)



## al-An‘ām (Livestock)

**Title:** *al-An‘ām* (thus titled in al-Bukhārī: 3524; al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, p. 240; Ibn al-Ḍirrīs, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, p. 196; al-Ṭabarānī: 12930) equates to livestock. The word *an‘ām* derives from *ni‘mah* which means bounty (cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Livestock are mentioned in detail in this sura (cf. al-Suyūfī, *al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur‘ān*, 1/197) by way of providing a concrete Sign of God’s sole rightfulness to the worship of the Arabs of the time who depended greatly on their livestock in their daily lives. The Signs of God’s munificence for and nourishment of people are to be found all around us but we need to keep our eyes and hearts open. For these, one only needs to be grateful to God, ‘*Gratitude be to Allah*’, to Whom everything in the universe owes its life and livelihood.

**Merit:** it is one of the meritorious first seven lengthy suras of the Qur‘an (cf. Introductions to Suras 4 and 5). Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “*al-An‘ām* came down as a whole in Makkah at night, surrounded by seventy thousand angels raising their voices with glorification (*tasbīh*) ‘of Allah’” (al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, p. 240; Ibn al-Ḍirrīs, *Faḍā’il al-Qur‘ān*, p. 196; al-Ṭabarānī: 12930; Ibn Ḥajar deemed this narration sound (*ḥasan*) in *Natā’ij al-Afkār*, 3/227; Aḥmad Shākir deemed its chain of narrators sound in *‘Umdat al-Taḥfīr*, 1/761).

**Theme:** one of only five suras opening with the all too important statement of homage to God’s boundless munificence: *al-ḥamdu li Allāh* (*Gratitude be to Allah*; the other suras being: *al-Fātiḥah*, *al-Kahf*, *Saba’* and *Fāṭir*), *al-An‘ām* talks mainly of the proofs of God Almighty’s sole rightfulness to Lordship and discredits any form of worship extended to others besides Him (ﷻ). The many sub-themes of which this sura is made up are couched within this major discourse. The myriad Signs of God’s ability of creation, revelation, resurrection, reward and punishment, the story of Abraham (رضي الله عنه) told here, the admonishment of the Deniers and the descriptions of livestock utilization are all meant to lead people to Believe in God by opening up their hearts and using the unclouded powers of their intellects, without prejudice.

**Key:** in order to grasp the meaning potential of this sura one has to realize the very crucial fact that it is a Makkan sura (the unanimity of exegetes regarding this sura as Makkan is reported by Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, 1/162, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr* and Ibn ‘Āshūr). This is why we find in it numerous references to Makkah and the Arabian way of life. In the face of tyrannical oppression, the onslaught of hate and the incessant barrage of abuse they were bombarded with daily, the sura seeks to console the Prophet (ﷺ) and the fledging community around him as also to equip them with the right arguments to face up to their detractors and controvert their criticisms and arguments. To ascertain how revealing this sura is, one only needs to cite Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه): “If you want to realize just how ignorant the Arabs were then, read ‘the ayas’ beyond 130 of *al-An‘ām* up until: “*Losers indeed are those who killed their ‘own’ children out of foolishness with no basis in ‘proper’ knowledge, and forbade what Allah provided for them, falsely ascribing it ‘all’ to Allah; they have gone astray, and they were not guided*”” (al-Bukhārī: 3524).

The numerous times the Messenger (ﷺ) is commanded to address the doubtful by the word *qul* (say) underlines how fierce the debate was at those fraught times. This series of commands culminates in the ultimate stand-taking declaration: “Say ‘Muhammad’: “*Would I want to take as lord any other besides Allah while He is the Lord of everything. No soul shall earn ‘anything’ except it being against it; no burdened soul shall carry the burden of another*” (6: 164). No one who stares doubt, confusion and uncertainty in the face can afford to lose sight of *al-An‘ām*.

*In the name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful*

﴿1﴾ 'All' Gratitude be to Allah<sup>(1)</sup>  
Who created the Heavens and  
Earth, and made darkness and  
light<sup>(2)</sup> yet the Deniers set up 'false'  
equals to their Lord. ﴿2﴾ He is the  
One Who created you 'people'  
from clay<sup>(3)</sup> then He decreed a term,  
and 'another' term is specified  
with Him<sup>(4)</sup>, yet still you doubt!

أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ  
وَجَعَلَ الظُّلُمَاتِ وَالنُّورَ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
بِرَبِّهِمْ يُعَدِلُونَ ﴿١﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ  
طِينٍ ثُمَّ قَضَىٰ أَجَلًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى عِنْدَهُ ثُمَّ  
أَنْتُمْ تَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٢﴾

- 1 All praise is God's alone and none besides Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī).
- 2 The expression *al-ẓulumāt wa al nūr* (lit. darknesses and light) is quite recurrent throughout the Qur'an. 'Darkness' is invariably always found in the plural form (*ẓulumāt*) whilst 'light' is conversely always in the singular. Here they could mean both tangible and abstract darkness and light; ignorance, Association and sin as opposed to knowledge, Belief and obedience (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).  
This sura being about proving with compelling, inexorable logic God Almighty's singular rightfulness to Lordship, being the sole Creator and Sustainer of the whole universe and all that exists therein, opens up magnificently with this succinct statement. That God is the Creator and the sole deserver of praise and gratitude, that He is the undisputed 'light' that sound human nature is born to vouch for is, given the many contexts that individuals find themselves plunged into, clouded over by multiple 'darknesses'. Yet, all of these 'darknesses' are decimated, one after another, in and through the upcoming ayas. The argument for this singular 'light' is expounded and advanced and the multi-layered, multi-faceted darkness is exposed before those who use their reason to a worthy end. All comes to a climax in Aya 6: 122 below: "*Is the one who was dead and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which?*" (cf. also 2: 257).
- 3 Clay is the original substance of human creation (cf. 15: 26, 55: 14, 37: 11); Adam, the father of humanity, was created from clay, processed earth. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su'ūd, al-Sa'dī)
- 4 There are two 'terms' (*ajal*) spoken of here. Exegetes have differed over the meaning of each of these. However, many of them (e.g. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr) are of the opinion that God Almighty has set a term for each individual's existence in life, throughout which they will be tried and tested, and then they will die and be turned into the original substance of which humans are made, earth (decomposed clay). This is the first term, whilst the second is the exact timing of the Day on which people



﴿3﴾ He is 'Allah' 'the One' in the Heavens and in Earth<sup>(5)</sup>; He Knows your hidden secrets and what you make public and He Knows whatever you earn<sup>(6)</sup>.

وَهُوَ اللَّهُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّكُمْ  
وَجَهْرَكُمْ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْمُمُونَ ﴿٣﴾

﴿4﴾ Whatever Sign of the Signs of their Lord comes to them; they will only turn away from it.

وَمَا تَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ آيَةٍ مِنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا  
كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ

﴿5﴾ They have 'wilfully' declared false the Truth when it came to them; the 'absolute' tidings of what they used to ridicule<sup>(7)</sup> will 'certainly' reach them<sup>(8)</sup>.

لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَنْبَأُ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ  
يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٥﴾

will be resurrected and recreated alive again for judgement; no one knows the exact hour of the Day of Judgement except Almighty God Himself (7: 187). That people see and live through the all too incontrovertible fact of their very own existence, life and death, all around them, is all the more reason for them to be guided to Believing in the Creator, and to ask about the cogent reason behind their existence.

- 5 He is the most glorified Lord Who is rightfully worshipped by the dwellers of these two realms (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'd). "It is He Who is 'the only' God in the Heavens and 'the only' God in the Earth. For He is the All-Wise, All-Knowing" (43: 84).

Note that the Majestic Name, Allah, is deliberately employed in this sura. It is used by way of bringing to mind the Supreme God Whom the Arabs related to (39: 3) but with an added, perspective-changing, emphasis on how He should be viewed. It is a call for a return to the pristine *hanifiyyah* creed of the patriarch of Prophets, Abraham (ﷺ) of whom they were descendants.

- 6 Only such an Omnipotent, Omnipresent Lord should be heeded and worshipped, and none besides Him.
- 7 Here are three types of reaction to the Signs of God: first denying them and pretending to take no notice of them; secondly, casting aspersions on their truthfulness, and, thirdly, ridiculing and jeering at them. These three reactions are gradual and of varying intensity; the first being the less outspoken (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān). This plays into the bigger picture being drawn here of the stance taken by the Makkan pagans on Islam and its call and highlights how stiff in their opposition to it they were.
- 8 Sooner or later, they will come to realize the Truth of what they Denied. One instance of this, as opined by Ibn 'Abbās (quoted in al-Ṭabarī), is

﴿6﴾ Had they not seen how many a generation<sup>(9)</sup> before them We have destroyed? We had established them in the land<sup>(10)</sup>

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ قَرْنٍ  
مَكَثَتْهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ

the story of one of the Quraysh chiefs, namely al-Walīd Ibn al-Mughīrah, who was one of Islam's brashest enemies and who is vividly described in Sura *al-Qalam*. He was told in that sura that he would be 'branded on the snout' (68: 16), and sure enough this news came true in the Battle of Badr, when his nose was smitten leaving an ineradicable, all visible mark on this most prominent site of pride, as per the Arab culture of the time. Yet, even this sign, he and the few around him did not heed. Another such notable example is the news of the victory of the Byzantines over the Persians after their humiliating defeats beginning in the year 613 up to 615, roughly three years after the Prophet (ﷺ) began his mission and in the midst of the heat of the onslaught against his call. A very remote possibility as it was, Sura *al-Rūm* gave an exact time for which the Byzantines would rebound and gain the upper hand over their enemies: "within a few (*bid'*) years", (30: 4). It was within *bid'* (anywhere between three and ten years (cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*)) that this foretelling took place. In 622, i.e. six or seven years after the Qur'anic prediction, the tide indeed turned in favour of the Byzantines and they gained the upper hand over their enemies. Even this though was not enough of a Sign for the Deniers; clearly, darkness is what they languished in.

It has to be said that, as per many an exegete, the realization of the Truth of the news of the Qur'an, of which they were told, would be in this worldly life and/or in the Hereafter, when they would be brought before ultimate justice.

- 9 *Qarn* which derives from the verb *qarana* (to join together/bundle up) is a large group of people or a nation joined together both temporally and spatially. It is also said of a stretch of time, the people who live through this time, or those who live during a period over which a Prophet was active in his career. It is said that *qarn* is 80 years long but no less than 30 years. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)
- 10 The Qurayshites had many of the ruins of previous, much more prosperous, nations all around them: "You 'Makkans' pass by their ruins morning \*and night. Will you not use your reason?" (37: 137-138). They could also see many more of these majestic ruins, especially those of the wealthy Nabateans in Hegra (al-Ḥijr) and Petra (al-Batrā') respectively, during their famed winter and summer journeys (cf. 106: 2). The fact that these earlier nations who were endowed with such abundance and were given water (the source of life and prosperity) both flowing and pouring without end

'far' more firmly than how We established you 'people'! We sent the sky pouring down on them profusely and We made the rivers run under their feet, 'only' then We destroyed them for their sins<sup>(11)</sup> and We brought into being another generation after them.

مَا لَمْ تُمَكِّنْ لَهُمْ وَأَرْسَلْنَا السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْهِمْ مَدْرَارًا  
وَجَعَلْنَا الْأَنْهَارَ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ  
بِدُنُوبِهِمْ وَأَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٧﴾

﴿7﴾ (12) Had We sent you a Book in 'actual' sheets, so that they would touch it with their own hands, the Deniers would 'only' say: "This is nothing but sheer sorcery!"<sup>(13)</sup>

وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ كِتَابًا فِي قِرْطَاسٍ فَلَمَسُوهُ  
بِأَيْدِيهِمْ لَقَالِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ  
مُبِينٌ ﴿٧﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أَنْزَلِ عَلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ  
وَلَوْ أَنْزَلْنَا مَلَكًا

﴿8﴾ They 'further' said: "Had only there been an angel sent down to him!"<sup>(14)</sup> Had We sent down an angel,

were devastated, did not make them think over their fate contemptively. "Have they not travelled throughout the land to see what was the end of those 'destroyed' before them? They were far superior in might; they cultivated the land and developed it more than these 'Makkans' ever have. Their Messengers came to them with clear proofs. Allah would have never wronged them, but it was they who wronged themselves" (30:9).

- 11 "Your Lord never destroys towns until He sends a Messenger to their mother town to recite unto them Our Signs. And We never destroy towns, save when their people are wrongdoers" (28:59).
- 12 This passage expounds, explains and substantiates the previous one.
- 13 The reason for their Denial was not the Seemingly weak abstract arguments and evidences they were being presented with, for even if they were to have concrete evidence brought to them (here, a heavenly book in touchable, tangible material, unlike the Unseen revelation that the Messenger (ﷺ) was relaying to them), they would still not Believe, out of deep-set aversion and ingrained antagonism (Ibn 'Uthaymīn). When faced with concrete evidence, they would always conjure up the lame ploy of calling it all nothing but magic: "And even if We opened for them a gate to Heaven, through which they continued to ascend, \*they would still say: "Our eyes are hallucinating. We are bewitched!" (15: 14-15).
- 14 "And they say 'mockingly': "What kind of messenger is this who eats food and goes about in market-places 'for a living'? If only an angel had been sent down with him to be his co-warner!" (25: 7).

the whole matter would have been 'immediately' settled and they would not be given respite<sup>15</sup>. ﴿9﴾ Had We made him an angel, We would have 'certainly' made him 'in the form of' a man<sup>16</sup> and then We would have confused them for what they 'contrive to' confuse<sup>17</sup>. ﴿10﴾ Indeed, Messengers before you were ridiculed, but those who used to ridicule them got hit by what they ridiculed.

لَقَضَى الْأَمْرَ لَمْ لَا يُظْرُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ  
مَلَكَ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ رَجُلًا وَلَلَبَسْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ  
مَا يَلْبَسُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ آسْتَهْزَيْتَ بِرُسُلِ مِثْرَ  
قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا  
كَأَنْوَابِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

15 The delivery of the Message usually takes years, if not even centuries as in the case of Prophet Noah (14 :29) (ﷺ), of hard, toilsome work, example setting, and argumentation and counter-argumentation. Angels were not created for this role. This is why God sends human Messengers; with whom people can interact, relate to and see them acting upon their own teachings, thus providing role models to be emulated and followed. Angels descending to Earth have only one job: to deliver what is 'true'; "either a Message to a human Messenger or a Punishment from God upon those who Deny it" (Mujāhid, quoted in al-Ṭabarī). "They 'brashly' say: "O you to whom the Reminder is revealed! You must be insane! \*Why do you not bring us the angels, if what you say is true?" \*We do not send down the angels, save in Truth 'Punishment', and were We to do so, they would be granted no respite" (15: 6-8).

Besides, God would not satisfy haughty Deniers by answering their devious demands as much as He obliged His most faithful servants Abraham (ﷺ) when he asked Him to show him how He brings the dead to life (2: 260) and Jesus and his disciples when they asked for a heavenly feast (5: 114). Were Messengers to answer each one of these demands, the requests would have known no end. They would have been taken for a plaything, losing their meaning and becoming so common place as to be to no avail (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Sincere Belief has to emanate from the heart and be based on unshakable, profound certainty. It is not the result of the mere material realization of a miracle that vanishes once this outside source of awe is no longer perceivable (cf. al-Sa'dī).

16 Such a co-warner angel would have been made to appear in human form so that meaningful communication could take place. Otherwise, the Message could not be delivered to begin with thereby defeating the whole purpose as they would inevitably confuse him for a human being (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Wajīz, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

17 This shows that they were not sincere in their demand and that they only wanted to confuse and mystify matters.

﴿11﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Travel the land and look what was the fate of the deniers".

﴿12﴾ <sup>(18)</sup> Say 'Muhammad': "To whom belongs all what is in the Heavens and Earth? Say: "To 'Allah!'" – He decreed Mercy upon Himself<sup>(19)</sup> – He shall gather you on the Day of Judgement in which there is no doubt. Those who have 'really' lost their souls are the ones who would not Believe". <sup>(13)</sup> For Him belongs what rests 'still' at night and in the morning<sup>(20)</sup>—He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

﴿14﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Shall I take as ally 'any other' besides Allah,

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ  
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

قُلْ لِمَنْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ قُلْ لِلَّهِ  
كَتَبَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ لِيَجْمَعَ كُمُ  
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا  
أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ \* وَالَّذِي  
سَكَنَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ  
الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣﴾

قُلْ أَعْيُرَ اللَّهُ اتَّخَذُ وَلِيًّا

- 18 Instead of game playing and charade maintaining, they are presented here with real evidence, which engages both the heart and mind, rising above the banal material evidences they were proposing.
- 19 After mentioning the most plausible and irrefutable of all evidences, the creation of the Heavens and Earth, particularly since the Qurayshites did not reject this fact, God Almighty's Mercy is evoked to underline His absolute ability at any given time to destroy them for Denying in and doubting Him. This so that they realize that this happens even though they are given a chance to see reason and repent (cf. al-Qurṭubī, al-Baghawī, Ibn 'Āshūr). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "When Allah created all of the creatures, He wrote in His Book, which is with Him above the Throne: "My Mercy overrules My Wrath" (al-Bukhārī: 7404, Muslim: 2751). This also constitutes a message to the Believers who are too eager to see Divine Punishment overtake the Deniers (Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 20 This is to show that all dimensions are under the control of God Almighty; the spatial dimension, the Heavens and Earth, and the temporal dimension, day and night. Nothing exists outside the reach of His Power (al-Rāzī, Riḍā, Ibn 'Ādil), not even in their most imperceptible inert states; He is verily the All-Hearing, All-Knowing of everything!

the Originator<sup>(21)</sup> of the Heavens and Earth, while He feeds and never is He fed?”<sup>(22)</sup> Say: “I was commanded to be the first to submit, and that: “Do not you be among the Associators”<sup>(23)</sup>”.  
 ﴿15﴾ Say: “I fear, should I disobey my Lord, the Punishment of a dreadful Day”.  
 ﴿16﴾ Whoever is averted ‘from Punishment’ on that Day, then He had Mercy on him—that indeed is the clearest success<sup>(24)</sup>.

﴿17﴾ If Allah touches you with affliction, none will remove it except for Him, and if He touches you with good, then He is Able over everything<sup>(25)</sup>.  
 ﴿18﴾ He is the Most Dominant over His servants<sup>(26)</sup>—He is the Most Wise, the All-Knowledgeable.

فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَهُوَ يُطْعَمُهُ  
 وَلَا يُطْعَمُ فُلٌ اِتٰى اُمْرًا اَنْ اَكُوْنَ اَوَّلَ مَنْ  
 اَسْلَمَ وَلَا تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُسْرِكِيْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ قُلْ اِنِّىْ  
 اَخَافُ اِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّىْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٦﴾  
 مَنْ يُصْرَفْ عَنْهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْنَاهُ وَذٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ  
 الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٧﴾

وَ اِنْ يَمَسَّ سَكَّ اَللّٰهُ بِضْرٍ فَلَا كَاشِفَ لَهٗ اِلَّا هُوَ  
 وَ اِنْ يَمَسَّ سَكَّ بِخَيْرٍ فَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ  
 قَدِيْرٌ ﴿١٧﴾ وَ هُوَ الْفَاھِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهٖ وَ هُوَ  
 الْحَكِيْمُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٨﴾

- 21 *Fāṭir* comes from *fatara* (past tense) which means to create something totally brand new, unparalleled in the past (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 22 Only a Self-Sufficient, All-Sustaining God is worthy of worship and should be the only One sought for help. “*I did not create jinn and humans except to worship Me. \*I want no provision from them, nor do I want them to feed Me. \*Indeed, Allah the One Who is the Supreme Provider—Owner of Power, Ever Mighty*” (51: 56-58).
- 23 This direct quote within the indirect report is meant as a two-fold delivery of this, most crucial Message; first for the Messenger (ﷺ), to assert his firmness, and secondly to deliver it to others (al-Shinqīṭī, al-‘Aḥb al-Namīr).
- 24 “...whoever is dragged away from Hellfire and entered into Paradise, then he is a winner” (3: 185).
- 25 This is further evidence of God Almighty’s Lordship as opposed to all besides Him, especially the idols whom the Makkans used to worship. They could not create anything, let alone the whole universe, or provide sustenance for their servants, nor could they harm or remove harm, bring good or prevent it (Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 26 God Almighty’s total, unchecked dominance over His servants is a notion which is underlined in many Qur’anic passages; cf. 10: 107, 33: 17, 35: 2, 39: 38, 48: 11.

﴿19﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "What thing is most weighty in testimony?"<sup>(27)</sup> Say: "Allah is a Witness between me and you. He revealed to me this Qur'an to warn you with it and whoever it reaches. Certainly you testify that there are other gods with Allah". Say: "I 'most certainly' do not testify 'to this'!" Say: "He is none but One God. I certainly denounce what you Associate 'with Him'"<sup>(28)</sup>.

﴿20﴾ Those to whom We gave the Book know him 'Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)' as much as they know their 'own' children. Those who have 'really' lost their souls are the ones who would not Believe<sup>(29)</sup>.

قُلْ أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَكْبَرُ شَهَادَةً قُلْ اللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَأُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنُ لِأُنذِرَكُمْ بِهِ وَمَنْ بَلَغَ أَتَيْكُمْ لَتَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهَةً أُخْرَى قُلْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ وَاتَّبِعْ بَرِيءًا مِمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمُ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

27 To prove the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), God is evoked as Arbiter between him and his opponents (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). In Arab culture, this is a very solemn undertaking; building on a sort of a code of honour. That God's Most Majestic Name, 'Allah', is specifically mentioned draws on the addressees' belief that Allah is Most Supreme over all the gods whom they claimed they only worshipped to draw them nearer to Him (39: 3). He is the One by Whom they used to bind each other in their pledges, dealings and interactions (cf. 4:1). They owed all their exceptional privileges over and above the whole of Arabia, to their legitimacy as guardians of His holiest shrine, the Ka'bah. So to evoke His Name in testimony is extremely serious, especially when it comes from the one person whom they used to call *al-amīn* (the honest), Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). "Nay' But 'in spite of the Deniers' Allah 'Himself' bears witness to what He sent down to you – He sent it with His Knowledge – and the angels bear witness 'to it' too—sufficient is Allah 'indeed' as Witness" (4: 166).

28 This is the testimony of monotheism: the ultimate declaration..., that there is only One God worthy of worship, Allah (ﷻ).

29 The People of the Book commanded much respect in the Arab collective consciousness because they were considered learned owing to their having

﴿21﴾ Who is more unjust than him who fabricated lies against Allah, or rejected His Signs—‘certainly’ the unjust are never successful. ﴿22﴾ On the Day when We round them all up, then We say to those who Associated: “Where are your Associates<sup>(30)</sup>, whom you used to ‘falsely’ claim?” ﴿23﴾ At that their plea would be only saying: “By Allah, our Lord, we were not Associators”.<sup>(31)</sup> ﴿24﴾ Look how they lied to themselves and what they used to fabricate deserted them!

﴿25﴾ Some among them would listen to you; ‘but’ We have put sheaths over their hearts, lest they would perceive it, and in their ears there is impairment<sup>(32)</sup>.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِآيَاتِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا إِنَّا سَرَكْنَا فِي الَّذِينَ كُفَرْتُمْ تَرْجُوعُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ثُمَّ لَمْ تَكُنْ فَتَحْشُرُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا وَاللَّهِ رَبَّنَا مَا كُنَّا مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ أَنْظِرْ كَيْفَ كَذَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ ۗ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ وَجَعَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ أَكِنَّةً أَنْ يَفْقَهُوهُ وَفِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا

Scriptures, whereas the Arabs of that time were overwhelmingly illiterate (62: 2). They are being brought to the fore here by way of forestalling an assumed argument of the Makkans against Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). The People of the Book had an exact description of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) in their Scriptures yet a great many of them did not Believe: “...those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they find inscribed in the Torah and the Evangel that is with them, who enjoins upon them what is right, and forbids them what is wrong, and makes good things lawful for them, and forbids them bad things, and relieves them of their burden and the shackles that were upon them. Thus those who Believe in him, honour him, help him, and follow the Light that has been sent down with him; it is they who shall prosper” (7: 157).

30 Those whom they worshipped besides God Almighty.

31 “On the Day Allah resurrects them all, they will ‘falsely’ swear to Him as they swear to you, thinking they have something to stand on. Indeed, it is they who are the ‘total’ liars” (58: 18).

32 This is the case of those among the Deniers who would not see the Truth no matter what they are being presented with. This is because they willingly



Even if they see every Sign, they would not Believe in it<sup>(33)</sup>; so much so that when they come to dispute with you, the Deniers would 'willingly' say: "This is nothing but merely 'a retelling of the' scribbles of the ancients!"<sup>(34)</sup>

وَأِنْ يَرَوْا كُلَّ آيَةٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا  
جَاءُوكَ يُجَادِلُونَكَ يَقُولَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ  
هَذَا إِلَّا آسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

and eagerly rushed into rejecting God's Signs as a matter of principle and out of entrenched beliefs. They knew that Believing would dispossess them of their special privileges, status and prestige, as Islam aimed to build a fundamentally equalitarian society. They just could not bring themselves to Believe in all that leads to this new state of affairs: "Those who Denied said: "Do not listen to this Qur'an. Drown it out so that hopefully you will gain the upper hand" (41: 26); "Some of them would listen to you and when they come out of your place they say: "What did he say earlier?" (47: 16); "They said: "Our hearts are in sheaths regarding what you call us for, there is impairment in our ears and between us and you is a barrier. Do your best then because we will surely be doing our best!" (41: 5).

Other ayas describe the same Denial: "And who is more unjust than those who, when reminded of their Lord's Signs, turn away from them and forget what their own hands have done? We have certainly put sheaths over their hearts – leaving them unable to perceive this 'Qur'an' – and impairment in their ears. And if you invite them to guidance, they will never be guided" (18: 57); "When you recite the Qur'an, We place a hidden veil between you and those who Believe not in the Hereafter. \*We have placed sheaths over their hearts, preventing them from perceiving it, and impairment in their ears. When you mention your Lord alone in the Qur'an, they turn their backs and run away" (17: 45-46).

33 "Yet, whenever they see a Sign, they turn away, saying: "Same old sorcery!" (54: 2).

34 This is a dynamic equivalence translation, reproducing a comparable affective import on the target language reader. Another translation would be: "This is nothing but myths of old!" Literally, *asāṭīr*, are written news and stories of ancient times, where fact and myth are inextricably intertwined (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'an*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). This claim is a familiar ruse of the Deniers: "Whenever Our Signs are recited to them, they say: "We have already heard' the recitation'. If we wanted, we could have easily produced something similar. This is nothing but scribbles of the ancients!" (8: 31); "They say: "This is nothing but scribbles of the ancients, which he had written down: they are dictated to him morning and evening" (25: 5).

﴿26﴾ They strongly caution ‘people’ against it ‘the Truth’ and they ‘themselves’ strike a distance away from it; they only destroy themselves unwittingly<sup>(35)</sup>.

وَهُمْ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَيَنْعَوْنَ عَنْهُ وَإِنْ يُهْلِكُونَ  
إِلَّا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

﴿27﴾ <sup>(36)</sup> If only you could see ‘Muhammad’ when they were stood at the Fire and then said: “How we wish we could be returned then we would ‘surely’ not deny the Signs of our Lord and would be among the Believers!<sup>(37)</sup>” ﴿28﴾ Nay, but what they used to hide<sup>(38)</sup> before was made to come all too true to them. If they were to return they would ‘only’ backtrack to what they were forbidden from—indeed they are liars.

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ فَقَالُوا يَا لَيْتَنَا  
نُرَدُّ وَلَا نُكَذِّبُ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونُ مِنَ  
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ بَلْ بَدَأَ اللَّهُ مَا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِنْ  
قَبْلُ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَادُوا لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ  
لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

- 35 “Are those whose evil-doing is made so appealing to them that they deem it good ‘like those who are rightly guided’?” (35: 8).
- 36 This passage is meant to console the Prophet (ﷺ) and assure him of the Deniers’ fate – those who caused him much pain and distress – by giving him a preview of some events of the Day of Judgement. The scenes and sights being depicted are so real that the past tense is used as if the events had already taken place. The past tense is also meant as an assurance that the case has already been settled.
- 37 “As for those who Deny, theirs shall be the Fire of Hell. They will neither be done away with so as to die; nor will any of its Punishment be lightened for them. Thus do We requite every Denier. \*They will howl out shouting therein: “Our Lord! Let us out, that we may do good other than that which we used to do. Did We not give you long life, enough for whosoever would reflect to reflect therein? And the Warner came to you, so taste ‘the Punishment’! The wrongdoers shall have no helpers.”” (35: 36-37).
- 38 Their realization of the Truth of the Message (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, ‘Uddat al-Ṣābirin, p. 186, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). They knew for sure that it was true but nonetheless they denied it all the same: “They denied them ‘the Signs’, in their wickedness and their pride, even though their souls acknowledged them as true. See how those who spread corruption met their end!” (27: 14).

﴿29﴾ 'Earlier in the worldly life' They used to say: "It is nothing but this worldly life of ours and we shall not be resurrected!" ﴿30﴾ 'But' If only you could see 'Muhammad' when they were stood in front of their Lord; He said: "Is not this real?" They said: "Most certainly, by our Lord!" He said: "Taste you then the Punishment for your Denying". ﴿31﴾ Losers indeed are those who deny the meeting of Allah, until when the Hour comes upon them all of a sudden, they would say: "Woe be us for wasting it 'our lives'!" ﴿39﴾ They would carry their 'burdensome' sins over their backs—sordid indeed what they carry. ﴿32﴾ This worldly life is nothing but a plaything, a distraction, but the final abode is better for the Mindful—have you no sense!<sup>(40)</sup>

وَقَالُوا إِن هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ بَلَيْسَ هَذَا بِالْحَقِّ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّنَا قَالَ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِلِقَاءِ اللَّهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ تَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً قَالُوا يَحْسِرْتَنَّا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَطْنَا فِيهَا وَهُمْ يَحْمِلُونَ أَوْرَاقَهُمْ عَلَىٰ ظُهُورِهِمْ ۗ أَلِيسَ مَا يَزِرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَعِبٌ وَهُوَ وَلَدَارُ الْآخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ ۗ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

39 "Follow 'the Qur'an' the best of what has been sent down to you from your Lord, before the Punishment comes upon you all of a sudden while you are unaware, \*lest any soul should say: "Woe is me for having neglected what is due to God, and having been one of those who scoffed!" (39: 55-56).

40 This life is nothing but an illusory enjoyment (3: 185) that will soon come to an abrupt end by death, but the Hereafter is the real life, the everlasting abode, that those of sound reason need to strive for: "The life of this world is merely a plaything and a distraction; the true life is in the Final Abode, if only they knew" (29: 64); "Know you all that the life of this world is but a plaything, a distraction, an ornament, mutual boasting among you, and vying for increase in property and children—the likeness of a rain whose vegetation impresses the farmers; then it withers such that you see it turn yellow; then it becomes chaff. And in the Hereafter there shall be severe Punishment, forgiveness from Allah, and Pleasure, and the life of this world is naught but an illusory enjoyment" (57: 20).

Al-Mustawrid Ibn Shaddād (رحمته الله) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "By Allah, this worldly life by comparison to the Hereafter is like a person who

﴿33﴾ (41) We 'surely' Know that what they say saddens you<sup>(42)</sup>. 'Know then that' They do not 'really' think you a liar, but the wrongdoers are 'only' dismissive of the Signs of Allah<sup>(43)</sup>. ﴿34﴾ Many a Messenger before you has been rejected, but they persevered in the face of their rejection; they were harmed until Our victory came to them. None can change the Words of Allah<sup>(44)</sup>; the profound news of the Messengers came to you<sup>(45)</sup>.

قَدْ نَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُ لَيَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِي يَقُولُونَ فَإِنَّهُمْ لَا يَكَذِبُونَكَ وَلَكِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ إِنَّمَا يُتِيَاَتُ اللَّهُ يَمْحَدُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَى مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأُوذُوا حَتَّى أَتَاهُمْ نَصْرُنَا وَلَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِنْ نَبِيَّاَتِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

dips this finger (pointing his index finger) in the sea; see how much he draws from it!" (Muslim: 2858).

- 41 This passage gives a glimpse at the woes and pains that our great Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) had to endure in his struggle to deliver the Message. He was met with stiff opposition and outright enmity by his own clan and some of his closest relatives, which naturally saddened and pained him. They customarily called him a madman, a sorcerer, a charlatan, a liar, a mere rhymester; they rejected his Message calling it mere scribbles of the ancients, and they hurled many more jeers and sneers at him; and their persecutions were by no means any less severe. But God Almighty was on his side. He bolstered him with the necessary support and comfort to get over such states and to carry on delivering the Message, striving in the cause (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 42 The great grief the Prophet (ﷺ) experienced is laconically captured in the following aya: "But, perhaps you 'Muhammad' will grieve yourself to death over their Denial, if they 'continue to' Deny in this Discourse" (18: 6).
- 43 They knew for sure that he came with the Truth, but out of intransigence and haughtiness they would not admit this (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'ādī). The Qur'an employs the word *jaḥada* which means to deny and reject with the tongue what the heart surely knows to be the Truth; the noun *juhūd*, which derives from it, means ingratitude (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 44 That He (ﷻ) will grant victory to His Messengers and the sincerely faithful around them (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Ashūr): "Our Word has already been given to Our servants, the Messengers, that: it is they who will be made victorious, and that Our forces will certainly prevail" (37: 171-173); "Allah decreed that: "I shall prevail, Me and My Messengers—verily Allah is All-Powerful, All-Prevailing"" (58: 21).
- 45 "And all We relate to you 'Muhammad' of the stories of the Messengers is to reassure your heart" (11: 120).

﴿35﴾ (46) If their aversion is too hard on you, then if you can seek out a tunnel in the ground or ladder to the sky, so that you may bring them a Sign 'then do it'; 'but' if Allah so wished He would have banded them all together around guidance, so be not among the ignorant.

وَإِنْ كَانَ كِبْرُ عَلَيْكَ إِعْرَاضُهُمْ فَإِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَنْبَغِيَ نَفَقًا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ سَلْمًا فِي السَّمَاءِ فَتَأْتِيَهُمْ بَيِّنَاتٌ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَمَعَهُمْ عَلَى الْهُدَىٰ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾

﴿36﴾ (47) Indeed only those who can hear<sup>(48)</sup> will respond, yet the dead Allah will resurrect them and then to Him they return<sup>(49)</sup>. ﴿37﴾ They said: "If only a Sign from his Lord would be sent down to him!"<sup>(50)</sup>

\*إِنَّمَا يَسْتَجِيبُ الَّذِينَ يَسْمَعُونَ وَالْمَوْتَىٰ يَبْعَثُهُمُ اللَّهُ تَوَّابًا إِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ

- 46 In the face of this fierce onslaught, the Prophet (ﷺ) is told that he can do none of the sort of actions mentioned, whether digging a tunnel or climbing up a ladder to the sky, in response to his foes' preposterous demands. Had God wished, He would have made them all willingly embrace his call. So he need not feel anguish on account of this (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ṭaṭṭāwī, *al-Taḥsīn al-Wasīlī*): "Had your Lord 'Muhammad' so willed, all 'people' on Earth would have certainly Believed, every single one of them! Would you then force people to become Believers?" (10: 99).
- 47 This passage carries on from the few previous ones further expanding on them. Those who fail to be guided are so done by because they themselves are adamantly unwilling to receive the Signs of God. They are 'dead' to them revelling and languishing in a bottomless pit of darkness (cf. Riḍā, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 48 Those who are well-tuned and receptive (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).
- 49 Those who rebel against the call to Truth and are 'dead' to it will meet their fate on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr). That the misguided are 'dead' is a metaphor that carries on in Aya 6:122 below: "Is the one who was dead and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which?" (al-Shinqīṭī draws attention to this point).
- 50 They keep on asking for miraculous 'signs' even though whatever Signs they might be given would not be believed in (Aya 25 above), seeking thereby only to further confound and complicate matters (Aya 9 above) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī). This is their oft-evoked lame excuse: "They

Say 'Muhammad': "Indeed Allah can send down a Sign"; but most of them know not<sup>(51)</sup>. ﴿38﴾ There is not a single moving creature on Earth or a bird flying with its two wings except them being nations like you<sup>(52)</sup> – We left nothing

قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَادِرٌ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ آيَةً وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَّمٌ مِّثْلًا لَكُمْ مَّا قَرَّبْنَا

say: "We will not Believe in you 'Muhammad' until you make a spring gush out of the ground for us; \*or until you have a garden of date palms and vines, and make rivers pour through them; \*or make the sky fall on us in pieces, as you claimed will happen; \*or bring Allah and the angels before us face to face; \*or have a house made of gold; or ascend into the sky, 'but' even then, we will not Believe in your ascension until you send a 'tangible' book down for us to read". Say: "Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a mortal, a Messenger?" (17: 90-93).

- 51 This draws attention to their sheer ignorance of the laws of God and what befell many a nation before them: when people ask for a sign and choose afterwards to declare it false, they will surely meet a swift reckoning. An example at hand is that of the Thamūd, their not too distant neighbours, who asked for a supernatural she-camel as a Sign but chose to disbelieve in it afterwards, miraculous as it was, and God exacted justice on them momentarily: "Nothing keeps Us from sending the 'demanded' Signs except that they had 'already' been denied by earlier peoples. And We gave the Thamūd the she-camel as a clear 'Sign', but they wrongfully rejected it. We only send the Signs as a warning" (17: 59).
- 52 The 'Signs' are everywhere, all around them but being 'out of tune' and adamantly objectionable resulted in their sense of perception being blotched; they are "deaf and dumb in the bosom of darkness" as if 'dead'. All the creatures around us are but nations like us; in them are enough Signs for those of sound reason to see and know the path to God. They are created, provided for, brought to death and resurrected by God Almighty. All of their lives, livelihoods and deeds are recorded to the smallest detail in the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*): "There is no moving creature on Earth but that its provision lies with Allah. And He knows its dwelling place and its repository. All is 'accounted for' in a clear Book" (11: 6; cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- The One who does all this, is more than Able to bring them whatever Sign He wishes (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shirbīnī), and to Him they shall all be returned: "We know best the way they listen, when they listen to you and when they confer in secret, and these wrongdoers say: "You are only following a man who is bewitched". \*See what they think you are like! But they are lost and cannot find the right way. \*They also say: "What? When we are turned to bones and dust, shall we really be raised up in a new act of creation? \*Say: "Yes' Even if you were 'as hard as' stone, or iron,

unaccounted for in the Book – and then to their Lord they shall be gathered. <sup>439</sup> Those who deny Our Signs are deaf and dumb in ‘the bosom of’ darkness<sup>53</sup>. Whoever Allah wishes, He misguides and whoever He wishes, He places him on a Straight Path.

<sup>440</sup> <sup>(54)</sup> Say ‘Muhammad’: “Would you not see that when Allah’s Punishment comes to you or the Hour comes upon you, would you pray to any besides ‘Allah’, if only you are truthful?” <sup>441</sup> “Nay, but it is He Whom you would pray to, then He removes what you pray to Him for, if He so wills, and you forget about what you Associate ‘with Him’.”<sup>(55)</sup>

فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا صُمٌّ وَبُكْمٌ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ مَن يَشَاءِ اللَّهُ يُضِلِّهُ وَمَن يَشَاءِ يُصِّرْهُ عَلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٣٩﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ كُمُ إِذَا نَادَاكُمُ الْعَذَابُ اللَّهُ أَوْتَأْتِكُمْ أَلَسَّاعَةٌ أَعْبَرَ اللَّهُ تَدْعُونَ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ بَلْ إِيَّاهُ تَدْعُونَ فَيَكْشِفُ مَا تَدْعُونَ إِلَيْهِ إِنْ شَاءَ وَتَنْسَوْنَ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

*\*or any other creation you think hard to bring to life”. Then they will say: “Who will bring us back?” Say: “The One Who created you the first time”. Then they will shake their heads at you and say: “When will that be?” Say: “It may well be very soon: \*it will be the Day when He calls you, and you answer by praising Him, and you think you have stayed ‘on Earth’ only a little while” (17: 47-52).*

- 53 *Zulumāt* (lit. darknesses) is, as always given in the Qur’an, in the plural. They waste their lives away in the darknesses of Denying, ignorance and intransigence (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 54 Then, people might have had many gods whom they Associated with God, but when they were touched by affliction or hit by disaster they quickly turned to the One and only God, the ‘Allah’ they knew for sure as All-Able, All-Dominant. At those times their recalcitrance evaded them (cf. al-Rāzī): “*He is the One Who enables you to travel through land and sea. And it so happens that you are on ships, sailing with a favourable wind, to the passengers’ delight. Suddenly, the ships are overcome by a gale wind and those on board are overwhelmed by waves from every side, and they assume they are doomed. They cry out to Allah ‘alone’ in sincere devotion: “If You save us from this, we will certainly be grateful” (10: 22).*
- 55 “*When you are touched with hardship at sea, you forget all ‘the gods’ you ‘normally’ invoke, except Him. But when He delivers you ‘safely’ to shore, you turn away. Humans are ever ungrateful” (17: 67).*

﴿42﴾ We have certainly sent 'Messengers' to nations before you 'Muhammad'; We took them by affliction and hardship, so that they might humble themselves.

﴿43﴾ Were they only when Our affliction befell them to 'sincerely' humble themselves!<sup>(56)</sup> Nay, but their hearts became hard and Satan made what they used to do look attractive to them<sup>(57)</sup>. ﴿44﴾ When they forgot what they were reminded of<sup>(58)</sup>, We opened up for them the doors of everything<sup>(59)</sup>; yet when they become full of gloating over what they were given,

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ أُمَمٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَآخَذْنَاهُمْ  
بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَضَرَّعُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾  
فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِن قَسَتْ  
فُلُوبُهُمْ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ مَا كَانُوا  
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَتَحْنَا  
عَلَيْهِمُ أَبْوَابَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَرِحُوا بِمَا أُوتُوا

56 *Yataḍarra'u* is to worship God with all sincerity and in humbleness. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

57 Denial, Association and sinning. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

58 They deliberately disregarded what their Messengers conveyed to them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

59 The doors that were shut to them at times of hardship will be opened and they will experience a life of ease, limitless abundance and merriment. Until they become too gleefully sure of it, God brings His swift reckoning over their heads (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī): “Whenever We sent a Prophet to a town, We afflicted its ‘Denying’ people with suffering and hardships, so that they might humble themselves ‘before Us’, \*and then We changed their hardship into prosperity, until they multiplied. But then they ‘smugly’ said: “Hardship and affluence also befell our forefathers”, and so We took them all of a sudden, unawares” (7: 94-95). ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Āmir (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When you see Allah providing generously for a servant, despite him being ‘rebelliously’ sinful, then know that it is by way of luring him ‘into a trap’”. Then he (رضي الله عنه) recited: “When they forgot what they were reminded of, We opened up for them the doors of everything; yet when they become full of gloating over what they were given, We took them all of a sudden, and lo they are full of despair” (Aḥmad: 17311, al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ*: 9272, al-Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab al-Īmān*: 4220). This aya, further, relates back to Aya 11 above, which encourages taking heed from the fate of earlier nations who Denied their Messengers.



We took them all of a sudden, and lo they are seized with despair. <sup>445</sup> The people who did wrong were utterly wiped out; all gratitude be to Allah, the Lord of all beings.

<sup>446</sup> Say 'Muhammad': "Would you not see that if Allah were to take away your hearing and your sight; and seal your hearts, what god besides 'Allah' would restore it 'all' back to you!<sup>60</sup> Look 'Muhammad' how We expound the Signs to them and then they 'defiantly' turn away! <sup>447</sup> Say 'Muhammad': "Would you not see that if Allah's Punishment befalls you all of a sudden or plainly to sight; would none but only the wrongdoers be destroyed?<sup>62</sup>

أَخَذْنَهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾  
فَقَطَّعَ دَائِرَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ  
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ سَمْعَكُمْ وَأَبْصَارَكُمْ  
وَحَتَمَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ مِنَ إِلَهٍ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ  
بِهِ أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نَصَرَفُ الْآيَاتِ ثُمَّ هُمْ  
يَصْدَفُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ أَنْتُمْ عَدَابُ  
اللَّهِ بَغْتَةً أَوْ جَهْرَةً هَلْ يُهْلِكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمَ  
الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

- 60 This passage sheds further light and expounds upon the previous one; providing yet further Signs of the Truth and God's Omnipotence. (Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 61 They are reminded to take heed, being warned about a Punishment for the nature of their rejection. The argument goes that any god would normally want hearing, seeing and mindful servants who are able to worship him and pay him homage, but given that the Deniers made no use of these perceptual faculties to come to realize the Truth for what it really is (knowing all too well that their false gods are not in the least able to either benefit or harm them, being nothing more than stones and inanimate objects), and fully knowing that only 'Allah' (God) is able over everything, they might as well be bereft of them (cf. al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-'Aḥḥ al-Namīr).
- 62 Punishment could come to them suddenly without warning or after the coming of its harbingers and none could tip them off in the case of the earlier or save them in the case of the latter; either way, only the Deniers will be taken, and God saves His sincere servants (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Those who Believe and do not mix their Belief with injustice, for those is security and they are 'truly' guided" (6: 82).

﴿48﴾ We send Messengers as nothing but bearers of glad tidings and warners<sup>(63)</sup>; whoever Believes and mends 'their ways' then they should not fear nor need they grieve<sup>(64)</sup>, ﴿49﴾ 'but' those who reject Our Signs, Punishment touches them for their rebelliousness. ﴿50﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "I would not say to you that I hold the treasures of Allah, I do not know 'about' the Unseen<sup>(65)</sup>, I would not say to you that I am an angel; I only follow what is revealed to me". Say 'Muhammad': "Are the blind and the seeing 'persons' alike?<sup>(66)</sup> Would you 'Deniers' not reflect!"

وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِينَ إِلَّا مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ  
فَمَنْ ءَامَنَ وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ  
يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا بِمَسْهُمْ  
الْعَذَابُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ لَا أَقُولُ  
لَكُمْ عِنْدِي خَزَائِنُ اللَّهِ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ  
وَلَا أَقُولُ لَكُمْ إِنِّي مَلَكٌ إِنِّي أَتَّبِعُ إِلَّا مَا يُوحَىٰ  
إِلَيَّ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ أَفَلَا  
تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

- 63 This explains plainly that God sends human Messengers for specific purposes, whereby they come to deliver the Message they were entrusted with, but are not to be toyed with. (Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 64 Those who come to embrace Faith in all sincerity are given assurance against future Punishment; they should not be saddened over their previous rebellious actions. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 65 Messengers are but human beings who warn people against rebelling against God and bring them glad tidings of the good rewards in store for those who listen and pay heed. They come with a Message to open up peoples' hearts and minds to the Truth; they are not endowed with the supernatural powers that people want them to demonstrate at will: "Say 'Muhammad': 'I have no power over benefit or harm, 'even' to myself, except as Allah may please: if I had knowledge of the Unseen, I would have abundant good things and no harm could touch me. I am no more than a bearer of warning, and good news to those who Believe'" (7: 188). This clear, definite reply puts an end to their disputatious demands.
- 66 The analogy of the blind and the seeing replicates the other contrasting comparisons between the dead and the living, the deaf and the hearing, with which this sura abounds. Those who are being contrasted here are the Deniers who are 'blind' to the Truth and the Believers who can see it plainly for what it is (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿51﴾ (67) Warn with it<sup>(68)</sup> 'Muhammad' those who fear being gathered before their Lord – there is none besides Him as an ally or intercessor for them<sup>(69)</sup> – so they might be Mindful. ﴿52﴾ Do not 'Muhammad' turn away<sup>(70)</sup> those who pray to their Lord early and late in the day seeking 'only' His Face<sup>(71)</sup>; you will not be brought to account over them nor will they be brought to account over your deeds so that you may turn them away, 'mind you' lest you would be among the wrongdoers.

وَأَنْذِرْ بِهِ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْ يُحْشَرُوا إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ لَيْسَ لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا سَفِيحٌ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَلَا تَطْرُدِ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَدَاةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَهُ مَا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَمَا مِنْ حِسَابِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَتَطْرُدَهُمْ فَتَكُونَ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

- 67 Now, discourse sheds light on yet another segment of that society, the less favoured who had no vested interest in the status quo but who wholeheartedly embraced the Message of Truth. A truth they readily saw.
- 68 The Qur'an. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 69 They sincerely fear God because they fully realize that there will be none on the Day of Judgement to help them or intercede with Him except the Almighty Himself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 70 In these early days, the ones who sincerely Believed were mostly from among the underprivileged societal denominations, paupers and slaves, so out of sheer egotism when those belonging to the upper echelons of society wanted to sit with the Prophet they disdainfully demanded these 'others' be sent away. Sa'd Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) said: "We were with the Prophet (ﷺ), six of us, when the Associates said to him: "Send these away, lest they get overfamiliar with us!" He continued: "There were me, 'Abdullāh' Ibn Mas'ūd, a man from 'the clan of' Hudhayl, Bilāl 'Ibn Rabāḥ' and another two men whom I do not know their names. Something 'of sorts' occurred to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and then Allah sent down: "Do not 'Muhammad' turn away those who pray to their Lord early and late in the day'" (Muslim: 2413). Such haughtiness was known about since the first Messenger, Noah (عليه السلام), was sent to humanity: "They said: "Why should we Believe you 'Noah' when only the riffraff follow you?" \*He said: "What knowledge do I have of what they used to do? \*It is for my Lord alone to bring them to account - if only you could see - \*I will not drive Believers away. \*I am but a clear warner"" (26: 111-115).
- 71 The fact that they are busy with mentioning and praying to their Lord at these two most busy times of the day underlines how devoted they were (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

﴿53﴾ Like so We tested some of them by means of others<sup>(72)</sup>, so they 'the haughty' would say: "Is it these whom Allah favoured among us!" Is not Allah more aware of the thankful?<sup>(73)</sup> ﴿54﴾ When those who Believe in Our Signs come to you say 'to them': "Peace be upon you – your Lord decreed Mercy upon Himself – whoever of you commits evil out of ignorance then repents afterwards, and mends 'their ways', then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful"<sup>(74)</sup>.

﴿55﴾ Like so We spell out the Signs so that the path of the criminals becomes plain 'to sight'<sup>(75)</sup>.

وَكَذَلِكَ فَتَنَّا بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لِيَقُولُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا أَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِالشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ كَتَبَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ الرَّحْمَةَ أَنَّهُ مَنْ عَمِلَ مِنْكُمْ سُوءًا بِجَهْلَةٍ ثُمَّ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَأَنَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلِتَسْتبينَ سَبِيلُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

- 72 That mainly the less significant of the population were the first to embrace the call is yet another test for the notables of society. In order to become true Believers, they would have to suppress their feelings of deep contempt and really consider themselves brethren with those whom they saw themselves as vastly superior to (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 73 Their senses were not clouded by worldly distractions, so they knew the Truth for what it really was once they saw it; they readily counted God's many favours on them and became thankful.
- 74 No matter what rank other mortals held them at, they were practically honoured by their Most High Lord. They were to be amiably received and greeted by the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), given the good tidings of God's Mercy to them and told that their sins will be forgiven once they seek repentance. These were the most solid kernel of the Believing society, who performed many death-defying acts of heroism and whose role was decisive in bolstering the preservation of the whole Faith community in those early days.
- 75 The path of the Believers further draws attention to how swerved the path of the Deniers is (al-Rāzī, al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūm*). The Believers' whole-hearted, unconditional acceptance of the call of Truth was to be yet another Sign of the true path to take had the Deniers' senses not been clouded: "If they 'the Deniers' see the path of guidedness, they would not take it as a path..." (7: 146).

﴿56﴾ (76) Say ‘Muhammad’: “I was forbidden to worship those you invoke besides Allah”. Say: “I shall not follow your ‘vain’ desires<sup>(77)</sup>; ‘for then’ I shall be misguided and not among the guided”. ﴿57﴾ Say: “I stand on clear evidence from my Lord, yet you deny it; I do not have what you are in a hurry for<sup>(78)</sup>. Only Allah has a decision ‘about that’; He declares the Truth—He is the best of adjudicators”. ﴿58﴾ Say: “If I have what you seek to hasten, the matter between me and you would have been ‘soon’ settled—Allah knows best the wrongdoers<sup>(79)</sup>”.

﴿59﴾ (80) “He ‘Allah’ has the keys of the Unseen<sup>(81)</sup>, only He knows them.

قُلْ إِنِّي نُهِيتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَا آتِيْعَ أَهْوَاءَكُمْ قَدْ ضَلَلْتُ إِذًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّي وَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِهِ مَا عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ إِنْ الْحُكْمُ إِلَّا لِلَّهِ يَقْضِي الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الْفَاصِلِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قُلْ لَوْ أَنَّ عِنْدِي مَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ بِهِ لَقَضِيَ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

\*وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِيْحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ

- 76 The diatribe against the Deniers is renewed here with emphasis on stating a clear position which strikes a definite distance from the path of the misguided (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Ashūr).
- 77 Following vain desires is what lead them to stray. (Abū Ḥayyān)
- 78 That is Punishment from God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “They also said: “O Allah, if this really is the Truth from You, then rain stones on us from the heavens, or send us some other painful Punishment” (8: 32); “They say: “Our Lord, hasten us our share of Punishment before the Day of Reckoning!” (38: 16).
- 79 An allusion to the destruction of the ‘wrongdoers’; a throwback to Aya 47 above.
- 80 The following are indications of the absolute Omnipotence and Omniscience of the One and true Master of the universe, Whom they Deny out of sheer ignorance (Abū Ḥayyān).
- 81 *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (lit. keys of the Unseen) is invariably interpreted by exegetes as *khazā’in al-ghayb*, troves of the Unseen. Although this passage provides a number of these ‘keys’ that lie beyond human perceptions, the example usually given is Aya 31: 34: “Indeed, Allah ‘alone’ has the

He knows ‘all’ what is there in the land and sea; not a leaf that falls without Him knowing about it, not a seed in the ‘deepest recess of the’ darkness of Earth<sup>(82)</sup>, not a thing moist nor dry<sup>(83)</sup> except ‘it’ being in a clarifying book<sup>(84)</sup>.”  
 ﴿60﴾ “He is the One Who terminates your ‘lives’ at night<sup>(85)</sup> and knows what you earn during the day, then He sets you off ‘again’ during it ‘the day’ so that a specified term comes to an end<sup>(86)</sup>; then to Him is your return then He gives you the news about what you used to do<sup>(87)</sup>.” ﴿61﴾ “He is the Most Dominant over His servants<sup>(88)</sup>

وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنَ  
 وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظِلْمَتِ الْأَرْضِ  
 وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾  
 وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَتَوَفَّاكُم بِاللَّيْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا جَرَحْتُم  
 بِالنَّهَارِ ثُمَّ يَبْعَثُكُمْ فِيهِ لِيُقْضَىٰ أَجَلٌ  
 مُّسْتَقَرٌّ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا  
 كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَهُوَ الْقَاهِرُ فَوْقَ عِبَادِهِ

*knowledge of the Hour. He sends down the rain, and knows what is in the wombs. No soul knows what it will earn for tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware’.*

- 82 The seeds buried deep in the ground. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 83 Exegetes hold different opinions regarding the meaning of this binary pair; however al-Baghawī notes that ‘moist’ and ‘dry’ could be used as metonyms for life and death, respectively.
- 84 The Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*) in which everything is clearly written ever since God first created the universe. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 85 The taking of people’s souls away from their bodies during their sleep (known as *al-wafāt al-ṣuḡhrā*; the lesser death) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Allah takes the souls of the dead and the souls of the living while they sleep - He keeps hold of those whose death He has ordained and sends the others back until their appointed time - there truly are Signs in this for those who reflect” (39: 42).
- 86 A person’s life.
- 87 On the Day of Judgement, God will bring people to account for their deeds after reviewing their records in public. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 88 God Almighty’s total, unchecked Dominance over His servants is a notion which is underlined in many Qur’anic passages; cf. 10: 107, 35: 2, 39: 38, 48: 11, 33: 17.

and He sends 'constant' keepers<sup>(89)</sup> over you, until when death comes upon any of you, Our messengers<sup>(90)</sup> terminate his life; never do they neglect 'a thing'". <sup>(62)</sup> <sup>(91)</sup> Then they are returned to Allah, their real Master; nay but to Him alone belongs the decision—He is the swiftest of Reckoners.

وَبُرْسُلَ عَلَيْكُمْ حَفَظَةً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَكُمْ  
الْمَوْتُ تَوَفَّتْهُ رُسُلُنَا وَهُمْ لَا يُفَرِّطُونَ ﴿٦١﴾  
ثُمَّ رُدُّوْا إِلَى اللَّهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِّ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْحُكْمُ  
وَهُوَ أَسْرَعُ الْحَاسِبِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾

<sup>(63)</sup> Say 'Muhammad': "Who salvages you from the 'danger-fraught, deep' darkness of the land and sea?<sup>(92)</sup> 'But the One' You invoke Him humbly and mutedly<sup>(93)</sup>; 'saying' "Should He salvage us from this, we will surely be among the thankful".

قُلْ مَنْ يُجِيبُكُمْ مِّنْ ظُلُمَاتِ اللَّيْلِ وَالْبَحْرِ  
تَدْعُوْنَهُ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً لَّيْنٍ ۚ أَجْحَمْنَا مِنْ هٰذِهِ  
لَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الشَّاكِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾

89 *Hafazah* (lit. keepers/protectors); these are angels who protect people and keep record of their deeds (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "For each one there are successive angels before and behind, protecting them by Allah's command" (13: 11); "Standing over you are guardians 'angels', \*watchers, noble recorders \*who know what you do" (82: 10-12).

90 The angels whose task is to take souls. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

91 The change of tone in this passage concluding aya is nothing short of majestic: the shift from first person to third person pronouns, from being talked to and then being talked about; from the present tense, which directly addresses the interlocutors and talks about the now, to the past tense in which the intended are only alluded to, and talks about a scene from the future as if already past and gone; and use of the marked exclusive "a-lā" (nay but!) is meant to further indicate the boundless Supremacy of God, Who is the sole Judge of people's deeds.

92 The Arabs of that time, like many people nowadays, did not deny that 'Allah' was their sole Lord (known as *tawhīd al-rubūbiyyah*) Whom they turned to in hard times, but what they denied was His sole Godhood (known as *tawhīd al-ulūhiyyah*), i.e. that He is the only God worthy of worship. Discourse here draws their attention to this fact in argument against them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

93 That is they summon up their most sincere prayers in true humbleness and whole-heartedly as people would do in hard times, yet once their prayers are answered, they renege on their promise to God.

﴿64﴾ Say: "Allah 'alone' salvages you from it and from every distress, 'but only' then you 'just' Associate 'with Him'".<sup>(94)</sup>  
 ﴿65﴾ <sup>(95)</sup> Say: "He is ever Able to send a Punishment on you from above you or from under your feet<sup>(96)</sup>; or mull you up into 'hostile' factions, letting some of you taste the brawn of the other".<sup>(97)</sup>

قُلْ اللَّهُ يُنَجِّيكُمْ مِنْهَا وَمِنْ كُلِّ كَرْبٍ تُنْمَأْتُمْ  
 تُشْرَكُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ قُلْ هُوَ الْقَادِرُ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
 عَذَابًا مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ أَوْ مِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِكُمْ أَوْ يَلْبَسَكُمْ  
 شِيْعًا وَيُذِيقَ بَعْضَكُمْ بَأْسَ بَعْضٍ

- 94 "When you are touched with hardship at sea, you forget all 'the gods' you invoke, except for Him. But when He delivers you 'safely' ashore, you turn away. Humankind is ever ungrateful!" (17: 67).
- 95 This is to make them realize that the thin cover of safety and security in which they revelled can easily be blown away by the Almighty, so that they need not take Him lightly or pretend to forget about Him (cf. *al-Biqā'ī, Naẓm al-Durar*): "Do the people of these towns feel secure that Our Punishment will not come upon them by night, while they are asleep? \*Do the people of these towns feel secure that Our Punishment will not come upon them by day, while they are at play? \*Do they feel secure against Allah's planning? None would feel secure from Allah's planning except the losers!" (7: 97-99).
- 96 This unqualified, undefined 'Punishment' opens up the doors to imagining all sorts of awful disasters that God can strike them with (Riḍā). They only need to ponder the fate of earlier nations and indeed their own fate whereby they think about the blessings they comfortably take for granted and the dangers they are oblivious to: "Your Lord is He Who makes ships go smoothly for you on the sea so that you can seek His bounty: He is Most Merciful towards you. \*When you are touched with hardship at sea, you forget all 'the gods' you invoke, except for Him. But when He delivers you 'safely' ashore, you turn away. Humankind is ever ungrateful! \*Do you feel secure that He will not cause the land to swallow you up, or unleash upon you a storm of stones? Then you will find none to protect you. \*Or do you feel secure that He will not cause you to return to it another time, and unleash upon you a tempestuous wind, and drown you for your having been ungrateful? Then you would find no avenger therein against Us" (17: 66-69); "Are you sure that He Who is in Heaven will not make the land swallow you up with a violent shudder? \*Are you sure that He Who is in Heaven will not send a whirlwind to pelt you with stones? You will come to know what My warning means!" (67: 16-17).
- 97 That is to trigger discord and civil unrest. Society's vulnerability to this most hideous monster rearing its head in its midst, making life almost



Look 'Muhammad' how We diversify the Signs so that may they discern! <sup>66</sup> Your people 'Muhammad' denied it, while it is the Truth, say: "I am not a guardian over you!" <sup>67</sup> "For every 'piece of significant' news is a 'date' of fulfillment; you shall come to know."

<sup>68</sup> <sup>(98)</sup> When you 'Muhammad' see those who indulge in 'blasphemous talk about' Our Signs, avert them until they engage in 'some' other speech<sup>(99)</sup>; perchance should Satan cause you to forget 'about this' then once you remember, do not sit with the wrongful people.

أَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نَصَرْنَا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾  
وَكَذَّبَ بِهِ قَوْمُكَ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ قُلْ لَسْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ  
بُوكِيلٌ ﴿٦٦﴾ لِكُلِّ نَبَأٍ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

وَإِذْ أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ يَحُضُّونَ فِي آيَاتِنَا فَأَعْرَضَ عَنْهُمْ  
حَتَّى يَحُضُّوْا فِي حَدِيثِ غَيْرِهِ وَإِنَّمَا يُنْسِيَنَّكَ  
السَّيْطَانُ فَلَا تَقْعُدْ بَعْدَ الذِّكْرِ مَعَ الْقَوَّارِ  
الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

impossible to endure, is thus exposed. At such turbulent times, they just wish for their lives to end a thousand times over. Jābir Ibn 'Abdillāh narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) sought refuge by God from the former two types of Punishment when he heard this aya for the first time, but said: "These two are much lighter and much less severe", when he heard the third type of Punishment, i.e. them being divided into warring factions (al-Bukhārī: 7313).

- 98 Building on the preceding episode as much as in an earlier passage (Ayas 51-55), this passage yet again points the Messenger (ﷺ) to the right way of dealing with his circumstances and the people that exist in them. Given the elongated answer that he was delivered before, he is also told here of the right manner to deal with the Denying ones around him (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 99 This is a general rule that applies at all times: "He sent down 'in' the Book to you that should you hear the Signs of Allah being Denied or ridiculed 'by some', then remain not with them unless they engage in a conversation other than that. 'If you still stay with them' Then you are 'just' like them—indeed Allah will gather the Deniers and the hypocrites in Hellfire altogether" (4: 140).

﴿69﴾ Those who are Mindful will not be brought to account over them 'the wrongdoers'; but only a reminder 'they extend', perchance they become Mindful. ﴿70﴾ Leave behind 'Muhammad' those who took their religion lightly and playfully and were deceived by the worldly life, and remind with it 'the Qur'an', lest that a soul becomes bonded by what it earned; there is no ally or intercessor for it besides Allah and if it were to ransom itself with anything it will not be accepted from it<sup>(100)</sup>. Those are the ones who are bonded for their earning, for them are a boiling drink and a painful Punishment for all their Denying.

﴿71﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Are we to pray to that – apart from Allah – which neither benefits us nor harms us<sup>(101)</sup>; and be turned on our heels when Allah guided us<sup>(102)</sup>?" "And be ' Like the one who was lured by the devils 'to stray' in the land, bewildered, while he has 'true' friends calling him to guidance: "Come to us!"

وَمَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ مِنْ حِسَابِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَلَكِنْ ذَكَرُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾  
 وَذَرِ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَهُوَ عَزَائِبُهُ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا وَذَكَرَ بِهِمْ أَنْ تَبْسُلُ نَفْسٌ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلِيٌّ وَلَا شَفِيعٌ وَإِنْ تَعَدَّلَ كُلٌّ عَدْلًا لَا يُؤَخِّذُ مِنْهَا أَوْلِيَاكَ الَّذِينَ أُبْسِلُوا بِمَا كَسَبُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

قُلْ أَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ دِينِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنْفَعُنَا وَلَا يَضُرُّنَا وَنُرَدُّ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِنَا بَعْدَ إِهْدَانَا اللَّهُ كَالَّذِي اسْتَهْوَتْهُ الشَّيَاطِينُ فِي الْأَرْضِ حَيْرَانَ لَهُ أَصْحَابٌ يَدْعُونَهُ إِلَىٰ الْهُدَىٰ انْتَبِهْ

100 "Those who Deny and die as Deniers, 'as much as' Earth's fill of gold will not be accepted from them, even if they were to ransom themselves with it—for those is a painful Punishment and they will have no helpers" (3: 91).

101 This implies the surrounding idolaters, who worshipped nothing more than inanimate objects, statues and carvings (cf. al-Rāzī).

102 Back to the old days of misguidedness. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

Say: “Indeed ‘true’ guidance is the guidance of Allah! We were commanded to ‘devoutly’ submit to the Lord of all beings”. ﴿72﴾ And “to keep you the Prayer and be Mindful of Him—‘indeed’ He is the One to whom you shall be gathered<sup>(103)</sup>”. ﴿73﴾ He is the One Who created the Heavens and Earth with the Truth<sup>(104)</sup>; and on the Day when He says: “Be!” and it shall be<sup>(105)</sup>; His speech is the Truth and to Him belongs Sovereignty on the Day when the Horn<sup>(106)</sup> will be blown – the All-Knower of what is unseen and witnessed—He is the Most Wise, the All-Knowledgeable.

﴿74﴾<sup>(107)</sup> ‘Mention’ When Ibrāhīm ‘Abraham’ said to his father, Āzar:

قُلْ إِنْ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَأَمْرًا يُسَلِّمَ  
لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَأَنْ أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوْهُ  
وَهُوَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُخْشَرُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي  
خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَیَوْمَ یَقُولُ  
كُنْ فِیْ كُنْ قَوْلَهُ الْحَقُّ وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ  
یَوْمَ یُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ عَلَی الْعَیْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ  
وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿٧٣﴾

\*وَاذْ قَالِ إِبْرَاهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ آزَرَ

- 103 On the Day of Judgement when everyone will be held accountable for their deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 104 This is the greatest Sign ever, one that was created for a good reason: “*We have not created the Heavens and Earth and everything in between without purpose – that is the assumption of those who Denied—woe to those who Denied when they are in the Fire!*” (38: 27).
- 105 The All-Sovereign of the Day of Judgement will only say: “Be!” and His will is no sooner realized (cf. al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 106 Exegetes are unanimous that *al-ṣūr* is a horn which is blown by Archangel Isrāfīl to announce the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Samarqandī, *Baḥr al-‘Ulūm*): “*And the Horn was blown; that indeed is the Day promised*” (50: 20); “*The Horn will be sounded and – lo and behold! – they will rush out to their Lord from their graves*” (36: 51).
- 107 The direct addressees here are the Qurayshites, who rightly considered themselves as the descendants of Abraham (ﷺ), being the offspring of Ishmael (ﷺ). They also considered their religion linked to him, although being only remotely related to his *ḥanīfiyyah* in the most rudimentary of terms. This is why he is cited in argument against them, giving them insight as to how he came to be the true Believer in God and His Signs that he was; having to read cosmic Signs to reach this conclusion (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

“Do you take on idols as gods! Indeed I see you and your people in apparent misguidance”.  
 ﴿75﴾ Like so We showed Ibrāhīm the magnificent Dominion<sup>(108)</sup> of the Heavens and Earth and that he shall be among those possessing certitude. ﴿76﴾ Thus when ‘the darkness of’ night shrouded him, he saw a ‘particularly luminous’ planet and said: “This is my Lord?”<sup>(109)</sup> When it vanished,

أَتَّخَذُوا صَمَاءَ آلِهَةً إِنِّي أَرَأَيْتَ لِقَوْمِكَ  
 فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ نُرِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ  
 مَلَكُوتَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَكُونُ  
 مِنَ الْمُوقِنِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّا جَنَّ عَلَيْهِ اللَّيْلُ رَأَى  
 كَوْكَبًا قَالِ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ

108 *Malakūt* is a hyperbolic form of *mulk* (dominion, sovereignty); it is the greatest form of *mulk* (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). For him to be shown the *malakūt* of the Heavens and Earth is to see all that God made in them as Signs (cf. Muqātil quoted in al-Ṭabarī). It is to fully realize the Truthfulness of the Oneness of God and that no one besides Him is worthy of worship. This elevated him to the station of *yaqīn* (lit. certitude) which is the highest station of *īmān* (Faith), which never gets mixed with doubt (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

109 Scholars and exegetes, old and new, pondered at length on the nature of the declaration: “*This is my Lord*” in this aya and the next two and the question is still being raised. Generally, they have come to the conclusion that Abraham (ؑ) was engaged in a debate with his people and was not involved in meditating the universe around him in this instance (*kāna munāziran wa lam yakun nāziran* cf. al-Eijī). That is, this declaration should not be misconstrued as a declaration of faith by Abraham and that it comes within the context of his argument with his people (cf. Ayas 80-83 below and al-Shinqīfī), the Chaldeans, who worshiped planets. In order to persuade them, Abraham mimicked their own line of deduction (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr), whereby he followed a gradual line of argument moving from one terrestrial body to another, to the bigger and more luminous, only to reach the same final result at the end. They also cite many proofs to bolster this point of interpretation.

Another view is provided by the great exegete al-Ṭabarī whereby Abraham was genuinely engaged in meditation (*nāziran*), thus, he called upon his Lord to guide him or else he too would go astray. Although this view is frowned upon as it is understood to cast doubts on Abraham’s (ؑ) all-time purity of Faith, it could give a glimpse at another way of looking at the concerned ayas. This passage, Ayas 74-79, provides a composite whole and is couched

he said: “I do not like those that vanish!” <sup>﴿77﴾</sup> When he saw the moon rising, he said: “This is my Lord? When it vanished,

قَالَ لَا أُحِبُّ الْأَفْلَاقَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَلَمَّارَاءَ الْقَمَرِ  
بَارِعًا قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي فَلَمَّا أَفَلَ

in the context of exposing the folly of idol worship: it cuts against the grain of sound human nature as these idols possess neither power nor ability to either harm or benefit, thus they do not possess the very basic quality of a god worthy of the name. This conclusion was reached at by Abraham who was endowed with true guidance and sound judgement (*rushd*) from an early age (cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Mukhtaṣar*: “We had certainly given Abraham his *rushdahū* (his portion of sound judgement, guidance, rectitude) before, and We were of him Well-Knowing” (21: 51)). Thus, he saw the folly of worshipping mere idols, who can neither harm nor benefit and he points this fact out to his father (Aya 74). For this firm stand, he was gifted with the faculty of reading the Signs of the Heavens and Earth (shown the *malakūt*; cf. Muqātil quoted in al-Ṭabarī) to realize the Truth and thus attain certitude of Faith (*li yakuna min al-muqinīn*; Aya 75). As he had to intellectually deduce these, he had to engage in deep, hard thinking and being in that state, coupled with the very lonely engulfing darkness of the night (*janna*; cf. al-Māwardī, *al-Nukat wa al-‘Uyūn*, Ibn ‘Āshūr), he naturally turned his face to the sky. He saw this shining star which he wondered if it were his lord, but soon realized that it was not, being of the sound judgement (*rushd*) that he was gifted with by God. This state of meditation lasted until another night when he saw the moon rising in its full glory, but it having the same shortcoming as the earlier star made him realize for sure that his real Lord is way beyond any of these and, hence, he prayed for guidance. By this time he was bestowed with certitude (*yaqīn*), and so turned to his people to use this newly gained logic (God’s own *ḥujjah* argument, cf. Aya 83 below) and cited the sun, the largest and brightest star glaringly visible to humans, as being essentially imperfect, faulty and frail. None of these heavenly bodies fit the criterion of being present at all times (Omnipresent) to hear and answer those who worship it; whatever vanishes is not God because it abandons its worshippers leaving them to fend for themselves (this reading is alluded to by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah in his *Tafsīr*). Thus his certitude of Faith materialized as he stood in the face of his people unequivocally declaring his beliefs (disowning their idols) and showing his real substance. By singularly taking on a whole nation, he fully deserves the designation one-man ‘nation’: “Truly Ibrāhīm was a nation, devoutly obedient to Allah, rightly-oriented, and he was not among the Associators” (16: 120). Having said this one cannot emphasize enough the importance of considering the learned opinion of the majority of exegetes on this issue whereby Abraham was engaged in debate and argumentation with his people.

he said: “If my Lord does not guide me then I shall be one of the misguided people!” <sup>78</sup> When he saw the sun rising, he said: “This is my Lord! This is greater!” When it vanished, he said: “My people, I hereby disown those that you Associate ‘with Allah’”. <sup>79</sup> “I hereby direct my face to He Who Originated the Heavens and Earth<sup>(110)</sup>, ‘being’ rightly-oriented, and never am I one of the Associators.”

<sup>80</sup> His people ‘then’ argued with him; He said: “Do you argue with me concerning Allah when ‘surely’ He has guided me? ‘Besides’ I do not fear those that you Associate with Him, unless my Lord wills something. My Lord encompasses everything with ‘His’ Knowledge<sup>(111)</sup>; do you heed not?” <sup>81</sup> “How should I ‘ever’ fear those that you Associate<sup>(112)</sup>, while you do not

قَالَ لَئِن لَّمْ يَهْدِنِي رَبِّي لَأَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَى الشَّمْسُ بَازِغَةً قَالَ هَذَا رَبِّي هَذَا أَكْبَرُ فَلَمَّا أَفَلَتْ قَالَ يُقَوْمِ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّمَّا تُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ إِنِّي وَجَّهْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّذِي فَطَرَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

وَحَاجَّهُ قَوْمُهُ قَالَ أَتُحَاجُّونِي فِي اللَّهِ وَقَدْ هَدَانِ وَلَا أَخَافُ مَا تُشْرِكُونَ بِهِ إِلَّا أَن يَشَاءَ رَبِّي شَيْئًا وَسِعَ رَبِّي كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ أَخَافُ مَا أَشْرَكْتُمْ وَلَا تَخَافُونَ

110 “People! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you might be Mindful. \*He Who made the land a carpet and the sky a roof for you, and sent water down from the sky and grew with it ‘all sorts of’ produce as provisions for you. Therefore, knowing this, do not set up ‘rivalling’ equals for Him” (2: 21-22).

111 That is, unlike your gods, my God has total knowledge of everything, and is able to block any harm coming my way. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

112 This argument further draws the line under the basic fact that any god worthy of the name should at least be able to harm or benefit (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’adī, Ibn ‘Ashūr). The same logic was applied by the people of Prophet Hūd (ﷺ) who superstitiously thought that their gods were able to hurt people. Hūd’s firm Belief in God made him feel immune to such threats, sure that he would only be harmed with God’s permission: “They said: “Hūd! You have not given us any clear proof, and we will never abandon our gods

fear that you Associate with Allah those for which He sent down to you no authority; so which of the two parties is more deserving of security, if you "truly" know?"  
 ﴿82﴾ – Those who Believe and do not mix their Belief with injustice<sup>(113)</sup>, for those is security and they are "truly" guided – ﴿83﴾ That is Our argument<sup>(114)</sup> that We gave to Ibrāhīm against his people; We raise in rank whoever We will— "Muhammad" indeed your Lord is Most Wise, All-Knowing.

﴿84﴾ <sup>(115)</sup>And We granted him "Ibrāhīm" Ishāq "Isaac" and

أَتَكْفُرُ أَشْرَكَتُمْ بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ سُلْطَانًا فَأَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ أَحَقُّ  
 بِالْأَمْنِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ الَّذِينَ  
 ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ  
 الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَتِلْكَ حُجَّتُنَا  
 ءَاتَيْنَاهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ نَرْفَعُ دَرَجَاتٍ  
 مَّن نَّشَاءُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٨٤﴾

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ

*upon your word, nor will we believe in you. \*All we can say is that one of our gods may have inflicted some harm on you". He said: "I call Allah to witness, and you too bear witness, that I reject whatever you Associate \*with Him "in worship". So let all of you plot against me without delay! \*I put my trust in Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature which He does not control. My Lord's path is straight" (11: 53-57).*

- 113 'Injustice' here means *shirk* (Association): 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "When this aya was sent down the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) felt it burdensome and said: "None of us did not do himself an injustice!" The Messenger (ﷺ) said: "It is not what you think it is, but it is akin to what Luqmān 'the sage' said to his son: "My son, do not Associate with Allah 'in worship'. Indeed Association is a grave injustice" (31: 13), (al-Bukhārī: 6937; Muslim: 124).
- 114 Exegetes have differed about which argument this is (*hujjah*): al-Ṭabari is of the opinion that it is: "... which of the two parties is more deserving of security...", while others (including al-Wāhidī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī) saw it as the whole interaction between Abraham and his people beginning with: "...when 'the darkness of' night shrouded him...".
- 115 This is a line-up of God's most notable Messengers who were 'raised ranks' above all others and singled out for perfect guidance with which they guided those who followed them. 18 out of the 25 names of the Messengers who are mentioned in the Qur'an are to be found here. Their mention and praise point as examples to the Prophet (ﷺ), strengthening his stand in the face of the severe hardship he was facing in his call to God.

Ya'qūb 'Jacob'<sup>(116)</sup>; all these We guided – and We guided Nūḥ 'Noah'<sup>(117)</sup> before – and from his posterity 'We guided': Dāwūd 'David', Sulaymān 'Solomon', Ayyūb 'Job', Yūsuf 'Joseph', Mūsā 'Moses' and Hārūn 'Aaron' – like so We reward the good doers<sup>(118)</sup>

كُلًّا هَدَيْتَ وَنُوحًا هَدَيْتَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ  
ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ  
وَمُوسَى وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي  
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

- 116 For his patience and endurance Abraham (ﷺ) was given a great gift, a righteous posterity that would always be a credit to him throughout time: his son Isaac and the son of his son Jacob, and many other Prophets who were his descendants so much so that he is rightly called the Patriarch of Prophets (*abū al-anbiyā'*, lit. the father of the Prophets) (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): *"We granted him Isaac and Jacob, and reserved Prophethood and the Book for his descendants. We gave him his reward in this life, and in the Hereafter he will certainly be among the righteous"* (29: 27); *"Remember Our servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, all men of strength and vision. \*Truly We purified them with that which is pure: remembrance of the Abode. \*Surely, they are with Us, of those chosen and the best!"* (38: 45-47). His two sons and their posterity were the ones who inhabited and purified for generations the sacred land which he chose for residence after he left his people: *"So he withdrew from them and what they worship other than God. And We bestowed on him Isaac and Jacob. And each of them We made a Prophet"* (19: 49; cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Ishmael (ﷺ), his other son, on the other hand, was chosen to help his father raise the foundations of the House in Makkah, people's everlasting sanctuary, and populate its environs.
- 117 Prophet Noah (ﷺ) is the first Messenger that was sent by God to humanity, after Adam (ﷺ) himself. He is rightly considered the second father of humanity, as after the flood only his posterity were kept alive and thrived thereafter: *"...and made his 'Noah's' descendants the sole survivors"* (37: 77). He along with Abraham are the fathers of Prophets: *"Indeed, We had sent Noah and Abraham and reserved Prophethood and the Book for their descendants"* (57: 26); *"These were the Prophets God blessed - from the seed of Adam, of those We carried in the Ark with Noah, from the seed of Abraham and Israel - and those We guided and chose. When the Signs of the Most Merciful were recited to them, they fell to their knees and wept"* (19: 58). Thus the mention of the names of all the Prophets in this aya as being his descendants, especially Lot (ﷺ) as he was Abraham's nephew (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr) and so could have been considered Abraham's 'descendant' because Abraham was the one who taught him.
- 118 *"Those who accept guidance, He will increase their guidance and bestow on them their Mindfulness"* (47: 17).



﴿85﴾ – Zakariyyā 'Zachariah', Yahyā 'John', 'Īsā 'Jesus', Ilyās 'Elijah' – everyone 'of them' is among the righteous – ﴿86﴾ Ismā'il 'Ishmael', al-Yasa' 'Elisha', Yūnus 'Jonah' and Lūṭ 'Lot' – everyone of them We preferred to all other humans<sup>(119)</sup> – ﴿87﴾ and 'were guided some' from among their fathers, posterity and brothers<sup>(120)</sup>; We picked them and guided them to a Straight Path. ﴿88﴾ That is the guidance of Allah; He guides with it whomever He wills from among His servants. Had they Associated, what they used to do would have been laid to waste<sup>(121)</sup>. ﴿89﴾ Those are the ones to whom We gave the Book, judiciousness<sup>(122)</sup> and Prophethood; but if these 'Makkans'<sup>(123)</sup> Deny them, then We have entrusted them to others who would never Deny them<sup>(124)</sup>.

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَإِيلَاسَ كُلٌّ مِّنَ  
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيُوسُفَ  
وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَمِن  
آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ  
وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٨٧﴾ ذَلِكَ  
هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ  
وَلَوْ أَشْرَكُوا لَحِطَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾  
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ  
وَالنَّبُوَّةَ فَإِن يَكْفُرْ بِهَا هَلْوَآءَ فَقَدْ وَكَلْنَا  
بِهَا قَوْمًا لَّيْسُوا بِهَا بِكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

119 "Indeed Allah chose 'for honour' Adam, Noah, the House of Ibrāhīm and the Family of 'Imrān over 'and above' all other humans" (3: 33).

120 These Prophets were not alone on this road to which not an insignificant number were blessed with guidance. Thus it is, by no means, for the select few (al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

121 "It has already been revealed to you 'Muhammad' and to those before you: 'If you Associate 'with Allah in worship', all your work will be rendered void: you will be one of the losers. \*Rather, worship Allah and be among the thankful!'" (39: 65-66)

122 The proper and deep understanding<sup>(122)</sup> of the Scriptures with which to guide people and judge among them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

123 Cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī.

124 All those who truly Believe. (al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*)

﴿90﴾ Those ‘Prophets’ are the ones whom Allah guided, follow then ‘Muhammad’ their guidance. Say ‘Muhammad’: “I am not asking for payment for it<sup>(125)</sup>; it is nothing less than a reminder to all beings”.

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ فَبِهِدَاهُمْ أَقْتَدِهِ  
قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ  
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾

﴿91﴾ They did not appreciate Allah as much as He should ‘rightly’ be appreciated, when they said: “Allah never sent down anything to any human!”<sup>(126)</sup> Say ‘Muhammad’: “Who ‘then’ sent down the Book with which Mūsā came as a light and guidance to people? – You make it ‘the Book’ into sheets that you display and you conceal much ‘of it’<sup>(127)</sup>. You

وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ إِذْ قَالُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا  
بَشِيرًا مِّنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ مَنْ أَنْزَلَ الْكِتَابَ الَّذِي  
جَاءَ بِهِءُ مُوسَى نُورًا وَهَدَى لِّلنَّاسِ لِيَجْعَلُوهُ  
قُرْطُبِسَ تُبَدُونَهَا وَتُخْفُونَ كَثِيرًا وَعِصَمْتُمْ  
مَا لَمْ تَعْمَلُوا

125 Guidance is the priciest gift that any human can be presented with, yet it is vehemently rejected. People had to be reminded of the paradoxical nature of their situation. In Sura *al-Shu‘arā’*, Prophets Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Lot and Shu‘ayb, all pointed this out to their people: “I do not ask you for a payment for it. Indeed my payment is with the Lord of all beings!” Other instances also highlight the same, e.g.: “Then from the farthest end of the city a man came, rushing. He said: “My people! Follow the Messenger. \*Follow those who ask not of you any payment and who are guided”” (36: 20-21).

126 al-Biqā‘ī (*Naẓm al-Durar*) has it that the Makkan’s reply to the ‘reminder’ was an answer dictated to them by the Jews of Madinah from whom they sought advice. In their eagerness to deny him and based on these false grounds they doubted the Divine Wisdom of choice (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī); a Wisdom that has been well explained earlier in this sura when the Deniers asked for an angel Messenger.

127 *Qarā’īs* (translated here as sheets) is whatever written material they had available at that time made into separate sheets and not bound together, which makes it easier to hide some of it whenever this is felt convenient (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). The use of the word is meant to berate the Jews for taking liberty with the Torah altering and distorting its purport; one very prominent fact they tried to hide was Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ) Messengership (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

were taught what you and your fathers did not know ‘before’!<sup>(128)</sup>”  
 – Say: “Allah!”<sup>(129)</sup> Then abandon them to joyously waddle in their mess”.<sup>(130)</sup> ﴿92﴾ And this ‘Qur’an’ is a Book We sent down, blessed, professing the Truth of what came before it<sup>(131)</sup>, so that you ‘Muhammad’ may warn ‘the people of’ the mother of towns<sup>(132)</sup> and those around it<sup>(133)</sup>. Those who Believe in the Hereafter ‘do’ Believe in it;

أَنْتُمْ وَلَا آبَاءُكُمْ قُلِ اللَّهُ قَدْ دَرَّاهُمْ فِي  
 حَوْضِهِمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ  
 مُبَارَكٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَلِتُنذِرَ  
 أُمَّ الْقُرَىٰ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ  
 يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۗ وَهُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

- 128 The addressees in this sentence are the Makkans. By means of the Qur’an, they were taught things that neither they nor their fathers were aware of before. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 129 This single-word reply is the answer to the question posed earlier in the aya before the parenthetical interjection: “Who ‘then’ sent down the Book with which *Mūsā* came as a light and guidance to people?” As said earlier, the use of the Proper Divine Name of God, Allah, in this sura delivers a very potent rhetorical message; a strong reminder to the Qurayshites of Makkah of the ‘Allah’ they beseech and draw their strength and very privileged status from. Yet, they conveniently forget about Him whenever it suits them.
- 130 After giving them this sobering answer precisely and clearly, the Messenger has delivered the Message properly. He is not to pain over their denial but should instead leave them to face none but God for it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 131 Confirming and conforming to the Truth found in earlier heavenly revealed Scriptures. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 132 Makkah, being the largest and most thriving town in Arabia at that time (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 133 Ibn ‘Āshūr sees no point in the understanding that this implies that the Prophetic mission is limited to Makkah and its neighbouring towns. Their specific mention here, he carries on, is because they are the peoples who are being directly argued with in this early Makkan sura. That the Message of Islam is global is emphasized in a number of other ayas: “Say ‘Muhammad’: “O humanity! I am Allah’s Messenger to you all” (7:158); “We have sent you ‘Muhammad’ only as a deliverer of good news and a warner to all of humanity, but most people do not know” (34: 28).

they safeguard their Prayers<sup>(134)</sup>.

﴿93﴾ Who is more wrongful than he who fabricates falsehood against Allah<sup>(135)</sup> or says: “I was given revelation”, while nothing was revealed to him, and he who says: “I will send down the like of that which Allah sent down”<sup>(136)</sup>. If only you could see ‘Muhammad’ when the wrongdoers are in the throes of death and the angels stretch their hands to them<sup>(137)</sup> ‘saying’: “Give up your souls. Today you will be rewarded the Punishment of degradation for saying what is false against Allah and snubbing His Signs”. ﴿94﴾ Indeed you have come to Us each one separately just as We created you in the first time and you left behind ‘all’ what We conferred on you<sup>(138)</sup>.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ قَالَ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ وَلَمْ يُوحَ إِلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ وَمَنْ قَالَ سَأُنزِلُ  
مِثْلَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذِ الظَّالِمُونَ فِي  
عَمْرَتِ الْمَوْتِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ بَاسِطُوا أَيْدِيهِمْ  
أَخْرَجُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُونِ  
بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَكُنتُمْ  
عَنْ آيَاتِهِ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا  
فُرْدَىٰ كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَتَرْكَبْتُمْ مَا  
كَوَّنَّا لَكُمُ وِرَاءَ ظُهُورِكُمْ

134 Prayer (*ṣalāh*) is the most manifest, singularly defining form of worship of the Followers of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

135 The idolaters of Makkah, and Arabia at large, who coined so-called ‘laws’ and said that they came with God’s command (Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Allah allowed none ‘of the so-called’ bahīrah, nor sā’ibah, nor waṣīlah, nor ḥām but the Deniers fabricate lies against Allah; most of them have no sense” (5: 103).

136 It is said that this came with regards to the false prophets that appeared in parts of Arabia at that time (Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Ikrimah and Qatādah cited in Ibn Kathīr). Furthermore, those who came and will come after them are also implicated (Ibn ‘Āshūr).

137 Landing blows on their faces and backsides (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “If only you could see when the angels take their ‘the Deniers’ souls, beating their faces and backsides; that because they followed what angered Allah and hated His Pleasure” (47: 27-28).

138 The dialogue here takes place on the Day of Judgement when they will be stripped down to nothing but themselves and brought before God for reckoning (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “They will be lined up before

We cannot see your intercessors with you, those you ‘falsely’ claimed are partners ‘with Us’ in you<sup>(139)</sup>; all has been severed between you ‘and them’ and all that which you once claimed has deserted you<sup>(140)</sup>.

وَمَا نَرَىٰ مَعَكُمْ شُفَعَاءَ الَّذِينَ زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّهُمْ فِيكُمْ شُرَكَاءُ لَقَدْ تَفَطَّعَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَضَلَّ عَنْكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

﴿95﴾ Verily ‘Allah’<sup>(141)</sup> is the One Who ‘ever’ cracks grains and seeds<sup>(142)</sup> – ‘thus’ He brings the living out of the dead – and He is the One Who ‘ever’ brings the dead out of the living<sup>(143)</sup>.

\* إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَالِقُ الْحَبِّ وَالنَّوَىٰ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَمُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتِ مِنَ الْحَيِّ

*your Lord* ‘and He will say’: “*Now you have come to Us as We first created you, although you claimed We had not made any such appointment for you*” (18: 48). This is what this battle of wits and blows boils down to; a very macabre scene of what awaits rebellious Deniers. The use of the past tense for a future happening is just as striking as the scene being depicted; it imparts a sense of immediate imminence on the whole occurrence.

- 139 The false idols whom they claimed had a right in their worship alongside God Almighty, and that they would intercede with Him on their behalf on the Day of Judgement. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 140 Cf. Ayas 22-24 above: “*On the Day when We round them all up, then We say to those who Associated: “Where are your Associates, whom you used to ‘falsely’ claim?” \*At that their plea would be only saying: “By Allah, our Lord, we were not Associators.” \*Look how they lied to themselves and what they used to fabricate deserted them!*”
- 141 This passage and the next set out to correct the gross misconceptions they held about ‘Allah, God Almighty, and shows them the real worth of He Whom they under-appreciated (cf. Ibn ‘Ādil).
- 142 That is God is the One Who infuses life into the ‘dead’ kernel of all plants and trees which either, like barley and wheat, grow from grains (*ḥabb*) or palm date trees, which grow from seeds and fruit stones (*nawā*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 143 Endowing such kernels with life in the first place and sprouting the latent germ of life in them is God’s Own doing. All plants and animals originate from such ‘dead’ elements: seeds, grains, and sperm. Like so, these ‘dead’ elements germinate from living, breathing beings (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah). This is the most widely held reading of the meaning of this segment, yet others exist,

That you see is ‘Allah’, whereof are you then turned away ‘from the Truth’? ﴿96﴾ He is the One Who ‘ever’ cracks the dawn, and made night a repose<sup>(144)</sup>, and the sun and the moon ‘run’ in ‘exact’ calculation<sup>(145)</sup> – that is the measure of the All-Prevailing, All-Knowing. ﴿97﴾ He is the One Who made the stars for you ‘as Signs’ so that you may find the way through them amid the ‘deep’ darkness of the land and sea—indeed We have detailed the Signs to those who ‘really’ know<sup>(146)</sup>. ﴿98﴾ He is the One Who

ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ فَاتَى تَوْفِكَوَتْ ﴿٩٥﴾ فَالِقُ الْإِصْبَاحِ  
وَجَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ سَكَنًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ حُسْبَانًا  
ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ  
لَكُمْ النُّجُومَ لِتَهْتَدُوا بِهَا فِي ظُلُمَاتِ اللَّيْلِ  
وَالْبَحْرِ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾  
وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ

some of which are figurative. This also seeks to open the eyes of the Deniers to a fact they chose to be ignorant of, i.e. God’s ability to take life and bring the dead to life again for resurrection and reckoning. The example given is just a miniature representation of this more serious event (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).

- 144 God is the One Who makes the light of day seep through the thick cloak of night’s darkness, of ‘cracking’ it so that people can go about their living. At night, He so decreed that they find rest and tranquility (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*): “Say ‘Muhammad’: “Would you not see, if Allah were to cast perpetual night over you until the Day of Resurrection, what god other than Allah could bring you light? Do you not listen? \*Say: “Have you considered: if God should make day come over you unceasingly until the Day of Resurrection, what god other than Allah would bring you night, that you might rest therein? Will you not, then, see? \*In His Mercy He has given you night and day, so that you may rest and seek His Bounty and be grateful” (28: 71-73).
- 145 God makes the sun and moon run to an absolutely exact calculation (*ḥusbān*). This calculation never alters nor will it ever falter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “He is the One Who made the sun a radiance and the moon a light, with precisely ordained phases, so that you may know the number of years and calculation ‘of time’. Allah did not create all this except for a purpose. He makes the Signs clear for people of knowledge” (10: 5).
- 146 Day break, the sun, the moon and the stars are among the many cosmic Signs

initiated you from a single soul, then 'you move on from' a place of stay to a place of storage<sup>(147)</sup>; indeed We have detailed the Signs for those who discern. ﴿99﴾ He is the One Who sends water from the sky and We bring out with it 'all types of' plants of everything; and We bring with it 'all' greens from which We bring out grains stacked up<sup>(148)</sup>; and of date palm from their sheaths 'come out' clusters 'of dates' hanging down; and gardens of vines; and olive and pomegranate 'confusingly' resembling each other but are not similar<sup>(149)</sup>; look you at<sup>(150)</sup> its fruits when it yields and its lushness—indeed in all that are Signs to those who Believe.

فَمَسْتَقَرٌّ وَمُسْتَوْدَعٌ قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ  
يَفْقَهُوتُ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ  
مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا  
مِنْهُ خَضِرًا مُخْرِجًا مِنْهُ جَبًا مُتَرَكِبًا وَمِنْ  
الَّتَخَلَّ مِنْ طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِنْ  
أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونُ وَالرَّيْحَانُ مُمْتَثِلًا وَعَيْرَ  
مُتَشَابِهٍ ۗ انظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ ۗ  
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَكُم لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ شُرَكَاءَ الْجِبْتِ وَخَلَقَهُمْ

﴿100﴾ They ascribe jinn as partners to Allah<sup>(151)</sup>, while He 'is the One

that need to be contemplated and pondered upon to be lead to Believing in God and realizing His immeasurable Magnificence (cf. al-Rāzī).

- 147 The single soul is Adam, the father of humanity. Then humans were made into 'drops' that move from the loins of men, the places of stay (*mustaqarr*), to the wombs of women, the places of storage (*mustawda*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Alternatively, as some exegetes would have it, it could be understood as: a time-limit (*mustaqarr*) on the surface of the Earth and a resting-place (*mustawda*) in its belly after death.
- 148 Like the spikes of wheat and ears of corn. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 149 The leaves of olives and pomegranate trees may look confusingly alike (*mushtabih*) but their fruits are different (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Or that no two fruits of the same kind, which may look alike, are of the same taste (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 150 Or: feast your eyes.
- 151 Their worship of such creatures as the jinn gives a glimpse of how far astray from the right path these pagans were (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "They pray to none besides Him but females; they only pray to a

وَخَرَقُوا لَهُ بَنِينَ وَبَنَاتٍ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى  
 عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ بِدِيعِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
 أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَهُ صَاحِبَةٌ وَخَلَقَ  
 كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠١﴾  
 ذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ خَلَقَ كُلَّ  
 شَيْءٍ فَأَعْبُدُوهُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَكِيلٌ ﴿١٠٢﴾  
 لَا تُدْرِكُهُ الْأَبْصَارُ وَهُوَ يُدْرِكُ الْأَبْصَرَ  
 وَهُوَ اللَّطِيفُ الْخَبِيرُ ﴿١٠٣﴾

قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَصَائِرُ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَمَنْ  
 أَبْصَرَ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ عَمِيَ فَعَلَيْهَا



then it is against him—and I am not a keeper<sup>(155)</sup> over you. <sup>﴿105﴾</sup> Like so We diversify the Signs, let them ‘Muhammad, scornfully’ say: “You studied this ‘somewhere’”<sup>(156)</sup>; and ‘more so’ We shall make it clear to those who ‘really’ know<sup>(157)</sup>. <sup>﴿106﴾</sup> Follow ‘Muhammad’ what was revealed to you by your Lord – there is no god but Him – and turn away from the Associators. <sup>﴿107﴾</sup> Had Allah wished, they would not have Associated<sup>(158)</sup>; We have not made you a keeper over them; nor are you a maintainer over them<sup>(159)</sup>.

وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِحَفِيظٍ ﴿١٠٥﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ  
نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ وَلِيَقُولُوا دَرَسْتَ وَلِنُبَيِّنَهُ  
لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ اتَّبِعْ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ  
مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٠٧﴾  
وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَشْرَكُوا وَمَا جَعَلْنَاكَ  
عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيظًا وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾

- 155 The Prophet’s (ﷺ) mission is to deliver the Message clearly and the rest is for God: “...*your duty* ‘Muhammad’ *is only to deliver the Message; the Reckoning is Ours*” (13: 40).
- 156 In their efforts to discredit the Prophet (ﷺ) they arrived at this sham, which they kept on repeating: “*We know that they say: “It is only a human being who is teaching him”. The tongue of him they allude to is a foreign one whereas this is in clear and lucid Arabic!*” (16: 103).
- 157 Whereas the blind of heart only receive the Signs derisively, those endowed with a real faculty for attaining darkness dissipating knowledge will realize the potential of what is being said to them: “*It ‘the Qur’an’ is a guidance and a healing for those who Believe, and those who do not Believe have a deafness in their ears, and it is a blindness for them*” (41: 44).
- 158 This is stated to comfort the Prophet (ﷺ), who was deeply saddened by the Denial of his people, who remained languishing in darkness no matter how glaring the Signs he kept on presenting them with were. Had God wished He could have made them all embrace the call willingly without fail, but how then would the real Believers, who overcame the many hurdles in their way, be set apart from those who came to Believe due to a default gene? What choice is a human left with then? What pains is he to endure to attain Faith? (Cf. Abū al-Su‘ūd, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 159 The caller is to feel a sense of empathy towards those to whom he is delivering the Message, he is not to feel bitter or bear grudges against those whom he calls; he is neither to keep a record of the deeds to hold them to account over (*hafīz*) nor is he to seize control of their affairs and dispose of them at will (*wakīl*). (al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Riḍā)

﴿108﴾ Do not 'you Believers' insult what they pray to besides Allah, so that they would 'in return' insult Allah transgressedly, out of ignorance. Like so We have prettified for every nation their deeds<sup>(160)</sup>, then their return is to their Lord and He will give them the news about what they used to do<sup>(161)</sup>. ﴿109﴾ They had sworn by Allah with their most solemn oaths that if a Sign were to come to them, they would surely Believe in it. Say 'Muhammad': "Indeed Signs are from none but Allah!" How would you 'Believers' know that when they 'the Signs' come, they would 'still' not Believe? ﴿110﴾ We keep on turning their hearts and their sights<sup>(162)</sup> away for not Believing in it the first time and 'thus' We leave them to wander aimlessly in their 'unbending' recalcitrance.

﴿111﴾ <sup>(163)</sup>Had We sent down the angels 'successively' to them<sup>(164)</sup>,

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ  
فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَّا لِكُلِّ  
أُمَّةٍ عَمَلَهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ  
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ  
أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَةٌ لَيُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهَا قُلْ  
إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا يُشْعُرُكُمْ أَنَهَا إِذَا  
جَاءَتْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَتَقَلَّبَ أَقْدَابُهُمْ  
وَابْصَرَهُمْ كَمَا لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ  
وَنَذَرَهُمْ فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

\*وَلَوْ أَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ

160 "Can those who follow clear proof from their Lord be compared to those whose foul deeds are made to seem prettified to them—those who follow their own desires?" (47: 14)

161 God will hold them to account over their deeds on the Day of Judgement. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

162 This is their punishment from God: "So when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate; for Allah does not guide the rebellious people" (61: 5).

163 The fact that they only cherry pick to 'see' and 'realize' what is only to their fancy and selectively pay heed to whatever supports their position, alluded to in the previous passage, is further underlined and detailed here (cf. Riḍā).

164 Cf. Aya 8 above. Such a demand is not unusual of them: "Those who do not expect to meet Us say: "If only the angels were sent down to us, or we could

made the dead talk to them<sup>(165)</sup> and congregated everything right before them<sup>(166)</sup>, they would not have Believed<sup>(167)</sup> unless that Allah wills it so; but indeed most of them are ignorant. ﴿112﴾ Like so We made for every Prophet an enemy, the devils of humans and jinn; they inspire each other with glittering speech in order to deceive<sup>(168)</sup> – had your Lord wished, they would not have done so; leave them then and their ‘false’ fabrications – ﴿113﴾ and that the hearts of those who do not Believe in the Hereafter may be drawn to it ‘such deceit’, and they may approve of it and ‘insistently’ perpetrate what they are perpetrating<sup>(169)</sup>.

وَكَلَّمَهُمُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَحَنَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ قَبْلًا مَا كَانُوا لِيُؤْمِنُوا إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَٰكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ يَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَٰئِطِينَ الْإِنسِ وَالْجِنِّ يُوحِي بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ زُخْرُفَ الْقَوْلِ غُرُورًا وَلَوْ شَاءَ رَبُّكَ مَا فَعَلُوهُ فَذَرَّهُمْ وَمَا يُفْتَرُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَلِتَصْغَىٰ إِلَيْهِ أَفْئِدَةُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَلِيَرْتَفُوا مَا هُمْ مُقْتَرِفُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

*see our Lord!” They have certainly been carried away by their arrogance and have entirely exceeded all limits” (25: 21).*

- 165 To bear out the Truth of what the Messenger (ﷺ) is telling them. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 166 Even if everything was made to come before them and speak about the Truth of the Messenger (ﷺ), they would not change their minds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)
- 167 “Truly those for whom the Word of your Lord has come due will not Believe, \*though every Sign should come to them, till they see the painful Punishment” (10: 96-97).
- 168 The arguments and disputations they offer, which to all appearance seem valid, is nothing but an elaborate fabrication, a sham meant to deceive and steer away from the Truth. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 169 They are only drawn to what is to their liking, which is provided by both human and jinn devils; they hearken to, believe and act upon such hollow, glittering words, willingly thus committing sinful deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

﴿114﴾ Would I 'then' want a judge apart from Allah, while He sent you the Book, detailed?<sup>(170)</sup> Those to whom We gave the Book<sup>(171)</sup> know that it 'the Qur'an' is sent down from your Lord with the Truth—be not then among the doubters. ﴿115﴾ Your Lord's Word 'Muhammad' was perfected truthfully and justly<sup>(172)</sup>; None can change His Words<sup>(173)</sup>—He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿116﴾ If you 'Muhammad' obey most of those on Earth, they will lead you away from the Path of Allah; indeed they only follow 'mere' fancies, indeed they are only guessing. ﴿117﴾ Verily your Lord knows best those who steer away from His path, and He knows best the guided.

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكَمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ  
إِلَيْكُمْ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا وَالَّذِينَ  
ءَاتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِنْ  
رَبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾  
وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا لَا مُبَدَّلَ  
لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَإِنْ تَطَّعَ  
أَكْثَرُ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ  
اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا  
يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَنْ يَضِلُّ  
عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٧﴾

- 170 All matters of dispute are to be referred to God alone and judged against the heavenly revealed yardstick, the Qur'an: "And We sent down to you 'Muhammad' the Book as a clarification of all things, and as a guidance and a mercy and glad tidings for those who 'wholly' submit" (16: 89); "Mankind was one nation, then Allah sent the Prophets bearing good tidings and cautioning, and He sent down with them the Book with Truth so as to arbitrate between people in what they dispute over" (2: 213).
- 171 The Jews who were given the Torah and the Christians who were given the Evangel, and who were considered with respect as authorities on such matters in Arabia at that time, fully knew that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was Truthful and that the Qur'an is God's Word, even if they did not openly admit it (cf. al-Ṭabarī and the Qur'an is God's Word, even if they did not openly admit it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar' Ta'arud al-'Aql wa al-Naql*, al-Sa'dī): "But if you are in doubt as to what We have revealed to you 'Muhammad', ask those who read the Book before you; certainly the Truth has come to you from your Lord, therefore you should not be of the doubters" 10: 94).
- 172 All that we find in the Qur'an is true and fair. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Ashūr, al-Sa'dī)
- 173 God has perfected His Word and He guaranteed to preserve it from alteration and corruption: "We have sent down the Reminder 'Qur'an' Ourselves, and We Ourselves will guard it" (15: 9).

﴿118﴾ (174) Eat then from what Allah’s Names was mentioned on. If you are truly Believing in His Signs. ﴿119﴾ Why would you not eat from what Allah’s Name was mentioned on when He detailed to you what He made unlawful for you, excepting what you are forced to<sup>(175)</sup>; indeed many misguide with their vain desires out of ignorance—indeed your Lord knows best the transgressors<sup>(176)</sup>.

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِّرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ بِآيَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِّرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُمْ مَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا لَيُضِلُّونَ بِأَهْوَاءِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١١٩﴾

174 In a way this passage sheds more light on the previous two passages. The devils inspiring their allies ‘glittering speech’ such that they argue with the Believers regarding a matter for which God is the only worthy ‘judge’; this when He said His ‘detailed’ Word in the matter of eating sacrifices dedicated to Him, and all types of lawful food. Regarding this, the Messenger (ﷺ) and his followers by extension need know no ‘doubt’, or follow the groundless ‘fancies’ and whims of the Deniers. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās narrated that the reason for this aya’s revelation was that some people went to the Messenger (ﷺ) asking him whether they should eat from what they kill themselves and not what God Himself killed (i.e. carrion)! (Cf. al-Tirmidhī: 3069, al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*) Ibn ‘Āshūr comments: “This aya entails answering the argument regarding forbidding eating carrion which was forwarded by the Associators. They said: “You ‘Muhammad’ claim that what you, your Companions, the dog and the falcon kill is lawful and what Allah kills (i.e. carrion) is unlawful? Their argument is implicated in Allah’s saying: “... indeed they only follow ‘mere’ fancies, indeed they are only guessing”. When He (ﷺ) called their laws ‘mere’ fancies’ and warned against following them, He subsequently explained what is lawful, i.e., eating from what Allah’s Name was mentioned on at the time of its killing and forbidding what Allah’s Name was not mentioned on while killing it, including carrion”.

175 Believers are given license here only when they are hard pressed into it by necessity: “Indeed He made unlawful for you carrion, blood, swine flesh, and what was intended as sacrifice for others besides Allah; yet whoever is forced by necessity – neither transgressing nor going to excess – he is not guilty of sin—certainly Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (2: 173).

176 God is only too aware of those who violate the rules and overstep the boundaries set by Him. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿120﴾ Abandon 'you all' sin, secret and open; indeed those who earn sin will be requited for what they used to "insistently" perpetrate. ﴿121﴾ Do not eat from what Allah's Name was not mentioned on; that is surely a serious contravention<sup>(177)</sup>. Indeed the devils inspire their allies so that they may argue with you 'Believers', but if you obey them then you are 'among the' Associators<sup>(178)</sup>. ﴿122﴾ Is the one who was dead<sup>(179)</sup> and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in<sup>(180)</sup> among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which? Thus what they used to do was prettified for the Deniers.

وَدَرُوا ظَهْرَ الْأَيْمَنِ وَبَاطِنَهُ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ  
يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِنَّمِ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا  
يَقْتَرُونَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ  
أَسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ وَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ  
لِيُوْحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَآئِهِمْ لِيُجَدِّلُوا كَمَا وَإِن  
أَطَعْتُمْ هُمْ أَتَّكُمُ لِمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾ أَوْ مَنْ كَانَ مِثْلًا  
فَأَحْيَيْنَاهُ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُ نُورًا يَمْشِي بِهِ فِي  
النَّاسِ كَمَنْ مَثَلُهُ فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ لَيْسَ بِخَارِجٍ  
مِّنْهَا كَذَلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْكَافِرِينَ مَا كَانُوا  
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

177 *Fisq* is serious infringement of the laws of God. The word is derived from the imagery of a palm date coming out of its protective covering (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Rebellious against God's ordained laws exposes one as much as an uncovered palm date is exposed to the elements.

178 Associators (*mushrikūn*) set themselves up as equal to God. They forbid what He made lawful and allow what He forbade (cf. al-Shirbīnī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā' al-Bayān*). Contravening God's laws comes under Associating others with Him (cf. al-Rāzī).

179 The Deniers who are languishing in ignorance and dwelling in a bottomless pit of darkness are as good as dead, bereft of the light of guidance, which is equal to life itself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Or like darkness upon an abysmal sea: one wave covers up another wave, over which there 'hang' clouds; layers of darkness, one above the other! When he stretches out his hand, he can scarcely see it. Anyone whom Allah does not grant light to will have no light!" (24: 40).

180 *Yamshī bibi* could be translated as 'walk in' or 'walk with'. A Believer who has light is guided in himself and is guiding to other people. So he walks 'in' this light and walks 'with' it, lighting with it the paths of other people (Abū Ḥayyān).

﴿123﴾ Like so<sup>(181)</sup> We made into each town its chief criminals so that they may spread 'conniving' plots in it; they only weave plots against themselves but they are not aware of it. ﴿124﴾ When a Sign comes to them, they 'readily' say: "We will not Believe unless we are given the like of which the Messengers of Allah<sup>(182)</sup> were given". Allah knows best where He places His Message; the crime perpetrators will be seized by debasement in front of Allah and 'for them is' a painful Punishment for their plot weaving.<sup>(183)</sup>

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَا فِي كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ أَكْبَرًا مُّجْرِمِيهَا  
لِيَمْكُرُوا فِيهَا وَمَا يَمْكُرُونَ إِلَّا  
بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَإِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ  
آيَةٌ قَالُوا لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ حَتَّى نُؤْتَىٰ مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ  
رُسُلُ اللَّهِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ حَيْثُ يَجْعَلُ رِسَالَتَهُ  
سَمِصِبُ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا صَغَارٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ  
وَعَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَمْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

- 181 The instigators of such wiles and cunning criminalities were the notables of Makkah, who had most interest in keeping the status quo, which the Message came to interrupt. Ibn Kathīr opines that this fact is mentioned here by way of comforting the Prophet (ﷺ), a sub-text which runs throughout this sura. That the Prophet is opposed by the notables of his town is nothing new, 'like so' all towns were made to fall into the grips of such 'criminals' whose doing is nothing more than weaving stratagems and conniving: "Like so We have made for every Prophet an enemy among the criminals. But your Lord is sufficient as a Guide and Helper" (25: 31).
- 182 They did not say: "The Messenger of Allah", because they wanted to vent their covetous wish without acknowledging his Messengership (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "Nay but each one of them demands that a Scripture be sent down to him, unrolled before his very eyes" (74: 52). They could also have said this derogatorily (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr), seeing him as unworthy of the Message: "And they said: "Why was this Qur'ān not sent down to a distinguished man, from either of the two towns 'Makkah and Taif'?" (43: 31).
- 183 Their truth and fate in the Hereafter are told graphically in the following ayas: "Those who waxed arrogant will say to those who had been weak and oppressed: "Did we turn you away from guidance after it had come unto you? Nay! But you were 'equally' criminals. \*Those who had been weak and oppressed will say to those who waxed arrogant: "Nay! But there was plotting by night and day when you ordered us to Deny Allah, and to set up equals to Him". And they will hide their remorse when they see the Punishment, and We put shackles to the necks of those who Deny. Will they be requited for nothing but what they used to do? \*And We sent no warner to a town, but that those living in luxury therein said: "We do not believe

﴿125﴾ Whoever Allah wants to guide, He opens up his heart to Islam<sup>(184)</sup>, but whoever He wants to misguide, He makes His chest constricted, gripped as if elevating into the ‘heights’ of the sky. Like so Allah places plight on those who do not Believe. ﴿126﴾<sup>(185)</sup> This is the path of your Lord, straight, We have detailed the Signs to those who reason. ﴿127﴾ For them<sup>(186)</sup> is the Abode of Peace<sup>(187)</sup> with their Lord; He is their Ally for what they used to do.

﴿128﴾<sup>(188)</sup> And on the Day when He congregates them all ‘and says’:

فَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَهْدِيَهُ، يَشْرَحْ صَدْرَهُ  
لِلْإِسْلَامِ، وَمَنْ يُرِدْ أَنْ يُضِلَّهُ، يُغَيِّرْ  
صَدْرَهُ ضَيْقًا حَرَجًا كَأَنَّمَا يَصْعَدُ  
فِي السَّمَاءِ كَذَلِكَ يَجْعَلُ اللَّهُ الرِّجْسَ عَلَى  
الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَهَذَا صِرَاطٌ رَبِّكَ مُسْتَقِيمًا  
قَدْ فَصَّلْنَا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٢٦﴾  
\* لَهُمْ دَارُ السَّلَامِ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُوَ وَيْلُهُمْ  
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾

وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا

*in that where with you have been sent. \*And they say: “We are greater in wealth and children, and we shall not be Punished” (34: 32-35).*

- 184 “But Allah has endeared Belief to you, making it appealing to your hearts. And He has made Denying, rebelliousness, and disobedience detestable to you. Those are the ones rightly guided. \*This is ‘A bounty and a blessing from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise” (49: 7-8).
- 185 Such a clear straight path, Islam, to which there are no twists and turns is easy to see and walk in, but the Deniers are plighted with blotched perceptions. They just cannot bring themselves to Believe in the Message; it is too hard on them as if they are breathing through the eye of a needle, like one climbing up to the sky or gaping heights (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 186 Those who open up their minds and hearts to ponder the Signs of God while Believing (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Sa’dī).
- 187 Paradise where they are kept aloof and safe from all worries and dangers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 188 This passage depicts a scene from the Day of Judgement and starkly details the humiliating ‘debasement’ of the humans and their jinn ‘allies’ who pitted themselves against the Message. On that Day their truth and the fragility of their alliance will be exposed as they have nothing to offer but lame excuses and shameful confessions. This dark fate is sharply contrasted to that of those who embraced the Message who peacefully dwell in the ‘Abode of Peace’ in great dignity, the telling of which has just been given in the previous aya. Both scenes are brought together by the conjunctive *wa* (and) found at the beginning of Aya 128 here (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).



“You assembly of jinn have taken great liberties<sup>(189)</sup> with humans!” Their allies among humans said: “Our Lord, we enjoyed<sup>(190)</sup> each other and we fulfilled our term that You have appointed for us<sup>(191)</sup>”. He said: “Fire is your dwelling, eternally ‘you abide’ therein, except what Allah wills”—indeed your Lord ‘Muhammad’ is All-Wise, All-Knowing. <sup>﴿129﴾</sup> Like so We ally<sup>(192)</sup> the wrongdoers with each other because of what they used to earn. <sup>﴿130﴾</sup> “You assembly of jinn and humans, have there come to you no Messengers of your kind communicating to you My Signs and warning you of meeting this Day of yours?”

يَمَعَّشِرَ الْجِنِّ قَدْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ مِنَ الْإِنسِ  
وَقَالَ أَوْلِيَآؤُهُمْ مِنَ الْإِنسِ رَبَّنَا اسْتَمْتَعَ  
بَعْضُنَا بِبَعْضٍ وَبَلَّغْنَا آجَلَتَا الَّذِي أَجَلْتَنَا  
لَكَ قَالَ أَلَا تَرْمُونَكَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَلَا مَأْشَاءَ  
اللَّهِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ  
نُؤَلِّي بَعْضَ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضًا بِمَا كَانُوا  
يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ نَمَعَّشِرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ  
الْمَرِيَاتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنكُمْ يَقُصُّونَ  
عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي وَيُنذِرُونَكُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا

- 189 They heeded no limits in taking humans as followers and in leading them far away from the right path; this resulted in a great many humans being misguided (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī): “He ‘Satan, then’ said: “You see this being ‘Adam’ You have honoured above me? If You reprove me until the Day of Resurrection, I will lead all but a few of his descendants by the nose” (17: 62); “Indeed, Iblīs ‘Satan’ was proved right in his opinion of them, they followed him, except a group of ‘true’ Believers” (34: 20).
- 190 The jinn ‘enjoyed’ the humans obeying and worshipping them and the humans ‘enjoyed’ that the jinn fulfilled their wishes and gratified their lusts (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). They volunteered to offer such a lame self-incriminating defense because they knew they were implicated in the taunt directed at the jinn and so they volunteered to answer for themselves and on behalf of their masters, not wanting in the process to appear the lesser party in this alliance (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 191 *Ajal* is the period they were destined to stay in life (cf. Aya 2 above; al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī). They state this fact out of sheer despair seeing their more able allies unable to speak for themselves and being hit by the reality they were warned about coming true (cf. al-Alūsī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 192 Such criminals will always flock together and find solace and support and encouragement in each other’s company; they are partners in sin (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Wajīz, al-Sa‘dī).

They said: “We bear witness against ourselves”.<sup>(193)</sup> The worldly life has deluded them<sup>(194)</sup> and they bore witness against themselves that they were Deniers. <sup>﴿131﴾</sup> That<sup>(195)</sup>, for your Lord will not destroy towns unjustly while their people are unaware.

<sup>﴿132﴾</sup> For each are ranks for what they did<sup>(196)</sup>; Your Lord ‘Muhammad’ is not oblivious to what they do. <sup>﴿133﴾</sup> Your Lord is the ‘One’ Free from Need the Possessor of Mercy<sup>(197)</sup>,

قَالُوا شَهِدْنَا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِنَا وَعَرَّتَهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ  
الدُّنْيَا وَشَهِدُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا  
كَفَرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ ذَلِكَ أَن لَّمْ يَكُن رَّبُّكَ  
مُهْلِكَ الْقُرَىٰ بِظُلْمٍ وَأَهْلُهَا غَفِلُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

وَلِكُلِّ دَرَجَةٍ مِمَّا عَمِلُوا وَمَا رَّبُّكَ  
بِعَظِيمٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَرَبُّكَ الْغَنِيُّ  
ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ

193 “...and they said: “Had we listened or reasoned, we would not have been among the companions of the Blaze. \*So they confessed their sin; away with the companions of the Blaze” (67: 10-11).

194 This is the real reason that they were straying (cf. al-Shinqīī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*); they were lured by this worldly life and all the pleasures it has to offer.

195 The communication of the Message and the warning; God, the All-Just, will only inflict punishment on those whom He forewarned and are made aware of their wrongs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): “These ‘Messengers’ were sent as ‘deliverers of glad tidings and warnings, so that people would have no pretext against Allah after the Messengers’ coming to them’—verily Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise” (4: 165).

196 This is yet another hint pointing to the fate of people in the life to come: essentially, then, the different ranks people will occupy in the Hereafter either in Hell or Paradise, each according to their deeds. The more good one does, the higher rank they will have in Paradise, the more evil one commits the severer the place in Hell (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Jāmi‘ al-Rasā’il*, 1:111, al-Sa‘ dī): “See how We have favoured some of them over others, and surely the Hereafter is greater in ranking and greater in favour” (17: 21).

197 *al-Ghaniyy* (lit. The Free from Need) is to indicate that God Almighty is in no need of His creation so it is in His Power to wipe them out at will, but He is also *Dhū al-Raḥmah* (lit. The Possessor of Mercy) and for it He gives them respite to reflect and try to mend their ways. That He allows people to go on rebelling against Him is not to be mistaken for any lack of ability (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): “People, it is you who stand in need of Allah, indeed God is the ‘One’ Free from Need, the Praiseworthy; \*if He wills, He can do away with you and bring in a new creation, \*and that is no great matter for Allah” (35: 15-17).

if He wishes He would do away with you ‘all’ and bring to succeed you whatever He wishes; the same as He brought you from the offspring of other people<sup>(198)</sup>. ﴿134﴾ What you are being promised will most certainly come to take place<sup>(199)</sup>; you will never tire ‘Me’<sup>(200)</sup>. ﴿135﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: My people labour in the state in which you are<sup>(201)</sup>, as I will be labouring ‘my own way’, for sure you will come to know to whom belongs the last round in the land<sup>(202)</sup>—indeed the wrongdoers do not prosper.

إِنْ يَشَاءُ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَسْتَبْخِلْ مِنْ  
بَعْدِكُمْ مَا يَشَاءُ كَمَا أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنْ  
ذُرِّيَّةِ قَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ إِنْ مَا تُوْعَدُونَ  
لَأَتِيَنَّكُمْ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ قُلْ يَتَقَوَّمُ  
أَعْمَلُوا عَلَىٰ مَكَاتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ فَسَوْفَ  
تَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ تَكُونُ لَهُ عَقِبَةُ الدَّارِ  
إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

198 Earlier generations of humans. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

199 Requit for your deeds. (al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Ashūr)

200 “Those who Deny claim they will not be resurrected. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Yes, by my Lord, you will surely be resurrected, then you will certainly be informed of what you have done – that is easy for Allah” (64: 7).

201 That is to say, continue in your current state of Denial, refusing to heed the Signs of God with which you are satisfied, just as I will continue following the dictates of God and the path of His Pleasure and I will not be hurt by your intransigence (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). Their sordid state of affairs will be detailed shortly in Ayas 136-140.

202 Who will gain the upper hand when God’s promise is fulfilled either soon in this worldly life or later in the Hereafter? (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Surely, We will make Our Messengers victorious and those who Believe in the worldly life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand. \*On the Day when excuses will not profit the evildoers, their fate will be rejection and they will have the worst of homes” (40: 51-52); “Indeed We wrote in the Psalms, as We did in the ‘earlier’ Scripture: “My righteous servants shall inherit the land”” (21: 105); “Allah has promised those of you who Believe and do good that He will certainly make them successors in the land, as He did with those before them; and will surely establish for them their Faith which He has chosen for them; and will indeed change their fear into security—‘provided that’ they worship Me, Associating nothing with Me. But whoever Denies after this ‘promise’, it is they who will be the rebellious” (24: 55).

﴿136﴾<sup>(203)</sup> They professed for Allah a share in crops and livestock which He generated and said: “This is for Allah – so they claimed – and this is for our Associates<sup>(204)</sup>”; whatever is allocated for their Associates does not reach Allah, but whatever is allocated for Allah reaches their Associates—sordid indeed how they judge. ﴿137﴾ Like so<sup>(205)</sup> the Associates made alluring for many of the Associators killing their ‘own’ children to ruin them and confound them in their religion. Had Allah wished,

وَجَعَلُوا لِلَّهِ مِمَّا ذَرَأَ مِنَ الْحَرْثِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ  
نَصِيبًا فَقَالُوا هَذَا لِلَّهِ بِرِعْمِهِمْ وَهَذَا  
لِشْرِكِنَا إِنَّا فَمَا كَانَ لِشْرِكِنَا بِهِمْ فَلَا  
يَصِلُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ فَهُوَ يَصِلُ  
إِلَى شْرِكِنَا بِهِمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾  
وَكَذَلِكَ زَيَّنَ لِكَثِيرٍ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ  
قَتْلَ أَوْلَادِهِمْ شُرَكَاؤُهُمْ لِيُرْدُوهُمْ  
وَلِيَلْبِسُوا عَلَيْهِمْ دِينَهُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

- 203 This passage and the next detail the sorry moral ‘state’ (*makānah*) to which the idolater Arabs of Makkah were demoted because they fabricated laws and falsely ascribed them to God. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: “If you want to realize just how ignorant the Arabs were then, read ‘the ayas’ beyond 130 of *al-An‘ām* up until: “Losers indeed are those who killed their ‘own’ children out of foolishness with no basis in ‘proper’ knowledge, and forbade what Allah provided for them, falsely ascribing it ‘all’ to Allah; they have gone astray, and they were not guided” (al-Bukhārī: 358).
- 204 Their idols (cf. al-Ṭabarī). It was their heathen ritual to allocate two shares out of their livestock; a share for God and a share for the idols. If a portion of the share they allocated to God was mixed with that of their idols, they would not deduct and add it to God’s so-called share, saying that God is in no need of it. Yet they would not do so the other way round; if a portion of the share they allocated for their idols fell with that of God’s they would readily cut it and add it on to their idols’ share (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *Adwā’ al-Bayān*).
- 205 The same principle applies to another of their grievous and ritualistic crimes; killing their own children. Since they only followed their mere fancies (Aya 116 above) and the whisperings of the devils, they strayed far from the path of God and were degraded to such a sub-human state of affairs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “When one of them is given news of the birth of a baby girl, his face darkens and he is filled with gloom. \*In his shame he hides himself away from his people because of the bad news he has been given. Should he keep her and suffer contempt or bury her in the dust? Sordid indeed is how they judge!” (16: 58-59)

they would not have done it, so leave them ‘Muhammad’ and what they concoct. <sup>﴿138﴾</sup> They also said: “These are prohibited livestock and crops which are only to be consumed by those whom we wish”<sup>(206)</sup> – so they claimed – ‘other’ livestock the backs of which were made forbidden<sup>(207)</sup>, and ‘some’ livestock over which they do not mention Allah’s Name<sup>(208)</sup>, ascribing this falsely to Him; He will requite them for what they used concoct. <sup>﴿139﴾</sup> They also said: “Whatever is in the bellies of these livestock ‘if alive’ is reserved exclusively for our males and is forbidden to our ‘female’ mates”.<sup>(209)</sup> But if it is ‘born’ dead then it is shared with them; He will requite them for their designation<sup>(210)</sup>—verily

مَا فَعَلُوهُ قَدْ زَهَرُوا وَمَا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾  
 وَقَالُوا هَذِهِ أَفْعَمٌ وَحَرَّتْ حَجْرٌ لَا يَطْعَمُهَا  
 إِلَّا مَنْ نَشَاءُ بَرَعْمِهِمْ وَأَنْعَمٌ حُرِّمَتْ  
 ظُهُورُهَا وَأَنْعَمٌ لَا يَذْكُرُونَ أَسْمَاءَ اللَّهِ  
 عَلَيْهَا افْتِرَاءً عَلَيْهِ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ بِمَا كَانُوا  
 يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَقَالُوا مَا فِي بُطُونِ هَذِهِ  
 الْأَنْعَامِ خَالِصَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرْنَا وَمُحَرَّمَ عَلَى  
 أَزْوَاجِنَا وَإِنْ يَكُن مَيْتَةً فَهُمْ فِيهِ  
 شُرَكَاءُ سَيَجْزِيهِمْ وَصْفَهُمْ

206 “Allah allowed none ‘of the so designated’ bahīrah, nor sā’ibah, nor waṣilah, nor ḥām but the Deniers fabricate lies against Allah; most of them have no sense” (5: 103); “Say: “Think about the provision Allah has sent down for you, some of which you have made unlawful and some lawful”. Say: “Has Allah given you permission ‘to do this’, or are you fabricating lies against Allah?” (10: 59)

207 Some animals were made forbidden to ride. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

208 Superstitiously, they would deliberately not mention God’s Name on them when riding, milking, loading or slaughtering them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wajīz, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

209 Another of their ‘religious’ fabrications was their dedication of every live birth of their livestock to men but to the exclusion of women. This because they regarded women as impure, bad omens and this is why they allowed them to consume of the born dead because then there would be no harm done (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

210 Calling this lawful and that forbidden (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī): “And utter not lies in what your tongues designate, ‘saying’: “This is lawful and this

He is Most Wise, All-Knowing. ﴿140﴾ Losers indeed are those who killed their 'own' children out of foolishness with no basis in 'proper' knowledge, and forbade what Allah provided for them, falsely ascribing it 'all' to Allah; they have gone astray, and they were not guided.

﴿141﴾ <sup>(211)</sup>He is the One Who fashioned gardens, trellised and untrellised<sup>(212)</sup>, palm dates and greenery of various edibles<sup>(213)</sup>, and olive and pomegranate resembling each other but are not similar<sup>(214)</sup>,

إِنَّهُرَّحِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَدْ خَسِرَ الَّذِينَ  
 قَتَلُوا أَوْلَادَهُمْ سَفَهًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَحَرَمُوا  
 مَا رَزَقَهُمُ اللَّهُ آفِتَاءً عَلَى اللَّهِ قَدْ ضَلُّوا  
 وَمَا كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

\* وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنْشَأَ جَنَّاتٍ مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَعَيْرَ  
 مَعْرُوشَاتٍ وَالنَّخْلَ وَالزَّرْعَ مُخْتَلِفًا أَكْثَرُهُ  
 وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُتَشَابِهًا وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ

*is forbidden”, such that you fabricate a lie against Allah. Surely those who fabricate lies against Allah will not prosper” (16: 116).*

- 211 This passage explains the ruling regarding God's provisions to humans in contrast with the pagan way which falls in the footsteps of man's arch-enemy, Satan (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 212 The creation of gardens of all sorts is God's own doing. He created all those plants; those that crawl on the ground which need to be trellised for support and those which stand on their own (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī). Even those gardens that humans tend by supporting their plants to enhance the produce are in essence God made.
- 213 Indicating Almighty God's bountiful Generosity and His wondrous Ability of creation (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 214 This segment of the aya is parallel to an almost similar one found in Aya 99 above. However the difference is very subtle and scholars provide a number of readings. Whereas the previous one uses the adjective *mushtabih* (confusingly resembling each other) to qualify olives and pomegranates, this one uses the less intensified adjective *mutashābih* (resembling each other). Aya 99 comes within the context of expounding God's Signs which lead to realizing His Omnipotence and this requires that one take a close look around trying to read even the smallest of signs as opposed to the cosmic signs which were spoken about many times earlier in the sura. What is meant there is to look at the trees, especially the saplings as alluded to in the aya, of olive and pomegranate which look closely similar but the produce is wholly different in terms of shape and taste. Once one is 'confused' by

eat 'you' of its fruits when it yields<sup>(215)</sup> and give out the given right<sup>(216)</sup> out of it on the day of its harvest; and do not squander, for He does not like the squanderers. <sup>(142)</sup> And out of livestock 'He fashioned' some for burden and some for tapestry<sup>(217)</sup>,

كُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَآتُوا حَقَّهُ ر  
يَوْمَ حَصَادِهِ وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ  
الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَفِي الْأَنْعَامِ حَمُولَةٌ وَفَرَشَاتٌ

such resemblance, one is more likely to ask questions about the subtlety of the creation and thus the Ability of the Creator, Who is, to say the least, a far cry from the idols they hold as gods. However, this aya deals with God's provision of fruits and the best manner of dealing with them, so looking at the trees themselves when they bear fruits is no longer 'confusingly' similar since their fruits are not alike. In Aya 99 God commands: "Look!" whereas here He bids: "Eat!" (cf. al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

- 215 This is the reason why these fruits have been created; to be consumed and not to be declared unlawful by and for some (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 216 Their 'right' is the zakah (prescribed alms), which is to be given out readily without delay (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīī). Those who do not give out this God-given right will soon be afflicted: "Indeed, We have tested them 'Makkans' as We tested the owners of the garden – when they swore they would surely harvest 'all' its fruit in the early morning, \*and they made no exception. \*Whereupon a visitation from your Lord came upon that 'garden' while they were asleep, \*and by morning it was stripped bare, a desolate land. \*Then by daybreak they called out to each other, \*saying: "Rush early to your harvest, if you are bent on picking 'all' the fruit. \*They hurried off muttering to one another: \*"Do not let any poor person enter your garden today." \*They left early, bent on their purpose. \*But when they saw it 'devastated', they cried, "We must have lost our way! Nay! But we are made to suffer privation" (68: 17-28).
- 217 This is the translation for the Qur'anic word *farsh* based on al-Zamakhsharī in *al-Kashshāf* meaning the wool, fur and hair of animals out of which tapestries and furnishings are woven: "Allah is the One Who has given you a place of rest in your homes and from the hides of animals made you homes that you find light 'to handle' when you travel and when you set up camp; furnishings and comfort for a while from their wool, fur, and hair" (16: 80). However, al-Iṣfahānī in *al-Mufradāt* has it that *farsh* are the camels which are not fit for loading so that they are rode as much as pieces of furniture. Yet *Lisān al-'Arab* quotes Abū Ishāq al-Ḥaḍramī saying that all linguists are of the opinion that *farsh* are small camel. In fact, the word and how it is coined allude to all these meanings.

eat ‘you’ of what Allah has provided for you and do not follow the footsteps of Satan<sup>(218)</sup>—he is indeed an open enemy to you.

﴿143﴾ <sup>(219)</sup> ‘Now, these livestock are eight mates<sup>(220)</sup>, two of sheep and two of goats. Say ‘Muhammad’: “‘Pray you’ Did He forbid the two males or the two females, or what is contained in the wombs of the two females?<sup>(221)</sup> Tell me with knowledge<sup>(222)</sup>, if you are truthful!” ﴿144﴾ “And two of camels and two of cattle. Say ‘Muhammad’: “‘Pray you’ Did He forbid the two males or the two females, or what is contained in the wombs of the two females?

كُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا  
خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ

مُبِينٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾

ثَمَانِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ مَمَّنَ الضَّأْنِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمَمَّنَ  
الْمَعْزِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ ءَالذَّكَرَيْنِ حَرَّمَ أَمِ  
الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ  
نَبِيُّ يَعْلَمُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَمَمَّنَ  
الْإِبِلِ اثْنَيْنِ وَمَمَّنَ الْبَقَرِ اثْنَيْنِ قُلْ ءَالذَّكَرَيْنِ  
حَرَّمَ أَمِ الْأُنثَيَيْنِ أَمَّا اشْتَمَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ أَرْحَامُ  
الْأُنثَيَيْنِ

218 By falsely declaring some of these provisions lawful and others as unlawful. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

219 This passage delivers a knockout argument and highlights the folly of the heathen laws which, to say the least, lack wisdom and are prone to be derided if looked at critically as in this passage (al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

220 “He created you from a single soul. Then He made from it its mate, and He produced for you from the grazing livestock eight mates...” (39: 6).

221 This brings into question the wisdom behind their declaring unlawful some of the mentioned kinds (males, females and embryos) but not all of them, and as to why some of these were made unlawful in particular and not all of them since the same principles apply in all parallel cases (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). If a male sheep was declared unlawful then why not a he goat?; if a female sheep was declared unlawful then why not a she goat?; if an embryo in the womb of the female sheep was declared unlawful then, by the same token, why was the embryo in the womb of the she goat not declared so? (al-Rāzī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namūr*).

222 That is this peculiar choice is not justified by proper knowledge! (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). It also mounts a challenge to the Arabs of the time who claimed to follow the creed of Abraham (ﷺ).



Or were you witness as Allah bade you to this 'commandment'?"<sup>(223)</sup> Who is more unjust than one who fabricates lies against Allah to misguide people with no basis in 'proper' knowledge—verily Allah guides not the wrongful people.

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ وَصَّيْنَاكُمْ اللَّهُ  
بِهَذَا فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ  
كَذِبًا لِيُضِلَّ النَّاسَ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

﴿145﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "I find none in what is revealed to me forbidden for any eater to eat thereof, except it being carrion, flowing blood, swine flesh then it is a defilement<sup>(224)</sup>, or 'further' an act of contravention intended 'as sacrifice' for others besides Allah"<sup>(225)</sup> 'Yet' Whoever is forced 'by necessity' – neither transgressing nor going to excess – he is not guilty of sin—certainly Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.  
﴿146﴾<sup>(226)</sup> And for those of Jewish faith,

قُلْ لَا أَجِدُ فِي مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ مُحَرَّمًا عَلَى طَاعِمٍ  
يَطْعُمُهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ مَيْتَةً أَوْ دَمًا  
مَسْفُوحًا أَوْ لَحْمَ خَنزِيرٍ فَإِنَّهُ رِجْسٌ أَوْ  
فِسْقًا أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ لَيْسَ عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌ  
بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾  
وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ هَادُوا

223 This alludes to the fact that their so-called laws were not based on a revelation from the Creator of all things, Almighty God, which is the real source of proper knowledge (cf. al-Sa'dī).

224 *Rijs* is something which is abhorrently filthy and desecrated (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). To these types of forbidden foods are added the ones in Aya 3 of Sura *al-Mā'idah*, a late Madinan sura, which 'perfected' the religion and detailed its rulings for Believers (cf. al-Qurṭubī). For a detailed discussion of the types mentioned here see Aya 173.

225 All that which is intended as sacrifice for others besides God is also added to this list of prohibited foods (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

226 This is mentioned here to further specify the generalization that all food is lawful except what was told of in the previous aya since lawful food applies to all humans and not only Believers; God-ordained rulings are thus detailed (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Furthermore, since mention was made earlier of the fact that setting laws is to be backed by Divine revelation, such a law is cited as example here (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

We prohibited all animals of nails<sup>(227)</sup>, and from cattle, sheep and goats We prohibited for them their fat except what their backs hold or the entrails or what mixes with bone<sup>(228)</sup>; that We imposed on them for their transgression— Indeed We are all but Truthful. ﴿147﴾ If they call you a liar then say ‘Muhammad to them’: “Your Lord is of vast Mercy and His affliction is never to be warded off away from the criminal people”<sup>(229)</sup>.

﴿148﴾ <sup>(230)</sup>Those who Associate will say: “Had Allah wished, we would not have Associated, neither we nor our fathers; neither would we have prohibited anything!”<sup>(231)</sup>

حَرَّمَ كُلَّ ذِي ظُفْرٍ وَمِمَّنِ الْبَقَرِ  
وَالْعَنَمِ حَرَّمَ عَلَيْهِنَّ شُحُومَهُمَا إِلَّا مَا حَمَلَتْ  
ظُهُرُهُمَا أَوِ الْحَوَايَا أَوْ مَا اخْتَلَطَ بِعَظْمٍ  
ذَلِكَ حَرَجٌ لَهُمْ بِبَعْضِهِمْ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾  
فَإِنْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَقُلْ رَبُّكُمْ ذُو رَحْمَةٍ وَسِعَةَ  
وَلَا يَرُدُّ بَأْسَهُ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

سَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا لَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا  
أَشْرَكْنَا وَلَا آبَاؤُنَا وَلَا حَرَمْنَا مِنْ شَيْءٍ

- 227 Clawed animals that have nails in their toes, e.g. camels, ostriches, duck, geese, etc. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 228 The fat on animals’ backs, in their entrails or that which is mixed with bones are all exempted from this general ruling. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-‘Adhb al-Namīr)
- 229 That is to say, although your Lord’s Mercy is rightly vast, do not be fooled by the slackening of His reins for you, as His Might may catch up with you at anytime so heed Him well (cf. al-Anṣārī, *Faṭḥ al-Raḥmān*).
- 230 Now that it is their presumed turn to respond to the arguments put forward to them, assuming their position, God quotes this time-worn pretext of the rejecters of the Truth; blaming their Denial on God (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā‘ī): “The Associators said: “Had Allah wished, neither we nor our fathers would have worshipped anything other than Him, nor prohibited anything without His command”. The same was done by those before them. Is not the Messengers’ duty only to deliver ‘the Message’ clearly?” (16: 35)
- 231 They argue by citing predestination (*al-qadar*), yet they were given the choice of choosing the path they follow in life whilst being sent Messengers to show them the right path: “...and pointed out to him ‘man’ the two clear ways ‘of good and evil’?” (90: 10); “We showed him the way, be he

Likewise the ones before them denied until they tasted Our affliction<sup>(232)</sup>. Say 'Muhammad': "Do you have knowledge that you may produce for us? Indeed you only follow 'mere' fancies, indeed they are only guessing"<sup>(233)</sup>. ﴿149﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "The conclusive argument belongs to Allah; had He wished, He would have guided you all<sup>(234)</sup>". ﴿150﴾ Say: "Bring forth your witnesses who bear out that Allah prohibited this"<sup>(235)</sup>. If they bear witness<sup>(236)</sup>, then do not bear witness with them and do not follow the vain desires of those who rejected our Signs and those who do not Believe in the Hereafter while they set up 'false' equals to their Lord.

كَذَلِكَ كَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ  
ذَاقُوا بِأَسَنَاتِهِم مَّا كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ  
فَتَخَرَّجُوهُ لَنَا إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ  
أَسْمُرُ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ قُلْ فَلِلَّهِ الْحُجَّةُ الْبَالِغَةُ  
فَلَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَيْتُكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ قُلْ هَلُمَّ  
شُهَدَاءَكُمْ الَّذِينَ يَشْهَدُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ  
هَذَا فَإِن شَهِدُوا فَلَا تَشْهَدْ مَعَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ  
أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَالَّذِينَ  
لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ وَهُمْ يَرْمُونَكَ بِنَجْوَىٰ

*thankful or be he ardently Denying*" (76: 3); "... and by the soul and how He formed it; \*And inspired it 'with discernment of' its wickedness and its righteousness" (91: 7-8). Thus endowed, blaming their evil doings on God's will is nothing more than scapegoating, a weak ploy meant either to evade responsibility or to quiet one's nagging conscience. Yet it could also be meant merely for the sake of arguing back.

232 The example of earlier nations is given here to confirm that God is not pleased with the path they chose for themselves no matter what line of argument they take, so that they may rethink. Earlier in the sura (Aya 11) they were bade to: "Travel the land and look what was the fate of the deniers".

233 In actuality, this is what they base their 'laws' on, a fact stated earlier in Aya 116 above and alluded to throughout the sura.

234 Cf. Aya 107 above.

235 Their fallacious stance is again revisited to drive the message home.

236 That is even if they decide to come up with some forgery of their own to attempt additional challenge.

﴿151﴾ (237) Say ‘Muhammad’: “Come ‘you’ along so that I may recite what your Lord ‘really’ forbade for you: that you do not Associate anything with Him, (238) and being kind to ‘one’s’ parents (239); do not kill your children out of ‘desperate’ destitution (240) – We shall provide for both of you and them;

﴿قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَنَا رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيَّ كُفْرٌ  
الَّذِينَ شَرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا  
وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ إِنَّ أُمَّلِقَ مَحْنُ  
تَرْزُقُكُمْ وَإِيَّاهُمْ﴾

237 This passage further exposes the immorality of their practices by detailing ten ‘real’ high morals of God’s religion and what they stand for (cf. al-Rāzī, Riḍā): worshipping only the Sole rightful God Almighty, being kind to one’s parents, not killing one’s children under any circumstance (which over-rules their such practice) and being affectionate and charitable to them (cf. Ibn Kathīr), staying aloof from all vices and immoral acts, not killing other humans unless having a legal right to do so, striking a distance from the money of orphans, the most vulnerable segment in society, being fair and equitable in trade and financial dealings, passing a just judgement and uttering fair words at all times, and upholding one’s duty to God by obeying His commands and steering away from what He forbade; indeed this is a Straight Path!

It has to be noted that the principles mentioned here are of both a global and local purport as they at once address humans throughout times and places even though they address and highlight the particular moral failings of the Arabs at the time of revelation. The passage is further divided into two parts; the first deals with doing away with all forms of vice, and the second deals with basic virtues.

238 Pure monotheism (*tawhīd*), worshipping God Almighty alone, is the fountain-head of all virtue whereas Associating with God is, by contrast, the source of all evil. So, clearing this Association out and wholly subscribing to this foremost foundational principle comes first in the list of virtues (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

239 This is a major moral principle which is recurrently revisited in the Qur’an and is almost invariably coupled with worshipping God Almighty alone (cf. 2: 83, 4: 36, 17: 32). Little wonder really because parents are the source of one’s existence and one’s first benefactors after God (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

240 This is the vilest of all vices so that it is singled out before the rest. ‘Vices’ here are preceded by killing one’s own children and followed by killing other people, because violating a sacrosanct soul is a most serious act of infringement of Divine laws (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

do not come near vices, both open and secret; do not kill the soul that Allah forbade, except with a right to it<sup>(241)</sup>. That He bade you to, so that you may reason<sup>(242)</sup>.  
<sup>152</sup> (243) “Do not ‘neither’ come near the money of the orphan – except in a comely manner – until his coming of age<sup>(244)</sup>; give weights and scales their full measure with equity – We shall only task a soul with that which it could bear<sup>(245)</sup>; when you say ‘something’ say it fairly, even against a next of kin<sup>(246)</sup>; and fulfil your duty to Allah.

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا بَطَّنَ  
 وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا النَّفْسَ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ  
 ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّوْكُمْ بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾  
 وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا مَالَ الْيَتِيمِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ حَتَّىٰ  
 يَبْلُغَ أَشُدَّهُ وَأَوْفُوا بِالْكَيْلِ وَالْمِيزَانِ  
 بِالْقِسْطِ لَأَنْكَلِفَ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا وَإِذَا  
 قُلْتُمْ قَاعِدُوا لَوَاطِنَ ذَا قُرْبَىٰ وَبِعَهْدِ  
 اللَّهِ أَوْفُوا

241 Cf. Aya 5: 32: “...whoever kills a person – unless for killing another or spreading corruption in the land – it shall be as if he killed all people and whoever saves a life then it is as if he gave life to all people”.

242 The person who abides by these commandments is indeed endowed with sound reason (cf. Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, *al-Qawl al-Mufīd ‘alā Kitāb al-Tawhīd*, 1/39).

243 This aya deals with the rights of others in society be they financial or otherwise. It begins with the rights of the weakest link in society, the young and orphaned neither of whom can stand up for themselves (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

244 Cf. 4: 6.

245 This principle underlines God’s benevolence to humans: “Allah would not charge a soul with that which it cannot bear; to it belongs what it earned and against it is held what it has committed” (2: 286). Although people are to take care of their dealings and how they ‘weigh their scales’, God does not require them to be minutely exact, but rather that they should be Mindful of Him whenever engaging in such transactions (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

246 This commandment involves all human transactions done through speech: bearing witness and testifying, passing judgement, giving advice, getting involved in the affairs of other people, offering recommendations, etc. The principle of fairness is to be abided by even if it might be detrimental to a person one is closely related to (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “You who Believe, be ‘staunch’ upholders of absolute justice; witnesses for ‘the sake of’ Allah even against yourselves or your parents and relatives” (4: 135).

That He bade you so that you may remember<sup>(247)</sup>. ﴿153﴾ Indeed this is My path, Straight, so follow it and do not follow the ‘diverse’ roads and get driven away from His road; that He bade you so that you may become Mindful<sup>(248)</sup>.

﴿154﴾ <sup>(249)</sup>Then ‘know that’ We had given Musā ‘Moses’ the Book in perfection ‘for Our bounty’ for he who did well<sup>(250)</sup> and detailing everything; a guidance and mercy so that they may Believe in meeting their Lord.

ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٥٢﴾  
وَأَنَّ هَٰذَا صِرَاطِي مُسْتَقِيمًا فَاتَّبِعُوهُ وَلَا  
تَتَّبِعُوا السُّبُلَ فَتَفَرَّقَ بِكُمْ عَن سَبِيلِهِ  
ذَٰلِكُمْ وَصَّكُم بِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

ثُمَّ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ تَمَامًا عَلَى الَّذِي  
أَحْسَنَ وَبَفْصِيلًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهَدَىٰ وَرَحْمَةً  
لِّعَالَمِهِمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾

- 247 These virtues were well-known and highly recommended in the Arab culture at the time: although society was not exactly godly it nonetheless was inspired to an extent by some basic form of morality. This reminds them of the code of conduct they prided themselves on (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 248 Whoever follows this Straight Path becomes one of the Mindful (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 249 Since the ayas in this passage deal with the revelation of both the Torah and the Qur’an, they both build and reflect on the ten commandments found in the Torah, which in their totality are reflected in Ayas 151-153 above, as well as Ayas 91-92 which talk about the source of the revelation of the Torah and the Qur’an (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Exegetes have differed on the meaning of the connective *thumma* (then), but the closest to what is meant is not to put the events themselves in order but to order their telling which is closely related and relevant (cf. al-Sha‘rāwī). Moses is pointed out here to highlight, to the Makkans who acknowledged the Divine source of the Torah, that both the source of the Qur’an and the Torah (and the Evangel as implicated by mention of the ‘two groups’, the Jews and the Christians) is the same since the vices they forbid and the virtues they call for are essentially the same (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). It is customary in the Qur’an that both the Qur’an and the Torah are mentioned together as they both provide the most detailing of Divine laws of the Heavenly revealed Books (al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 250 The revelation of the Torah was a God-given blessing for those who did well among the Children of Israel (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*). Or ‘he who did well’ could mean Moses (ﷺ) exclusively (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī).

﴿155﴾ And this 'Qur'an' is a Book<sup>(251)</sup> We sent down, blessed, so follow it and be Mindful so that you may be shown mercy. ﴿156﴾ Lest that you may say: "But this Book was sent down to two 'other' groups<sup>(252)</sup> before us; indeed we are totally oblivious to their studying!<sup>(253)</sup>" ﴿157﴾ Or you may say: "Had we had the Book sent down to us, we would have been more guided than they are!" Surely then a clear evidence has come to you from your Lord, a guidance and mercy. Who is then more unjust than one who rejects Allah's Signs and spurns them? We shall requite those who spurn Our Signs the worst of Punishment for their spurning. ﴿158﴾ Do they expect 'nothing' but that the angels come upon them<sup>(254)</sup>; or your Lord comes,

وَهَذَا كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مَبَارَكٌ فَاتَّبِعُوهُ  
وَاتَّقُوا الْعَذَابَ الَّذِي نُرْجِمُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ أَنْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَنْزَلَ  
الْكِتَابَ عَلَى طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا وَإِنْ كُنَّا عَنِ  
دِرَاسَتِهِمْ لَغَافِلِينَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أَوْ تَقُولُوا لَوْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْ  
عَلَيْنَا الْكِتَابَ لَكُنَّا أَهْدَى مِنْهُمْ  
فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهَدَى  
وَرَحْمَةً فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ بَيِّنَاتِ اللَّهِ وَصَدَفَ  
عَنْهَا سَتَجَرَى الَّذِينَ يَصْدِفُونَ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا سُوءَ  
الْعَذَابِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْدِفُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ  
إِلَّا أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ أَوْ يَأْتِيَ رَبُّكَ

251 "And this 'Qur'an' is a Book We sent down, blessed, professing the Truth of what came before it" (6: 92); "And We sent down to you 'Muhammad' the Book 'the Qur'an' with the Truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Book 'the Torah and the Evangel' and a 'supreme' authority over it" (5: 48).

252 The reference here is to the Jews to whom the Torah was sent down and the Christians to whom the Evangel was sent down (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Both of whom the Arabs reverently regarded as 'people of the Book'.

253 That is they were ignorant of what these two Books contained not having access to them due to linguistic barriers, and that they were thought of as exclusive to their people (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

254 That is, not embracing the evident Truth they were given, they only wait for one of three very grave things to happen: 1) that angels come to them with death, terminating their lives while still Denying; 2) God coming to judge their affairs on the Day of Judgement: "Do they expect 'nothing' but that Allah comes to them in shadows of clouds along with the angels; 'lo!' the affair is settled and to Allah all affairs are returned" (2: 210); 3) that some of the Signs of the Day of Judgement, especially the sun rising from the West, take place. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

or some of your Lord's Signs come 'upon them'? On the Day when some of your Lord's Signs come, a soul's Believing will be to no avail to it had it not Believed earlier or earned good<sup>(255)</sup> in its Believing<sup>(256)</sup>, – say 'Muhammad': "Wait 'you', for we shall be waiting". <sup>(159)</sup> Indeed those who divided their religion and became sects, you have nothing to do with them<sup>(257)</sup>; their affair is 'left' to Allah, then He will give them the news about what they used to do. <sup>(160)</sup> <sup>(258)</sup> Whoever comes with a good deed, then for him is its equal tenfold, but whoever comes with a bad deed will only be requited its like; they shall not be wronged.

أَوْ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي بَعْضُ آيَاتِ رَبِّكَ لَا يَنْفَعُ نَفْسًا إِيمَانُهَا لَمْ تَكُنْ ءَامَنَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ أَوْ كَسَبَتْ فِي إِيمَانِهَا خَيْرًا قُلِ انْتَضِرُوا إِنَّا مَنَّطِرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ قَفَرُوا أَوِ دَابَّوْا كَمَا دَابَّ قَوْمُ أَهْلِ الْبَيْتِ فَهُمْ لَا يَخْتَفُونَ مِنْ أَفْئِدَتِنَا فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَنَّاعُكَ لِلَّهِ تَعَالَى ﴿١٥٩﴾ وَإِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرَ أَمْثَالِهَا وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى إِلَّا مِثْلَهَا وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾

255 Those who Believe are also to do good deeds and earn rewards for them (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

256 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The Hour will not come until the sun rises from the West. When it does so, people will Believe, but then: "...a soul's Believing will be to no avail to it had it not Believed earlier or earned good in its Believing" (al-Bukhārī: 6506, Muslim: 157). Belief has got to be in the Unseen and out of free choice but if the Signs are present then it becomes useless, because it becomes a must (cf. al-Sa'dī): "Repentance is not 'due' for those who carry on committing 'many a grave' evil, until death comes upon one of them, whence he says: "Now I repent!" (4: 18).

257 "He has prescribed for you as religion that which He enjoined upon Noah, and that which We sent down to you 'Muhammad', and that which We enjoined upon Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, that you uphold religion and not become divided therein" (42: 13); "This nation of yours is one – and I am your Lord: be Mindful of Me – \*but they have split their community into sects, each rejoicing in their own. \*So leave them 'Muhammad' for a while steeped 'in their ignorance'. \*Do they reckon that, by giving them wealth and children, \*We race to give them good things? Nay, but they are unaware!" (23: 52-56)

258 Such is Almighty God's boundless benevolence to those who do good deeds, and ultimate justice in judging the affairs of those who commit evil (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*).



﴿161﴾<sup>(259)</sup> Say ‘Muhammad’: “Indeed my Lord guided me to a Straight Path; an upright religion, the creed of Ibrāhīm ‘which is’ rightly oriented and never was he among the Associators”<sup>(260)</sup>. ﴿162﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “My Prayers, devotional rites<sup>(261)</sup>, living and death are all for Allah, the Lord of all beings. ﴿163﴾ There is no Associate for Him – with that I was commanded – and I am the first of those who submit”. ﴿164﴾ Say: “Would I want to take as lord any other besides Allah while He is the Lord of everything”.

قُلْ إِنِّي هَدَىٰ رَبِّي إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ دِينًا  
فِيمَا مَلَآءَ اِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ  
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾ قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ  
وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ لَا شَرِيكَ لَّهُ وَبِذَلِكَ  
أُمرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ قُلْ أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ أُنْبِيَ  
رَبًّا وَهُوَ رَبُّ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ

- 259 This is the sura’s concluding passage. It draws to a close the series of commands to the Prophet (ﷺ) to argue with his Denying people (to ‘say’ to them; which is further repeated thrice in this passage) so that they may see some sense and make an ultimate and firm stand-taking declaration (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 260 The creed of Abraham, *ḥanīfiyyah*, is the most pristine form of submission (*islām*) to God and the unadulterated source of all Heavenly-revealed religions. Makkans, being the custodians of the holy sites which Abraham himself instated by the command of God, fully realized the meaning of a new religion coming to them, one that would restore their true religion to its purest form (cf. Riḍā): “They said: “Become Jews or Christian, and you will be guided”. Say: “Nay, but ‘we follow’ the creed of Ibrāhīm, rightly oriented, and he was not one of the Associators” (2: 135); “With this Ibrāhīm and Ya‘qūb ‘Jacob’ enjoined their sons: “My sons! Allah has chosen this religion for you, so die not without being devoutly submitted” (2: 132).
- 261 *Nusuk* is a general denominator for all acts of worship meant to get closer to God (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). However, the majority of exegetes are of the opinion that here it means sacrificing animals (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*). Both Prayers and sacrificing were very conspicuous acts of devotion which ran contrary to the then common practices prevalent in the Makkan polytheistic society. They are both symbolic of the firmness of Faith (cf. al-Sa‘dī).

No soul shall earn 'anything' except it being against it<sup>(262)</sup>; no burdened soul shall carry the burden of another. Then to your Lord is your return and He will give you the news about what you used to differ upon<sup>(263)</sup>. ﴿165﴾ Indeed He is the One Who made you successors<sup>(264)</sup> in the land and raised some of you ranks above others so that He may test you through what He bestowed upon you<sup>(265)</sup>—verily your Lord is swift in retribution<sup>(266)</sup>; verily He is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَلَا تَكْسِبُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ إِلَّا عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُم مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ خَلِيفَةَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِّيَبْلُوكُمْ فِي مَاءِ آتَاكُمُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَرَفِيعٌ ذَرِّيٌّ ﴿١٦٦﴾



- 262 A person who earns evil is earning it against himself alone (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*): “Every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned” (74: 38).
- 263 “Say ‘Muhammad’: “You will not be questioned concerning that of which we were guilty; nor will we be questioned concerning what you do. \*Say: “Our Lord will gather us together; then He will decide between us with Truth; and He is the Arbiter, the Knower” (34: 25-26); “Then your ‘humans’ return will be to Me and I shall judge between you over that which you used to differ” (3: 55).
- 264 The God they defied is the One Who raised them to take the place of other people who preceded them, and empowered them to ‘succeed’ in His land (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 265 People are of varying degrees with regards to God’s bounty on them: beauty, strength, character, wealth, intellectual ability, power, knowledge, etc. This is to see what they do with what they are endowed with (cf. Riḍā).
- 266 The One Who raised people in succession and endowed them with various bounties is All-Able to hold them accountable for their deeds. God’s Signs of the creation of people and His providing their livelihoods for them, their coming in succession, generation after another, and the struggles of the Messengers with them, and their reckoning both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter are significant themes of the next sura, *al-A’rāf*.



سُورَةُ الْأَعْرَافِ

*al-A'raf*  
(The Heights)



## *al-A‘rāf* (The Heights)

**Title:** *al-A‘rāf* (thus titled in al-Nasā‘ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 911; al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*: 3362; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 4037) is raised ground, a height, forming a separating barrier between Paradise and its dwellers and Hellfire and its dwellers. This is the only sura where *al-a‘rāf*, as such, is mentioned in the Qur’an. This lexical item and the happenings pertaining to it as detailed in Ayas 46-52 vividly depict the final scene in the chapter of the battle of good and evil over God Almighty’s sole rightfulness to worship, around which the whole sura revolves.

**Merit:** it is one of the meritorious first seven lengthy suras of the Qur’an (cf. Introductions to Suras 4 and 5). ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) recited ‘the whole of’ Sura *al-A‘rāf* during al-Maghrib Prayer dividing it between the two *rak‘ahs* ‘units of Prayer’” (al-Nasā‘ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 991; al-Ṭabarānī, *Musnad al-Shāmiyyīn*: 3362, al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 4037; this narration was deemed authentic in: al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awtār*, 2/258; al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Nasā‘ī*, 990).

**Theme:** this sura takes the reader on a long illustrative journey of the battle between good and evil ever since the creation of Adam, the father of humanity, who epitomised what ‘good’ and virtuous is and the emergence of his archenemy, Satan, who epitomised what is ‘evil’ and devious. It charts out many historical occurrences that took place between the Messengers of God to humanity, who came to guide them to the Straight Path urging them to dedicate their worship to Allah alone, and their enemies among the forces of evil, the followers of Satan. The many ‘Signs’ and arguments detailed in answer to the Deniers throughout history and how they were destroyed, the causes of straying and deviation, and the graphic description of scenes happening around the ‘heights’, are meant to bring the Deniers to their senses so that they may heed and are intended for the Believers so that they may find solace and remain steadfast. The Qur’an, God’s everlasting Message to humanity, is further highlighted at the very beginning of the sura and at its end as an ‘eye-opener’, ‘guidance’ and ‘light’ which should be listened to attentively so that people may salvage and deliver themselves from ruination.

**Key:** this is a Makkan (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān) sura just like the previous one, *al-An'ām* and follows on from it in a number of ways. Like *al-An'ām* it is set against a backdrop of the tough Makkan days of Islam. Thus, in many ways, it comes as consolation to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers around him (al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā'ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*), assuring him of the final result of the battle that he was engaged in with the Deniers; the pious enjoying the many blisses of Paradise and the rebellious suffering all forms of torment in Hellfire, and citing in the process many examples of earlier Messengers and how they struggled against the forces of evil who came, in the end, to meet their doom. On the other hand, whereas *al-An'ām* talks mainly of the proofs and 'Signs' (*āyāt*) of God Almighty's sole rightfulness to Lordship (*rubūbiyyah*) which sound human nature vouches for, given that it is provided with potent 'Signs', *al-A'raf* (the sura where the word 'Signs' (*āyāt*) occurs most in the Qur'an) takes it a step further to prove Allah's Godship (*ulūhiyyah*), and that He is the Sole Deserver of all acts of worship and that He is not to be Associated with. In the same vein, whereas *al-An'ām* contrasts 'darknesses' and 'light', *al-A'raf* draws the line between good and evil and recounts the ever raging battle between the two divides.

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

﴿1﴾ *Alif, Lām, Mīm, Šād*<sup>(1)</sup>. ﴿2﴾ A Book<sup>(2)</sup> that has been sent down to you 'Muhammad' – let there not be unease in your chest about it<sup>(3)</sup> – so that you may warn with it, and it be a reminder to the Believers.

﴿3﴾ Follow 'you people' what was sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow allies besides Him—'how' little do you heed!<sup>(4)</sup>

الْمَصِّ ۝ كِتَابٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ عَلَيْكَ فَلَا يَكُنْ فِي صَدْرِكَ  
حَرَجٌ مِّنْهُ لِتُنذِرَ بِهِ ۖ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝  
اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُم مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مِن  
دُونِهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ۝

1 These disjointed letters, highlighting the inimitable nature of the Qur'an (cf. 2: 1), are meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the Truthfulness of the Message.

2 The Qur'an, God's most potent Message to humanity (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). It is the 'eye-opener' Book (cf. 6: 92 and 155) that needs to be both professed and adhered to. Ibn 'Āshūr opines that the use of the word 'Book' in the indefinite form is, among other rhetorical purposes, meant to underline the greatness of the Qur'an. Riḍā, on the other hand, goes to say that the 'Book' is so well-known that it needs no defining, and hence the use of the indefinite form.

Significantly, 'Book' is the very first word in this sura. The Qur'an explains and expounds upon the divide that separates good and evil; it is the Distinguisher (*al-Furqān*) which shows rightfulness from wrongfulness and sets Truth apart from falsehood: "*Blessed is He Who sent down the Distinguisher to His servant that he may be a warner to all beings*" (25: 1); "...indeed there has come to you a Light and a clarifying Book 'The Qur'an'; \*by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path" (5: 15-16).

3 Anyone who is entrusted with a task of this great a magnitude, who guides humanity to light and dispels the darkness in which they live, and suffers as a result all sorts of oppression and harm, will very understandably experience trepidation when looking at the task that lies ahead.

4 This aya captures the essence of the Message; that the Qur'an, and it alone, is to be followed should one want to be truly guided (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).



﴿4﴾ ﴿5﴾ How many a town have We destroyed and Our Might befell it ﴿6﴾ 'while they were fast asleep' at night, or as they were resting during the day! ﴿7﴾ ﴿5﴾ Then their only plea, when Our Might befell them, was to say: "We have indeed been wrongdoers!" ﴿8﴾ ﴿6﴾ We shall surely ask the ones to whom it 'the Message' was sent and We shall surely ask the ones who were sent 'the Messengers' ﴿9﴾.

وَكَمْ مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَا فَجَاءَهَا بَأْسُنَا  
بَيْتًا أَوْ هُمْ قَائِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ فَمَا كَانَ دَعْوَاهُمْ  
إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا  
ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٥﴾ فَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الَّذِينَ أُرْسِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَنَسْأَلَنَّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٦﴾

- 5 Now that the defining criterion, the Qur'an, the Distinguisher, which has to be 'heeded', has been introduced, this passage brings into light the fate of those who lost their souls and rebelled against God's Signs; destruction in this world and Punishment in the Hereafter (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 6 God, the All-Just, will only inflict punishment on those whom He forewarned and who were made aware of their wrongs through the communication of the Message and warning (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): "These `Messengers` were sent as `deliverers of glad tidings and warnings, so that people would have no pretext against Allah after the Messengers` coming to them`—verily Allah is Most Prevailing, All-Wise" (4: 165); "That, for your Lord will not destroy towns unjustly while their people are unaware" (6: 131).
- 7 That is in a state when people feel most safe and secure and least expect disaster to hit; so much so that the warning becomes more real and the message hard-hitting: "Do those who have plotted evil deeds feel secure that God will not cause the Earth to engulf them, or that the punishment will not come upon them whence they are not aware? \*Or that He will not seize them in the midst of their going to and fro, and they will be powerless to thwart 'it'? \*Or that He will not seize them with a gradual diminishing? And truly your Lord is Kind, Merciful" (16: 45-47).
- 8 Faced with this most truthful fact, they could say nothing but admit guilt: "And how many a town have We destroyed because of its wrong doing, and We established after them a different people! \*When they felt Our Might, they fled at once. \*Do not run, and come back to that which you were living lavishly in and your homes; so that you will be questioned." \*They cried: "Woe to us! We have surely been wrongdoers!" \*That cry of theirs did not cease until We made them burnt-off stubble" (21: 11-15).
- 9 That God does not wrong anyone by the smallest amount, entails that He brings witnesses to testify either for or against those who are held to account on the Day of Judgement. These witnesses are no less than the most

﴿7﴾ Then We shall surely recount for them, out of 'real' knowledge; 'verily' We were not absent<sup>(10)</sup>.  
 ﴿8﴾ <sup>(11)</sup>The weighing on that Day is truthful; the one whose scales are heavy, then these are the successful; <sup>(9)</sup> 'while' the one whose scales are light, then these are the ones who lost their souls, for wrongfully dealing with Our Signs<sup>(12)</sup>.

فَلَنَقُصَّنَّ عَلَيْهِم بِعِلْمٍ وَمَا كُنَّا غَائِبِينَ ﴿٧﴾  
 وَالْوَزْنُ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ  
 فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ  
 مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ بِمَا  
 كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَظَاهِرُونَ ﴿٩﴾

honourable Prophets that God sent to each nation to show them the Straight Path that leads to His Pleasure (cf. al-Rāzī): "How 'will they fare', when we bring forward a witness from every nation, and We bring you 'Muhammad' as witness against these!" (4: 41).

- 10 Almighty God Who is Ever-Present at all times and Whose angels keep a minute record of people's deeds, will recount for them what they said and what they did on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 11 The outcome of this Reckoning is that these deeds will be weighed on the Scales; the one who did good, his deeds will tip the Scale to his side and thus attain salvation and great reward, but the one whose deeds are 'light' and not weighty enough to tip the scale in his favour will be consigned to the worst of suffering (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Sa'dī): "And We will place the Scales of justice for the Day of Judgement, so that no soul will be wronged in the least. Even if it was the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it. And We are sufficient as a Reckoner" (21: 47); "Verily Allah does not deal 'anyone' unjustly as much as a mote's weight; if it is a 'one' good deed done, then He multiplies it and grants from His Own 'additionally' a great reward" (4: 40).  
 Abū al-Dardā' (رضي الله عنه) narrated that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: "Nothing is put on the Scale bearing more weight than good manners. The person of good moral behaviour attains the rank of the person known for upholding Prayers and fasting" (Abū Dāwūd: 4799, al-Tirmidhī: 2003); Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Two words; light on the tongue, heavy on the Scale, loved by the Most Merciful: *subhāna Allah-i wa bi ḥamdihi, subhāna Allah-i l-'Azīm* (Glory be to Allah and in Gratitude for Him I do glorify Him. Glory be to Allah, the Most Great)" (al-Bukhārī: 6682, Muslim: 2694).
- 12 The word 'Signs', meaning that which they rejected is deployed throughout this sura on 22 occasions. Indeed it is one of the most recurrent Qur'anic

﴿10﴾ (13) Indeed We had empowered you on Earth and We made into it for you many a livelihood— ‘how’ little do you give thanks!<sup>(14)</sup>  
 ﴿11﴾ (15) We had indeed created you, then We formed you, then We said to the angels: “Prostrate to Adam!” They all prostrated except Iblīs; he was not among those who prostrated<sup>(16)</sup>.

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعْيَشًا قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ صَوَّرْنَاكُمْ ثُمَّ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ لَمْ يَكُن مِّنَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿١١﴾

lexical items. In its plural form alone it is to be found 280 times in the Qur’an. God would never leave people in the dark without showing them His Signs, but it is up to them to choose to Believe or Deny: “*We shall show them Our Signs in the horizons, and within themselves, until it becomes clear to them that it is the Truth*” (41: 53).

- 13 What follows is the first episode in the long history of the epic struggle between good and evil which is unravelled in what is to come later in this sura. It begins with a gentle reminder to people of God’s most benevolent favour on them, their livelihoods, which they find all around them, a constant reminder of their Most Benevolent Lord. Then it goes on to account for God’s most generous favour; the creation and honouring of humans over other beings: “*Indeed, We have honoured the children of Adam, carried them on land and sea, granted them good and lawful provisions, and privileged them far above many of Our creatures*” (17: 70).
- 14 Indeed God’s favours to humanity are boundless; they are being catered and provided for profusely so that they may ponder the ‘Sign’, pay heed and thank their Creator (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*Indeed Allah is bountiful to people, but most of them are thankless*” (2: 243); “*He has given you all that you asked Him for. If you were to count God’s favours, you could never calculate them: man is truly unjust and ungrateful*” (14: 34).
- 15 The favour of provision is followed by that of creation and the honouring of the father of humanity (Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 16 This story, which took place at the dawn of the creation of the very first human ever, Adam the father of humanity, bears special significance and is told over a number of times in the Qur’an, throwing new light on it as per the occasion of its mention. Earlier, it was told in Sura *al-Baqarah* (Ayas 30-39), which ends with: a stark forewarning: “*We said: “Go down all of you, whenever guidance comes to you from Me whoever follows it will have neither fear nor will they grieve. \*As for those who Deny and disbelieve in our Signs these are the company of the Fire; forever they will abide therein*” (2: 38-39).

﴿12﴾ He 'Allah' said: "What prevented you from prostrating as I commanded you!" He said: "I am 'surely' better than him! You created me from fire and created him from clay!" ﴿13﴾ He said: "Then down with you from it 'Paradise'; it is not for you to wax arrogant in; ﴿18﴾ out with you, you are verily one of the degraded!" ﴿14﴾ He said: "Allow me respite 'then' until the Day when they are resurrected".

قَالَ مَا مَنَّكَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ جَدِّ إِذَا أَمَرْتُكَ قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ  
خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالَ فَاهْبِطْ  
مِنْهَا فَمَا يَكُونُ لَكَ أَنْ تَتَكَبَّرَ فِيهَا فَاخْرُجْ إِنَّكَ  
مِنَ الصَّغِيرِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالَ أَنْظِرْنِي إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

- 17 Satan rebelled against the Command of his Lord out of sheer arrogance. Moreover, by doing this he questioned the Wisdom of God (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*). He quoted the substance from which he was created, fire, in argument as to why he felt superior to Adam, who was created from clay, and thus refused to prostrate to him as per God's order, further proving himself in the wrong. Prior to this command, to prostrate to Adam, God practically explained to the angels, among whom Iblīs was present, the Wisdom of this occurrence. Unlike Iblīs, they dutifully followed the word of their Lord: "'Mention Muhammad' *When your Lord said to the angels: "I shall instate a successor on Earth!" They said: "Will you instate in it one who sows corruption and sheds blood, whereas we 'incessantly' glorify You in gratitude to You and exalt You?" He said: "I know that which you do not". \*He taught Adam all the names 'of things', then showed them to the angels and said: "Tell Me the names of these, if only you were truthful!" \*They said: "Glorified may You be! We have no knowledge but what You have taught us. You are All-Knowing, All-Wise". \*He said: "Adam! Tell them their names". When he told them their names, He said: "Did I not instruct you that I know what is hidden in the Heavens and the Earth? – and I know what you hide and what you make public" (2: 30-33). How far apart is the response of the angels to that of Satan! His arrogance made him adamant in his stance and thus blinded him from seeking forgiveness from God (cf. al-Rāzī).*

God Almighty, is the One Who created and provides for His creation, so His Wisdom should not be questioned and His Commands, which are binding in nature, should never be disobeyed (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, Khan, *Fath al-Bayān fī Maqāṣid al-Qur'ān*).

- 18 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "None who has a mote's weight of arrogance in his heart shall enter Paradise" (Muslim: 91).

﴿15﴾ He said: “You are among those given respite”. ﴿16﴾ He said: “Then for Your misguiding of me<sup>(19)</sup>, I shall certainly lie in wait for them on Your Straight Path!”<sup>(20)</sup> ﴿17﴾ “Then I shall come to them from their fronts, backs, rights and lefts, and You shall not find most of them thankful”<sup>(21)</sup>.

قَالَ إِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنظَرِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالَ فِيمَا أُغْوَيْتَنِي لَأَفْعُدَنَّ لَهُمْ صِرَاطَكَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ لَأَنْتَبِهَهُمْ مِنْ بَيْنِ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ أَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَائِلِهِمْ وَلَا تَجِدُ أَكْثَرَهُمْ شَاكِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

- 19 By citing predestination (*al-qadar*), that God had already decreed him to be misguided, Satan sets the record for being the first to use *al-qadar* as a pretext for not following God's command (*al-amr*) as an excuse to justify his rebelliousness against Him (ﷻ) (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Rasā'il wa al-Masā'il*, 5: 134; Ibn al-Qayyim, *Rawdat al-Muhibbīn*, p. 62).
- 20 Sabrah Ibn Abi Fākih (ﷺ) narrated that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “Satan sat at the roads of the son of Adam. He sat for him at the road of Islam and said to him: “Do you become Muslim and abandon your religion, the religion of your fathers and the forefathers of your fathers?” But he ‘the son of Adam’ disobeyed him and became Muslim. Then he sat for him at the road of migrating and said to him: “Do you migrate and leave behind your land and your sky? Indeed the migrant is nothing but a ‘lonely’ horse tied to a rope!” But he ‘the son of Adam’ disobeyed him and migrated. Then he sat for him at the road of striving in the cause of Allah and said: “It is indeed hard for the soul and wealth; you fight and get killed then your wife will get married and your wealth divided!” But he ‘the son of Adam’ disobeyed him and strove in the cause of Allah. Whoever of them does that and dies, then it is obligatorily that Allah will admit him into Paradise; if he gets killed then it is obligatorily that Allah will admit him into Paradise; if he drowns then it is obligatorily that Allah will admit him into Paradise; or if his neck gets broken because of an animal then it is obligatorily that Allah will admit him into Paradise” (al-Nasā'ī: 3134, Imām Aḥmad: 16000, Ibn Ḥibbān: 4593).
- 21 This shows how purposeful and determined Satan really is in his mission (Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i' al-Fawā'id*, 1/120). Indeed, he came to be successful; when at the beginning he was just guessing (Ibn Kathīr: “Indeed, Iblīs' assumption about them has come true, so they ‘all’ followed him, except a group of ‘true’ Believers. \*He does not have any authority over them, but ‘Our Will is’ only to distinguish those who Believe in the Hereafter from those who are in doubt about it. And your Lord is a ‘vigilant’ Keeper over all things” (34: 20-21). Such a purposeful enemy should be guarded against with constant vigilance (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿18﴾ He said: “Out with you from it; condemned and routed<sup>(22)</sup>. Whoever follows you of them, I shall fill up Hell with you all”.<sup>(23)</sup>

قَالَ أَخْرَجْ مِنْهَا مَذْمُومًا مَدْحُورًا لَمَنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ  
لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

﴿19﴾ <sup>(24)</sup>“And you Adam! Dwell yourself and your wife in the Garden and eat thereof whatever you wish, and do not come near this tree, or ‘else’ you two will be from among the wrongful.”

وَيَا آدَمُ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ فَكُلَا مِنْ حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَوَسَّوَسَ لَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ لِيَدِيَ لَهُمَا مَا وُورِيَ عَنْهُمَا مِنْ سَوْءِ الثَّمَارِ وَقَالَ مَا نَهَاكُمَا رَبُّكُمَا

﴿20﴾ Satan whispered to them, so that he may expose to them what was made hidden to them of their nether regions<sup>(25)</sup>, and said: “Your Lord only forbade you

22 “He said: “Be gone from it! You are indeed outcast. \*Verily on you is My Damnation until the Day of Judgement” (38: 77-78).

23 “He said: “Go, and whoever follows you from them. Hellfire shall be the reward of you all, a reward well-deserved. \*And rouse whoever you can of them with your voice, and mobilize all your forces and men against them, and you may share with them in their money and children, and promise them.” But Satan promises them nothing but deceit. \*As for My ‘true’ servants, you will have no power over them. And your Lord suffices as a Trustee” (17: 63-65).

24 Satan started acting on his mission right away and he made his first successful incursion. (Another slightly different account of this episode was dealt with in Sura *al-Baqarah*, Aya 35-39. You may wish to refer to it for more details on the issue at hand.) The warning comes later (Aya 27 below) to the children of Adam to guard against Satan and not give him the chance to ‘weave his magic’ on them.

25 The particle *li* (translated here as “so that”) could grammatically be what is known as *lām al-ṣayrūrah* (the *lām* of destination). Hence the aya could be interpreted whereby Satan did not initially intend to show them their nether regions but to make them commit sin, and that the final result of this sinning was that they were exposed. Another grammatical rationalization of the *lām* is that *ta’lil* (justification), i.e. that he intended to lower their state through nakedness (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). The significance of guarding against nakedness and its symbolic nature will be taken up shortly.

from this tree, lest that you two become angels, or be immortal!”<sup>(26)</sup> ﴿21﴾ He “further” swore to them: “I am indeed a sincere adviser to you!” ﴿22﴾ He dipped<sup>(27)</sup> them “low” with delusion; when they tasted from the tree, their nether regions became exposed to them and they ‘panickingly’ scurried to attaching leaves of the Garden to themselves; their Lord called out for them: “Did I not forbid you from that tree and tell you that Satan was an open enemy to you!” ﴿23﴾ They said: “Our Lord, we have indeed wronged ourselves. Should you not forgive us and have mercy on us then we shall surely be among the losers”.<sup>(28)</sup> ﴿24﴾ He said: “Go down, as enemies to each other. On Earth will be your dwelling and livelihood for a given time!” ﴿25﴾ He said: “Therein you live, therein you die and from it you are brought out”.

عَنْ هَذِهِ الشَّجَرَةِ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَا مَلَائِكَةً  
أَوْ تَكُونَا مِنَ الْخَالِدِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَقَاسَمَهُمَا إِنِّي لَكُمَا  
لَمِنَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَدَلَّهُمَا بِعُرْوَةٍ فَلَمَّا ذَاقَا  
الشَّجَرَةَ بَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا مَخْصِفَانِ  
عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ رَوْقِ الْجَنَّةِ وَنَادَاهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا أَلَمْ أَنْهَكُمَا  
عَنْ تِلْكَ الشَّجَرَةِ وَأَقُلْتُ لَكُمَا إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ  
لَكُمَا عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَا رَبَّنَا ظَلَمْنَا أَنْفُسَنَا  
وَإِن لَمْ تَغْفِرْ لَنَا وَتَرْحَمْنَا لَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ  
الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ أَهبطوا بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ  
وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ وَمَتْعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٥﴾  
قَالَ فِيهَا تَحْيَوْنَ وَفِيهَا تَمُوتُونَ وَمِنْهَا  
تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

26 “Then Satan whispered to him, saying: “Adam! Shall I show you the Tree of Immortality and a kingship that does not fade away?” (20: 120).

27 *Dallāhumā* means that he tricked them as well as he lowered them, just like a bucket is lowered into a well to draw water (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr). Indeed he tricked them, made them ‘dip’ into sin, and lowered their status.

28 Their immediate repentance sharply contrasts with Satan’s haughty stance upon his disobedience of God: “Adam received a few words ‘a supplication’ from His Lord, and He forgave him; He is the All-Forgiving the Most Merciful” (2: 37). The one who sins and seeks repentance is more likely to be forgiven: “Verily Allah likes those who repeatedly repent and those who purify themselves” (2: 222).

﴿26﴾ (29) Children of Adam! We have sent down to you raiment that hides your nether regions and feathers<sup>(30)</sup>; and ‘as for’ the raiment of Mindfulness, that is the best ‘of all raiment’<sup>(31)</sup>. That is indeed from among the Signs of Allah, so that you may pay heed. ﴿27﴾ Children of Adam! Let not Satan seduce you just as he banished your two parents from the Garden; he ripped off their raiment from them to expose their nether regions to them. Indeed he sees you along with his kind from where you do not see them—indeed We made the devils allies to those who do not Believe. ﴿28﴾ When they commit a vice<sup>(32)</sup>, they say: “We found

يٰۤاٰدَمَ قَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَیْكُمْ لِبَاسًا یُّورِی  
سَوَءَ تَکۡرُمٍ وَّرِیۡشًا وَّلِبَاسَ التَّقۡوٰی ذٰلِکَ خَیۡرٌ  
ذٰلِکَ مِنْۢ مَّا اٰتٰتَ اللّٰهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ یَذَّکَّرُوۡنَ ﴿۲۶﴾ یٰۤاٰدَمَ  
لَا یَفۡتِنَنَّکُمُ الشَّیۡطٰنُ کَمَا اَخۡرَجَ  
اٰبَآءَکُمۡ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ یَنۡزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِبَاسَهُمَا  
لِیُرِیَهُمَا سَوَءَ اَنۡهَمَا اِنَّهُۥ یَرۡکُبُکُمۡ هُوَ وَّقَبِیۡلُهُ  
مِنْ حَیۡثُ لَا تَرَوۡنَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّا جَعَلۡنَا الشَّیۡطٰنَ اَوْلِیَآءَ  
لِلَّذٰلِمِیۡنَ لَا یُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۲۷﴾ وَاِذَا فَعَلُوۡا فِحۡشَةً قَالُوۡا  
وَجَدۡنَا عَلَیۡهَا

- 29 The detailing of the bliss of ‘raiment’ that was given to the children of Adam is a symbolic reminder of how much they should guard their cover of modesty lest Satan and his kind ‘rip it off’ them with their insinuations and make them fall into sin as much as he did to their parents, thus ‘lowering’ their moral status.
- 30 *Rīsh* literally means the feathers of birds. Birds find protection and beauty in their feathers (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 12: 255). However, here it means luxuriant garments which are used for beautification (al-Ṭabarī, al-Jawharī, *al-Ṣiḥāḥ*, 3/1008, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 31 There are three types of raiment spoken of here: the clothing which is necessary to cover one’s nakedness, thus basically setting humans apart from animals; luxuriant feathery garments as adornments showing God’s honouring of humans (cf. Ayas 31-32 below), and the most superior ‘raiment’, i.e. that of Mindfulness of God and paying Him heed. This elevates humans to new heights for such ‘raiment’ both protects the human against Satan and his kind, who lie in waiting unseen, and, in more than one aspect, adorns him.
- 32 The heathen practice of the Arabs who used to circumambulate around the Ka‘bah naked as part of their so-called pilgrimage rites (cf. al-Ṭabarī,



our fathers thus doing and Allah bade us to it". Say "Muhammad": "Allah does not bid vice. Do you say regarding Allah that which you have no knowledge of?"<sup>33</sup> Say: "Muhammad": "My Lord 'only' bade equity<sup>33</sup> and that you should devote your faces<sup>34</sup> at all

ءَابَاءَنَا وَاللَّهُ أَمَرَنَا بِهَا قُلْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَأْمُرُ  
بِالْفَحْشَاءِ أَتَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾  
قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ

Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 21/276, Ibn Rajab, *Fath al-Bārī*, 2/335), is being alluded to here and is something of a subtext to be found throughout these opening passages. It bears special significance because it is indicative of how morally low they stooped; that is for taking Satan as ally and following in his footsteps generation after another. Devotional acts of worship are not to be mixed with base desires and lewdness. This 'vice' is the vilest of all acts, and sound human nature rebels against it (as much as Adam and Eve instinctively wanted to cover up from each other in Paradise) (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

- 33 *al-Qiṣṭ* is fairness with regards to acts of worship by devoting them solely to God, and transactions by being fair to others (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). *al-Qiṣṭ* captures the totality of the true heavenly religion; it is a middle ground between extremes: monotheism is a middle ground between Association and atheism, calculated generosity is a middle ground between tightfistedness and wastefulness, and so on and so forth. It is the source of all virtue (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 34 *Iqāmat al-wajh* (lit. keeping the face forward facing) is dedicating worship only and wholeheartedly to God: "I hereby direct my face to He Who Originated the Heavens and Earth, 'being' rightly-oriented, and never am I one of the Associators" (6: 79). Ibn 'Āshūr explains: "That one 'devotes his face' is illustrative of the perfection of the dedication of worship in its designated places. It is like when a person directs his undivided attention to see something very important; he does not look left or right. This pure dedication is called *iqāmat al-wajh* because it keeps the face absolutely forward facing. This means that Allah enjoined people to keep their faces upright in places of worship, because they are where the Lord is glorified; He did not enjoin people to glorify Him or ennoble His places of worship with anything let alone including nakedness or Associating with Him.... Prohibiting nakedness is purposeful here because the word *fāḥishah* (vice) entails it and because the context bears it out; the conferment of raiment and the prohibition of nudity being underlined". 'Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) when standing for Prayer used to say: "I turn my face to He Who originated the creation of the Heavens and the Earth being rightly-oriented 'in religion' and not being one of the Associators. Indeed, my Prayer, devotional rites, life and death belong to

places of prostration and invoke Him being devout in religion to Him; as He originated you, you will return”<sup>(35)</sup>. ﴿30﴾ A party ‘of you’ He guides, and another party misguidedness is their rightful lot; they betook the devils as allies besides Allah and they think that they are guided!<sup>(36)</sup>

عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ  
الْذِينَ كَمَا بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَرِيقًا  
هَدَىٰ وَفَرِيقًا حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الضَّلَالَةُ إِنَّهُمْ  
اتَّخَذُوا الشَّيْطِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ  
وَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُم مُّهْتَدُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Allah, there is no Associating with Him. With this I have been bade and I am one of those who submit. O Allah! You are the King, there is no god ‘worthy of worship’ but You. You are my Lord and I am Your servant. I have transgressed against myself and confessed my misdeeds. Forgive all my misdeeds, no one forgives misdeeds but You. Guide me to the best of manners, no one guides to them but You. Drive bad manners away from me, no one drives them away but You. I hold fast to worshipping You, which immensely helped me ‘and pleased me’. All that is good is in Your Hands. Evil is not to be ascribed to You. My success is from You and I turn to You ‘in all my affairs’. Glorified and exalted You are. I ask You for forgiveness and turn in repentance to You” (Muslim: 771). al-Barā’ Ibn ‘Āzib (رضي الله عنه) said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “When you want to go to bed perform *wudu’* in the same way as you would for Prayer, then lie on your right side and say: “O Allah! I have submitted my soul to You and directed my face towards You, and I have entrusted You with ‘all’ my affairs, and I have depended on You ‘with all my affairs’, expecting Your favour and dreading Your punishment. There is no fleeing or refuge from You except to You. I Believe in the Book you have revealed and the Prophet you have sent. If you die that night, you will die in ‘the state of *fitrah* (pure Faith). Make them the last things you say” (al-Bukhārī: 6311, Muslim: 2710).

- 35 They are to be mindful that the One Who created them the first time is Able to resurrect them for Judgement (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “*And he cites an example for Us, forgetting his own creation. He said: “Who can give life back to bones after they have decayed? \*Say: “The One Who made them in the first place will resurrect them. He is fully aware of every creation”*” (36: 78-79).
- 36 “*Indeed, those who revert ‘to Denying’ after guidance has become clear to them; Satan has tempted them, luring them with false hope”* (47: 25); “*Say: “Shall I inform you who are the greatest losers in respect to their deeds? \*Those whose efforts go astray in the worldly life, while they reckon that they are virtuous in their works. \*It is they who Denied the Signs of their Lord and their meeting with Him, their deeds became void, so We will not give their deeds any weight on the Day of Judgement”*” (18: 103-105).

﴿31﴾ (37)Children of Adam! | يٰبَنِي آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ  
Take your adornment at every | وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ  
place of prostration; eat and | الْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣١﴾  
drink<sup>(38)</sup> but do not squander—  
He likes not the squanderers.

37 The morally degrading, religiously defiling issue of nudity, which arouses the beast in man and runs contrary to holiness, is being implicated here. As for the reason for revelation of this aya Ibn ‘Abbās says: “Women used to circumambulate around the Ka‘bah ‘stark’ naked and ask: “Who would lend me a cover for circumambulation (*tiṭwāf*)?” They would then cover with it their private parts and say ‘in poetry’: “Today some or all of it is exposed; whatever is exposed of it I do not grant permission to it!” Then this aya was set down: “...take your adornment at every place of worship” (Muslim: 3028). Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (*Fath al-Bārī*: 2/335) said: “It was sent down because the Associators used to circumambulate around the Ka‘bah ‘stark’ naked. Ibn ‘Abbās’s narration is authentic and all earlier exegetes are unanimous about it”. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) sent him - during the pilgrimage mission that the Prophet (ﷺ) appointed him as head of - and bade him announce to people that: “No Associator shall perform hajj after this year and no naked person shall circumambulate around the Ka‘bah” (al-Bukhārī: 1622, Muslim: 1347). God commanded that people ‘take adornment’ and not merely cover their nakedness by way of indicating that people should wear their best to Prayers. It is reported that there was one among our rightly-guided predecessors who used to have a luxuriantly expensive garment to wear for Prayer, when asked he said: “My Lord has the most right from me to look my best for Prayer”. It is well-known that Allah likes to see the mark of His Bounty on His servants, especially when they stand in front of Him; the best way to do so is by wearing one’s best raiment that Allah bestowed on Him both outer (the garment) and inner (Mindfulness) (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, 5/326, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikīn*, 2/363). Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “None who has a mote’s measure of arrogance will enter Paradise”. A man remarked: “One likes his clothing and footwear to look good!” He ‘the Messenger (ﷺ)’ replied: “Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty! ‘Arrogance’ is to disdainfully dismiss what is rightful and to regard other people with contempt” (Muslim: 91).

38 In their heathen days they used to even forbid certain types of food, or that no food should enter Makkah besides what was already available therein and only eat from it during the time of pilgrimage (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Ashūr). These two practices bidding what is unlawful, nudity, and forbidding what is lawful, food consumption, are indicative of how far straying the Arab community was from God’s Path and how eaten up by Satan they were. God only bids what is equitable (*qist*): moderation between miserliness and wastefulness.

﴿32﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Who is he who declared unlawful the adornment of Allah that He brought forth to His servants<sup>(39)</sup>, and His good provisions?" Say 'Muhammad': "It is for those who Believe during this worldly life; 'and theirs' solely in the Hereafter."<sup>(40)</sup> Thus We detail the Signs to those who know.

﴿33﴾ <sup>(41)</sup>Say 'Muhammad': "My Lord only forbade vices, both open and secret<sup>(42)</sup>, sinning, aggressing unrightfully<sup>(43)</sup>, that

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِينَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ  
وَالطَّيِّبَاتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كَذَلِكَ  
نَفَّصَلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

قُلْ إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ رَبِّي الْفَوَاحِشَ مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَمَا  
بَطَّنَ وَالْإِثْمَ وَالْبَغْيَ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ

- 39 Ibn Kathīr says in his commentary: "The Arabs, excepting the Quraysh, used not to circumambulate around the Ka'bah in the garments in which they committed sins in... whoever was lent a garment by a Qurayshite would use it and whoever circumambulated in a 'brand' new garment would throw it away 'after performing the rites' and no one would use it afterwards. But whoever could not find 'or afford' a new garment or borrow one from a Qurayshite, would perform the rite naked" (cf. also al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makkah*, 1/138).
- 40 This 'adornment' and good provision may be enjoyed by both the Believers and the Deniers in this life but in the Hereafter it is only enjoyed by those who Believed (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*). This allusion paves the way for the scenes of the Hereafter that come shortly.
- 41 This message is to affirm the Godly stand on their sordid state of affairs and warns them against His retribution. A detailed account of what real morality is, is provided in the previous Makkan Sura *al-An'ām*, Ayas 151-153, which pointedly concludes with: "Indeed this is My path, Straight, so follow it and do not follow the 'diverse' roads and get driven away from His road; that He bade you so that you may become Mindful".
- 42 *al-Fawāḥish* (lit. vices) mentioned here are, in a way, related to acts of lewdness (cf. Aya 80 below which talks of homosexuality as a 'vice') and nudity (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 15/381). Ibn 'Abbās narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "No one is more solicitously jealous than Allah. This is why He forbade vices, both open and secret" (al-Bukhārī: 4637, Muslim: 2670).
- 43 It is given that all forms of aggression (*baghy*) are undoubtedly not rightful, but 'unrightful' (*bi ghayr al-haqq*): this is mentioned here by way of calling

you Associate with Him that for which He sent down no authority, and that you say about Allah what you have no knowledge of".<sup>44</sup> For every nation there is a 'set' term; when their term is due, they will not be delayed an hour nor will they be hastened<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> Children of Adam! Whenever Messengers from among you<sup>46</sup> come to you recounting My Signs to you; whoever 'then' becomes Mindful and makes mends, then they should not fear nor need they grieve<sup>47</sup>.<sup>46</sup> While those who rejected Our Signs and disdained them, these are the Companions of Hellfire—forever they abide therein.

وَأَنْ تَشْرِكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَأَنْ تَقُولُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلٌ فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَجْلُهُمْ لَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ سَاعَةً وَلَا يَسْتَقْدِمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

يَبْنَىءَ آدَمَ إِمَّا يَأْتِيَنَّكَ رُسُلٌ مِنْكَ بِبُصُونٍ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِي فَمَنْ أَتَقَى وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَأَسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

attention to its repulsiveness. Conversely, it could mean that 'rightful aggression' is justified when exacting justice against someone who aggressed against the person concerned (al-Rāzī, al-Shinqīfī, al-'Adhb al-Namīr).

- 44 A set time for it to taste Divine Wrath and retribution should it persist in Denying (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ, Shinqīfī, al-'Adhb al-Namīr). The ones who are directly meant by this warning are the Arabs of that time who stood against the Message. Their attention is being drawn to what befell those who came before them (Ibn 'Ashūr): "*Indeed, Messengers before you were ridiculed, but those who used to ridicule them got hit by what they ridiculed. \*Say 'Muhammad': 'Travel the land and look what was the fate of the Deniers'*" (6: 10-11).
- 45 Now the address, 'Children of Adam', takes on a more general note and speaks not particularly to Arabs, who were especially morally degraded (as they had nudity enshrined in their religion), but humanity at large.
- 46 Messengers from among humankind (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, al-Shinqīfī). That the Messengers are humans 'from you' is the more reason to Believe (cf. 6: 9) and is used here in argument against them (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 47 They need not worry about the future nor brood over their past sins. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

﴿37﴾ Who does more wrong than one who fabricated lies against Allah or rejected His Signs; those their share 'as' per the Book will catch up with them<sup>(48)</sup>, until when Our Messengers<sup>(49)</sup> come upon them to terminate their lives, they would say: "Where is it that you were invoking besides Allah?" They said: "They have deserted us!"<sup>(50)</sup> They bore witness against themselves that they were Deniers<sup>(51)</sup>. ﴿38﴾ He 'Allah' said: "Enter you to join nations of humans and jinn, who passed away before you, in Hellfire". Whenever a nation enters, it damns its sister<sup>(52)</sup>; until when they are all amassed in it,

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ  
بِآيَاتِهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ يَتْلُوهُمْ نَصِيبُهُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ  
حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُمْ تُهْمٌ رُّسُلُنَا يَتَوَقَّوْنَهُمْ قَالُوا أَيْنَ مَا  
كُنْتُمْ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ قَالُوا ضَلُّوا عَنَّا  
وَشَهِدُوا عَلَيَّ أَنفُسِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا كَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾  
قَالَ ادْخُلُوا فِي أُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مِنَ  
الْحَيَاةِ وَالْإِنْسَانِ فِي النَّارِ كَمَا خَلَتْ أُمَّةٌ  
لَعَنَتْ أُخْتَهَا حَتَّىٰ إِذَا آدَارَكُوا فِيهَا جَمِيعًا

- 48 Even those who chose to Deny will get their allocated provisions and will go on living their lives as per what is written in the Book, the Preserved Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-maḥfūz*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī): "Those who Deny, let their Denying not grieve you 'Muhammad'. To Us is their return and We shall inform them what they have done. Surely, Allah is the All-Knower of what are in the hearts 'of people'. \*We let them enjoy for a little while 'in this world', then We shall oblige them to enter a rough Punishment 'in the Hereafter'" (31: 23-24).
- 49 The angels who are tasked with claiming peoples' lives. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*)
- 50 Their so-called gods whom they Associate with God; they 'deserted' them at the time of their most pressing need! (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*)
- 51 Only at the time of their death did they realize the Truth! (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ʿĀshūr)
- 52 By replying positively to the question about their 'gods', they effectively, and quite regretfully, admitted guilt: "He 'Ibrāhīm' said: "You have taken besides Allah idols 'for worship', only to keep 'a bond of' love among yourselves in this worldly life. But on the Day of Judgement you will disown and damn one another. Your home will be the Fire, and you will have no helper!" (29: 25)

the last of them says<sup>(53)</sup> to the first of them: “Our Lord! These are the ones who misled us, so give them double the Punishment in Hellfire”. He ‘Allah’ said: “There is double ‘Punishment’ for everyone<sup>(54)</sup> but you do not know”.<sup>(39)</sup> The first of them said to the last of them: “You are no better than us. Taste you the Punishment for what you used to earn<sup>(55)</sup>”.

<sup>(40)</sup> Indeed those who rejected Our Signs and disdained them, the gates of Heaven will not be opened up for them<sup>(56)</sup> and they will not enter Paradise until the camel gets through the eye of a needle<sup>(57)</sup>— thus We requite the criminals.

قَالَتْ أَخْرِطْهُمْ لِأَوْلِيهِمْ رَبَّنَا هَؤُلَاءِ أَضَلُّونَا  
فَقَاتِهِمْ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا مِّنَ النَّارِ قَالَ لِكُلِّ ضِعْفٍ  
وَلَكِن لَّا تَعْمُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَالَتْ أَوْلِيَهُمْ لِأَخْرِطْهُمْ  
فَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ عَلَيْنَا مِن فَضْلٍ فَذُوقُوا  
العَذَابَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهَا  
لَا نَفْتَحُ لَهُمُ أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ وَلَا يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ  
حَتَّى يَلِجَ الْجَمَلُ فِي سَمِّ الْخِيَاطِ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي  
الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

53 Another such acrimonious interaction between the dwellers of Hellfire, both early and late, is recounted elsewhere: “...if only you could see ‘Muhammad’ when the wrongdoers will be detained before their Lord, throwing blame at each other! The lowly ‘followers’ will say to the arrogant ‘leaders’: ‘Had it not been for you, we would certainly have been Believers. \*The arrogant will respond to the lowly, ‘Did we ever drive you away from guidance after it came to you? Indeed, you were criminals’ in your own right” (34: 31-32).

54 “As for those who Deny and turn away ‘others’ from the Way of Allah, We will add more Punishment to their Punishment for all the corruption they spread” (16: 88).

55 The sins they used to commit. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*)

56 The doors of Heavens will be closed shut for their deeds during their lives because of their disdainful rejection of God’s Signs, nor will they be opened up for their souls when they die. (*al-Muyassar, al-Mukhtaṣar*; for details about what happens to the souls of those who Believe and those who Deny upon their death see Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaḥ*: 12059, Imām Aḥmad: 18534, al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 107)

57 An impossible prospect indeed: “...whoever Associates with Allah, then Allah will surely forbid him ‘entry into’ Paradise and his home will be Hellfire—the wrongdoers will never have helpers” (5: 72).

﴿41﴾ Theirs is bedding from Hellfire and above them are covers 'of fire'— thus We requite the wrongdoers.

﴿42﴾ And 'as for' those who Believed and did good deeds – We only charge a soul with that which it can bear<sup>(58)</sup> – these are the Companions of Paradise—forever they abide therein. ﴿43﴾ And We had stripped away the ill will that is in their chests<sup>(59)</sup>; rivers flow from under them. And they said: “All gratitude be to Allah<sup>(60)</sup>, Who guided us to this. We would not have been guided had Allah not guided us. Surely the Messengers of our Lord came with the Truth”. They were called out: “That is Paradise; you were made to inherit it for what you used to do”.<sup>(61)</sup>

لَهُمْ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مِهَادٌ وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ غَوَاشٍ وَكَذَلِكَ  
يَجْزِي الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَا نُكَلِّفُ  
نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا اُولَئِكَ اَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ  
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ  
مِنْ عَلِيٍّ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ اِلَّا نَهْرٌ وَقَالُوا  
اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِي هَدٰنَا لِهٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لِنَهْتَدِيَ  
لَوْلَا اَنْ هَدٰنَا اللّٰهُ لَقَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلٌ رَبِّنَا  
بِالْحَقِّ وَنُودُوا اَنْ تَلَٰكُمُ الْجَنَّةُ اَوْرَثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا  
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

- 58 The statement in parenthesis asserts a major Qur'anic tenet that God laid upon us “no hardship in the religion” (22: 78, cf. also: 2: 333, 2: 286, 6: 152, 23: 62, 65: 7, 64: 16). It is raised here to encourage people to do whatever is in their capacity to gain Paradise (al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 59 All the evil thoughts and toxic feelings they might have had, will be removed from their hearts, so that they live in total peace and do not harbor any ill will for each other, especially given that they are of different ranks in Paradise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 60 “And they said: “All Gratitude be to Allah, Who has dispelled grief from us. Truly our Lord is Most Forgiving, All-Thankful, \*Who, of His Bounty, has caused us to dwell in the Abode of Everlasting Life, wherein no weariness shall touch us, nor fatigue befall us” (35: 34-35). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Each one of the Companions of Paradise sees his ‘could have been’ seat in Hellfire and says: “Had Allah not guided me!” Uttering it out of thankfulness. Each one of the Companions of Hellfire sees his ‘could have been’ seat in Paradise and says: “Had Allah guided me!” Uttering it out of dismay” (al-Nasā'ī: 11390. Imām Aḥmad: 10652).
- 61 “These are the inheritors, \*who inherit Paradise; forever they abide therein” (23: 10-11). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Each



﴿44﴾<sup>(62)</sup> The Companions of Paradise called out to the Companions of Hellfire<sup>(63)</sup>: “We have indeed found what our Lord promised us as truthful! Did you ‘too’ find what your Lord promised you as truthful?” They said: “Yes!” Then an announcer announced<sup>(64)</sup> between them: “Indeed Allah’s Damnation is on the wrongdoers;

وَتَادَىٰ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ أَنْ قَدَّ  
وَجَدْنَا مَا وَعَدَنَا رَبُّنَا حَقًّا فَهَلْ وَجَدْتُمْ مَا وَعَدَ  
رَبُّكُمْ حَقًّا قَالُوا نَعَمْ فَأَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ بَيْنَهُمْ  
لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

one of you has two ‘would be’ abodes: one in Paradise and one in Hellfire. When one dies and is admitted into Hellfire, the Companions of Paradise inherit his abode. That is what is meant by: “*These are the inheritors*” (23: 10) (Ibn Mājah: 4341, al-Bayhaqī, *al-Ba‘th wa al-Nushūr*: 241).

- 62 What follows is a graphic description, a vivid recreation of what will take place after the Companions of both Paradise and Hellfire have been settled in their abodes and have had a taste of what both parties have been promised through the Messengers of God. This is the culminating scene of the battle between good and evil; the central theme of this sura.

Notice that the past tense is employed throughout the passage, and indeed this is the case of almost all the happenings of the Day of Judgement and beyond in the different passages where it is mentioned in the Qur’an, even though the events being talked about are future events. This carries a number of interrelated rhetorical purposes: to ascertain its taking place as if it had already done so since it is the Truth coming from the All-Wise, All-Knowing (ﷻ), to heighten the effect on the receiver whose brain is programmed to taking past events as a foregone conclusion. Since the narrator is no one less than the Majestic Creator of the universe, the Founder of life and death (ﷻ), what we are told will happen in the future is surely a foregone conclusion (cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Mathal al-Sā’ir fī Adab al-Kātib wa al-Shā’ir*, al-Shinqīṭī, *Aḍwā’ al-Bayān*).

- 63 After enduring a barrage of ridicule and slandering from the Deniers, it is now the turn of the Believers to ridicule those who hurt them so much seeing that they justly got what they deserved: “*The worldly life is prettified for the Deniers; they ridicule those who Believe; ‘but’ the Mindful are indeed above them on the Day of Judgement—Allah shows with favours whom He wills without account*” (2: 212).
- 64 The announcement is said in a loud clearly audible, authoritative voice: al-Qurṭubī is of the opinion that it is the angels’ (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). This announcement is meant to make the Companions of Hellfire despair of all hope of deliverance (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿45﴾ those who turn away<sup>(65)</sup> from the Way of Allah and wish it be crooked, while they are 'staunchly' Denying of the Hereafter". ﴿46﴾ Between them is a barrier<sup>(66)</sup> and on the heights are men<sup>(67)</sup> who know each by their signs<sup>(68)</sup>; they called out to

الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنِ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَيَعُوجُّونَهَا عَوجًا  
وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿45﴾ وَبَيْنَهُمَا حِجَابٌ وَعَلَى  
الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالٌ يَعْرِفُونَ كُلًّا بِسِيمَاهُمْ وَنَادُوا

- 65 They always cast the religion of God in bad light, showing it as defective and imperfect (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): “*And when Our Signs are recited to them as clear proofs, they say: “This is naught but a man who desires to turn you from that which your fathers used to worship”. And they say: “This is naught but a fabricated perversion”. And those who Denied say to the Truth when it comes to them: “This is naught but manifest sorcery”*” (34: 43). They used to ‘turn away’ (*yaṣuddūna*) from the Truth themselves and divert other people from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 66 Between the dwellers of both abodes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “*So a fence will be set up between them, whose gate separates Mercy on the inner side, from Punishment on the outer side*” (57: 13).
- 67 There are a number of opinions as to who these people really are. It is mostly agreed however that these are people whose good deeds and bad deeds came in equal measure after their weighing on the Scale of deeds on the Day of Judgement (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-‘Adhb al-Namīr). That they are said to be ‘men’ (*rijāl*) does not necessarily exclude women; a woman in authentic Arabic is also called ‘*rajulah*’ (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, al-‘Adhb al-Namīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 68 The beauty and illuminated faces of the dwellers of Paradise and the grotesque faces of the dwellers of Hell which are clouded with darkness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-‘Adhb al-Namīr). Being on such a high and raised place, they are afforded the vantage point of seeing the stark difference between those terminally suffering in Hell in contrast to those who dwell in Paradise enjoying all sorts of bliss (cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr*, 2/124): “*On the Day when some faces are illumined and others are darkened; as for those whose faces become dark: “Did you Deny after you have become Believers? Taste then the Punishment of your Denial”. \*As for those whose faces become illumined, they will be ‘admitted’ in Allah’s Mercy, forever they reside therein*” (3: 106-107): “*Faces on that Day shall be beaming; \*laughing, rejoicing. \*And faces that Day shall be covered with dust, \*and overcast with gloom*” (80: 38-41): “*Those who had done good, will have the best reward and even more. Neither dust nor humiliating disgrace shall cover their faces. They are the Companions of Paradise; forever they abide therein. \*And those who have earned evil*

the Companions of Paradise: “Peace be upon you!” They did not get into it<sup>(69)</sup> ‘Paradise, yet’; they are desirous.<sup>(47)</sup> When their sights were turned towards the Companions of Hellfire, they said: “Our Lord, do not let us end up with the wrongdoers!”<sup>(48)</sup> The Companions of the heights called out ‘some’ men they knew by their signs<sup>(70)</sup>: “What has your gathering<sup>(71)</sup> and your arrogance warded off from you?”<sup>(49)</sup> “Are these the ones that you swore that Allah would not touch them with His Mercy?”<sup>(72)</sup>

أَصْحَابِ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ سَلَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ لَمْ يَدْخُلُوهَا وَهُمْ يَطْمَعُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ \* وَإِذَا صُرِفَتْ أَبْصَارُهُمْ تِلْقَاءَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَتَادَى أَصْحَابُ الْأَعْرَافِ رِجَالًا يَعْرِفُونَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ قَالُوا مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْكُمْ جَمْعُكُمْ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ أَهْلُولَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمْتُمْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ

*deeds, the recompense of an evil deed will be like thereof, humiliating disgrace will cover them. They will not have any defender from Allah. It will be' As if their faces are covered with dark patches of night. They are the Companions of Hellfire; forever they abide therein.*" (10: 26-27).

- 69 The people on the heights have not yet entered Paradise, but they are desperately hopeful that they will be admitted into it with God's Mercy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*). They are to be entered into Paradise but they are being stood on these heights as a light punishment, a purification of their misdeeds (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr; this is his inference from the views of earlier exegetes).
- 70 Unlike the earlier 'signs' which brand the whole population of Hellfire, these are special 'signs' which mark out the heads of the criminals who dwell in Hell (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 71 The sons, men and resources they amassed around themselves to fend off evil from themselves (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su'ūd). Their cry on that Day is: “*My wealth has availed me nothing, \*Vanished has my power from me!*” (69: 28-29)
- 72 In the worldly life they were so blinded by arrogance that seeing, merely by worldly measures, how lowly some of the Believers were, they assumed them not worthy of God's Mercy; thus applying their own seriously convoluted standards to those of God (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Rāzī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī). This is by way of catching the attention of the haughty Arab masters who regarded the Believers at that time, among whom were slaves and those of low social standing, with disdainful contempt (cf. 6: 52-53, Ibn 'Āshūr).

“Enter you Paradise, you should not fear nor need you grieve.”<sup>(73)</sup>

﴿50﴾ And the Companions of Hellfire called out to the Companions of Paradise: “Spill over some water for us or ‘any’ of what Allah blessed you with!”<sup>(74)</sup> They said: “Indeed Allah has forbidden both to the Deniers; ﴿51﴾ those who took their religion lightly and playfully<sup>(75)</sup> and were deceived by the worldly life”<sup>(76)</sup>. Today We forget them as they had forgotten their meeting of this Day of theirs<sup>(77)</sup> and for denying Our Signs.

أَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾  
 وَتَادَىٰ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ أَنْ أَيْضُوا  
 عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ أَوْ مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالُوا  
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ حَرَّمَ مَا عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ الَّذِينَ  
 اتَّخَذُوا دِينَهُمْ لَهْوًا وَلَعِبًا وَغَرَّتْهُمُ الْحَيَاةُ  
 الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ نَنسَاهُمْ كَمَا نَسُوا لِقَاءَ يَوْمِهِمْ  
 هَذَا وَمَا كَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يَجْحَدُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

- 73 The addressees here are the people of the heights (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa‘dī).
- 74 They would beg them for water and food (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 75 “When you call for Prayer they playfully take it ‘as an object of’ mockery and scorn. That because they are people who do not reason” (5: 58).
- 76 This aya strongly brings to mind Aya 6: 70: “Leave behind ‘Muhammad’ those who took their religion lightly and playfully and were deceived by the worldly life, and remind with it ‘the Qur’an’, lest that a soul becomes bonded by what it earned; there is no ally or intercessor for it besides Allah and if it were to ransom itself with anything it will not be accepted from it. Those are the ones who are bonded for their earning, for them are a boiling drink and a painful Punishment for all their Denying”.
- 77 Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Allah meets the servant and says: “You so-and so! Have I not been generous towards you, made you into a master, got you married, availed you with horses and camels, and let you reign supreme?” He says: “Yes indeed!” He (ﷺ) then says: “Were you of a mind that you would not come to meet Me?” He says: “No!” He then says: “Then I forget you just as you had forgotten Me!” Then He meets another one and says: “You so-and so! Have I not been generous towards you, made you into a master, got you married, availed you with horses and camels, and let you reign supreme?” He says: “Yes indeed!” He (ﷺ) then says: “Were you of a mind that you would not come to meet Me?” He (ﷺ) says: “No!” He then says: “Then I forget you just as you had forgotten Me!” (Muslim: 2968); “So taste ‘the Punishment’ for forgetting the meeting of this Day of yours. We ‘too’ have certainly forgotten you; taste the Punishment of eternity for what you used to do!” (32: 14)

﴿52﴾ Verily, We had brought them a Book, which We have detailed with 'proper' knowledge; a guidance and mercy for the Believing people.<sup>(78)</sup>  
 ﴿53﴾ Do they expect 'nothing' but its realization!<sup>(79)</sup> On the Day when its realization comes, those who forgot it before would say: "Indeed the Messengers of our Lord came with the Truth. Will we then have intercessors to intercede for us, or are we to be returned so that we may do that besides what we used to do!"<sup>(80)</sup> Surely, they have lost their souls<sup>(81)</sup> and what they used to weave<sup>(82)</sup> deserted them.

وَلَقَدْ جِئْنَاهُمْ بِكِتَابٍ فَصَّلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ  
 هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّتُؤْمِرُوا ۖ هَلْ يُظْهِرُونَ إِلَّا تَأْوِيلَهُ ۚ يَوْمَ يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلَهُ يَقُولُ  
 الَّذِينَ تَسُوهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا  
 بِالْحَقِّ فَهَلْ لَنَا مِنْ شُفَعَاءَ فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا  
 أَوْ نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلَ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۚ قَدْ  
 خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَصَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا  
 يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

- 78 The telling here of these stories and occurrences that will come to be true on the Day of Judgement and beyond are Signs for those who take heed so that they may prepare for their future and choose the path that takes them to their fate: "... indeed there has come to you a Light and a clarifying Book; \*by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path" (5: 15-16).
- 79 *Ta'wilahu* (lit. its interpretation) is the coming true and realization of what it tells of and promises: resurrection, reckoning and Punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Do they expect 'nothing' but that the angels come upon them; or your Lord comes, or some of your Lord's Signs come 'upon them'? On the Day when some of your Lord's Signs come, a soul's Believing will be to no avail to it had it not Believed earlier or earned good in its Believing. Say 'Muhammad': "Wait 'you', for we shall be waiting"" (6: 158).
- 80 "If only you could see 'Muhammad' when they were stood at the Fire and then said: "How we wish we could be returned then we would 'surely' not deny the Signs of our Lord and would be among the Believers!" \*Nay, but what they used to hide before was made to come all too true to them. If they were to return they would 'only' backtrack to what they were forbidden from—indeed they are liars" (6: 27-28).
- 81 "Losers indeed are those who deny the meeting of Allah, until when the Hour comes upon them all of a sudden, they would say: "Woe be us for wasting it 'our lives'!" They would carry their 'burdensome' sins over their backs—sordid indeed what they carry" (6: 31).
- 82 The false idols and gods they used to set up as rivals to Almighty God (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿54﴾ (83) Indeed your 'True' Lord is Allah Who created the Heavens and Earth in six days<sup>(84)</sup>, then Established<sup>(85)</sup> Himself on the Throne; He shrouds night over day, relentlessly pursuing it<sup>(86)</sup>; the sun, the moon and the stars are dominated by His Command<sup>(87)</sup>;

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ  
فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ  
يُعْشَىٰ لَيْلَ النَّهَارِ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسُ  
وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ مُسَخَّرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِهِ

- 83 This passage and the next one mark an interpose; acting as anchorage for the flow of the discourse, a reminder of this sura's central theme, Allah's Godship (*ulūhiyyah*), and that He is the Sole Deserver of all acts of worship Who is not to be Associated with. The truly cosmic Signs detailed here are proofs of His Majesty, indications of the extent of His limitless Power, and rightfulness to devoted worship (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr). This is the single most Truth that people engage in struggle over; the core Message of all Prophets throughout time: "Worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him".
- 84 "Surely your Lord is Allah Who created the Heavens and Earth in six days, then Established Himself on the Throne, conducting every affair. None can intercede except by His permission. That is Allah—your Lord, so worship Him 'alone'. Will you not then be heedful?" (10: 3); "Allah is He Who has created the Heavens and Earth and everything in between in six days, then Established Himself on the Throne. You have no Protector or Intercessor besides Him. Will you not then be heedful?" (32: 4)
- 85 The verb *istawā* literally means rose and ascended in a manner befitting His Majesty only and unlike any of His creation. This Attribute of Almighty God (ﷻ) should be established as it is without *tashbīh* (drawing analogies), *takyīf* (adaptation) or *ta'fīl* (repudiation). (Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī)
- 86 The Qur'an depicts striking imagery of the relationship that holds between night and day in many places where they are mentioned as cosmic Signs of God's magnificent creation; they are personified as truly odd companions who live in constant contrast and struggle: "You 'Allah' merge night into day and You merge day into night" (3: 27); "He shrouds night over day. Indeed in these are Signs for those who pay heed" (13: 3); "The night is also a Sign for them: We strip the daylight from it, and behold!- they are left in darkness" (36: 37); "The sun is not permitted to overtake the moon, nor can the night outrun the day: each floats in 'its own' orbit" (36: 40).
- 87 This is yet another Sign of God's ability and He has subjected these planets for the benefit of creation; no one could have otherwise done so (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "He has made night and day subservient to you, and the sun, moon and stars, all dominated by His Command. There are certainly Signs in that for people who use their intellect" (16: 12).

verily for Him 'alone' is the creation and the Command<sup>(88)</sup>—glorified be Allah, the Lord of all beings<sup>(89)</sup>. <sup>455</sup> Invoke your Lord<sup>(90)</sup> humbly and mutedly<sup>(91)</sup>; indeed He likes not the transgressors<sup>(92)</sup>.

الَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالْأَمْرُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾  
 أَدْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ  
 الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾

- 88 God Almighty (ﷻ) is the Sole Creator. He is the One Who truly controls His creation disposing of their affairs at will, (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): “Say: “Who provides for you from the Heavens and Earth? Who owns hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? And Who conducts every affair?” They will ‘surely’ say: “Allah!” Say: “Will you not be Mindful?” (10: 31).
- 89 “So ‘all’ gratitude is for Allah—Lord of the Heavens and Lord of the Earth, Lord of all beings. \*His ‘alone’ is Majesty in the Heavens and the Earth, and He is the All-Mighty, All-Wise” (45: 36-37).
- 90 The result of realizing how Magnificent and Dominant God is, is to direct one’s sincerest act of worship, supplication (*du‘ā*) to Him alone. al-Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Supplication is worship” then he (ﷺ) read: “Your Lord said: “Call on Me and I will answer you; those who are too proud to serve Me will enter Hell humiliated” (40: 60)” (Imām Aḥmad: 271, Abū Dāwūd: 1479, al-Tirmidhī: 2969).
- 91 This is one of the protocols of calling upon God through invocations, i.e. summoning up one’s most sincere prayers in true humbleness, wholeheartedly and in secret; finding this one-to-One connection in all sincerity (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). That God is invoked secretly in a low voice bears special significance and is sincerer of Faith as it shows how much the supplicator realizes the nearness of God and His presence in his life, as well as how respecting of his Sovereign he really is (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā’i’ al-Fawā’id*, 6/3). Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) said: “We were travelling with the Prophet (ﷺ) and people began raising their voices glorifying ‘Allah’. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “O people! Go easy on yourselves; you are not invoking one who is deaf or absent. You are calling One Who is All-Hearing, All-Near; He is with you” (al-Bukhārī: 2992, Muslim: 2704).
- 92 Those who overstep the proper limits in their supplication and worship are called *mu’tadīn* (transgressors) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī). ‘Abdullāh Ibn Mughaffal (رضي الله عنه) heard a son of his pray, saying: “O Allah, I ask You for the white castle in Paradise, when I am admitted into it, to be on my right”. He said to him: “Son, ‘only’ pray to Allah to give you Paradise and seek refuge with Him from Hellfire for I truly heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “There will come after me, from this very nation, people who will transgress in supplication and purification (cleanliness)” (Abū Dāwūd: 96, Ibn Mājah: 3864, Imām Aḥmad: 20554).

﴿56﴾ Do not spread corruption in the land after it has been set aright<sup>(93)</sup> and invoke Him out of fear and in hope<sup>(94)</sup>; indeed Allah's Mercy is ever close to the good-doers<sup>(95)</sup>.

وَلَا تَقْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

﴿57﴾ <sup>(96)</sup>He is the One Who sends

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ

- 93 Another result of realizing the sheer Magnificence and Dominance of God Almighty is to steer clear of all forms of corruption and deviation from God's commands; notably Associating with Him in worship and sinning. The world has been set aright by the sending of the Messengers (ﷺ) who explained and expounded God's laws (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*).
- 94 This is yet another protocol of *du'ā'* which signifies that one should not be too sure of oneself while supplicating to God, gloating over good deeds or, conversely, despairing of His Mercy. In sincere acts of devotion, one should earnestly invest both fear (*al-khawf*) and hope (*al-rajā'*). Indeed God speaks of the supplication of His most sincere servants, the Messengers (ﷺ) who are the role models of humanity in such a manner: "...indeed, they used to race in doing good, and call upon Us in hope and fear, totally humbling themselves before Us" (21: 90).
- 95 Those who observe such rules of conduct in supplication are good-doers and will gain God's Mercy (Ibn al-Qayyim, *Badā'i' al-Fawā'id*, 3/31). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah, Glory be His, says: "I am as much as my servant thinks of Me and I am with him whenever he mentions Me; if he mentions me to himself, I will Mention him to Myself, if he mentions Me to a company, I will Mention him to a better company; if he draws nearer to Me by a hand span, I will Draw nearer to him an arm's length, if he draws nearer to Me an arm's length, I will Draw nearer to him the length of arms stretched out, and if he comes to Me walking, I will come to him jogging" (al-Bukhārī: 7405, Muslim: 2675).
- 96 These are further Signs of God's sole rightfulness to worship. The analogy here is drawn between life-giving rain and how it transforms 'dead' land making it teem with life and producing all sorts of growths, on the one hand, and God's Ability over bringing the dead to life and resurrecting them, on the other (cf. al-Rāzī). Further, people are likened to different plots of land of which some are 'good' and will readily benefit from rain, whilst others are 'malicious' and will only yield horrible produce; so, then, are people with regards to their reception of God's Signs and Guidance (al-Sa'dī, Ibn ʿAshūr): "*Another of His Signs is that He sends out the winds bearing glad tidings, giving you a taste of His Mercy... So observe the traces of Allah's Mercy, how He revives the land after its death. Truly that is the Reviver of the dead; He is Able over all things*" (30: 46 and 50).



out winds as glad tidings heralding His Mercy<sup>(97)</sup>; until when they haul heavy clouds, We drive them to a dead land, then We cause by them water to come down and We bring out with it crops of all types; like so We do bring out the dead so that you may heed<sup>(98)</sup>. ﴿58﴾ And the good land, its growths come out by its Lord's permission<sup>(99)</sup>; and the malicious one only comes out nasty<sup>(100)</sup>—like so We expound the Signs for those who are thankful<sup>(101)</sup>.

الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَقْلَّتْ  
سَحَابًا نَّفَخْنَا لَهَا لُفْلُفًا فَجَاءَتْ بِمَاءٍ مُّسَبِّحٍ فَجَاءَتْ بِهِ  
الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ  
نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالْبَلَدِ  
الطَّيِّبِ يَخْرُجُ بِنَاءِ رَبِّهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ ۗ وَالَّذِي خَبَثَ  
لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكْدًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْأَلْوَانِ  
لِقَوْمٍ يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

- 97 *Rahmah* (mercy) here means rain because with it God shows mercy on His creation and through it they are provided with the source of life: water and food (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 98 This is a major Sign of God's Ability to bring the dead to life: “*Allah is the One Who sends forth the winds; they raise up the clouds; We drive them to a dead town and with them revive the land after its death: such will be the Resurrection*” (35: 9); “*Among His Signs is that you see the land devoid of life, but as soon as We send down rain upon it, it begins to stir ‘to life’ and swell. Indeed, the One Who revives it can willingly revive the dead. He is certainly Most Able of everything*” (41: 39): “*We send blessed water down from the sky and grow with it gardens, harvest grain, \*and soaring palm trees, with clustered dates; \*a provision for the servants, and We give life with it to the land which is dead. Such is the coming forth ‘resurrection’*” (50: 9-11).
- 99 So God Wills that such good land becomes fruitful and grows good produce readily and speedily (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 100 Even if rain were to fall on such land and it were to produce anything, it would only grow forth that which is displeasing and bereft of all benefit (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The example of the guidance and knowledge with which Allah sent me is that of the rain that falls on ‘vast’ land: parts of it are good, they accepted the water, grew with it dense greenery and herbage; yet parts of it are arid, they held water therein so by it Allah benefitted people so they could drink of it, they quenched the thirst of others from it and grazed; other parts are barren, they do not hold water nor do they grow herbage. Like so is the example of the person who bears knowledge of the religion of Allah, benefitted from what Allah sent me with so he learned and taught and ‘on the other hand,’ those who did not rise to the occasion and did not accept the guidance of Allah with which I was sent” (al-Bukhārī: 79, Muslim: 2282).
- 101 Those who are receptive and thankful will readily benefit most from these Signs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Atīyyah, al-Qurtubī).

﴿59﴾ (102) Verily We had sent Nūh 'Noah' to his people and he said: "My people, worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him<sup>(103)</sup>. Certainly, I fear for you the Punishment of a dreadful Day!"

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا كُفِّرْتُمْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٥٩﴾

102 The 'good land' and 'malicious land' are to be found throughout times and ages. Those who benefit from God's Signs are the 'good' ones who are set apart from the 'evil' ones who only get worse once God's Signs are recited for them. According to al-Rāzī, the series of stories of the Messengers of God which are to be told here serve a number of goals: 1) to console Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) by showing him that shunning the Signs of God and treating them disdainfully is not limited to his people but rather a great many previous nations were as rebellious; 2) to show the two parties, the Believers and the Deniers, the fate of each through previous real examples; 3) to draw attention to the, both at once, assuring and unsettling fact that God may slacken the rein for those who rebel against His command but He never disregards them; 4) they provide further proof of the Truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who was unlettered and yet he managed to narrate stories of different nations, scattered throughout the land, with striking accuracy!

It is also useful to mention that these stories as told here are laconically styled (many of which are told elsewhere in the Qur'an in much more detail) recounting briefly the Message, the response to it, the response to the response and the punishment for not heeding it. Further, the rapport between the Messenger and those to whom he was sent is highlighted through the use of appellations like 'their brother' and 'my people' (cf. al-Biqā'i, *Naẓm al-Durar*); note too how some of the Messengers deeply and sorrowfully reflected on the fate of their people when they were hit by affliction. In this instance, further to what is alluded to by scholars, these stories can be taken as a reflection of the psychological state of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and how deeply he felt for his people; the interactions that went on between the Messengers and their people are also resonant of the ones that went on between Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his folk.

103 This is the single most Truth that people engage in struggle over; the core Message of all Prophets throughout time and ages: "*Worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him*". It is the first Message that any Messenger will deliver to his people (with the notable exception of the people of Lot as explained below), because it deals with monotheism (*al-tawhīd*) which is the first and surest step to sincere Faith (Ibn al-Qayyim, *Madārij al-Sālikin*, 1/154): "*We surely sent a Messenger to every nation, saying: "Worship Allah and shun false gods". But some of them Allah guided them, while others were destined to stray. So travel throughout the land and see the fate of the deniers!*" (16: 36)

﴿60﴾ The notables among his people said: “Most certainly we see you are in manifest error!”

﴿61﴾ He said: “My people, there is nothing misguided about me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of all beings!”

﴿62﴾ “I deliver to you the Messages of my Lord, sincerely advice you; I know of Allah that which you do not know!”

﴿63﴾ “Do you find it astounding that a reminder from your Lord comes to you through a man from among you to warn you so that you may become Mindful, and be shown mercy?”

﴿64﴾ They declared him a liar and We salvaged him and those with him in the ship and We drowned those who rejected Our Signs; indeed they were people smitten with blindness!<sup>(104)</sup>”

﴿65﴾ And to ‘Ad ‘We sent’ their brother Hūd. He said: “My people, worship Allah ‘alone’, there is no god for you besides Him; would you not be Mindful?”

﴿66﴾ The Denying notables among his people said: “Most certainly we see you lacking in sound judgement and we certainly believe that you are one of the liars!”

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالَ يَقَوْمِ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَالَةٌ وَلَا كِبْرِي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ أَتُبَلِّغُكُمْ رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّي وَأَنْصَحُ لَكُمْ وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ أَوْحَيْتُ لَكَ كَلِمًا تَذَكَّرُ مَن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَلِتَتَّقُوا وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَجْحِبْتَهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِكِ وَأَعْرَفْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا عَمِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

\* وَإِلَىٰ عَادِ أَخَاهُمْ هُودًا قَالَ يَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۚ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِي سَفَاهَةٍ وَإِنَّا لَنُظُنُّكَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

104 Blindness of the heart is the real blindness (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “Have they not journeyed in the land, that they might have hearts by which to understand or ears by which to hear? Truly it is not the eyes that go blind, but it is hearts within breasts that go blind!” (22: 46).

﴿67﴾ He said: “My people I am not lacking sound judgement, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of all beings!”<sup>(105)</sup> ﴿68﴾ “I deliver to you the Messages of my Lord and I am a sincere adviser to you in all honesty.”  
 ﴿69﴾ “Do you find it astounding that a reminder from your Lord comes to you through a man from among you?<sup>(106)</sup> Remember that He made you successors after the people of Nūḥ and He made your ‘physical’ creation high statured<sup>(107)</sup>; remember then the bounties of Allah so that you may become successful.”<sup>(108)</sup> They said: “Have you come to us to worship Allah alone and abandon what our fathers used to worship! Then bring down on us what you promise us, if you are truthful!”<sup>(108)</sup>  
 ﴿71﴾ He said: “There befalls you an affliction from your Lord, and Wrath! Do you argue with me on

قَالَ يٰٓقَوْمِ لَئِيسَ بِي سَفَاهَةٌ وَلَئِيسَ بِي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ اٰتٰىكُمْ رَسٰلَتِ رَبِّيْ وَاَنَا لَكُمْ نٰصِيْحٌ اٰمِيْنٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ اَوْعَجِبْتُمْ اَنْ جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ لِيُنذِرَكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوْا اِذْ جَعَلَكُمْ خُلَفَاۗءَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قَوْمِ نُوْحٍ وَّرَادَكُمْ فِى الْخَلْقِ بَصۜطَةً فَاذْكُرُوْا ءَايٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوْا اَجِئْتَنَا لِيَعْبُدَ اللّٰهَ وَحَدُوْدَهُ وَنَدْرَ مَا كَانِ يٰعْبُدُ اٰبَاؤُنَا فَآتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ قَدْ وُقِعَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ رَجْسٌ رَّجْسٌ وَّعَصَبُ اللّٰهِ لِيُنزِلَ فِى

105 This calm, well-poised answer by this noble Messenger of God, like that of Noah’s (ﷺ), to the outrageous slur of his people, who knew full well who he really was, is a great example of how to deal with ignorant people (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Abū Ḥayyān).

106 “The only thing that kept people from Believing, when guidance came to them, was that they said: “Has Allah sent a human being as a Messenger?”” (17: 94)

107 “As for ‘Ād, they waxed arrogant in the land without right and said: “Who is greater than us in strength?” Have they not considered that Allah, Who created them, is greater than them in strength? They continued to reject Our Signs” (41: 15).

108 “They said: “Have you come to us to divert us away from our gods? Then bring us what you are promising us, if you are truthful!”” (46: 22)

'behalf' of 'mere' names that you and your fathers name for whom Allah sent down no authority? Wait you then and I shall be with you among those who wait!"  
 ﴿72﴾ Then We salvaged him and those with him by Our Mercy and We cut off, down to the last one<sup>(109)</sup>, those who rejected Our Signs; never were they Believers<sup>(110)</sup>.

﴿73﴾ And to Thamūd 'We sent' their brother Šāliḥ. He said: "My people, worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him. There has come to you a clear evidence from your Lord; this is the she-camel of Allah, a Sign for you, so let it graze 'freely' in the land of Allah and touch it not with 'any' harm<sup>(111)</sup>; else a painful punishment will betake you". ﴿74﴾ "Remember that He made you successors after 'the people of' 'Ād and He made the land 'a comfortable' abode for you; you install castles

أَسْمَاءٍ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ  
 مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ فَانظُرُوا إِلَى  
 مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُتَظَنِّينَ ﴿٧١﴾ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ  
 وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنَّا وَقَطَّعْنَا دَابِرَ  
 الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بَيِّنَاتِنَا وَمَا كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾  
 وَإِلَى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ  
 اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ  
 جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ هَذِهِ نَاقَةُ  
 اللَّهِ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فَذَرُوهَا تَأْكُلْ فِي أَرْضِ  
 اللَّهِ وَلَا تَمْسُوهَا يُسْوَءَ فَبِأَخْذِكُمْ عَذَابٌ  
 أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَأَذْكُرُوا إِذْ جَعَلْنَا حُلُقَاءَ  
 مِنْ بَعْدِ عَادٍ وَبَوَّأْنَاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَتَّخِذُونَ  
 مِنْ سُهُولِهَا قُصُورًا

109 *Qaṭa'a dābir* is to completely wipe out (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

110 "That was 'Ād; they rejected the Signs of their Lord, disobeyed the Messengers, and followed the command of every stubborn tyrant. \*So' They were pursued by damnation in this world as they will be on the Day of Judgement. Indeed, 'Ād denied their Lord. So away with 'Ād, the people of Hūd!" (11: 59-60).

111 "He said: "Here is a she-camel 'as a Sign for you'. She will have her turn to drink as you have yours, each on an appointed day. \*And touch her not with harm, lest you be taken by the Punishment of a tremendous day" (26: 155-156).

on its plains and carve houses in mountains. Remember then the bounties of Allah and do not go about the land corrupting.”<sup>112</sup> The notables who waxed arrogant said to those who were downtrodden, those who Believed of them: “Do you know ‘for certain’ that Ṣāliḥ is sent from His Lord?” They said: “Indeed we Believe in what he was sent with!”<sup>113</sup> Those who waxed arrogant said: “Indeed we Deny that which you Believe in!”<sup>114</sup> They then slayed<sup>(112)</sup> the she-camel, insolently rebelled against their Lord’s Command and said: “Ṣāliḥ, bring down on us what you promise us if ‘only’ you are ‘truly’ one of the the ones who were sent ‘the Messengers’!”<sup>115</sup> Then the quake ‘soon’ betook them and they became ‘dead’ fallen prone in their ‘very’ land.<sup>116</sup> He turned away from them and said: “My people, indeed I have delivered the Message of my Lord to you, gave you sincere advice, but you like not those who give advise!”<sup>(113)</sup>

وَتَسْحَبُونَ الْجِبَالَ بُيُوتًا فَادْكُرُوا ءَالَآءَ  
 اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾  
 قَالَ الْمَلَآءِئِلَةُ أَسْتَكْبِرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ  
 لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَضَعُّوهُ لِمَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُمْ  
 أَنْتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ صَالِحًا مُرْسَلٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ  
 قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلَ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾  
 قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا بِالَّذِي  
 ءَامَنَّا بِهِ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَعَقَرُوا النَّاقَةَ  
 وَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ وَقَالُوا يُصَلِّحْ  
 أَخْتَنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَا إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾  
 فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ  
 جِثَمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَلْقَوْنَ لَكَدًا  
 ابْتَلَعْتُمْ رَسُولَ رَبِّي وَتَصَحَّتْ لَكُمْ  
 لَأَلْتَجِبُونَ النَّاصِحِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾

112 The verb used here is ‘*aqarū*’ as opposed to the most obvious word, which is usually used for such an action, *naḥara*. al-Biqā’ī (*Naẓm al-Durar*) distinguishes between the two in that *naḥara* as opposed to ‘*aqara*’ is to put an animal to the knife for a purposeful end, for example, to eat the meat or use the hide. However, ‘*aqara*’ is a pointless act of butchering. It is used to further highlight the magnitude of their contempt. The Arabic language authority, al-Farāhīdī (quoted in Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*) says that it means ‘to hamstring’.

113 This theatrical aside of the monologue beautifully captures the depth of the desolation Prophet Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ) felt upon seeing the ghastly sight of his

﴿80﴾ And [Mention] Lūt 'Lot' when he said to his people<sup>(114)</sup>: “Do you commit the ‘one’ vice to which none of all beings preceded you to?” ﴿81﴾ “Indeed you approach men lustfully instead of women; nay but you are excessive people!”<sup>(115)</sup> ﴿82﴾ The reply of his people was nothing other than saying: “Expel them out of your town; these are people who keep ‘themselves’ pure!”<sup>(116)</sup> ﴿83﴾ We salvaged him and his family, except his wife; she was among those remaining in doom<sup>(117)</sup>.

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾  
 إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِنْ دُونِ  
 الْبَنَاتِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَمَا  
 كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَخْرِجُوهُمْ  
 مَنْ قَدْ يَتَّبِعُكُمْ أَنْهُمْ أَنْسٌ يَتَّبِعُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾  
 فَانجَيْنَاهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ  
 مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾

own people, lifeless, flipped on their faces and stuck in the ground: “As for Thamūd, We showed them guidance, but they preferred blindness over guidance. So the blast of a disgracing Punishment overtook them for what they used to earn” (41: 17).

- 114 Notice that Lot (ﷺ) is the only Messenger told of here who did not begin his call to his people to worship God alone. This is by way of signifying the sheer vileness of the act they were involved in, namely, sodomy. No coaxing or sweet talking is appropriate in such a dire situation; anything otherwise would have been akin to ignoring the elephant in the room. Notice also the terseness of the story’s account which is also conducive in bringing about the same effect.
- 115 They were described as “excessive” because they exceeded the limits of moderation (*al-qist*) that God commands people to. Desire will find vent in lawful marriage, but overindulgence and being slave to one’s own animalistic lusts can only lead to the lowering of the status of the human race (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Of all beings, do you lie with males, \*and abandon the wives that God has created for you? You are exceeding all bounds!” (26: 165-166); “Do you really lust after men instead of women? In fact, you are nothing but ignorant people acting ignorantly!” (27: 55).
- 116 To such people, the mere presence of those who do not partake in their hedonistic way of life is a painful reminder of the virtue they are not, one that constantly gnaws on their consciences. Naturally, they want them gone (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Their only charge was that they were ‘pure’.
- 117 She was so condemned because she condoned the morally degrading behaviour of her people (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, 15/344).

﴿84﴾ We rained down 'some' rain<sup>(118)</sup> on them; behold then what was the end of the criminals.

﴿85﴾ And to Midian 'We sent' their brother Shu'ayb. He said: "My people, worship Allah 'alone', there is no god for you besides Him. There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord; give full measure and weight<sup>(119)</sup>, do not swindle people out of the things that are 'rightly' theirs<sup>(120)</sup>, and do not sow corruption in the land after it has been set aright. That is better for you; if only you 'would' Believe!" ﴿86﴾ "Do not also sit 'in ambush' at every path threatening<sup>(121)</sup> and turning

وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَطَرًا فَأَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾

وَالِىَ مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ قَدْ جَاءَتْكُمْ بَيِّنَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَأَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَالْمِيزَانَ وَلَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ أَشْيَاءَهُمْ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَلَا تَقْعُدُوا بِكُلِّ صِرَاطٍ تُوعَدُونَ وَتَصَدُّونَ

118 "So when Our Command came, We turned its uppermost to be its lowermost, and We rained down upon them stones of baked clay, one upon another, \*marked from your Lord. It is not far from the evildoers" (11: 82-83).

119 The sin of these people was wantonly engaging in fraudulent dealings; in other words, greed. "Give full measure, and cause no loss 'to others'. \*Weigh with honest scales" (26: 181-182); "And to Midian was 'sent' their brother Shu'ayb, he said: "My people, worship Allah, you have no god besides Him, and do not give short in the measure and weight. I see you well to do, and I fear for you the retribution of a day that is surrounding. \*My people, in fairness, give full measure and weight. Do not swindle people out of the things that are rightly theirs, and do not spread corruption in the land" (11: 84-85). This seemingly insignificant 'sin' is tantamount to corruption and sleaziness *par excellence*. Its unchecked spread generates a most dire consequence on the prosperity and sustainability of any community (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

120 Here is one example of such swindling defraud: "Woe to the defrauders, \*who, when they take measure from people, demand 'it' in full, and when they measure for them or weigh for them, they stint. \*Do such people not think that they will be resurrected \*on a mighty Day; \*a Day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of all beings?" (83: 1-6).

121 Ibn Kathīr and Ibn 'Atīyyah are of the opinion that Shu'ayb's people were engaged in highway robberies (cf. also al-Shawkānī, al-Wāhidi); along with



away from the road of Allah those who Believe<sup>(122)</sup> wanting it to be crooked<sup>(123)</sup>. Remember when you were but few and He multiplied your numbers and look how was the end of the corruptors.”<sup>(124)</sup>  
 ﴿87﴾ “Given that a party of you Believed in what I was sent with and ‘another’ party did not Believe, ‘so’ wait ‘you then’ until Allah judges between us – He is the best of judges”<sup>(125)</sup>.

﴿88﴾ The notables among his people who waxed arrogant said: “We shall expel you, Shu‘ayb, and those who Believed with you from our town<sup>(126)</sup> or you shall revert back to our way of life!” He said: “Even if we were detesting ‘of it!’”<sup>(127)</sup>

عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ ءَامَرَ بِهِ وَتَبِعُونَهَا  
 عَوَجًا وَأَذْكَرُوا إِذْ كُنْتُمْ قَلِيلًا فَكَثَّرَكُمْ  
 وَأَنْظَرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾  
 وَإِنْ كَانَ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْكُمْ ءَامَنُوا بِالَّذِي  
 أُرْسِلْتُ بِهِ وَطَائِفَةٌ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا فَاصْبِرُوا  
 حَتَّى يَحْكُمَ اللَّهُ بَيْنَنَا وَهُوَ خَيْرُ  
 الْحَاكِمِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

\* قَالَ الْمَلَأُ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ  
 لَنُخْرِجَنَّكَ يَشْعِيبُ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَعَكَ مِنْ  
 قَرْيَتِنَا أَوْ لَتَعُودُنَّ فِي مِلَّتِنَا قَالَ أَوَلَوْ كُنَّا  
 كَارِهِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾

turning away those who sought out Shu‘ayb so they could listen to him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī)

- 122 They also sat on roads seeking to turn away those who so sought out Shu‘ayb (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī).
- 123 Cf. Aya 45 above.
- 124 “O my people! Let not your dissension with me lead you into sin, such that there should befall you that which befell the people of Noah, or the people of Hūd, or the people of Ṣāliḥ? And the people of Lot are not far from you!” (11: 89).
- 125 “My people labour in the state in which you are, as I will be labouring ‘my own way’, for sure you will come to know who shall be visited by a Punishment to debase him; await and I shall await with you.” (11: 93)
- 126 As with Lot (ﷺ) the first reaction of the sinful was to threaten those of higher moral standing with expulsion from their lands, or have them revert back to their way of life. This is and was not a unique incident; a great many Messengers (ﷺ) were faced with the same threat: “But those who Denied said to their Messengers: “We shall surely expel you from our land, or you shall revert to our way of life...” (14: 13).
- 127 These true Believers chose to firmly adhere to their religion over a way of life that ran contrary to it (Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā); prosperity in the Hereafter over prosperity in this worldly life, the “illusory enjoyment” (57: 20).

﴿89﴾ “We would be fabricating ‘abominable’ lies against Allah should we revert back to your way of life when Allah delivered us from it. We would not ‘ever’ revert back to it unless Allah, our Lord, wills it so<sup>(128)</sup>; indeed our Lord encompasses everything with ‘His’ Knowledge. On Allah we rely!” “Our Lord, decide between us and our people with the Truth—You are the best of those who decide<sup>(129)</sup>”. ﴿90﴾ The Denying notables among his people said: “Should you follow Shu‘ayb, you shall surely come to be losers!<sup>(130)</sup>” ﴿91﴾ Then the quake ‘soon’ betook them and they became ‘dead’ fallen prone in their land. ﴿92﴾ The ones who declared Shu‘ayb a liar ‘ended’ as if they did not thrive in it ‘their land’; the ones who declared Shu‘ayb a liar were indeed the ‘real’ losers!<sup>(131)</sup>

قَدِ افْتَرَيْنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا إِنْ عُدْنَا فِي مِلَّتِكُمْ بَعْدَ  
 إِذْ جَعَلْنَا اللَّهَ مِنْهَا وَمَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَعُودَ فِيهَا  
 إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَسِعَ رَبُّنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ  
 عِلْمًا عَلَى اللَّهِ تَوَكَّلْنَا رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ  
 قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ  
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ لَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتُمْ شُعَيْبًا  
 إِتَّكُمُ إِذَا الْخَلْسُورَتِ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَآخَذَهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ  
 فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جَنِينًا ﴿٩١﴾ الَّذِينَ  
 كَذَّبُوا شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ فِيهَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا  
 شُعَيْبًا كَانُوا هُمُ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾

- 128 All creatures are subject to the will of Almighty God (ﷻ), Who knows everything present, past and future (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī): “But you cannot will unless Allah wills. Verily, Allah is ‘ever’ All-Knowing, All-Wise” (76: 30).
- 129 “Truly Allah does not wrong human beings in the least, but rather human beings wrong themselves” (10: 44).
- 130 Being so worldly they measured loss and gain in purely financial terms. They thought that those who followed the way of Shu‘ayb (ﷺ) were missing out on real opportunities to amass wealth, giving little thought to the legality and ethicality of their transactions (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī).
- 131 This is a much greater loss indeed than that of deviously seeking out financial gain: “Therefore, serve whatever you wish besides Him. Say: ‘The losers are those who lose their souls, and their families, on the Day of Resurrection. Indeed, such is the real loss’” (39: 15).

﴿93﴾ He turned away from them and said: “My people, indeed I have delivered the Messages of my Lord to you, gave you sincere advice; how would I then feel ‘deep’ grief for Denying people!”

فَتَوَلَّى عَنْهُمْ وَقَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لَقَدْ أَبْلَغْتُكُمْ  
رِسَالَتِي رَبِّي وَنَصَحْتُ لَكُمْ فَكَيْفَ  
ءَأْسَىٰ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

﴿94﴾ (132) We have never sent a Prophet to a town without taking its people by affliction and hardship<sup>(133)</sup>, so that they might humble themselves. ﴿95﴾ Then We ‘always’ replaced the bad ‘times’ with the good ‘times’ until they prospered<sup>(134)</sup> and ‘dismissively’ said: “Affliction and hardship had touched our fathers ‘before’!” We took them all of a sudden while they did not realize ‘it’!

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِّن نَّبِيٍّ إِلَّا أَخَذْنَا أَهْلَهَا  
بِالْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَضُرَّعُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾  
ثُمَّ بَدَّلْنَا مَكَانَ السَّيِّئَةِ الْحَسَنَةَ حَتَّىٰ  
عَفَوْا وَقَالُوا قَدْ مَسَّ آبَاءَنَا الضَّرَّاءُ وَالسَّرَّاءُ  
فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾

132 This passage summarizes the moral of the stories of the Messengers (ﷺ) and the lessons to be drawn from them. It encapsulates societies ways forward to prosperity and salvation (cf. al-Rāzī).

133 It is part of human nature to turn to God when hardship is experienced. In the same way, communities are hit with affliction, hardship and rough times for Denying God’s Signs so that they may come around to themselves and realize how wrong they are (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “We have certainly sent ‘Messengers’ to nations before you ‘Muhammad’; We took them by affliction and hardship, so that they might humble themselves. \*Were they only when Our affliction befell them to ‘sincerely’ humble themselves! Nay, but their hearts became hard and Satan made what they used to do look attractive to them” (6: 42-43).

134 ‘Afaw (translated here as prospered) is a semantically dense word. It, at once, means they became bodily healthy, prosperous and great in number (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr). This is by way of ‘slackening the reins for them to wander aimlessly in their blindness’ (cf. 2: 15): “When they forgot what they were reminded of, We opened up for them the doors of everything; yet when they become full of gloating over what they were given, We took them all of a sudden, and lo they are seized with despair” (6: 44).

﴿96﴾ Had the people of towns Believed and became Mindful, We would have opened up for them blessings from the Heavens and Earth<sup>(135)</sup>, but they rejected and We took them 'to task' for what they used to earn. ﴿97﴾ Do the townspeople feel secure that Our Might would not come to them at night while they are sleeping? ﴿98﴾ Do the townspeople feel secure that Our Might would not come to them in the forenoon while they are playing?<sup>(136)</sup> ﴿99﴾ Do they feel secure from the planning of Allah? Verily none feels safe from the planning of Allah except the losers.<sup>(137)</sup>

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَىٰ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا  
عَلَيْهِمْ بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
وَلَٰكِن كَذَّبُوا فَأَخَذْنَاهُم بِمَا كَانُوا  
يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ أَفَأَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن  
يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا بَيِّنًا وَهُمْ يَقَابِلُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ أَوْ  
أَمِنَ أَهْلُ الْقُرَىٰ أَن يَأْتِيَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا ضَيِّقًا  
وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ أَفَأَمِنُوا مَكْرَ اللَّهِ  
فَلَا يَأْمَنُ مَكْرَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

135 Those who truly Believe and obey God will come to lead lives of abundance: “Had they taken to the right way, We would have given them abundant water to drink” (72: 16); “... and had they upheld the Torah and the Evangel and what was sent down to them from their Lord, they would have eaten ‘blissfully’ from above them and from under their feet” (5: 66); “...and whoever is Mindful of Allah, He will make a way out for them, \*and He will provide for him whence he never expects...” (65: 2-3).

136 These are the times they are least expecting something terrible to hit them: “Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the towns while they are doing wrong. Surely His seizing is painful, severe!” (11: 102).

137 “And those who Denied Our Signs, We will ‘gradually’ lure them whence they know not. \*And I will grant them indulgence for a while. Truly, My planning is stout’, unfailing” (7: 182-183); “Let not those who Deny think that the rein We give them is better for them. We only give them allowance so that they would accumulate sins; theirs is a humiliating Punishment” (3: 178).

Even the most devout of Believers should not feel content with the good that they have done, as were our rightly-guided predecessors (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “The hearts of the offspring of Adam are between two Fingers of the Fingers of the Most Merciful like one heart. He directs it wherever He wishes”. Then the Messenger (ﷺ) added: “O Allah! You Who directs hearts. Direct our hearts towards Your observance” (Muslim: 2654).

﴿100﴾ Were those who come to inherit the land after its people not to perceive that should We have willed, We would have smitten them for their sins<sup>(138)</sup> and stamped on their hearts so that they would not hear?<sup>(139)</sup>

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لِلَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ  
أَهْلِهَا أَنْ لَوْ نَشَاءُ أَصَبْنَاهُمْ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ  
وَنَنْظِعُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

﴿101﴾ <sup>(140)</sup>Those 'bygone' towns, We relate to you 'Muhammad' of their notable news<sup>(141)</sup>.

تِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِهَا

- 138 Indeed the Signs of God's ability is all around people; their very existence and taking over after those who preceded them is not the least of these: "Had they not seen how many a generation before them We have destroyed? We had established them in the land 'far' more firmly than how We established you 'people'! We sent the sky pouring down on them profusely and We made the rivers run under their feet, 'only' then We destroyed them for their sins and We brought into being another generation after them" (6: 6); "Is it not 'enough of a lesson for them 'to see' how many a generation We destroyed before them, in whose homes they now walk? There truly are Signs in this; do they not hear?" (32: 26).
- 139 "And who is more unjust than those who, when reminded of their Lord's Signs, turn away from them and forget what their own hands have done? We have certainly put sheaths over their hearts – leaving them unable to perceive this 'Qur'an' – and impairment in their ears. And if you invite them to guidance, they will never be guided" (18: 57).
- 140 This is a connecting passage which concludes the previous episode and opens up the next one.
- 141 These stories are related so that the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers around him find comfort. Further they serve as a reminder for those who take heed and a warning for those who Deny (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): "If they deny you 'Muhammad', surely did deny before them the people of Nūh, 'Ad, and Thamūd, \*and the People of Ibrāhīm and the people of Lūt \*and the inhabitants of Midian, and Mūsā too was denied. But I granted the Deniers respite; then I overtook them 'with punishment'; how, then, was the repudiation I wrought!" (22: 42-44); "These accounts We relate to you 'Muhammad', of the 'bygone' towns; some are still standing 'deserted', while others have been mowed down. \*We did not wrong them but they wronged themselves; the gods they prayed to besides Allah availed them nothing: when Allah's Command came upon them, they increased them in nothing except destruction. \*That is how your Lord seizes the townships as He seizes them when they are wrongdoers. His seizing is indeed painful,

Indeed their Messengers came to them with clear evidences, but they would not come to Believe in what they had earlier denied<sup>(142)</sup>; like so Allah stamps on the hearts of the Deniers;<sup>(143)</sup> ﴿102﴾ We had not found most of them honouring of their pledge; nay, but We found most of them transgressors<sup>(144)</sup>.

﴿103﴾ <sup>(145)</sup>Then We sent after them

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَمَا كَانُوا  
لِيُؤْمِنُوا بِمَا كَذَّبُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ كَذَلِكَ  
يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَمَا وَجَدْنَا  
لِكَثْرَتِهِمْ مِنْ عَهْدٍ وَإِنْ وَجَدْنَا أَكْثَرَهُمْ  
لَفَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ

severe. \*Truly in that is a Sign for those who fear the Punishment of the Hereafter. That is a Day on which mankind shall be gathered together, and that is a Day that shall be witnessed” (11: 100-103).

- 142 “They had sworn by Allah with their most solemn oaths that if a Sign were to come to them, they would surely Believe in it. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Indeed Signs are from none but Allah!” How would you ‘Believers’ know that when they ‘the Signs’ come, they would ‘still’ not Believe? \*We keep on turning their hearts and their sights away for not Believing in it the first time and ‘thus’ We leave them to wander aimlessly in their ‘unbending’ recalcitrance” (6: 109-110): “...so when they deviated, Allah made their hearts deviate. Allah does not guide the rebellious people” (61: 5).
- 143 “Indeed the Deniers, whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not Believe. \*Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes there is a veil—theirs is a grievous Punishment” (2: 6-7); “Those who dispute Allah’s Signs, with no authority given to them, are doing something that is loathed by Allah and by those who Believe. In this way God stamps on the heart of every arrogant tyrant” (40: 35).
- 144 “And surely most of the earlier generations had strayed before them” (37: 71).
- 145 The story of Moses is singled out and recounted in detail here and indeed in many other suras (‘Moses’ is mentioned no less than 136 times in 34 suras) for its special significance. Of all the Messengers, his mission bears the most similarities with that of Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ), his miracles were amongst the greatest to be found, it is one of the most nuanced and intricate of the stories of the Messengers (ﷺ), his laws were the greatest before the advent of Islam and, in a way, paved the way for it, his nation were among the greatest nations that followed a Messenger before Muhammad (ﷺ) and at the time of revelation they existed in the locales of revelation (notably in Madinah) so that they were to be called on to Believe in Prophet Muhammad’s Message, and that the Believers were to take heed from them and not forget the pledge of God as they did (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr). In short, the lessons drawn from Moses’ story are very relevant.

Mūsā 'Moses' with Our Sign to Pharaoh and his notables and they wrongfully dealt with them,<sup>(146)</sup> behold then what was the end of the corruptors.

﴿104﴾ Mūsā said: “Pharaoh, truly I am a Messenger of the Lord of all beings; ﴿105﴾ rightful to saying nothing but what is right about Allah; I have come to you with a clear Sign from your Lord, so send the Children of Israel ‘away’ with me!”<sup>(147)</sup> ﴿106﴾ He ‘Pharaoh’ said: “If you have come with a Sign, bring it forth, if only you are Truthful!” ﴿107﴾ He ‘Mūsā’ cast his staff, and lo, it was a ‘great’ snake, plain ‘to sight’! ﴿108﴾ He ‘swiftly’ pulled out his hand, and lo, it was white to all beholders!<sup>(148)</sup>

مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِۦ فَظَاۤمُوا  
بِهَا فَاَنْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ  
الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٠٣﴾

وَقَالَ مُوسَىٰ يٰفِرْعَوْنُ اِنِّى رَسُوْلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ  
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ حَقِيْقٌ عَلَيَّ اَنْ لَا اَقُوْلَ عَلٰى اللّٰهِ  
اِلَّا الْحَقَّ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ  
فَاَرْسِلْ مَعِىٓ بَنِىٓ اِسْرٰٓءِيْلَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ قَالَ اِنْ كُنْتَ  
جِئْتَ بِآيٰتٍ فَاْتِ بِهَا اِنْ كُنْتَ مِّن  
الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ فَاَلْقٰٓى عَصَاهُ فَاِذَا هِىَ ثُعْبٰنٌ  
مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَنَزَعَ يَدَهٗ فَاِذَا هِىَ بَيْضَةٌ لِّلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

146 This is a teaser for the long and epic story that will shortly unfold (cf. Ridā).

147 At this point, Moses' (ﷺ) mission was mainly to deliver his brethren, the offspring of Jacob, from the oppression of Pharaoh and his people who subjected them to the “worst of suffering” (cf. 2: 49, 7: 141, 14: 6) so that they may find themselves a place to worship Almighty God alone (al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Go ‘the both of you, Moses and Aaron’ to him and say: “We are both Messengers from your Lord. Send the Children of Israel ‘away’ with us and do not torment them. We have brought you a Sign from your Lord, and may peace be upon whoever follows guidance” (20: 47). He underlined his truthfulness and mentioned the Sign he had, knowing all too well that he would be denied, so he wanted to forestall it (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

148 Pharaoh, who out of his bloated egotism claimed that he was no less than Almighty God, the Most High Lord (79: 24 and 28: 38), was dismissive at first and challenged Moses toyingly seeing Moses as nothing more than a fugitive slave or, at best, a disobedient fosterling he had been brought up under his own roof. But the two Signs that Moses managed to produce with such ease, had a remarkable unsettling effect on him and drove him to the edge of hysteria as evidenced by how manically he managed the

﴿109﴾ The notables among the people of Pharaoh said: “This one is evidently a greatly knowledgeable magician!”

قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّ هَذَا السَّاحِرُ

عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾

whole encounter. Once the significance of these two very potent Signs is explained, one clearly sees ample justification for Pharaoh’s erratic, out of hand behaviour.

Firstly, the staff, a humble shepherd’s staff, was thrown down only to momentarily and readily turn into a great snake, about which there is no mistake (the vigour of this creature was variably described and stressed in the Qur’an as in, for instance, here and: 20: 20, 27: 10). In ancient Egypt, the cobra snake, known as the uraeus, was used as a symbol of sovereignty, royalty, deity and divine authority emblematically worn on the headdresses and crowns of ancient Egyptian deities and sovereigns. It stood for the goddess Wadjet who was often depicted as a cobra. The Pharaohs wore the uraeus on their heads either with the body of Wadjet atop the head, or as a crown encircling the head; this indicated Wadjet’s protection and reinforced the Pharaoh’s claim over the land. It was in effect the Pharaoh’s crown; a pharaoh was recognized only by wearing the uraeus, which conveyed legitimacy to his rule. The uraeus, then, was nothing more than a ‘symbolic’ sign of rightful kingship, which is nothing compared with the living, moving creature after which it was modelled; in it, we see how the image of a thing fades out in comparison to the real thing. The legitimacy and effectively the supremacy of Pharaoh was proven to be a mere charade compared to that of Moses’.

The second Sign, being the white hand, was equally symbolic. The Children of Israel amounted to nothing but mere bondsmen and slaves whose will had long ago been broken and whose lives were domineered by their masters of old, the Egyptians. The sign of their servitude was the extra dark skin that they came to assume after years and year of hard, gruelling labour under a scorching, unforgiving sun. Moses (ﷺ) himself was of a dark hue (cf. al-Bukhārī: 245 and 3207) which, in the pharaonic psyche, carried the insignia of his own people, namely, slavery. That he was so easily able to shed such a tell-tale sign and assume the most glaring symbol of nobility, whiteness of the skin, coupled with the gesture in itself, a brawny hand suddenly and decisively raised, is nothing less than an indication that he, and his people by extension, had broken the shackles of slavery and subjugation and were already revolting against Pharaoh’s authority.

That Moses asked for the release of his people was, to Pharaoh’s mind, nothing less than an outright revolution and bare-faced challenge to the throne aiming to destabilise it and depose its occupant. This surely touched a raw nerve and, thus, we find that Pharaoh and his cronies were concerned that Moses would ‘oust’ them from their land. From their perspective, the war they waged was nothing if not justified.



﴿110﴾ Pharaoh said: "He intends to oust you from your land! Then what do you command!"<sup>(149)</sup>

﴿111﴾ They said: "Put him off<sup>(150)</sup>, and his brother, and send out to the territories 'forceful' gatherers; <sup>(112)</sup> they will bring to you every greatly knowledgeable magician!"

﴿113﴾ The magicians came to Pharaoh and said: "Indeed there is a reward for us, if we emerge winners!" <sup>(114)</sup> He 'Pharaoh' said: "Yes 'certainly'! And you shall be among the ones drawn near 'to me'!"<sup>(151)</sup> <sup>(115)</sup> They said: "Moses! Either you cast or we shall cast 'first'". <sup>(116)</sup> He said: "Cast!"<sup>(152)</sup> When they cast, they bewitched the eyes of people<sup>(153)</sup>,

يُرِيدُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَكُمْ مِنْ أَرْضِكُمْ فَمَاذَا تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ قَالُوا أَرْجِهْ وَأَخَاهُ وَأَرْسِلْ فِي الْمَدَائِنِ حَاشِرِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ يَا تَوَكُّبِكُلِّ سَاحِرٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿١١٢﴾

وَجَاءَ السَّحَرَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالُوا إِنَّ لَنَا لَأَجْرًا إِنْ كُنَّا نَحْنُ الْعَالِينَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَإِنَّكُمْ لَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ قَالُوا يَمْوَسَىٰ إِمَّا أَنْ تُلْقَىٰ وَإِمَّا أَنْ نَكُونَ نَحْنُ الْمُلْقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالَ الْقَوَائِمَا الْقَوَائِمَا سَاحِرُوا وَعَبْرَاتِ النَّاسِ

149 Panic-stricken, Pharaoh lost his pompously self-assured façade and faded into the background letting those around him decide. He even asked them to 'command' him to a course of action blurting out his top-most concern, 'ousting' from the land.

150 They felt that such a stately matter, a real sudden challenge to the throne, could only be argued after much great deliberation and well thought-out preparation, so they advised him and somehow tried to soothe their master's worries by accusing Moses (ﷺ) of magic, a prevalent trade in the provinces of his kingdom, in which there was no scarcity of masters. So basically, they bought time and afforded their master a chance to regain his composure.

151 The magicians simply saw this as a great chance and wanted to make the best of it (cf. al-Rāzī). They dictated their own terms, and surely Pharaoh was ripe for it. He offered them way more than they asked for; to be ever close to him as part of his inner court assured of great favours which would last a long while. He succumbed to their demands and bared his heart, out of sheer panic.

152 This one-word reply shows how sure Moses (ﷺ) was of victory to the extent that he sounded careless (cf. Riḍā).

153 They made their staffs and ropes appear to the onlookers to be a great many large snakes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb*

gave them the shivers, and they came up with great magic”.

﴿117﴾ Then We inspired Mūsā as: “Throw your staff!” And lo, it ‘swiftly’ swallowed up their fakery!<sup>(154)</sup> ﴿118﴾ At that, the Truth fell down ‘heavy’ and what they used to ‘naturally’ do unravelled<sup>(155)</sup>. ﴿119﴾ They were routed there, and they retreated in disgrace<sup>(156)</sup>. ﴿120﴾ Then the magicians threw themselves down<sup>(157)</sup> prostrating. ﴿121﴾ They said: “We Believe in the Lord of all beings; ﴿122﴾ the Lord of Mūsā and Hārūn ‘Aaron’”. ﴿123﴾ Pharaoh said: “Did you ‘dare’ believe in Him before I granted you permission? This is nothing but a scheme you have weaved in the city to oust its dwellers from it<sup>(158)</sup>; you shall see!

وَأَسْتَرَهُمُوهُمْ وَجَاءُوا بِسِحْرِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١١٧﴾  
 \* وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَلْقِ عَصَاكَ فَإِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ  
 مَا يَأْفِكُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فَوَقَعَ الْحَقُّ وَبَطَلَ مَا كَانُوا  
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١١٩﴾ وَأَلْقَىٰ هُنَالِكَ وَانْقَلَبُوا  
 صَٰغِرِينَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ وَأَلْقَىٰ السَّحَرَةُ سِهَابًا ﴿١٢١﴾  
 قَالُوا ءَأَمَّنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ رَبِّ مُوسَىٰ  
 وَهَارُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ءَأَمَّنْتُمْ بِهِ ۚ قَبْلَ أَنْ  
 ءَأَذَنَ لَكُمْ ۖ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَمَكْرٌ مَّكْرُتُمْ فِي  
 الْمَدِينَةِ لِتُخْرِجُوا مِنْهَا أَهْلَهَا فَسَوْفَ نَعْمُونَ ﴿١٢٤﴾

*al-Namīr*: “...and suddenly their ropes and staffs appeared to him – by their magic – to be slithering” (20: 66).

- 154 “Throw down what is in your right hand so it will swallow up anything they have produced. What they have produced is only some magician’s trick, and no magician succeeds no matter where he goes” (20: 69).
- 155 Any false hope that Pharaoh and those around him might have harboured was blown away, by the heavy stamp of Moses’ truthfulness.
- 156 The result of this encounter came as a particularly heavy blow to Pharaoh and his cronies (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).
- 157 Realizing the magnitude of what they had just witnessed, Almighty God’s Power, the like of which they had never seen before, the magicians were forced to fall down (*ulqiyā*); they could not help doing so (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, al-Shinqīfī, *al-‘Adhb al Namīr*).
- 158 Understandably, Pharaoh’s shock at this turn of events was so immeasurable that he spoke incoherently, bringing the full force of his wrath on the heads of his subordinates: chastising them for insubordination and defying his authority and blaming them for scheming with Moses (ﷺ), whom he called

﴿124﴾ I shall 'mercilessly' cut off your hands and feet on alternate sides! Then I shall crucify you all”.<sup>(159)</sup> ﴿125﴾ They said: “We shall return to our Lord;<sup>(160)</sup> ﴿126﴾ and do you resent us for nothing but Believing in our Lord's Signs when they came to us!<sup>(161)</sup> Our Lord! Pour steadfastness on us and bring our lives to termination as wholly submitting<sup>(162)</sup>”.

لَا قُطِعْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَرْجُلُكُمْ مِّنْ خِلْفٍ  
ثُمَّ لَأَصْلَبَنَّكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا  
مُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا تَنْقِمُ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ ءَامَنَّا  
بِآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا لَمَّا جَاءَتْنَا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا  
وَتَوَقَّنَا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢٦﴾

in another account 'their chief who taught them magic' (cf. 20: 71), to 'oust' people from their land, the issue that exasperated him most (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).

159 This punishment is the most severe in nature and is reserved for those who sow corruption in the land and wage war against the sovereign (cf. al-Sa'dī).

160 The firmness of Faith they attained in such a very short period of time is awe-inspiring and provides many great lessons (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Ṣawā'iq al-Mursalah*, 4/1389): “They said: “No harm! Verily to our Lord we are to return. \*Truly we hope that our Lord will forgive us our sins for our having been the first of the Believers” (26: 50-51); “They said: “We never prefer you over what has come to us from the clear Signs and to Him Who created us. So you decree whatever you wish to decree, you can only decree about this worldly life. \*We have Believed in our Lord so that He may forgive us for our mistakes and for the magic which you forced us to perform. Allah is better and longer lasting” (20: 72-73). This is what happens when rich knowledge meets pure intention: “...it is those of His servants who have knowledge who stand in true awe of Allah” (35: 28). What he threatened them with was nothing more than expediting them to a desirous destination; meeting their Lord.

161 This implies deriding Pharaoh for his skewed standards.

162 *Muslimīn* (plural form of *muslim*), i.e. totally submitted to God. Total submission to God and devotion to Him in worship is the basic meaning of *Islām*. All Prophets were ‘Muslim’ in as much as they were wholly devoted to God and sincerely submitted to Him in worship according to their own respective creeds. Needless to say, after Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent to mankind no other religion except Islam is accepted from anyone (cf. 3: 85).

﴿127﴾ The notables among the people of Pharaoh said: “Will you ‘Pharaoh’ let Mūsā and his people ‘loose’ to be corrupt in the land and forsake you and your gods!” He said: “We shall slaughter their sons and retain their womenfolk alive; verily we are domineering over them!” ﴿128﴾ ﴿163﴾ Mūsā said to his people: “Seek help in Allah and be steadfast. Indeed the land is for Allah, He bequeaths it to whom He wills among His servants; the final round is for the Mindful! ﴿164﴾ ﴿129﴾ They said: “We suffered harm before you came to us and ‘now’ after you came to us”. ﴿165﴾ He said: “Hopefully your Lord may well destroy your enemy and make you successors to the land, so that He sees how you fare”. ﴿166﴾

وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنَ قَوْمِ فِرْعَوْنَ أَتَدْرُمُونَا وَقَوْمَهُ  
لِيَفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَيَذُرْكُمُ وَهَاتِكُمْ قَالَ  
سَنَقْتُلُنَّ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَنَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّا  
فَوْقَهُمْ قَاهِرُونَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا  
بِاللَّهِ وَأَصْبِرُوا إِنَّا الْأَرْضُ لِلَّهِ يُورِثُهَا مَنْ  
يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَالْعَلِيَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٢٨﴾  
قَالُوا أَوِذْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَأْتِيَنَا وَمَنْ بَعْدَنَا  
جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَى رَبُّكُمْ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ عَدُوَّكُمْ  
وَيَسْتَخْلِفَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرَكُمْ  
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

163 They intended to hearten their master and spur him to clamp down on Moses and his people, serving only their own interests and privileges in the process. Readily, he followed their insinuations: “Then, when he brought the truth from Us to them, they said: “Kill the sons of those who Believe with him and let their womenfolk live.” The scheming of the Deniers is naught but astray” (40: 25). See how far apart the stand of this ruling elite was from that of the truly knowledgeable.

164 He wanted to hearten them and remind them of the Divine canon that no one nation remains dominant indefinitely: “...those are the days We rotate them between people!” (3: 140); “We surely destroyed ‘other’ peoples before you when they did wrong, and their Messengers had come to them with clear proofs but they would not Believe! This is how We reward the wicked people” (10: 13).

165 They said this out of sheer desperation (cf. al-Jazā’irī).

166 This is not merely a wish but a prayer of a most noble Messenger of God and, somehow a promise to his people (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā). What follows is a detailing of how this prayer was answered and the promise fulfilled. This is how great leaders shine like stars in the dark in the most adverse of circumstances.

﴿130﴾ (167) 'Then' We overtook Pharaoh's folk with 'severely dry' years and dwindling crops so that they might pay heed. ﴿131﴾ Whenever a good thing<sup>(168)</sup> came their way, they would say: "This is 'deservedly' ours!" Yet when a bad thing hit them, they would find an ill omen with Mūsā and those with him<sup>(169)</sup>; indeed their omen is nowhere but with Allah, but most of them do not know!"<sup>(170)</sup> ﴿132﴾ They 'further' said 'to Mūsā': "No matter what sign you bring us to bewitch us, we shall never believe in you!" ﴿133﴾ Then We sent on them the flood, locusts, bugs, frogs and blood; Signs detailed. But they waxed arrogant, and were 'nothing but' criminal people<sup>(171)</sup>.

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ بِالْبِئْسَيْنِ وَنَقِصَ  
 مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ فَإِذَا  
 جَاءَتْهُمْ الْحَسَنَةُ قَالُوا لَنَا هَذِهِ وَإِنْ تُصِيبُهُمْ  
 سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَىٰ وَمَنْ مَعَهُ ۗ أَلَا  
 إِنَّمَا طَّيَّرَهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَئِن كَانُوا لَهُمْ  
 لَآ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَقَالُوا مَهْمَا تَأْتِنَا بِهِ مِنْ آيَةٍ  
 لَّيْسَ حَرَبًا بِهَا فَمَا نَحْنُ لَكَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٢﴾  
 فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الطُّوفَانَ وَالْجَرَادَ وَالْقُمَّلَ  
 وَالضَّفَادِعَ وَالدَّمَ آيَاتٍ مُّفَصَّلَاتٍ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا  
 وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

167 This marks the beginning of the end and ruination for Pharaoh and his people (cf. al-Rāzī). God in His Infinite Justice wanted to give them a chance to repent: "Not a Sign did We show them, but that it was greater than its sister. And We overtook them with the punishment, so that they might return 'to the Right Path'" (43: 48).

168 A prosperous time, when they find abundant rain and crops (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

169 Out of egotism and smugness, they felt they deserved all things that are good (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Hard times did not really have much of a humbling effect on them. Whenever they were plighted with hardship, they would easily blame it on others; in this case Moses and those around him. Such is always the habit of the rebellious: "...when good 'fortune' comes their way, they say: "This is from Allah", but when a misfortune befalls them, they say: "This is from you 'Muhammad'!" Say 'Muhammad': "All 'good and bad fortune' is from Allah". What is wrong with these people, they can hardly grasp what is said 'to them.'" (4: 78).

170 "Corruption has spread on land and sea as a result of what people's hands have done, so that Allah may cause them to taste 'the consequences of some of their deeds and perhaps they might return 'repentant'" (30: 41).

171 For their adamant Denial and unshakably rebellious stance, God plighted them with a number of successive catastrophes: 1) the flood (al-tūfān)

﴿134﴾ When the plight<sup>(172)</sup> hit them 'hard', they said: "Mūsā, pray to your Lord for us by virtue of what He entrusted you with. Should you remove the plight 'away' from us, we would surely Believe in you and we shall send the Children of Israel 'away' with you!" ﴿135﴾ When We removed the plight 'away' from them – for a term they would 'inevitably' reach<sup>(173)</sup> – they swiftly reneged. ﴿136﴾ We 'at once' took vengeance on them and We drowned them

وَلَمَّا وَقَعَ عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّجْزُ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى ادْعُ  
 لَنَا رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ لَئِن كَشَفْتَ  
 عَنَّا الرِّجْزَ لَنُؤْمِنَنَّ لَكَ وَلَئِن لَّمْ يَكُنْ مَعَكَ  
 بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ  
 الرِّجْزَ إِلَى أَجَلٍ هُمْ بِلَعْنَتِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَنْكُتُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾  
 فَأَنْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَأَغْرَقْنَاهُمْ

which deluged their houses and submerged their plantations; 2) locusts (*al-jarād*) that swarmed and devastated their plantations and crops; 3) bugs (*al-qummal*; the exact nature of which is not agreed upon by exegetes) which caused them great distress and harm; 4) the frogs (*al-dafādi*) which swarmed upon them in their multitudes making their lives unbearable, and; blood (*al-dam*) which took the place of the water they drank and used (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*). These were unmistakably Messages bearing 'Signs' from God. This is why they, somehow relented, as will be detailed next.

- 172 Exegetes are of different opinions as to what this plight (*rijz*) actually was. However, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī deem it as the flood, locusts, bugs, frogs and blood which were just mentioned, citing in the process the following aya: "*We showed them no Sign which was not greater than the one before it. We inflicted punishment on them so that they might return to the Right Path*" (43: 48). They only turned to Moses, when the affliction bit them hard (cf. Abū Ḥayyān), and hardly in a sincerely humble manner at that (cf. al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr): "*They said: "Magician, call on your Lord for us, by virtue of what He entrusted you with: we shall certainly accept guidance. \*But when We removed the punishment from them, they swiftly reneged!"*" (43: 49-50). This just shows the kind of people, Moses had to put up with; indeed a lesson for all those who suffer all sorts of hardship in pursuing their calling.
- 173 The specific time God set for their destruction (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

in the deep sea<sup>(174)</sup>, because they denied Our Signs and were 'willingly' averting of them<sup>(175)</sup>. <sup>﴿137﴾</sup> And We bequeathed those people whom were downtrodden<sup>(176)</sup> the Easts and Wests of the land that We blessed<sup>(177)</sup>. The gracious Word<sup>(178)</sup> of your Lord was fulfilled for the Children of Israel for their steadfastness and We destroyed what Pharaoh and his people used to make and what they used to 'carefully' trellis<sup>(179)</sup>.

فِي الْبَيْرِ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا  
عَافِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَأَوْرَثْنَا الْقَوْمَ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا  
يُستَضْعَفُونَ مَشْرِقَ الْأَرْضِ وَمَغْرِبَهَا  
الَّتِي بَرَكْنَا فِيهَا وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ الْحُسْنَى  
عَلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَدَمَرْنَا  
مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمَهُ وَمَا كَانُوا  
يَعْرِشُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

174 This is the fulfilment of the first part of Moses' 'wish' as related in Aya 129: "*Hopefully your Lord will destroy your enemy...*". The detailed story of how they were drowned is told in 26: 52-67.

175 They averted considering what came to them as real Signs and paid no heed to them (cf. Aya 132 above).

176 This is the fulfilment of the second part of Moses' 'wish' as related in Aya 129: "*...and make you succeed 'the' in the land...*".

177 The extent of God's Bounty on them is shown in the words chosen: the East(s), West(s), literally the Eastern and Western parts (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī), connote vastness and openness (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr) as contrasted with the really narrow, constricted life they were made to endure. Moreover, they were made to 'inherit' not any land but one of bountiful blessings. Most exegetes are of the opinion that this land is *arḍ al-shām* (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr), which roughly translates as the Levant, however this region is variably demarcated and named throughout history. It is a land of perpetual bliss and abundance of rain and crops (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*).

178 God's glad promise to the Children of Israel; many exegetes (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*) are of the opinion that this 'Word' is this Aya: "*We wanted to favour those who were downtrodden in the land, and make them leaders and make them inheritors 'of the land'*" (28: 5).

179 Respectively, their masonry and farms (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*). They took great care and pride in these, but God not only destroyed them, He even obliterated their vestiges for so stubbornly rebelling against His Signs and overly transgressing against other human beings.

﴿138﴾ (180) And We whisked<sup>(181)</sup> the Children of Israel across the sea, and then they came upon a people who were devoutly attentive to some idols of theirs. They said: “Mūsā, make us a god like the gods they have!” He said: “You are ‘but’ ignorant people<sup>(182)</sup>; ﴿139﴾ verily whatever these are, is ill-fated<sup>(183)</sup>, and futile is what they are used to labour ‘at.’”<sup>(184)</sup> ﴿140﴾ He ‘further’ said: “How would I ‘ever’ seek a lord besides Allah for you, when He favoured you above all people?”  
 ﴿141﴾ ‘Remember’ “When We delivered you from Pharaoh’s

وَجَوَزْنَا بِبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْبَحْرَ فَأَتَوْا عَلَى قَوْمٍ يَعْكُفُونَ عَلَى أَصْنَانٍ لَهُمْ قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى اجْعَلْ لَنَا آلِهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُونَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ مَتَّبِعُوا مَا هُمْ فِيهِ وَبَطِلُ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ قَالَ أَغَيْرَ اللَّهِ أَبْغِيكُمْ إِلِهًا وَهُوَ فَضَّلَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

وَإِذْ أَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ

- 180 What follows are snippets of how the Israelites fared when God made them inherit that land, as alluded to in the last part of Aya 129: “... so that He sees how you fare”. This is told in detail here so that Believers may take heed and guard their Faith at all times (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 181 *Jāwaza* means that God made it possible as well as effortless for them to pass through the sea (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 182 They did not fully realize the extent of God Almighty’s Magnificence and the binding nature of worshipping Him alone (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). After censuring them, Moses explained to them, why he was so forthright with them on this issue (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Nazm al-Durar*) so that they might realize how erroneous they were (cf. Riḍā).
- 183 “We shall turn to whatever work they have done, and make it scattered dust” (25: 23).
- 184 “Those will have nothing in the Hereafter except the Fire; their efforts in it ‘this life’ will prove futile and what they used to do shall be in vain” (11: 16); “Verily, those that you are praying to besides Him cannot help you, nor can they help themselves” (7: 197); “...but those you invoke besides Him do not possess even the skin of a date stone. \*If you pray to them, they do not hear your call, and even if they hear you, they cannot answer you. On the Day of Judgement, they will disown your worshipping them—none can inform you like the All-Knowledgeable” (35: 13-14).



folk 'who' used to subject you to the worst of suffering; they would slaughter your sons and retain your womenfolk alive, indeed in that is a great trial from your Lord.”

﴿142﴾ (185) And We appointed for Moses thirty nights and We completed them with ten; so the appointment<sup>(186)</sup> of his Lord was forty nights complete. Mūsā said to his brother Hārūn: “Assume my role among my people; set aright ‘their affairs’ and do not follow the path of the corruptors”. ﴿143﴾ When Mūsā came for Our appointment and His Lord spoke to him, he said: “My Lord, show me ‘, let me’ look at You!” He said: “You shall not see Me.”<sup>(187)</sup>

يَسْؤُمُونَكُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُقْتَلُونَ  
أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي  
ذَلِكَ لَكُم بَلَاءٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾

\*وَوَاعَدْنَا مُوسَى ثَلَاثِينَ لَيْلَةً وَأَتَمَمْنَاهَا  
بِعَشْرٍ فَمَرَّ مِيقَاتُ رَبِّهِ ۚ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً  
وَقَالَ مُوسَى لِأَخِيهِ هَارُونَ اخْلُفْنِي فِي قَوْمِي  
وَأَصْلِحْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾  
وَلَمَّا جَاءَ مُوسَى لِمِيقَاتِنَا وَكَلَّمَهُ رَبُّهُ قَالَ  
رَبِّ أَرِنِي ۖ أَنْظُرْ إِلَيْكَ ۗ قَالَ لَنْ نَرٰنِي

185 The few passages that follow are couched in the overall narrative of the story of the exodus of the Israelites and how they fared after their deliverance, yet they are interspersed with references to the Torah; how it came into being and how wrongfully it was dealt with. This highlights that it bears out the Qur’an and foretells the coming of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to whom the Qur’an, the light that sets good apart from evil, was sent down (cf. also: 6: 154-157).

186 The length of time God set for Moses to communicate with him and send the Torah down to him (al-Ṭabarī, al-Marāghī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).

187 People cannot see God Almighty (ﷻ) in the worldly life, not even a noble Messenger of the status of Moses (ﷺ) to whom He talked directly without a mediator (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī). Humans are simply not built in such a way as to bear it (cf. al-Sa’dī, al-, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*). Abū Mūsā al-Ash’arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood among us to deliver five ‘weighty’ words. He said: “Allah, Glory be His, does not sleep and it is not befitting of Him to sleep; He lowers ‘with the scale of’ justice ‘whoever does wrong’ and raises ‘with’ it ‘whoever does good’; to Him the deeds of the day are raised before the deeds of the night and the deeds of the night are raised before the deeds of the day; His Veil is the Light; if He were to lift it, the Magnificent Splendours of His Face would burn whoever of His creation, His Sight reaches” (Muslim: 179).

But look at the mountain. If it 'still' remains in its place, then you will see Me". Then as His Lord revealed Himself to the mountain, He crushed it flat and Mūsā collapsed, struck<sup>(188)</sup>. When he recovered, he said: "Glory be Yours; I repent to You; I am the first of the Believers!"<sup>(189)</sup>

﴿144﴾ He said<sup>(190)</sup>: "Mūsā, I have chosen you above all people for My Messages and My 'direct' Speech; take then what I gave you and be among the thankful!"

﴿145﴾ We wrote for him in the tablets about everything<sup>(191)</sup>; and exhortation and elaboration of everything<sup>(192)</sup>: "Take them 'Mūsā' with strength<sup>(193)</sup> and command your people to take

وَلَكِنْ أَنْظِرْ إِلَى الْجَبَلِ فَإِنِ اسْتَقَرَّ مَكَانَهُ  
فَسَوْفَ تَرِنُنِي فَأَمَّا تَجَلَّى رَبُّهُ لِلْجَبَلِ جَعَلَهُ  
دَكًّا وَخَرَّ مُوسَىٰ صَعِقًا فَلَمَّا أَفَاقَ قَالَ  
سُبْحَانَكَ ثُبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

قَالَ يَمُوسَىٰ إِنِّي أَصْطَفَيْتُكَ عَلَى النَّاسِ  
بِرِسَالَتِي وَبِكَلِمِي فَخُذْ مَا آتَيْتُكَ وَكُن مِّنَ  
الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَكَتَبْنَا لَهُ فِي الْأَلْوَاحِ  
مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْعِظَةً وَتَفْصِيلًا لِّكُلِّ  
شَيْءٍ فَخُذْهَا بِقُوَّةٍ وَأْمُرْ قَوْمَكَ يَأْخُذُوا

188 God Almighty practically showed Moses how unable he was of seeing Him (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Sa'dī); the mountain, which is by far a mightier creation than man, was crushed to dust when God revealed Himself to it (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Basī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-'Adhb al-Namīr).

189 Sincere Belief (*Īmān*) requires no tangible evidence (cf. al-Biqā'ī).

190 For refusing him his demand, God assuaged Moses by spelling out His singularly most important bounties on him (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān).

191 The tablets (*al-alwāḥ*) which contained the Torah (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr) detailed all the laws and guidelines that Moses' nation needed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wajīz, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī).

192 "Then 'know that' We had given Mūsā the Book 'the Torah' in perfection 'for Our bounty' for he who did well and detailing everything; a guidance and mercy so that they may Believe in meeting their Lord" (6: 154).

193 Firmly adhere to the dictates of the Torah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).

the best therein<sup>(194)</sup>—I shall show you the abode of those who contravene<sup>(195)</sup>”.

﴿146﴾ (196) I shall turn away from My Signs those who wax arrogant in the land, unrightfully<sup>(197)</sup>. So even if they see each 'and every' Sign, they would not Believe in it<sup>(198)</sup>;

بِأَحْسَنِهَا سَأُوْرِكُمْ دَارَ الْفَسِقِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

سَأَصْرِفُ عَنْ آيَاتِيَ الَّذِينَ يَتَكَبَّرُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَإِنْ يَرَوْا كَلَّآئَةً لَا يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَا

194 They were told to observe and practice the best of what they find in the Torah: carry out its bidding, avoid what is forbidden and ponder over its moral directions (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī).

195 *Sa-urikum dār al-fāsiqīn* (rendered here directly) has been a site of argument among scholars. Some have opined that the 'abode of those who contravene' is Hellfire, taking it to refer to those who contravene the dictates of the Torah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*). Others have taken it to mean the hometown of the Canaanites, i.e. Jerusalem, and thus it was a promise from God that should they adhere to the Torah, they would be rewarded with the blessed land (cf. al-Qāsimī, Ibn 'Ashūr).

196 Reflective parentheses such as this passage are meant to serve a number of purposes. Here, it could be taken to bring relevance to the flow of narrative; i.e. food for thought. The reader/listener/reciter is directed to draw lessons from the epic story of the Israelites and how haughtily many of them dealt with the myriad of Signs that they were exposed to. This bore special significance to the immediate community of revelation around whom the Israelites lived in their multitudes and who were regarded with respect for their being 'People of the Book'.

197 Arrogance is pointed out here as a major cause for falling into Denial, because it forms an insurmountable barrier between the heart and Believing; the arrogant will not heed admonition nor will they hearken to advice (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 13/242). Arrogance was the cardinal sin that drove Satan out of Paradise (cf. Aya 13 above) and it is the most dangerous human impulse that has to be repressed by humbly and sincerely prostrating to God and glorifying Him (cf. Aya 206 below).

This is their punishment from God: "...so when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate; for Allah does not guide the rebellious people" (61: 5); "We keep on turning their hearts and their sights away for not Believing in it the first time and 'thus' We leave them to wander aimlessly in their 'unbending' recalcitrance" (6: 110).

198 "Had We sent down the angels 'successively' to them, made the dead talk to them and congregated everything right before them, they would not

if they see the path of guidedness they would not take it as a path 'of theirs', and if they see the path of 'utter' misguidedness, they would take it as a path 'of theirs'; that because they denied Our Signs and were 'willingly' averting of them<sup>(199)</sup>. ﴿147﴾ Those who denied Our Signs and the meeting of the Hereafter, their deeds were rendered void; do they get rewarded except for what they used to do?<sup>(200)</sup>

﴿148﴾ The people of Mūsā took up 'as idol' when he was gone – 'made' from their jewellery – a calf<sup>(201)</sup>, a 'mere' body of a lowing sound. Did they not 'just' see that he would not talk to them, nor guide them to the way!<sup>(202)</sup>

وَأَنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الرُّشْدِ لَا يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا  
وَأَنْ يَرَوْا سَبِيلَ الْغَيِّ يَتَّخِذُوهُ سَبِيلًا ذَلِكَ  
بِأَنَّهُمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا عَنْهَا  
غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا  
وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ  
إِلَّا مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

وَأَتَّخَذَ قَوْمُ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ مِنْ حُلِيِّهِمْ  
عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ أَلْمَيْرُ وَأَنَّهُ لَا  
يُكَلِّمُهُمْ وَلَا يَهْدِيهِمْ سَبِيلًا

*have Believed unless that Allah wills it so; but indeed most of them are ignorant*" (6: 111).

- 199 Out of a deep-seated lack of sincere will to embrace Faith, their first reaction to the Signs was to deny them. They did not make the necessary effort to consider and contemplate them and, thus, treated them with disdain. So God, in punishment of them, diverted their hearts away from them, much to their grave detriment (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "We created not the Heavens and the Earth and whatsoever is in between them save with Truth, and for a term stated. Yet the Deniers are turning away from what they have been warned about" (46: 3).
- 200 "We thus requited them for their Denying; do We ever requite save the ardent Denier" (34: 17).
- 201 When Moses (ﷺ) was gone for forty nights for his appointment with God, his people sculptured out of their jewellery a calf that produced a bellowing sound and worshipped it: "And 'remember' when We appointed forty nights for Moses, and then when he was away you took up 'worshiping' the calf—you were unjust" (2: 51).
- 202 This mere body even lacked the most basic attributes of being a god (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 13/242): "How did they not see that it could not give them any response and had no power to harm or benefit them?" (20: 89)

They took up 'worshipping' him; they were 'truly' wrongdoers!<sup>(203)</sup>  
 ﴿149﴾ When they felt profound regret and they saw that they went astray, they said: "Should our Lord not have mercy on us and forgive us, we shall surely be among the losers!"

أَتَّخَذُوهُ وَكَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَلَمَّا سَوَّطَ  
 فِي أَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَأَوْا أَنَّهُمْ قَدَ ضَلُّوا قَالُوا لَئِن  
 لَّمْ يَرْحَمْنَا رَبُّنَا وَيَغْفِرْ لَنَا لَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ  
 الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

﴿150﴾ When Moses returned – enraged and exasperated<sup>(204)</sup> – he said: "Awful indeed what you superseded me with after I was gone!<sup>(205)</sup> Did you seek to hasten your Lord's decree?"<sup>(206)</sup> He threw down the tablets<sup>(207)</sup>, seized his brother's head tugging it towards him<sup>(208)</sup>.

وَلَمَّا رَجَعَ مُوسَىٰ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ غَضَبًا أَن سَآءَ مَا  
 بَسَمَا خَلَقْتُمُونِي مِن بَعْدِي أَعَجَلْتُمْ أَمْرَ  
 رَبِّكُمْ ۖ وَالْقَىٰ الْأَلْوَابِحَ وَأَخَذَ بِرَأْسِ أَخِيهِ  
 يَجُرُّهُ إِلَيْهِ

- 203 "Remember" When Moses said to his people: "My people, you have done yourselves injustice by taking the calf" as an idol" ... " (2: 54).
- 204 God told him what befell his people while he was away: "Allah said: 'Moses, what has made you come ahead of your people in such haste?' \*He said: "They are following in my footsteps. I rushed to You, Lord, to please You" \*He 'Allah' said, "But We have tested your people after you 'departed', and the Samaritan has led them astray". \*So Moses returned to his people, enraged and exasperated. He said: "My people! Had your Lord not made you a good promise? Has my absence been too long for you? Or have you wished for Wrath from your Lord to befall you, so you broke your promise to me?" (20: 83-86).
- 205 He reminded them of what he had told them when they saw some idol worshippers deeply involved in their devotions and asked him to make them a god like the idolaters had (cf. Ayas 138-140 above).
- 206 In other words, "Could you not have waited until I came back to you with your Lord's good Guidance?" (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 207 That the tablets were 'thrown down' is symbolic of the context in which God's Guidance was received; instead of one of cheeriness and thankfulness it was one of deviation and Association, much to the consternation of the Messenger. Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Hearing is not like seeing. Allah told Moses of what his people did with the calf and he did not throw down the tablets. Yet, when he actually saw what they did he threw them down!" (Imām Aḥmad: 2447; Ibn Ḥibbān: 6213)
- 208 "He said: "Hārūn, what prevented you, when you saw they had strayed \*from following me? Why did you disobey my command?" (20: 92-93).

He 'Hārūn' said: "Son of my mother! The folks thought little of me and they almost killed me!<sup>(209)</sup> Do not then let the enemies rejoice on my account and do not count me among the wrongdoers!"<sup>﴿151﴾</sup> He 'Mūsā' said: "My Lord forgive me and my brother<sup>(210)</sup>, admit us into Your Mercy— You are the Most Merciful of the merciful"<sup>﴿152﴾</sup> Those who took 'to worshipping' the calf will gain Wrath from their Lord, and disgrace in the worldly life; thus We requite the lies' weavers.<sup>﴿153﴾</sup> Those who committed bad deeds, then repented afterwards and Believed; indeed your Lord after that is certainly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful<sup>(211)</sup>.

قَالَ ابْنُ أُمِّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِنَّ الْقَوْمَ اسْتَضَعُّوْنِي وَكَادُوا  
يَقْتُلُونَنِي فَلَا تُشْمِتْ بِي الْأَعْدَاءَ وَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي  
مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِإِخِي  
وَأَدْخِلْنَا فِي رَحْمَتِكَ وَأَنْتَ أَرْحَمُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾  
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا الْعِجْلَ سَيِّئًا لَّهُمْ غَضَبٌ  
مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَذُلٌّ فِي الْآلَمِينَ وَكَذَلِكَ  
نَجْزِي الْمُفْتِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا  
السَّيِّئَاتِ ثُمَّ تَابُوا مِن بَعْدِهَا وَآمَنُوا  
إِنَّ رَبَّكَ مِن بَعْدِهَا لَغَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٥٤﴾

- 209 "Hārūn had already, before this said to them: "My people! You are being tested in this: for verily your Lord is 'Allah' the Most Gracious; so follow me and obey my command". \*They said: "We will never cease being devoted to it 'the calf' until Moses returns to us"" (20: 90-91).
- 210 Thus he practically apologized to his brother, demonstrated that he accepted his explanation and did not make his enemies rejoice at his misfortune (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 211 This shows that no matter how grave the sin is, God will forgive it if the person truly repents and sincerely Believes. This represents a great ray of hope indeed (cf. al-Shirbīnī): "Verily, I am indeed Most Forgiving towards the one who repents, Believes, does righteous deeds, and then remains guided" (20: 82). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say: "Allah, glory be His, said: "Son of Adam! Verily, you shall not pray to Me and beseech Me without Me easily absolving you of your sins no matter how grave they are. Son of Adam! Verily, if your sins were to mount up to the sky, then you asked Me for forgiveness, I shall easily forgive you. Son of Adam! If you were to come to Me with nearly Earth's fill of misdeeds and you meet Me without Associating anything with Me, I shall come to you with its measure of forgiveness" (al-Tirmidhī: 3540, al-Ṭabarānī, al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ: 4305).

﴿154﴾ When rage ceased to haunt Mūsā, he picked up the tablets; copied in them is guidance and a mercy to those who stand in awe<sup>(212)</sup> of their Lord. ﴿155﴾ Then Mūsā chose 'from' his people seventy men for Our appointment. When the quake seized them,<sup>(213)</sup> he 'Mūsā' said: "My Lord, had You wished, You would have destroyed them earlier along with me! Do you destroy us for what the feeble-minded among us committed! Indeed, it is nothing but a trial<sup>(214)</sup> of Yours, You misguide with it whomever You will and guide whomever You will—You are our Ally, so forgive us and show us mercy; You are the best of forgivers;

وَلَمَّا سَكَتَ عَنْ مُوسَى الْغَضَبُ أَخَذَ الْأَلْوَابِحَ  
 وَفِي نُسخِهَا هُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلَّذِينَ هُمْ لِرَبِّهِمْ  
 يَرْهَبُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَأَخْتَارَ مُوسَى قَوْمَهُ سَمْعِينَ  
 رَجُلًا لِمِيقَاتِنَا فَلَمَّا أَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ قَالَ  
 رَبِّ لَوْ شِئْتَ أَهْلَكْتَهُم مِّن قَبْلُ وَإِنِّي  
 أَنَّهُلِكُمَا إِنَّمَا فَعَلْتُمَا بِهِنَّ مِمَّا إِنَّهُنَّ  
 فِتْنَتِكُمْ لِئَلَّا يَتَّبِعُنَّ مِن شِئَانِهِمْ  
 فَتَتَّبِعُوا مَا يَشَاءُونَ لِيكُونَ لَكُمْ  
 حِزْبٌ مِّنْهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٥٥﴾

212 *Yarhabūn* is fear mixed with apprehension (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-*Iṣfahānī*, al-*Mufradāt*). Those who are always on their guard will benefit most from Divine guidance: "...so remind by means of the *Qur'ān* those who fear My Threat" (50: 45).

213 They were hit with an earthquake and were either struck unconscious or actually died (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, Abū Ḥayyān). Exegetes have differed as to what the reason behind this punishment was. Ibn al-Jawzī (*Zād al-Masīr*, 2/158-159) sums up three widely postulated reasons (though they are not by any means conclusive, since they are not supported by evidence); they are: 1) that they transgressed in their supplications; 2) that they did not stand up to those who worshipped the calf; 3) that they demanded that they speak to God and see Him directly. However, given the immediate context, al-Ṭabarī and Ibn 'Āshur conclude that it related to the worship of the calf, as Moses hinted to in his prayer: "Do you destroy us for what the feeble-minded among us committed!" They took the 'feeble-minded' here to mean the calf worshippers.

214 That is, the worship of the calf was a test for the people of Moses to see who remained firm and who wavered and slipped into misguidedness (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr): "He 'Allah' said: "But We have tested your people after you 'departed', and the Samaritan has led them astray" (20: 85).

﴿156﴾ and decree for us what is good in this worldly life and in the Hereafter<sup>(215)</sup>; we have returned to You repentant<sup>(216)</sup>.” He ‘Allah’ said: “My Punishment, I hit with it whoever I will<sup>(217)</sup> and My Mercy encompasses everything<sup>(218)</sup>; I will decree it to those who are Mindful and give out the prescribed alms, and those who are ‘firmly’ Believing in Our Signs<sup>(219)</sup>;

وَأَكْتَسَبْنَا فِي هَذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً  
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ إِنَّا هُدُنَا إِلَىٰ آلِهَاتِنَا قَالَ عَذَابِي  
أَصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ أَشَاءُ وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ  
شَيْءٍ فَسَأَلْتُهُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لِيُنْفِقْ  
مِمَّا كَفَرَ اللَّهُ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِنَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾

- 215 The good (*hasanah*) is all that is desirable and sought by humans in this worldly life, on the one hand, and forgiveness and admittance into Paradise in the Hereafter, on the other (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).
- 216 *Hudnā ilyaka* is to repent and return (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). This is the verbal form (*hudnā*/from the stem *h-w-d*) from where the name *yahūd* (Jews) comes from; i.e. those who return to God in repentance (cf. al-Iṣfahānī, al-Mufradāt, al-Ḥalabī, ‘*Umdat al-Huffāz*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*).
- 217 Among those who deserve punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 218 God’s Mercy is boundless. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “God has one hundred mercies. He sent down one of them on humans, jinn, animals and venomous creatures. Through it they show mercy to each other, and through it wild beasts show mercy to their young. God has reserved ninety-nine mercies with which He will bestow mercy on His servants on the Day of Judgement” (al-Bukhārī: 6000; Muslim: 2752); Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When Allah created all of the creatures, He wrote in His Book, which is with Him above the Throne: “My Mercy overrules My Wrath” (al-Bukhārī: 7404, Muslim: 2751).
- 219 These are three conditions necessary for rightfully earning God’s Mercy: 1) being Mindful of Him: “When those who Believe in Our Signs come to you say to them: “Peace be upon you – your Lord decreed Mercy upon Himself – whoever of you commits evil out of ignorance then repents afterwards, and mends ‘their ways’, then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (6: 54); 2) willingly and charitably giving out zakah (the prescribed alms): “...indeed Allah’s Mercy is ever close to the good-doers” (7: 56), and 3) unequivocally Believing in God’s Signs. However, there is a fourth very important condition, singled out for its importance in the next aya, i.e. to Believe in the Messengership of Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. al-Rāzī).



﴿157﴾ those who follow the Messenger, 'the unlettered'<sup>(220)</sup> | الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ

220 Exegetes are unanimous that this unlettered Messenger Prophet is Muhammad (ﷺ) (cf. al-Khāzin). That he was unlettered (*ummī*) is evidenced in the Qur'an: "You 'Muhammad' never recited any Scripture before 'We sent down' this one 'to you'; you never wrote one down with your hand. If you had done so, those who follow falsehood might have had cause to doubt" (29: 48); "And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our Command. You did not know what the Book or Faith are, but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We will of Our servants. And indeed, 'Muhammad,' you guide to a Straight Path" (42: 52).

That he (ﷺ) was unlettered and raised among an unlettered nation ("He is the One Who raised for the unlettered 'people' a Messenger from among themselves..." (62: 2) was to: 1) ensure that no reasonable doubt arises about the Source of revelation; 2) the revelation remains intact and does not get mixed up with other sources and/or what hearts and minds are programmed with, and; 3) very significantly to connect him (ﷺ) directly to the most elevated and pristine of all sources, the Divine, as opposed to human sources which are very likely be adulterated (cf. al-Sha'rāwī). Some have speculated that *ummī* means or is derived from *umm al-Qurā* (Makkah, the Arab metropolis) from which he (ﷺ) originated, or being one of the 'unlettered nation', the Arabs (cf. al-Sijjīstānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*), and especially 'gentile' (particularly some recent sources and English translations of the Qur'an). However, upon thorough study, this could be challenged by the fact that notably the Jews of Madinah as told in Aya 2: 89 ("When a Book came to them from Allah confirming what they already have; 'while' before it they used to invoke 'Divine' assistance over those who Deny, still when what they knew came to them, they Denied it. Allah's Damnation is on the Deniers.") were expectant of a Messenger of their own and not a gentile one (cf. al-Ṭabarī). The Jews of Madinah were very learned and alive to their Scriptures (as attested to in numerous instances in the Qur'an and Sunnah), so translating *ummī* as 'gentile' is, to say the least, misleading because it speculatively reflects on Scriptures which are either lost or distorted beyond recognition, and is not attested to by Qur'anic evidence. On the other hand, for the Messenger (ﷺ) to be described as 'the unlettered Prophet' is to directly quote what is exactly written in the Torah and the Evangel (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Needless to say, such pristine sources are no longer in existence. 'Messenger' (*rasūl*) differs from 'Prophet' (*nabīyy*, lit. one who is told) in that it is a more general designation; every Messenger is a Prophet but not every Prophet is a Messenger (cf. Riḍā, and for more on the difference between the two see, Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Nubūwwāt*, 2/714). Muhammad (ﷺ) was privileged by both Messengership and Prophethood.

Prophet', whom they find with them written in the Torah and the Evangel<sup>(221)</sup>. He enjoins them to virtue and advises them against what is unacceptable; makes lawful for them good provisions and makes unlawful for them what is deleterious<sup>(222)</sup>;

الَّذِي يَجِدُ وَنَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ  
وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ  
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَيُحَرِّمُ  
عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ

- 221 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is described in great detail in both the Torah and the Evangel (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): “*And mention when Jesus, the son of Mary, said: “Children of Israel, indeed I am the Messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a Messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad ‘the praised one’.*” But when he came to them with clear evidences, they said: “This is clearly magic” (61: 6). ‘Aṭā’ Ibn Yasār (رضي الله عنه) said: “I met ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) and I said to him: “Tell me about the description of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) in the Torah”. He said: “Indeed! By Allah he is described in the Torah with some of his descriptions in the Qur’an: “*O Prophet, We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings and, a warner*” (33: 45); as a shelter for the unlettered ones ‘the Arabs’, and thus ‘said God in the Torah’: “You are My servant and My Messenger, I called you *al-mutawakkil* ‘the one who trustfully relies on God’”; he is ‘further described as’ not foul mouthed neither is he hard-hearted, nor raucous in market places; he does not offend when offended, but he forgives and forgets; Allah will not take his soul until he sets straight by him the crooked creed, i.e., that they say: “There is no god but Allah”, he opens up with it ‘this declaration’ blinded eyes, deaf ears and encased hearts” (al-Bukhārī: 4838).
- 222 “*Forbidden for you is carrion, ‘spilled’ blood, the flesh of swine, what was offered ‘as sacrifice’ to others besides Allah, the strangled, the battered, the fallen, the rammed, what is mangled by beasts of prey – except those ‘of these’ that you slaughter ‘before their dying’ – what is slaughtered at the altars of idols, and that you allot shares ‘of meat’ by drawing lots; ‘all of’ that is a serious contravention. Today the Deniers have despaired of ‘undermining’ your religion, so fear them not but fear Me; today I have perfected your religion for you, finalized My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you. ‘But’ Whoever is forced by wasting hunger ‘to eat of what is forbidden’, not swayed by sin, then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful*” (5: 3); “*You who Believe, intoxicants, gambling, altars ‘of idolatry’ and casting lots ‘for divination’ are nothing but defilement of the making of Satan, so steer clear from it ‘all’, so that you might be successful. \*Satan wants nothing but to sow enmity and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling, and repel you from the remembrance of Allah and Prayer, will you not ‘then’ desist?*” (5: 90-91).

lays down their burden and the yokes that were 'imposed' on them<sup>(223)</sup>. Then those who have Believed in him, strongly supported him, aided him and followed the Light that came down with him<sup>(224)</sup>; these are 'truly' the successful”.

وَبَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

﴿158﴾ (225) Say 'Muhammad': “O people, I am Allah’s Messenger

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنِّي رَسُولُ اللَّهِ

223 “Allah would not charge a soul with that which it cannot bear; to it belongs what it earned and against it is held what it has committed. ‘We pray to you’ “Our Lord, do not charge us for what we forgot or erred ‘in doing’; our Lord, do not lay on us what is burdensome as you did unto those who came before us; our Lord, do not burden us with that which we have no power over; forgive us, absolve us and have mercy on us. You are our Ally; make us prevail over the Denying people” (2: 286).

224 The Qur’an: “People of the Book, here is Our Messenger coming to you to reveal to you much of what you used to hide of the Book and overlooks much—indeed there has come to you a Light from Allah and a clarifying Book; \*by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path” (5: 15-16); “O people, there has come to you a ‘conclusive’ proof from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a Glaring Light. \*As for those who Believe in Allah and hold fast to Him, He will admit them into a Mercy and Grace from Him, and will guide them to a Straight Path” (4: 174-175).

225 This is a call to all who lived through the age of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), humanity’s last Messenger, the people of the Book included, and those that were to come after, to Believe in him, strongly support him, aid him and follow the Light that came down with him in order to attain success (al-Rāzī, Abū Hayyān). The address: “O people!” makes it clear that the extent of his Message is truly global, and to clear up any confusion that might arise from the fact that this declaration comes just after the stating of the fact that his foretelling was specifically mentioned in the Torah and the Evangel (cf. al-Sa’dī): “We have sent you ‘Muhammad’ as nothing but a deliverer of good tidings and a warner to all of humanity, but most people do not know” (34: 28); “We have sent you as nothing but mercy to all beings” (21: 107). Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “I was given five ‘privileges’ none of the Prophets was given...a Prophet would only be sent to his own people in particular and I am sent to all people without exception...” (al-Bukhārī: 438; Muslim: 521).

to all of you. He is the One to Whom belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth, He gives life and causes death<sup>(226)</sup>; so Believe in Allah and His Messenger, ‘the unlettered Prophet’<sup>(227)</sup>, who Believes in Allah and His Words and follow him so that you might be guided’<sup>(228)</sup>.

﴿159﴾ And from among Mūsā’s people is a legion that guide with the Truth and with it they administer justice<sup>(229)</sup>.

إِلَيْكُمْ جَمِيعًا الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ فَآمِنُوا  
بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ الَّذِي الَّذِي يُؤْمَرُ  
بِاللَّهِ وَكَلِمَاتِهِ ۗ وَاتَّبِعُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

وَمِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى أُمَّةٌ يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ  
وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

- 226 This global Message comes from None but the Absolute Sovereign of the dominions of the Heavens and Earth, the solely True Lord, Who holds Power over lives and livelihoods (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*): “...to Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth and all there is between them, He creates whatever He wills—Allah is indeed Able over everything” (5: 17); “Do they not see that Allah, Who created the Heavens and Earth and did not tire in doing so, has the Power to bring the dead back to life? Yes indeed! He has Power over everything” (46: 33).
- 227 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is being defined by this honorific epithet which is attested to in God’s Divine Writs. That it is brought up here again implicates authority and encourages the people of the Book at his time to Believe in him, since he is clearly described in their Books (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Had they Believed, the ‘unlettered’ Arabs would have felt tempted to follow suit, given the high regard in which they held the People of the Book.
- 228 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is set here as an example for all; to Believe in Allah and His Words, i.e. the Books He sent to His Messengers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī). So, consequently, people are to follow his example and Believe in the Light, the Qur’an, God’s Word, which he recites to them in order to be truly guided: “Say ‘Muhammad’: “If you ‘really’ love Allah then follow me and Allah shall love you and forgive your sins—Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful”. \*Say: “Obey Allah and the Messenger, but if they take to their heels, then Allah likes not the Deniers” (3: 31-32).
- 229 Here, the story of the Israelites is resumed after the last parenthetical reflection, which highlighted the relevance of the story, and good doers are an exception from the earlier Aya 148 which talks of the “people of Mūsā” taking up the calf as idol, so that they are not be bundled up under one heading (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr). That this fact is delayed to its mention here, after the call to all people to Believe in Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is, in a way, to point out that some who are deservedly called the ‘people of Mūsā’, being rightly inclined, (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿160﴾ And We cleaved them up into twelve tribal nations<sup>(230)</sup>. We inspired Mūsā, when his people appealed to him for water, to: “Strike the rock with your staff!” Twelve springs spurted out from it; every people knew their own fountain. We ‘further’ made the clouds shade them, sent down to them the manna and quails; “Eat from the good things that We provided for you”<sup>(231)</sup>—they did not commit injustice against Us, but they did themselves the injustice<sup>(232)</sup>.

وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ أَثْنَتَيْ عَشْرَةَ أَسْبَاطًا أُمَمًا  
وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ إِذِ اسْتَسْقَاهُ قَوْمُهُ  
أَنْ اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْبَجَسَتْ مِنْهُ  
أَثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ  
مَّشْرِبَهُمْ وَظَلَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْعَمَمَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا  
عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُّوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ  
مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا  
أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

will come to embrace Islam (cf. Abū Ḥayyān), which they surely did as mentioned in the later revealed Madinan Sura *Āl ‘Imrān*: “*They are not ‘all’ alike, there are among the People of the Book a legion, upright, reciting the Signs of Allah throughout the night and they prostrate ‘in Prayer’. \*They Believe in Allah and the Last Day, enjoin virtue and advise against what is unacceptable and rush forth to do good—those are among the Righteous. \*Whatever good they do they will not be denied it—Allah knows best the Mindful*” (3: 113-115); “*Indeed there are among the People of the Book those who Believe in Allah, what has been sent down to you ‘Muhammad’ and what had been sent down to them, humbling themselves before Allah and do not trade off the Signs of Allah for a pittance; for those is their reward with their Lord—Allah is swift in reckoning*” (3: 199).

230 This fact is stated by way of detailing God’s many favours on them. Dividing them into tribal nations implicated that they were to thrive and their numbers to multiply (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr). It was also by way of smoothly running their affairs and building them up into an organized community, the first manifestation of which was that each tribe was allocated a spring, its own resource (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). However, *qaṭṭa’a* (lit. to cut into several pieces) could be taken as a seed sown for severance of ties (the Diaspora) as is indicated in Aya 168 below.

231 This is a telling of the many favours that God showered them with during their exodus: they were provided with water, food and shade in the arid, scathingly sunny desert in which they wandered (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Sa’dī).

232 They simply treated God’s immeasurable favours with rebellion and ingratitude; thus they did themselves an injustice and deserved His punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, al-Sa’dī).

﴿161﴾ (233) 'Remember' When was said to them: "Dwell this town and eat therein whatever you like<sup>(234)</sup> and say: "*hiṭṭah!*"<sup>(235)</sup>; and enter through the gate prostrating 'in thankfulness', and We shall forgive you your sins and We shall increase 'the reward of' those who do good"<sup>(236)</sup>. ﴿162﴾ The wrongdoers among them substituted what was said to them for something else, and We sent down on them a plague<sup>(237)</sup> from the sky for their injustice.

وَإِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ اسْكُنُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ  
وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ  
وَادْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا نَعْفِرْ لَكُمْ  
خَطِيئَتَكُمْ سَيُرِيدُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾  
فَدَلَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ قَوْلًا غَيْرَ  
الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزًا  
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾

- 233 What is to come is another gravely rebellious deed for which they deserved the severe punishment that they were to undergo. A series of such instances of insubordination and disregard of God's commands are detailed in the upcoming passages.
- 234 This Divine command is God's greatest favour yet, to grant them a home after they have had none for centuries; a very prosperous and desirable one at that. This home was Jerusalem according to most exegetes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī). A more detailed account of what happened at the gates of Jerusalem is told elsewhere: "*My people, enter the sacred land that Allah decreed for you and do not turn back on your heels for then you will be the losers.*" \*They said: "*Moses, there are mighty people in it. We will not enter it until they come out of it and only then shall we enter.*" \*Two 'Allah-' fearing men – whom Allah favoured – said: "*Enter you the gate upon them! Shall you 'only' enter it, you will surely have the upper hand. Put your trust in Allah if only you are 'truly' Believers.*" \*They said: "*Moses, we shall not enter it as long as they are in it. Go then you and your Lord and fight, we are staying put here*" (5: 21-24).
- 235 That is 'forgiveness'; they were asked to seek forgiveness. The word is derived from *ḥaṭṭa*, i.e. to put down a burden (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 50; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 13), but they subtly twisted their tongues to mean 'barley', *hiṭṭah* (al-Bukhārī: 4641, cf. particularly al-'Asqalānī's comment).
- 236 God wanted to show them great mercy and treat them magnanimously for carrying out these very simple commands; to enter the gate asking for forgiveness, yet even this they did not care to do.
- 237 *Rijz*, i.e. torment and tumult. (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*)

﴿163﴾ And ask them 'Muhammad'<sup>(238)</sup> about the seaside town; they 'its people' used to transgress on the Sabbath. Their 'large' fish used to come to them forthrightly on their Sabbath, but when they were not observing the Sabbath, they 'the fish' would not come to them. Thus we tested them for their contravening. ﴿164﴾ 'Mention' When a group of them said 'to another group': "Why do you admonish 'those' folks whom Allah will surely destroy or punish severely?" They said: "As an apology in front of your Lord<sup>(239)</sup> and that they might be Mindful". ﴿165﴾ When they disregarded what they were reminded of, We salvaged those who forbade evil and overtook the wrongdoers with an abject punishment for their contravening. ﴿166﴾ When they 'flagrantly' defied what they were forbidden from We said to them: "Be apes, despised!"<sup>(240)</sup>

وَسَأَلُهُمْ عَنِ الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ  
حَاضِرَةً الْبَحْرِ إِذْ يَعْدُونَ فِي السَّبْتِ  
إِذْ تَأْتِيهِمْ حِيتَانُهُمْ يَوْمَ سَبْتِهِمْ شُرَّعًا  
وَيَوْمَ لَا يَسْبِتُونَ لَا تَأْتِيهِمْ كَذَلِكَ  
نَبَوּهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَإِذْ  
قَالَتْ أُمَّةٌ مِّنْهُمْ لِمَ تَعِظُونَ قَوْمًا اللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ  
أَوْ مُعَدِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا قَالُوا مَعْدَرَةٌ إِلَىٰ  
رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ فَلَمَّا سَأَلُوا مَا  
ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنْجَبْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ السُّوءِ  
وَأَخَذْنَا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا بَيِّنًا بِمَا كَانُوا  
يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ فَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَن مَّا نُهُوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا  
لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

238 This is yet another act of contravention some of them committed. That Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was directly told to ask his contemporary Jewish community about this jealously guarded embarrassing secret of theirs, was to further prove to them the Divine source of his Message (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*, Ibn ʿĀshūr). This is the most detailed account of this story that was only hinted at elsewhere (cf. 2: 65-66 and 4: 154).

239 *Ma'dhirah* is no more than an alibi. One they provided so that they would not be held accountable for not admonishing those who flouted a commandment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ʿĀshūr).

240 "You who were given the Book, Believe in what We sent down confirming the Truth of what you have, 'that is' before we deface some countenances and twist them towards the rear, or We Damn them like we Damned the

﴿167﴾ 'Mention Muhammad' When your Lord declared 'that' He would certainly send against them, until the Day of Judgement, 'those' who would subject them to the worst of suffering<sup>(241)</sup>— indeed your Lord is swift in reprisal and He certainly is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿178﴾ And We cut them into 'separate' nations 'asunder' in the land<sup>(242)</sup>; among them are those who are righteous and those who are less so. We tested them with the good and bad 'fortune' so that they might return.

وإِذْ تَأَذَّنَ رَبُّكَ لَيَبْعَثَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْفَيْصِمَةِ  
مَنْ يَسُوؤُهُمْ سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَسَرِيعُ  
الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٧﴾ وَقَطَعْنَاهُمْ فِي  
الْأَرْضِ أُمَّمًا مِمَّا مَتَّعْنَاهُمُ الصَّالِحِينَ وَمِنْهُمْ  
دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَبَلَّوْنَاهُمْ بِالْحَسَنَاتِ وَالسَّيِّئَاتِ  
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

*companions of the Sabbath—indeed the Command of Allah always comes to pass*" (4: 47).

Their deed was devious and deceptive, only outwardly resembling observance of God's commands. As such, they are apes only outwardly resembling humans, but are actually far apart from real humans (cf. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, 6/28, Ibn Kathīr).

- 241 This is in punishment for constantly and irreverently flouting their pledge with God (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 242 Allusion here is made to the Jewish Diaspora and their forced dispersion out of their lands (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): "And We decreed to the Children of Israel in the Book that: "You will surely cause corruption on the Earth twice, and you will surely reach "a degree of" great haughtiness. \*When the first of the two warnings would come to pass, We would send against you some of Our servants, of great might, who would ravage your lands. This would be a warning fulfilled. \*Then We would give you the upper hand over them and aid you with wealth and offspring, causing you to outnumber them. \*If you act rightly, it is for your own good, but if you do wrong, it is to your own loss. And when the second warning would come to pass, your enemies would totally disgrace you and enter the temple as they entered it the first time, and utterly destroy whatever would fall into their hands. \*Perhaps your Lord will have mercy on you 'should you repent', but if you return 'to sin', We will return 'to punishment'. And We have made Hell a prison for the Deniers'" (17: 4-8).



﴿169﴾ Then they were succeeded by a generation who inherited the Book; they would take the offer of that which is lower<sup>(243)</sup> and say: “We will be forgiven!” And when ‘yet again’ a like offer came to them, they seized it<sup>(244)</sup>; was not the pledge of the Book taken against them that they should not say about Allah except the Truth?<sup>(245)</sup> ‘Irrespective of that’ They have ‘carefully’ studied it! Indeed the Last Abode is better for the Mindful<sup>(246)</sup>, have you no sense? ﴿170﴾ But those who ‘firmly’ hold fast to the Book<sup>(247)</sup> and keep up the Prayer, We would never render void the reward of the reformers.

فَخَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ وَرِثُوا الْكِتَابَ  
يَأْخُذُونَ عَرَضَ هَذَا الْأَدْنَى وَيَقُولُونَ  
سَيَغْفِرَ لَنَا وَإِن يَأْتِهِمْ عَرَضٌ مِثْلَهُ يَأْخُذُوهُ  
أَلَمْ يُؤْخَذْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِيثَاقُ الْكِتَابِ أَن لَا يَقُولُوا  
عَلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا الْحَقَّ وَدَرَسُوا مَا فِيهِ وَالذَّارُ الْأَخِرَةُ  
خَيْرٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَتَّقُونَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ  
يُمْسِكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّا  
لَا نَضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ ﴿١٧٠﴾

243 They used to take the offer of the worldly, lowly life, i.e. bribes and unlawful money, and did not abide by the Torah, which forbade such unholy gains (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Atīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī): “*Woe betides those who write the Book with their own hands, then say: “This is from Allah!”*, so that they may exchange it for a pittance. Woe betides them for what their hands have written, and woe betides them from what they earn. \*They say: “The Fire will not touch us except for a limited number of days”. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Have you ‘got’ a promise from Allah? For Allah never breaks His promise. Or do you say about Allah that of which you have no knowledge?” (2: 79-80).

244 This shows how adamant and self justifying they were in sticking to their devious ways (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr).

245 “‘Mention’ *When Allah took the pledge of those who were given the Book that you should make it plain to people rather than suppress it; they tossed it behind their backs and traded it off for a pittance—miserable indeed is what they buy*” (3: 187).

246 “*And whatever thing you ‘people’ have been given is ‘only for’ the enjoyment of this worldly life and its adornment. And what is with Allah is better and more lasting; so will you not use reason?*” (28: 60).

247 These are the ones who, unlike those greedy learned, treat their Scripture with the reverence it merits and do not suppress or distort the parts of it which foretell the coming of the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, and the binding nature of Believing in him (cf. al-Sam‘ānī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shawkānī).

﴿171﴾ (248) 'Mention Muhammad' When We uprooted the mountain 'lifting it' like a canopy above them and they expected it to fall on them, 'We said': "Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what came into it, so that you might be Mindful".<sup>(249)</sup>

﴿172﴾ 'Mention' When your Lord took the posterity of the children of Adam from their backs and made them bear witness about themselves 'thus': "Am I not your Lord?" They said: "Yes, indeed! We bear witness 'to it'."<sup>(250)</sup> That,

\* وَإِذْ نَتَقْنَا الْجَبَلَ فَوْقَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُ ظِلَّةٌ وَظَنُوا أَنَّهُ وَاقِعٌ بِهِمْ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧١﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ كَلِمَاتِنَا مَوَطِّنًا وَلَمْ يُؤْمَرُوا بِأَلَّا يَحْمِلُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَخَلُّوا عَنْهَا وَكَانُوا غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

248 This passage highlights a further incident from the saga of the Israelites. It is notable in the current context as it provides greater relevance to the rest of humanity, so that they may draw lessons from it. People, in general, are not to be misled into thinking that God only took the pledge from the Israelites specifically. Instead, they are being made aware of an earlier testimony from all humans that Allah is their only and true God. That they are told so after mention of the show of force that God demonstrated to the Israelites reminds people of Gods Power in the face of those who defy Him: "And nothing prevents people from Believing when guidance comes to them and from asking forgiveness of their Lord except that there 'must' befall them the 'accustomed' fate of the former peoples or that punishment should come 'directly' before them" (18: 55).

249 After all these incidents of rebelling against God's commands and Moses' bidding as highlighted in Aya 145 above, they were only to afford the matter the care and concern it deserved through such a drastic measure as uprooting a mountain (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr), yet even that was not enough for them: "Remember When We took your pledge, and raised the mountain above you; "Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what came into it, so that you might be Mindful. 'Remember' When We took your pledge, and raised the mountain above you; "Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what came into it, so that you might be Mindful. \*Then you turned away after that. Had it not been for Allah's favour and Mercy, you would have been among the Losers" (2: 63-64).

250 There are two equally strong, potentially reconcilable, views as to the time and nature of this testimony which is widely known among scholars as *mīhāq al-*

lest that you say on the Day of Judgement: “We were not aware of this!”<sup>173</sup> Or that you may say: “Nay, but our fathers Associated before and we were nothing but a posterity ‘taking’ after them; do You do away with us for what falsifiers<sup>(251)</sup> committed?”

أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا  
عَافِينَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ أَوْ تَقُولُوا إِنَّمَا أَشْرَكَ آبَاؤُنَا مِن  
قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا ذُرِّيَّةً مِّنْ بَعْدِهِمْ أَفَتُهْلِكُنَا  
بِمَا فَعَلَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾

*fiṭrah* (the covenant of innate nature). The first being that God (ﷻ) extracted the children of Adam from his back and hence generated them one generation after the other from their fathers’ backs and made them all bear this testimony (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Shawkānī, al-Shinqīṭī). The Hadiths cited in support of this view are the one narrated by Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When Allah created Adam, He swiped his back and from his back fell everyone He would create from his posterity until the Day of Judgement” (al-Tirmidhī: 3076, al-Bazzār: 8892, al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 4132; it was deemed authentic by al-Albānī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Tirmidhī*, Ibn Baṭṭāl, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3/370, and Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, 2/333); and that which was narrated by Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Allah took the pledge from the back of Adam; He took from his loin all the posterity He created and scattered them between His Hands like small ants, then He talked to them directly ‘saying’: “Am I not your Lord?” They said: “Yes, indeed! We bear witness ‘to it’.” That, lest that you say on the Day of Judgement: “We were not aware of this!” Or that you may say: “Nay, but our fathers Associated before and we were nothing but a posterity ‘taking’ after them; do You do away with us for what falsifiers committed?” (Imām Aḥmad: 2455, al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 11127; it was deemed authentic by al-Ḥākim: 75, al-Dhahabī, Aḥmad Shākir, *Musnad Aḥmad*, and al-Albānī, *Takhrīj Mishkāt al-Maṣābīḥ*, p. 171)

The other view, which is held by such mighty scholars as Ibn Taymiyyah, *Dar’ Ta’arūḍ al-‘Aql wa al-Naql*, 8/487, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā’ al-‘Alīl*, pp. 12-13, Ibn Kathīr and al-Sa’dī, is that God made it innate for people, generation after the other, and that it is hard-wired in our very nature to Believe and vouch for the Oneness of God, being rightly-inclined to pristine Faith (*ḥanīfiyyah*): “Devote yourself uprightly to the Religion and follow the innate nature ‘/constitution’ as made by Allah, that innate nature in which He has created mankind. There is no altering the creation of Allah. That is the right religion. But most people do not realize it” (30: 30). Since God created all humans thus, scattered His Signs all around them in all His creation and sent them Messengers as bearers of glad tidings and warners, they have no excuse but to Believe in Him and dedicate their worship to Him alone (*Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah*).

<sup>251</sup> This stands for *al-mubḥilūn*, i.e. their fathers who came with falsehood (*al-bāṭil*) and abandoned monotheism (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Baiḍāwī).

﴿174﴾ Thus We expound the Signs, perchance they may return.

﴿175﴾ And recite to them 'Muhammad' the notable news of the one<sup>(252)</sup> to whom We gave our Signs but he skinned himself out<sup>(253)</sup> of them, Satan 'eagerly' caught up with him<sup>(254)</sup> and he became one of the strayed ones.

﴿176﴾ Had We wished, We would have elevated him by 'means of' them<sup>(255)</sup>, but he stuck to the ground and followed his desire<sup>(256)</sup>. His example is that of a dog, when you chase it away, it pants and 'even' when you leave it, it pants<sup>(257)</sup>. That is the example

وَكَذَلِكَ نَفْصَلُ الْآيَاتِ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾

وَأَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبَعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْعَاوِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾  
وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثْ أَوْ تَرَكَهٗ يُلْهَثُ ﴿١٧٦﴾  
ذَلِكَ مَثَلٌ

252 Exegetes speculated as to who exactly this person was, but al-Ṭabarī is of the opinion that determining this is inconsequential as his case is of a general nature and could apply to many people. Indeed the moral of the parable is universally applicable and calls for much thought (for many thoughts and reflections on this parable see: Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Fawā'id*, pp. 101-102 and *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, 1/127).

253 *Fa-nsalakha minhā* aptly brings to the fore the image of skinning so as to underline how much this person has shrugged off the Divine knowledge that he was given and how far he has distanced himself from it (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa'dī).

254 Thus he exposed himself to Satan who eagerly ceased the chance to sway him away and so possess him (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtasar*).

255 Knowledge is not enough to elevate a person and nurture his spirit but following the Truth, choosing it over everything else and seeking God's Pleasure do just that (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, 1/129).

256 *Akhlada ilā al-arḍ* means that he preferred the joys and riches of this lowly life to that of the Hereafter, thus following his lusts and vain desires (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

257 It is part of a dog's nature to pant whether it is being chased away or not. Such is the degrading parable that God draws of this kind of person who 'pants after' this worldly life, no matter whether he is admonished or not, he will not change (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Indeed the Deniers, whether

of the people who denied Our Signs; so recount 'Muhammad' the stories perchance they may ponder. ﴿177﴾ Sordid is the example of the folk who denied Our Signs and did themselves a great injustice. ﴿178﴾ Whoever Allah guides is the truly guided, and whoever He misguides, then these are the true losers.

الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصْ  
الْقِصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ سَاءَ مَثَلًا  
الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا بآيَاتِنَا وَانْفُسَهُمْ كَذَبُوا  
يُظَلَمُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ مَنْ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِي  
وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٧٨﴾

﴿179﴾ (258) We have indeed spawned for Hellfire many among the jinn and humans; theirs are hearts with which they comprehend naught, theirs are eyes with which they see naught and theirs are ears with which they hear naught. Those are akin to livestock, nay but they are more at loss<sup>(259)</sup>;

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ لَهُمْ  
قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ  
بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ  
كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ

*you warn them or do not warn them, they will not Believe. \*Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes there is a veil—theirs is a grievous Punishment” (2: 6-7).*

- 258 The misguided ones, who are destined for Hell, willfully fail to use their faculties of discernment and understanding which God endowed them with to get at the Truth and follow guidance (cf. Abū Ḥayyān): “... We gave them hearing, sight, and hearts. But their hearing and sight and hearts availed them not from anything when they were ‘continually’ rejecting Allah’s Signs. And ‘so’ they were overwhelmed by what they used to ridicule” (46: 26); “The worst creatures with Allah are those who are ‘willfully’ deaf and dumb, who do not reason. \*Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them hear; but had He made them hear, they would have turned away, averse.” (8: 22-23).
- 259 The greatest care and concern of the misguided in this life is to satiate their animalistic drives and materialistic pursuits, not sparing the least thought to the life to come; the real life: “The life of this world is merely an amusement and a diversion; the true life is in the Hereafter, if only they knew” (29: 64). In this respect, they are no better than livestock, yet the fact of the matter is that livestock are in a better state because they act upon what benefits them and instinctively pull themselves away from the bottomless abysses of eternal misery and self-destruction (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam‘ānī, al-Qurtubī Ibn Kathīr,

these are the unmindful<sup>(260)</sup>. ﴿180﴾ (261) To Allah belong the Beautiful Names, so pray to Him by them and leave out those who skew His Names<sup>(262)</sup>; they will be requited for what they used to do. ﴿181﴾ And among those whom We have created, is a nation who guide with the Truth and with it they administer justice<sup>(263)</sup>. ﴿182﴾ But those who denied Our Signs, We will lure them 'gradually' whereof they know not<sup>(264)</sup>;

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَافُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ  
فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا وَذُرُوا الَّذِينَ يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ  
سَيَجْزُونَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَمَنْ خَلَقْنَا أُمَّةً  
يَهْدُونَ بِالْحَقِّ وَبِهِ يَعْدِلُونَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ  
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ  
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

Ibn 'Āshūr: "Or do you reckon that most of them do hear or 'even' use their reason? They are just like livestock; nay but they are more at loss" (25: 44).

- 260 "Those are the ones over whose hearts and hearing and sights Allah has sealed; these are the unmindful" (16: 108).
- 261 A central theme of this sura, *Rubūbiyyah* (i.e. God's sole rightfulness to worship) is revisited here. The ones who are 'spawned for hell' are quintessentially Associators, and thus they omit one of the most inherent Attributes of God, i.e. His Oneness, and, in turn, a host of related Divine Attributes and Names. So Believers are told to pray to God upholding His Most Beautiful Names and ignore the squabbles that the misguided try to stir in this regard (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "Say: "Invoke Allah or invoke the Most Merciful – whichever you call, He has the Most Beautiful Names..." (17: 110). Invocation (*du'ā'*) encapsulates the essence of dedicated worship. In fact, the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Indeed invocation is worship" (al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*: 714, Imām Aḥmad: 18352). Believers are, in a way, directed to find solace in God and His Most Beautiful Names, thus shutting out all that bears down on their morale and psychological peace.
- 262 *Yulhidūna fī asmā'ih* is to slant/distort/twist the Names of God from their original, proper meaning. They would call their gods by them, add to them, subtract from them, or deny some of them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 263 These are by contrast the guided ones (cf. Abū Ḥayyān): "By time, \*surely mankind is in loss, \*except for those who Believe, do good deeds, urge one another to the Truth, and urge one another to steadfastness." (103: 1-3).
- 264 "When they forgot what they were reminded of, We opened up for them the doors of everything; yet when they became full of gloating over what they were given, We took them all of a sudden, and lo they are seized with despair. \*The people who did wrong were utterly wiped out; all gratitude be to Allah, the Lord of all beings" (6: 44-45); "So leave them in their

﴿183﴾ I will allow them time<sup>(265)</sup>—  
verily My Machination is robust<sup>(266)</sup>.

﴿184﴾ Did they not perceive that their fellow has no madness in him?<sup>(267)</sup> He is none but a fluent<sup>(268)</sup> warner! <sup>(185)</sup> Did they not look at the dominion of the Heavens and Earth, and whatever thing that Allah created<sup>(269)</sup>; perchance that their end has drawn near<sup>(270)</sup>— in what speech else besides it<sup>(271)</sup> do they ‘then’ believe?

وَأْمَلِي لَهُمْ إِنْ كَيْدِي مَتِينٌ ﴿١٨٣﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا مَا بِصَاحِبِهِمْ مِنْ جِنَّةٍ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٨٤﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا فِي مَلَكُوتِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ وَأَنْ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ قَدِ اقْتَرَبَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٥﴾

heedlessness for a time. \*Do they reckon that, ‘on account of’ the wealth and the children that We have provided them, \*We hasten to them with good things? Nay, but they are unaware!’ (23: 54-56).

- 265 Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Indeed Allah allows the wrongful time, but when He seizes them, He will not let them off”. Then he (ﷺ) recited: “Such is the seizing of your Lord when He seizes the towns while they are doing wrong. Surely His seizing is painful, severe!” (11: 102) (al-Bukhārī: 4686, Muslim: 2583)
- 266 As opposed to the *kayd* (machinations) of the Devil, whom they follow, which is described as *ḍa‘ifā* (frail) in 4: 76.
- 267 ‘Their fellow’ (*sāhibuhum*) is Muhammad (ﷺ) who brought them the Message and whose balanced character they knew all too well. Their collective faculties of discernment where so willfully clouded that they did not bother to ponder that he was indeed Truthful (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Say ‘Muhammad’: “I advise you to do one thing only: stand before Allah, in pairs or singly, and reflect: there is no sign of madness in your fellow; he is only warning you before severe suffering arrives” (34: 46).
- 268 His being ‘fluent’ (*mubīn*) is a far cry from the incoherent babbling of a madman; yet even this clear fact seemed to elude them.
- 269 Even if they were so biased against the Prophet (ﷺ), they would have done themselves a great service by contemplating God’s most obvious Signs, the Heavens and Earth, along with all His creations. Were they not so biased, that would surely have lead them to Believe (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn ‘Aṭṭiyah).
- 270 They could even have considered their fate and thereby done themselves a great service by averting it (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū al-Su‘ūd).
- 271 That is the Qur’an which is enough of a reminder and an eye-opener for those of sound perception (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

﴿186﴾ Whoever Allah sends astray, there is no guide for him; He leaves them to wander aimlessly in their blindness<sup>(272)</sup>.

مَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ وَيَدْرُهُمْ فِي  
طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾

﴿187﴾ They ask you 'Muhammad' about the Hour: "When is its materialization?"<sup>(273)</sup> Say: "This knowledge is with none but my Lord<sup>(274)</sup>. None reveals it at its 'due' time except Him. Heavy<sup>(275)</sup>

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسِمَتُهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا  
عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجِيبُهَا لَوْفِيهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ثَقُلَتْ

272 *Ṭughyān*, lit. transgression and exceeding the limits (cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, 41; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, 321): "Have you seen him who takes his whims and desires to be his god; whom Allah has misguided despite his knowledge, sealed up his hearing and his heart and placed a cover over his eyes? Who then will guide him after Allah? So will you not pay heed?" (45: 23).

273 Showing how far off in their blindness the Qurayshites have strayed, they toyingly asked the Messenger to pin point for them the exact time of the Final Hour's happening (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr). Denying its happening is sheer folly; the Hour (*al-sā'ah*) at which people will be resurrected, then held to account for their deeds on the Day of Judgement and consigned to their eternal abodes, is an inevitability. A wise person knows better than to ridicule this gravest of all matters: "But the Deniers say: "Shall we show you a man 'i.e. Muhammad' who claims that, when you have been utterly torn to pieces, you will be raised in a new creation?" (34: 7); "And they say: "When will this promise 'come true', if you are 'really' telling the truth? \*Say, 'Muhammad': "A Day has 'already' been appointed for you, which you can neither delay nor advance by a 'single' moment" (34: 29-30); "Yet man wants to deny what is ahead of him: \*he says: "So, when will this Day of Judgement be?" (75: 5-6).

274 This is a very calculated answer, which is not driven by self-vindication, to their slanderous question. That Prophet Muhammad was just a human Messenger of God is the greatest honour any human being can be given, and not the stigma they alluded to (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "A man asked the Prophet (ﷺ): "Messenger of Allah, When is the Hour?" He replied: "What did you prepare for it?" He said: "Nothing much with regards to Praying, fasting and giving in charity. But I love Allah and His Messenger". He (ﷺ) replied: "You are with those whom you love 'in Paradise'" (al-Bukhārī: 6171, Muslim: 2639).

275 This is a direct translation of *thaqulat* which signifies the Hour's heaviness and solemnity, after both Ibn 'Ashūr and al-Shinqīṭī. Another reading, albeit



it is in the Heavens and on Earth. It will come to you naught but all of a sudden<sup>(276)</sup>”. They ask you ‘Muhammad’ as if you were too keen on it! Say: “Its knowledge is with none but Allah”—indeed most people know ‘that’ not.

فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً يَسْتَأْذِنُوكَ  
كَأَنَّكَ حَفِيٌّ عَنْهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنِّي  
أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾

more exegetical given the co-text, is that *thaqulat* means it is ‘concealed’ (*khafiyat*) for its sheer profundity from the dwellers of both the Heavens and Earth; no angel no matter how nearly drawn to God he might be or an honourable Prophet Messenger is made privy to its timing. This meaning is chosen by al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr. al-Sa’dī marries the two meanings and says that it is a grave occurrence which no one, except God Almighty, knows when it will take place: “...how can you tell? The Last Hour may well be near: \*Those who Believe not in it seek to hasten it, and those who Believe are ‘fearfully’ wary of it and know that it is the Truth. Are not those who dispute the Hour far astray?” (42: 17-18); “So if you Deny, how can you guard yourselves against a Day that will turn children’s hair grey; \*it will ‘even’ cause the sky to crack ‘open’. His promise must be fulfilled” (73: 17-18). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “One day, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was out with the people. ‘Archangel’ Gabriel came to him and asked: “When is the Hour?” He (ﷺ) replied: “The one being asked about it knows none better than the one asking!”” (al-Bukhārī: 50, Muslim: 9)

- 276 Its suddenness calls for greater angst of it and better preparedness for it: “And they say: “When will this promise come to pass, if you are truthful? \*They await naught but a single cry that will seize them while they dispute among themselves, \*They will not even be able to leave a will, nor will they be able to return to their families” (36: 48-50). Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The Hour will only be announced after the sun rises from where it sets ‘the West’. When it rises thus, people will see it and they will all then Believe and that’s when: “... a soul’s Believing will be to no avail to it had it not Believed earlier or earned good in its Believing...” (6: 158). Verily, the Hour will be announced ‘suddenly’ while two men are spreading a cloth between them; they would not be given time to finish their bargain or to fold the cloth. Verily, the Hour will be announced ‘suddenly’ while a man is still carrying the milk he got from his she-camel but he will not be able to taste it. Verily, the Hour will be announced ‘suddenly’ while a man is caring for his watering bowl, and he will not have the time to water ‘his herd’ in it. Verily, the Hour will be announced ‘suddenly’ while a person raises his morsel of food to his mouth but he will not be able to eat it” (al-Bukhārī: 6506, Muslim: 157).

﴿188﴾ Say: “I have no power over benefit or harm coming my way, except ‘it being’ what Allah willed. Had I ‘any’ knowledge of the Unseen, I would have stockpiled ‘all that is’ good and no harm would have touched me. I am none but a warner and a bearer of glad tidings<sup>(277)</sup> to those who Believe”.

قُلْ لَا أَمْلِكُ لِنَفْسِي نَفْعًا وَلَا ضَرًّا إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ وَلَوْ كُنْتُ أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبِ لَاسْتَكْتَرْتُ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ وَمَا مَسَّنِيَ السُّوءُ إِنْ أَنَا إِلَّا نَذِيرٌ وَبَشِيرٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾

﴿189﴾ He is the One Who created you from a single soul and from it He made its mate<sup>(278)</sup> so that he may find assuagement<sup>(279)</sup> in her. When he pulled himself over her<sup>(280)</sup>,

\* هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا لِيَسْكُنَ إِلَيْهَا فَلَمَّا تَغَشَّاهَا

277 In the face of incessant asking and demands, this puts the scope of the Prophetic mission into proper perspective; he is not a miracle weaver nor is he privy to much of the Unseen, unless God allows him it. He is no more than a deliverer of the Message so people need to listen, heed and Believe; but only the mindful will benefit from him (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr).

278 Adam, the single soul, and Eve its mate (ﷻ) (cf. 4:1, 39:6; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). That all humans are the offspring of a single pair of people calls for considering the very likely prospect of resurrection; as much as creation from sheer nothingness was possible, re-creation is a more likely probability (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). Thus people are reminded to be Mindful of God Almighty: “O people, be Mindful of your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it He created its mate, and from both of them He dispersed scores of men and women...” (4: 1).

279 “And of His Signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find assuagement in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who reflect” (30: 21).

280 Exegetes hold two standpoints on who these two individuals actually were. The first, which is that of al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sam‘ānī and Ibn al-Jawzī, hold them to be Adam and Eve themselves who could not conceive children at an early stage in their nuptial life so Satan whispered to them to dedicate their child to another besides God. However, Ibn Kathīr debunks this view on the basis that it draws on apocryphal Biblical sources (known as *isrā’īliyyāt*), thus he along with a host of other exegetes, al-Zamakhsharī, al-Rāzī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn al-Qayyim, hold that these two are generic for many human couples thereafter. Since there is no traditional evidence in

she became lightly pregnant, and she 'carefreely' spent it 'her pregnancy'; when it became heavy, they both prayed to Allah, their Lord: "Should You grant us a well one<sup>(281)</sup>, we shall surely be among the grateful". <sup>190</sup> When He granted them both a well one, they claimed Associates with Him in what He granted them both—exalted be Allah above 'all' what they Associate 'with Him'. <sup>191</sup> Do they Associate 'with Him' that which would not create, while they 'themselves' are being created?<sup>(282)</sup> <sup>192</sup> They are not able to avail them with help, nor are they able of helping themselves<sup>(283)</sup>.

حَمَلَتْ حَمَلًا خَفِيفًا فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ فَلَمَّا أَثْقَلَتْ  
دَعَا اللَّهُ رَبَّهُمَا لَئِن آتَيْتَنَا صَالِحًا لَنُكَوِّنَنَّ  
مِنْ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٨٩﴾ فَلَمَّا آتَاهُمَا صَالِحًا  
جَعَلَا لَهُ شُرَكَاءَ فِيمَا آتَاهُمَا فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ عَمَّا  
يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿١٩٠﴾ أَيْسُرُونَ مَا لَا يَخْلُقُ شَيْئًا وَهُمْ  
يُخْلِقُونَ ﴿١٩١﴾ وَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ لَهُمْ نَصْرًا  
وَلَا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَنْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٢﴾

support of this view either, some tried to find textual evidence from the aya and those that follow in this passage. However, no matter who the exact referents of the pronouns in this episode were, it highlights how ungrateful humans can be to their Lord Who created them from a single soul, blessed him with a soul-mate, made the wife bear children and her pregnancy uncumbersome in its early stages, and dispersed a well-portioned posterity thereof.

- 281 *Sālihan* means good, well and healthy and righteous. Many exegetes, e.g. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, take that the parents, as would normally be the case, prayed that their child would be birthed free from deformation. Yet al-Ṭabarī sees no point in limiting it to one meaning in particular as such would lack proper evidence.
- 282 The idols they create and worship (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Shawkānī): "He said: "Do you worship that which you carve, \*while God created you and whatever you make?" (37: 95-96).
- 283 How can they worship such so-called 'gods' who cannot even help themselves? But they are heedless: "...his example is that of a dog, when you chase it away, it pants and when 'even' you leave it, it pants. That is the example of the people who denied Our Signs; so recount 'Muhammad' the stories perchance they may ponder. \*Sordid is the example of the folk who denied Our Signs and did themselves a great injustice." (7: 176-177).

﴿193﴾ If you call them to guidance, they would not follow you; it is all the same whether you call them or you were to remain silent.

وَأِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَى لَا يَتَّبِعُوكُمْ سِوَا عَلَيْنِ  
أَدْعَوْهُمْ أَمْ أَنْتُمْ صَمُّونَ ﴿١٩٣﴾

﴿194﴾ <sup>(284)</sup> Verily those whom you invoke <sup>(285)</sup> besides Allah are naught but subjects like you; invoke them then and let them respond to you if only you were truthful. ﴿195﴾ Do they have legs with which they walk? Or do they have hands with which they smite? Or do they have eyes with which they see? Or do they have ears with which they hear? <sup>(286)</sup> Say 'Muhammad': "Round up your Associates and conspire against me without delay <sup>(287)</sup>;

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ عِبَادٌ  
أَمْثَلُكُمْ فَادْعُوهُمْ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لَكُمْ  
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾ اللَّهُمَّ ارْجُلُ يَمْشُونَ  
بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَيْدٍ يَبِطُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ  
يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا أَمْ لَهُمْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ  
بِهَا قُلْ ادْعُوا شُرَكَاءَكُمْ ثُمَّ كِيدُوا  
فَلَا تُنظَرُونَ ﴿١٩٥﴾

284 The arguments in the previous passage are reinforced and expounded upon in this one (cf. Abū Ḥayyān). Both relate to the sura's central theme, being God's sole rightfulness to worship, hence they are to be found in the closing, wrapping up, passages.

285 Invocation (*du'ā'*) is singled out of all acts of devotion because in it a servant asks something of a power that has the ability to change the course of matters. Yet the 'gods' they invoke are nothing more than 'subjects' themselves to a higher Power and that is Almighty God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr): "He merges Night into Day, and he merges Day into Night, and he has subjected the sun and the moon to His will": each one runs its course for a term appointed. Such is Allah your Lord: to Him belongs all Dominion. And those whom you invoke besides Him have not the least power. \*If you invoke them, they do not hear you, and even if they could hear, they would not respond to you. On the Day of Resurrection, they will reject your having Associated them with God, and no one can inform you 'of the Truth' like the One Who is All-Aware" (35: 13-14); "And who is more misguided than one who invokes, besides Allah, such as will not answer him until the Day of Judgement, and who are not even aware of his call" (46: 5).

286 The spelling out of the arguments here highlight how desperately impervious the Associators were to basic logical reasoning (Ibn 'Āshūr). They are urged to see that they are more well-endowed with the tools of action and perception than their chosen gods (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Shawkānī).

287 This outrightly daring challenge further highlights the powerlessness

﴿196﴾ Verily my Ally is Allah, Who sent down the Book<sup>(288)</sup>; He covers the righteous in 'His' Alliance<sup>(289)</sup>; ﴿197﴾ but those whom you invoke besides Him, they cannot avail you with help nor are they able of helping themselves". ﴿198﴾ If you call them for guidance, they could not hear, and you 'Muhammad' see them look at you but they do not see.

﴿199﴾<sup>(290)</sup> Accept 'Muhammad' whatever is bearable<sup>(291)</sup>, enjoin what is

إِنَّ وَلِيََّ اللَّهُ الَّذِي نَزَّلَ الْكِتَابَ ۖ وَهُوَ بِتَوَّابٍ  
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ  
لَا يَسْتَمِيعُونَ نَصْرَكُمْ وَلَا أَنْفُسَهُمْ  
يَبْصُرُونَ ﴿١٩٧﴾ وَإِنْ تَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى الْهُدَىٰ لَا يَسْمَعُوا  
وَتَرَاهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَيْكَ وَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٩٨﴾

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ

of their gods (cf. al-Ṭabarī); as opposed to Almighty God Who should deservedly be relied upon (cf. al-Rāzī).

- 288 The Messenger's firm Faith in the Book, the Qur'an, made him mount such a challenge. In the Qur'an, God assures the Messenger (ﷺ) of His ever-near aid and protection: "O Messenger, convey what came down to you from your Lord ... ; Allah will 'certainly' shield you from people" (5: 67); "Is Allah not sufficient for His servant 'for protection'? Yet they threaten you 'Muhammad' with other 'helpless' gods besides Him! Whoever Allah misguides will be left with no guide" (39: 36).
- 289 "Surely Allah defends those who Believe..." (22: 38); "We shall certainly help Our Messengers and the Believers, 'both' in this worldly life and on the Day the witnesses will stand forth 'for testimony'" (40: 51). 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: "I was 'riding' behind the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) one day. He said: "Young man, I shall teach you a few 'significant' words. Preserve Allah and He shall preserve you. Preserve Allah and you shall find Him 'always' in front of you" (al-Tirmidhī: 2516, Imām Aḥmad: 2669).
- 290 In this penultimate passage, the Messenger (ﷺ) is being directed to the best course of action to take after the many digressions, transgressions, aberrations and deviations of the stubbornly Denying have been exposed and expounded on. The Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers around him are told to carry on with their mission of calling people to the Path of God and overlook whatever lack of regard and respect that might come their way (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 291 *al-'Afw* is the bottom-line acceptable and good of people's manners and behaviour. In the face of this all round belligerence and scorn, the Messenger (ﷺ) is told to accept whatever little he might be afforded of bearable behaviour (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Wajīz, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "And not equal are the good deed and the bad. Repel 'bad' by that 'deed' which is

acceptable<sup>(292)</sup> and turn away from the ignorant<sup>(293)</sup>. <sup>(200)</sup> Should Satan somehow stir you ‘Muhammad’, seek refuge with Allah<sup>(294)</sup>—indeed He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. <sup>(201)</sup> Indeed those who are Mindful when touched by a rounder visitation<sup>(295)</sup> of Satan’s,

بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾ وَإِنَّمَا  
يَنْزَعَنَّكَ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ نَزْعٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ  
إِنَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا إِذَا  
مَسَّهُمْ طَائِفٌ مِّنَ الشَّيْطَانِ

*better; and thereupon the one whom between you and him is enmity ‘will become’ as though he was a devoted friend, \*but no one will be granted it ‘such goodness’ except those who exercise patience and self-restraint; no one is granted it save those who are truly fortunate”* (41: 34-35).

- 292 *al-‘Urf* is what is accepted and condoned of by sound human nature and is ratified by Divine law (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa’dī).
- 293 This means to turn a blind eye and pretend to take no notice of abuse and slander (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*): “*The servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk humbly upon the Earth, and when the ignorant address them, say: “Peace”*” (25: 63); “*When they hear slanderous talk, they turn away from it, saying: “We are accountable for our deeds and you for yours. Peace to you! We want nothing to do with those who act ignorantly”*” (28: 55).
- 294 The natural instinct of a person when insulted is to get angry and react. But the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers are reminded to control their anger and know that the devil is the one who is stirring it (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Ashūr, al-Sa’dī). Sulaymān Ibn Ṣurad (رضي الله عنه) said: “I was sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ) when two men started cursing one another. One of them flared with anger and flew into a fit of rage. The Prophet then said: “I know some words, that, for sure, if he says them would ease away what it is: *a’ūdhu bi Allāh-i min al-shayṭān* (I seek refuge with Allah from Satan)”” (al-Bukhārī: 3282, Muslim: 2610).
- 295 *Tā’if* is a spur triggered by the devil. Originally, it denotes someone or something circling around someone or something (al-Sijjīstānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*): “*Those who spend at times of prosperity and adversity, restrain ‘their’ anger and pardon ‘other’ people—Allah loves good doers; \*the ones who upon committing a ‘gravely’ vile deed or doing themselves an injustice, they remember Allah and implore ‘Him’ for forgiveness for their sins – and who else would forgive sins besides Allah; they do not persist in committing what they do knowingly*” (3: 134-135). *Tā’if* being a ‘rounder’ visitation, suggests the movement of the devils around people whispering evil into their hearts, cf. Aya 17 above: “*Then I shall come to them from their fronts, backs, rights and lefts, and you shall not find most of them thankful*”.

they remember and lo they become clear-sighted. <sup>﴿202﴾</sup> But <sup>(296)</sup> their brothers, they 'the devils' pave a long path for them in error and they do not hold back. <sup>﴿203﴾</sup> <sup>(297)</sup>If you 'Muhammad' do not bring them a Sign, they would say: "Would you not just come up with it?" <sup>(298)</sup> Say: "I merely follow what is being revealed to me from my Lord <sup>(299)</sup>.

تَذَكَّرُوا فَإِذَا هُمْ مُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾ وَإِخْوَانُهُمْ يَمُدُّوْنَهُمْ فِي الْغَيِّ ثُمَّ لَا يُقْصِرُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾ وَإِذَا لَمْ تَأْتِهِمْ بِآيَةٍ قَالُوا لَوْلَا آجْتَبَيْتَهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَتَّبِعُ مَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ مِنْ رَبِّي

296 The Denier, the brothers of the devils, are being contrasted here to the Believers in terms of how far astray they will go and that they practice no restraint on their impulses (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr): "Do you not see that We have unleashed the devils on the Deniers, constantly stirring them with incitement?" (19: 83).

297 Challenging the Messenger (ﷺ) to come up with tailored miracles is an example of the inciting of devils (cf. al-Rāzi): "And they say, "We shall not believe in you till you make a spring gush forth for us from the earth, \*or till you have a garden of date palms and grapevines, and you make streams gush forth in the midst of it, \*or till you make the sky fall upon us in pieces, as you have claimed, or you bring Allah and the angels before us, \*or until you have a house of gold, or you ascend into heaven – and even then we will not believe in your ascension until you bring down to us a book that we can read." Say: "Glory be to my Lord! Am I not only a human Messenger?" (17: 90-93).

298 "And when Our Signs are recited to them as clear proofs, those who anticipate not the meeting with Us say: "Bring a Qur'ān other than this, or alter it." Say: "It is not for me to alter it of my own accord. I follow only that which is revealed unto me..." (10: 15).

299 "Say 'Muhammad': "I would not say to you that I hold the treasures of Allah, I do not know 'about' the Unseen, I would not say to you that I am an angel; I only follow what is revealed to me..." (6: 50); "They say: "If only 'some' Signs had been sent down to him from his Lord!" Say 'Muhammad': "Signs are only with Allah; I am only sent with a clear warning. \*is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book, 'which is' recited to them. Surely in this 'Qur'an' is a mercy and reminder for people who Believe" (29: 50-51).

This 'Qur'an'<sup>(300)</sup> is 'a plethora of eye-openers from your Lord, a guidance and mercy to those who Believe'.

هَذَا بَصَائِرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ  
لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٠٠﴾

﴿204﴾<sup>(301)</sup> When the Qur'an is recited, listen to it 'people' and hearken, so that you might be shown mercy<sup>(302)</sup>.  
﴿205﴾ And mention your Lord to yourself, humbly and fearfully; lower than audible speech<sup>(303)</sup>, early and late in the day<sup>(304)</sup>, and be not among the unmindful.

وَإِذَا قُرِئَ الْقُرْآنُ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ وَأَنْصِتُوا  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٣٠١﴾ وَأَذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ  
تَضَرَّعًا وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ  
وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ ﴿٣٠٢﴾

- 300 The Qur'an is the greatest Sign ever and nothing besides it, in term of miracles, should be asked for (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "...indeed there has come to you a Light from Allah and a clarifying Book; \*by it Allah guides those who follow His Pleasure to the path of peace and delivers them from utter darkness into light with His permission; He guides them to a Straight Path" (5: 15-16).
- 301 This passage concludes the sura by providing some guiding principles that lead to felicity in this worldly life and in the Hereafter: 1) showing people how to deal with God's greatest miracle, the Qur'an, the thickest rope of Allah which whoever follows it is guided and whoever does not has gone astray: "So hold fast to that 'the Qur'an' which is revealed to you. Surely, you are on a Straight Path" (43: 43); 2) having God in mind at all times and being faithfully sincere to Him; 3) God's most honorable creatures, the angels, are set as an example in their sincerity and willingness of worship.
- 302 This great Sign, the Qur'an, the light that shows people the path of peace, should be listened to attentively and with great care in order to be guided to the Straight Path and gain God's Mercy (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr).
- 303 Thus it would be closer to sincerity and purer for Faith, see Ayas 54 and 55 above. Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (رضي الله عنه): "We were 'on a journey' with the Messenger (ﷺ) and when we came in view of a valley we would say: "Lā ilāha illā Allāh, Allāh-u akbar (there is no god but Allah, Allah is the greatest)", raising our voices. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "O people, go easy on yourselves. You are not praying to one who is dumb or far away. He is with you; All-Hearing, Ever Near" (al-Bukhārī: 2992, Muslim: 2704).
- 304 "You who Believe, mention Allah abundantly, \*and glorify Him early and late in the day" (33: 41-42).



﴿206﴾ Indeed those who are with your Lord<sup>(305)</sup> do not disdain from His worship, they glorify Him and to Him they prostrate ﴿<sup>(306)</sup>﴾.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَيُسَبِّحُونَهُ وَهُوَ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿٢٠٦﴾



305 al-Qurtubī mentions that exegetes are unanimous that these are the angels: “And to Allah prostrates whatever creatures and the angels that are in the Heavens or on the Earth; they are free from arrogance. \*They fear their Lord above them, and do whatever they are commanded” (16: 49-50); “Those who carry the Throne and whoever is around it glorify the praises of their Lord and Believe in Him and ask for forgiveness for those who Believe saying: “Our Lord! You have encompassed everything in Mercy and in Knowledge; forgive those who repented and followed Your way and guard them from the punishment of Hellfire”” (40: 7).

306 It is very significant to note that this sura ends with a prostration (*sajdah*) which is the embodiment of humbleness and devotion. At the beginning of the sura (cf. Ayas 11 and 12), Satan refused out of arrogance to prostrate to Adam as per God’s command and thus he rebelled, was punished and vowed to sway Adam and his posterity. The sura then went to great lengths to explain how he managed to do so and the stories of the Messengers that God sent to guide people to the Straight Path. This *sajdah* is a message that people are left with; to humble themselves to the will of God in order to be guided: Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When the son of Adam recites ‘an aya with’ a prostration and prostrates, Satan moves aside and weeps saying: “Woe is me! The Son of Adam was commanded to prostrate and he did, and his ‘for it’ is Paradise. I was commanded to prostrate and I refused and mine ‘for it’ is Hellfire!” (Muslim: 81).

This is the first of 15 instances of prostration. It is the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) to prostrate when reciting these: Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: “When the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite the Qur’an, and come upon a sura in which there is prostration, he would prostrate and we would prostrate with him; some among us would not ‘even’ find a place for his forehead” (Muslim: 575); ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to say when prostrating while reading the Qur’an at night: “My face has prostrated to He Who created it and slit in it its hearing and sight with His Ability and Power (*sajada wajhi li-lladhi khalaqahu wa shaqqa fihi sam’ahu wa basharahu bi-hawlihi wa quwathi*)” (al-Tirmidhī: 1035). In another Hadith (al-Tirmidhī: 3424), the supplication said during such a prostration is: “O Allah, record for me this one as a reward, eliminate me with it a sin of mine, make it a deposit for me with You and accept it from me as You have accepted it from Your servant, Dāwūd (*Allāhumma ktub li bihā ‘indaka ajran, wa ḍa’ annī bihā wizran, wa j’alhā lī ‘indaka dhukhran, wa taqabbalhā minnī kamā taqabbaltahā min ‘abdika Dāwūd*)”.



سُورَةُ الْأَنْفَالِ

*al-Anfāl*  
(Spoils of Victory)



## *al-Anfāl* (Spoils of Victory)

**Title:** *al-Anfāl* (thus titled in al-Bukhārī: 4645, Muslim: 3031) is named after the gains that the Believers made at the Battle of Badr and how they differed about its division amongst themselves. *Al-anfāl*, the first ever spoils of war that the Believing community encountered after the establishment of their state in Madinah, is symbolic of the materialistic side of human nature, one which stands between a person and his pursuit of a higher calling.

**Merit:** it, along with the next sura, *al-Tawbah* (also known as *Barā'ah*), together make up the last of the meritorious seven lengthy suras of the Qur'an (cf. Introductions to Suras 4 and 5). 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān (رضي الله عنه) said: "Both *al-Anfāl* and *Barā'ah* were called at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), *al-qarīnatayn* (lit. the two conjoined suras). This is why I have included them both in the seven lengthy suras 'in the Uthmanic codex'..." (al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, 3/208, also al-Ṭabarānī, al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ, 7/7638).

**Theme:** this sura reflects on and draws lessons from the major Battle of Badr (known in history as *ghazwat Badr al-kubrā*), also known as *yawn al-furqān* (the Distinguisher Day), i.e. in which God distinguished between Truth, as represented by the Believers who won, and falsehood, as represented by the Deniers who lost. The great Prophetic biographer, Ibn Hishām (*al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*, p. 667) has it that whenever 'Ubādah Ibn al-Ṣāmit (رضي الله عنه) was asked about *al-Anfāl* he would reply: "It came down on account of us, the people of Badr. When we differed regarding the distribution of the gains of victory, Allah took the matter out of our hands when our manners turned sour, and made the Messenger (ﷺ) the judge of it all. He then divided it between us equitably. It was 'a lesson': to be Mindful of Allah, to obey Allah and His Messenger and mend our bond 'of brotherhood'".

Besides this major lesson, the sura details the chief reasons for winning victory, to wit: being truly dependent on God (*al-tawakkul*), standing firm, mentioning God profusely, observing the commands of God and His Messenger (ﷺ) (the Qur'an and the Sunnah), maintaining harmony and avoiding discord, remaining steadfast, conducting one's self with humbleness and dignity, and having the best intentions at heart for the purpose of battle. The sura moreover marks a watershed between two

methods of spreading the call of Faith: the receptive which advocated forbearance and leniency, on the one hand, and the proactive which encouraged getting ready for battle and braving the world, on the other.

**Key:** *al-Anfāl* came down during the second year of Hijrah immediately after the Battle of Badr (cf. al-Qurṭubī). It can only be properly understood by means of a thorough study of that battle especially its context and the circumstances it was played against: Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Gains of war were not rendered lawful to any before us. That is because Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, saw our destitution and helplessness and made it palatable for us” (al-Bukhārī: 3124, Muslim: 1747). These were the very early days when Muslims had just settled into their own designated territory, i.e. Madinah, and were neither mentally nor materially sufficiently prepared for waging war. Added to this is that they were not initially meant to engage in the battle, for it started off only as a reconnaissance sortie and, thus, the Believers were not prepared with the necessary equipment to fight a warring army. The Messenger expeditiously only called to it those who had their mounts at hand and essentially they only had what was just about enough to seize a lightly guarded caravan. This is why a party of the Believers at first were unwilling and lethargic and, hence, God’s gradual preparation of them for battle, both materially and mentally. The moralizing account of the Battle of Badr as recounted here is set against this backdrop. It also explains the chiding, and/or incentivizing, undertone with which Believers are broadly addressed here.

*Al-anfāl* disciplines the Believing spirit into practicing self-restraint and reining in one’s worldly desires; putting one’s commitments to God and Faith over all other mere worldly considerations.

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

﴿١﴾ They ask you ‘Muhammad’ about the spoils<sup>(1)</sup>, say: “The spoils are for Allah and the Messenger<sup>(2)</sup>.”

- 1 The Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) came to him to ask him about how the gains of their victory were to be distributed among them; they had disputed over this and were keen on knowing the answer: ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: “On the Day of Badr, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Whoever does this and that, then his is this and that of the loot. Then the younger ones marched forward ‘towards the enemy’ and the older ones remained in their place holding the banners. When Allah gave them victory ‘at the end of the battle’, the elders said: “We were backing you! Had you retreated you would have sought us out! You shall not get all the gains and leave us with nothing!” The youths refused and said: “The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) allotted it all for us!” Then Allah sent down: “*They ask you about the spoils, say: “The spoils are for Allah and the Messenger. So be ‘truly’ Mindful of Allah, mend your bond ‘of brotherhood’ and obey Allah and His Messenger, if only you are ‘truly’ Believers. \*Indeed the ‘true’ Believers are the ones who when Allah is mentioned their hearts tremble with awe, when His Signs are recited for them their Faith increases and they ‘devoutly’ put their trust in their Lord; \*the ones who keep up the Prayer and ‘charitably’ spend out from what We provided them with. \*These are truly the Believers; they have ‘elevated’ grades with their Lord, forgiveness and generous provision*”. (Abū Dāwūd: 2737, al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 11133. Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*: 5093); Muṣ‘ab Ibn Sa’d Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that his father said: “Apropos of me four ayas came down. I acquired a sword ‘among the Badr booty’. ‘Muṣ‘ab continues’ He ‘my father’ took it to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said: “Messenger of Allah, grant it to me!” He replied: “Put it back!” When he stood, the Messenger said to him: “Put it back where you took it from!” Then he said: “Give it to me, Messenger of Allah”. He replied: “Put it back!” He then said: “Messenger of Allah, grant it to me! Shall I be treated like one who has no share ‘in the booty’?” The Messenger said to him: “Put it back where you took it from!” Then this aya came down: “*The spoils are for Allah and the Messenger. So be ‘truly’ Mindful of Allah, mend your bond ‘of brotherhood’ and obey Allah and His Messenger, if only you are ‘truly’ Believers*”” (Muslim: 1748).
- It is important to note that their question, being in such earnest and born out of eagerness, was not answered until Aya 41 below. All the ayas in between are meant to further nurture their collective Believing spirit and elevate it.
- 2 That is, the matter is left to Allah to decide, and the Messenger (ﷺ) who would make the division. So Believers are told to accede to their resolution (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Sa’dī).

So be 'truly' Mindful of Allah, mend your bond 'of brotherhood'<sup>(3)</sup> and obey Allah and His Messenger, if only you are 'truly' Believers"<sup>(4)</sup>. <sup>(2)</sup> Indeed the 'true' Believers are the ones who when Allah is mentioned their hearts tremble with awe<sup>(5)</sup>, when His Signs are recited for them their Faith increases<sup>(6)</sup> and they 'devoutly' put their trust in their Lord<sup>(7)</sup>;

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَصْلِحُوا ذَاتَ بَيْنِكُمْ وَأَطِيعُوا  
 اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّمَا  
 الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَّتْ  
 قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ  
 إِيمَانًا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٣﴾

It is telling to note that, throughout this sura the Messenger (ﷺ) is every so often joined with God Almighty (ﷻ) using the conjunctive 'and', and sometimes he is closely affiliated to God using the possessive pronoun 'His'. This is to remind the Believers to accede to his bidding which is God's will. This is especially pertinent given they were naturally drawn to the spoils.

- 3 *Ashlihū dhāta baynikum* (lit. mend the affairs that are among you; cf. al-*Iṣfahānī*, al-*Mufradāt*, al-*Kafawī*, al-*Kulliyāt*) means to settle disputes, set matters aright and leave the issue of the division of the spoils to God and the Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. al-*Sam'ānī*, al-*Baidāwī*).
- 4 Since they would find qualms in this broad resolution, they are reminded of what true Believers would ideally be like (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). Al-Wāhidī (*al-Wasīṭ*) sees that this is to obligate the Companions to obey the Messenger in his distribution.
- 5 Thus they heed God's commands (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "And as for he who was in awe of standing before his Lord and restrained himself from desires, \*Paradise will certainly be the abode" (79: 40-41).
- 6 "Those who 'when' people said to them: "People have regrouped for you, so fear them", their Belief 'only' grew firmer and they said: "Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers"" (3: 173); "Whenever a sura is sent down, some of them say 'mockingly': "Which of you has this increased in faith?" As for the Believers, it has increased them in Faith and they rejoice" (9: 124).
- 7 They trust that their Benefactor and Protector is none but God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-*Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr). Putting one's trust in God (*al-tawakkul 'alā Allāh*) is the catalyst for all good deeds; no sincere deed exists nor can it be perfected without it. Sa'īd Ibn Jubayr said: "Putting one's trust in Allah is the culmination of sincere Faith" (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿3﴾ the ones who keep up the Prayer and ‘charitably’ spend out from what We provided them with<sup>(8)</sup>.

﴿4﴾ Those are truly the Believers; they have ‘elevated’ grades with their Lord<sup>(9)</sup>, forgiveness and generous provision.

﴿5﴾ That is like<sup>(10)</sup> your Lord’s bringing you out of your home with the Truth, ‘while’ indeed a party of the Believers were reluctant; ﴿6﴾ they argue with you regarding the Truth<sup>(11)</sup>

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ حَقًّا لَّهُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤﴾

كَمَا أَخْرَجَكَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَيْتِكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لَكَرِهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ يُجَادِلُونَكَ فِي الْحَقِّ

- 8 These two deeply devotional acts of worship are a true translation of sincere Faith which is detailed in the previous aya (cf. Ibn Kathīr). True Believers are ever ready and humbly engaged in sacrificing their two most valuable assets: time and money.
- 9 “Look how We favour some of them over others. But the Hereafter has higher ranks and greater favours” (17: 21). Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The dwellers of Paradise will indeed see the dwellers of the chambers ‘in Paradise’ above them as you see the glowing huge planet in the horizon, either on the East or on the West; that for how of various degrees their ranks are ‘in Paradise’”. They ‘the Companions’ said: “Messenger of Allah, these are the dwelling places of the Prophets; none attains them except them!” He replied: “Nay! By Whom in Whose Hand my soul is, ‘they will be attained by’ men who Believe in Allah and accept the Messengers” (al-Bukhārī: 3256, Muslim: 2931). This is the reward that one should strive for in this life.
- 10 That is, this tentative answer to their question about the division of the spoils and how they felt disquiet about it, is comparable to their response of unwillingness when they were told that they would face clashes with their enemy. So the Messenger (ﷺ) is told not to mind their response; things will turn out for the best (al-Zajjāj, *Ma’ānī al-Qur’ān*, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*; exegetes had many views about the purport of this analogy, for more cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*): “Fighting is prescribed for you, as much as you hate it; might you hate a thing which is good for you and might you love a thing which is evil for you – Allah knows and you do not know” (2: 216).
- 11 The Truth (*al-ḥaqq*) is that fighting was imminent (al-Sa’dī, *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*).



after it has become evident, as if they were being driven to death while staring 'at it'. ﴿7﴾ 'Remember' When Allah promised you 'either' one of the two 'enemy' sections to be yours<sup>(12)</sup>; you wished the one without the thorn to be yours, 'but' Allah wanted to confirm the Truth<sup>(13)</sup> with His Words<sup>(14)</sup>, and utterly wipe out the Deniers<sup>(15)</sup>; ﴿8﴾ to establish the Truth and abolish falsehood, even to the acrimony of the criminals.

﴿9﴾ 'Remember' When you 'Believers' implored your Lord for assistance<sup>(16)</sup> and He responded

بَعْدَ مَا تَبَيَّنَ كَأَنَّمَا يُسَاقُونَ إِلَى الْمَوْتِ  
وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَإِذْ يَعِدُكُمُ اللَّهُ إِحْدَى  
الطَّائِفَتَيْنِ أَنَّهَا لَكُمْ وَتَوَدُّونَ أَنَّ غَيْرَ ذَاتِ  
الشُّوكَةِ تَكُونُ لَكُمْ وَيُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَن يُحَقِّقَ  
الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمَاتِهِ وَيَقْطَعَ دَابِرَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧﴾  
لِيُحَقِّقَ الْحَقَّ وَيُطْلِعَ الْبَاطِلَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ  
الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٨﴾

إِذْ لَسْتَغِيثُونَ رَبَّكُمْ فَاسْتَجَابَ

- 12 The two sections (*al-tā'ifatayn*) being the caravan (*al-'ir*), which is laden with goods, and the fighting army (*al-nafīr*), the thorny one, which is well-armed and edging for a fight (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).
- 13 *al-Haqq* is for Islam to emerge victorious, and for this to become a reality poised to endure (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 14 His command to you to fight (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 15 The outcome of the Battle of Badr brought down a huge psychological barrier, with the killing and capture of many a celebrated Qurayshite hero (cf. *al-Mukhtaṣar*). It also marked the beginning of the end of the Arab Deniers (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*).
- 16 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "On the Day of Badr, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) looked at the Associators, who were 1,000 strong, and his Companions, who numbered 319 men. He then turned towards al-Qiblah, stretched his hands and started imploring his Lord: "O Allah, fulfil for me what You promised me. O Allah, make true to me Your promise. O Allah, should this Muslim band be annihilated, You shall not be 'ever' worshiped in the land". He went on imploring, stretching his hands and facing al-Qiblah until his upper garment fell off his shoulders. Then Abū Bakr came, took his upper garment and put it on his shoulders, and held him tight from his back. He said: "Messenger of Allah, enough imploring your Lord. He shall certainly make true His promise to you". Then Allah sent down: "Remember' When you 'Believers' implored your Lord for assistance and He responded to you that: "I am reinforcing you with one thousand angels, following 'one another' closely on their heels'" (Muslim: 1763).

to you that: “I am reinforcing you with one thousand angels, following ‘one another’ closely on their heels<sup>(17)</sup>”. <sup>﴿10﴾</sup> Allah made this none but a glad harbinger and that your hearts may become comforted with it; ‘but’ victory

لَكُمْ أَنِّي مُبَدِّدُكُمْ بِأَلْفٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُرْدِفِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ وَإِتِّظَمْنَ بِهٖ قُلُوبُكُمْ وَمَا تَنْصُرُ

17 Scholars have held different views as to the number of angels who were sent as reinforcement to the Believers on the day of Badr, whether they were only 1,000 or 5,000. Those who opined that they were in fact 5,000 (i.e. Ibn ‘Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatādah), interpreted *murdifin* (lit. following ‘one another’ closely on their heels) as: “followed ‘by others’ closely on their heels”, and in light of Sura *Āl ‘Imrān*: “Indeed Allah made you ‘emerge’ victorious in Badr when you were scorned – be Mindful of Allah so that you may be thankful. \*Then you ‘Muhammad’ said to the Believers: “Would it not suffice you that your Lord should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down ‘from the sky’?” \*Indeed ‘this would suffice’! Yet if you hold out and are Mindful, and should they ‘your enemies’ hasten to charge ‘in full force’ against you, your Lord will reinforce you with five thousand angels, clearly marked” (3: 123-125). Further they find similarities between the recounting of this episode in *Āl ‘Imrān* and here in *al-Anfāl* (compare: 3: 126 with 8: 10 and 3: 127 with 8: 7). Conversely, the party that saw that only 1,000 angels were sent as reinforcement (i.e. ‘Ikrimah followed by a number of exegetes, cf. *al-Tafsīr al-Muḥarrar*) interpreted *Āl ‘Imrān* 123-125 as being sent down regarding the Battle of Uḥud not Badr and for that it was conditional and not fulfilled. Yet, the great exegete, al-Ṭabarī concludes that there is evidence in the Qur’an that the Believers were reinforced at Badr with 1,000 angels, but there is not enough evidence to prove or disprove that they were actually reinforced with 5,000 angels or not.

Rifā‘ah Ibn Rāfi‘ al-Zuraqī, whose father fought in Badr, narrated that: “Gabriel (ﷺ) came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him: “How do you regard the people of Badr amongst you?” He replied: “Among the best of Muslims.” .... Then he ‘Gabriel’ said: “Likewise the angels who fought in Badr ‘are regarded’” (al-Bukhārī: 3992).

That God reinforced His Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers with angels and made them fight like men, although He could have set Archangel Gabriel on them and he would have effortlessly wiped them out with a flick of a feather from his wing, was meant, as per Ibn Ḥajar (*Faṭḥ al-Bārī*, 7/313) to cause victory at the hands of the Messenger and his Companions and not to flout the canon of the order of things and that Believers should always put their trust in God, and take the necessary preparations and measures for winning.

comes from none but Allah<sup>(18)</sup> – Allah is verily All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿11﴾ ‘Remember’ <sup>(19)</sup>When He enwrapped you with sleepiness as assurance from Him and sent down on you water from the sky to purify you with it<sup>(20)</sup>, dispel the taint of Satan<sup>(21)</sup> from you, brace your hearts<sup>(22)</sup> and make firm with it ‘your’ feet<sup>(23)</sup>.

﴿12﴾ ‘Mention Muhammad’ When your Lord inspired<sup>(24)</sup> the angels: “I am indeed with you<sup>(25)</sup> so make firm those who Believe. I shall cast fright in the hearts of those who Deny<sup>(26)</sup>; smite then above the

الْاٰمِنَٓتِ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿١٠﴾  
 اِذْ يَغْشٰكُمْ النُّعَاسَ اٰمَنَةً مِّنْهُ وَيُنَزِّلُ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً لِّيَطَهِّرَ كُمْ بِهِ  
 وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمْ رِجْسَ الشَّيْطٰنِ وَلِيَرِ بِطْعٰنِ  
 قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَيَتَبَيَّنَ بِهٖ الْاَقْدَامُ ﴿١١﴾

اِذْ يُوحِي رُؤْيٰكَ اِلَى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اَنۡيۡ مَعَكُمْ  
 فَشٰبَتُوۡا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا سَآءَلۡفِيۡ فِى قُلُوْبِ الَّذِيۡنَ  
 كَفَرُوۡا الرُّعۡبَ فَاَضْرَبُوۡا فَوْقَ

- 18 The angels were nothing but a means of achieving victory. The One Who grants it is none but God Almighty Himself; so put your trust in Him (cf. Ibn ‘Atīyah, al-Qurṭubī).
- 19 Besides bolstering them with angels, God made ready for them all the means and aids of victory, both mentally and physically (cf. al-Rāzī). Some of which are mentioned here.
- 20 That is from physical impurities (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 21 His whisperings and evil insinuations (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 22 To make more daring and audacious, and filled with certitude that victory is at hand (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 23 When the rain came down it made the ground under their feet become firmer (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī).
- 24 This could be inspiration (*waḥy ilhām*), i.e. tacitly communicating with them, or revelation (*waḥy i‘lām*) by directly communicating with them (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 25 God’s ‘withness’ (*ma‘iyyah*) is by His support and aid (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī).
- 26 Psychology is a very determining factor in warfare, once fear strikes the hearts of one side, then they are sure to lose. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was given this as a privilege, among others and five in all, that none of the earlier Prophets and Messengers were given. Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “I was given five ‘privileges’ that none of the earlier Prophets before me was given; I was made victorious with

necks and smite every fingertip of theirs<sup>(27)</sup>. ﴿13﴾ That for pitting themselves against Allah and His Messenger; whoever pits himself against Allah and His Messenger, then Allah is severe in punishment. ﴿14﴾ That ‘is your punishment’, so taste it then; indeed the Deniers’ is the Punishment of Hellfire.

﴿15﴾ You who Believe, when you meet the Deniers marshalled ‘in hosts’ do not show them your hind<sup>(28)</sup>. ﴿16﴾ Whoever shows them his hind on that day – except one

الْأَعْتَاقَ وَأَضْرِبُوا مَتَهُمْ كُلَّ بَتَانٍ ﴿١٣﴾  
 ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ شَاقُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ  
 اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٤﴾  
 ذَلِكَ كَمَا فَعَدُوهُ وَأَنَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ  
 النَّارِ ﴿١٥﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيْتُمُ الَّذِينَ  
 كَفَرُوا زَحْفًا فَلَا تُولُوهُمْ الْأَدْبَارَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَمَنْ  
 يُولُوهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ دُبُرَهُ رَايًا

fright at a one-month distance ‘away from the enemy’...” (al-Bukhārī: 438, Muslim: 521): “We will cast fright in the hearts of the Deniers for Associating with Allah that for which He made no authority. Their resort is Fire; dire indeed is the domicile of the Wrongdoers” (3: 151); “He brought those People of the Book who supported them down from their strongholds and cast fright into their hearts. Some of them you ‘Believers’ killed and some you took captive” (33: 26); “He is the One Who drove those of the People of the Book who Denied out from their homes at the first gathering – you ‘Believers’ never thought they would go, and they themselves thought their fortifications would protect them against Allah. Allah came up on them from where they least expected and cast fright into their hearts: their homes were destroyed by their own hands and the hands of the Believers. So take heed you of sound reason” (59: 2).

- 27 That is to aim carefully to kill by striking the necks and heads (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr) and to incapacitate by striking the joints of the fingers and toes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī) so that the enemy is unable to wield a weapon or stand straight and, thus, is vulnerable.
- 28 *Yuwallī duburahu* is literally to turn one’s back to someone. It is used both literally and figuratively, to communicate a shameful image, for fleeing and beating a hasty retreat during war (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Fleeing battle is one of the seven cardinal sins in Islam; it dampens morale and could cause defeat: Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Beware of the seven most cardinal sins: Associating other deities with Allah, sorcery, annihilating a soul, which Allah made sacrosanct, without having the right to, devouring usury, consuming an orphan’s money, fleeing in battle, and accusing chaste, pure in heart, Believing women ‘of lewdness’” (al-Bukhārī: 6857, Muslim: 89).

who turns round to fight back<sup>(29)</sup>, or to align 'himself' with a 'another company'<sup>(30)</sup> – then he goes back with Wrath from Allah and his resort is Hellfire; awful indeed is the destination.

مُتَحَرِّفًا لِقِتَالٍ أَوْ مُتَحَيِّزًا إِلَىٰ فِئَةٍ فَقَدْ بَاءَ  
بِغَضَبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أُولَٰئِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَيَسَّرَ  
الْمَصِيرَ ﴿١٦﴾

﴿17﴾ You 'Believers' did not kill them, but Allah killed them<sup>(31)</sup>; you 'Muhammad' did not cast but Allah did the casting<sup>(32)</sup>; to have the Believers do well by His Grace<sup>(33)</sup> – verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

فَلَمْ تَقْتُلُوهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ قَتَلَهُمْ وَمَا رَمَيْتَ  
إِذْ رَمَيْتَ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ رَمَىٰ وَلِيُبْلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
مِنْهُ بَلَاءً حَسَنًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾

- 29 *Mutaḥarrifan li qitālin* is one of the two exceptions made for showing the enemy one's hind once battle has commenced. It denotes turning round (*yataḥarrifu*) by way of manoeuvre to trick the enemy into believing that one is fleeing only then to suddenly come back at them catching them unawares (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 30 *Mutaḥayyizatan ilā fi'atin*, the second of the two exceptions, is to slide back to join another unit of the army of Believers to take shelter in them and bolster their ranks (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 31 This reminds the Believers of God's great aid to them in Badr and sums up the detailing of the many facets of the help He afforded the Believers so as to draw a lesson from it and not think that their own means were the main cause of victory (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 8/18, Ibn Kathīr, Riḍā): "Indeed Allah made you 'emerge' victorious in Badr when you were scorned – be Mindful of Allah so that you may be thankful" (3: 123).
- 32 Ḥakīm Ibn Ḥizām (رحمه الله) narrated the reason for this aya's revelation being that when the Messenger of God (ﷺ) took a fistful of gravel and threw it at the Qurayshites, they retreated (cf. al-Ṭabarī, *al-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*: 3128). The Messenger (ﷺ) performed the cause, by throwing the gravel at their faces, but it was God's doing that this cause took effect and was conducive to the Qurayshites' retreat (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). This is another manifestation of God's aid to the Believers which has not been mentioned before (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 33 That is, to afford the Believers to win the gains of victory and a great reward from their Lord (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn 'Āshūr). al-Khāzin has it that there is unanimity among exegetes that *balā'* (originally implying trial of someone's strength of Faith, cf. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *Umdat al-Ḥuffāz*) here means bounty (*ni'mah*).

﴿18﴾ 'All' That and 'in addition' Allah will surely dull the plotting of the Deniers<sup>(34)</sup>. ﴿19﴾ If you 'Deniers' seek 'Allah's' arbitration, then the arbitration has come upon you<sup>(35)</sup>; but if you desist<sup>(36)</sup>, it would be better for you; if you come back We shall come back. Your host will avail you nothing, numerous as it might be. And 'know' that Allah is surely with the Believers.

﴿20﴾ <sup>(37)</sup>You who Believe, obey Allah and His Messenger and do not turn away from him while you hear 'him'. ﴿21﴾ Do not be like the ones who said: "We are listening", while they listen not<sup>(38)</sup>.

ذَٰلِكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُوهِنُ كَيْدِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٨﴾  
 إِنْ تَسْتَفْتِحُوا فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ الْفَتْحُ وَإِنْ  
 تَنْتَهُوا فهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِنْ تَعُودُوا نَعُدْ وَلَنْ  
 نُغْنِي عَنكُمْ فَمَنَّكُمْ سَيِّئًا وَلَوْ كَفَرْتُمْ وَأَنَّ  
 اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ  
 وَلَا تَوَلَّوْا عَنهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا  
 كَالَّذِينَ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

- 34 All the aforementioned causes of victory are God's own doing. Another piece of good news that this aya broke to the Believers was that, in the future, God would unravel and blunt the plotting of the Deniers, so they need not be as apprehensive about their stratagems any more (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).
- 35 Imām Aḥmad notes in his *Musnad* (no. 23661) that 'Abdullāh Ibn Tha'labah Ibn Ṣucayr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Abū Jahl, the head of the Deniers, sought God's judgement on the eve of Badr by praying to Him saying: "O Allah, he 'i.e. Muhammad (ﷺ)' caused severance of kinship relations and he brought us that which we do not know so annihilate him tomorrow. Then Allah sent down: "If you 'Deniers' seek 'Allah's' arbitration, then the arbitration has come upon you...".
- 36 That is, relinquish your ways of Associating with God and Denying the Message (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 37 This section and the next two are reflective moralizing passages loaded with messages to the Believers and take their roots in the events that have just unfolded. Here, the Believers are meant to feel no qualms whatsoever with regards to what the Messenger decides regarding the division of the spoils and to pay him heed (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 38 These could either be the hypocrites and/or the Deniers (cf. Ibn Kathīr). Their 'listening' is merely mechanical and lacks sincerity, nor is it imbued with the intention of acting upon what is being said (cf. al-Sa' dī).

﴿22﴾ Indeed the worst of all the creatures with Allah are the deaf and dumb – those who cannot heed<sup>(39)</sup>. ﴿23﴾ Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them listen; ‘even’ had He made them listen, they would have turned away, looking the other way<sup>(40)</sup>.

﴿24﴾ You who Believe, respond to Allah and the Messenger<sup>(41)</sup> when he calls you to what gives you life<sup>(42)</sup>; know that Allah may intervene between a man and his heart and that to Him you shall be gathered<sup>(43)</sup>.

﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ شَرَّ الدَّوَابِّ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الصُّمُّ الْبُكْمُ  
الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ  
خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ  
مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ  
إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ  
اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ  
تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

39 “We have indeed spawned for Hellfire many among the jinn and humans; theirs are hearts with which they comprehend naught, theirs are eyes with which they see naught and theirs are ears with which they hear naught. Those are akin to livestock, nay but they are more at loss; these are the unmindful” (7: 179).

40 It takes purity of the heart, real willingness and good intention to have one’s faculties of perception open up to receiving the Truth (cf. al-Sa’dī).

41 By obeying them; willingly submitting to their commands (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’dī).

42 All that the Messenger (ﷺ) calls for leads to a better life both bodily and spiritually both in this life and in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’dī). Those who respond to the Messenger will be given life: “Is the one who was dead and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which? Thus what they used to do was prettified for the Deniers” (6: 122); while those who do not will be walking dead; their bodies are the graveyards of their hearts (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān*, 1/22): “Nor are the dead and the living equal. Indeed, Allah ‘alone’ makes whoever He wills hear, but you ‘Muhammad’ can never make those in the graves hear ‘your call’” (35: 22).

43 This is a stark warning to the Believers to willingly listen to the Messenger and abide by his command, which is the epitome of true, sincere Faith. But those who turn away from him, with regards to certain matters, are not to be sure of their Faith afterwards; God can block them from being willing to obey (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*, al-Sa’dī). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) said: “The

﴿25﴾ Beware of a trial that will befall not only the wrongdoers among you and know that Allah is severe in punishment<sup>(44)</sup>. ﴿26﴾ Remember when you were only but few, victimized in the land, fearing that people will snatch you away; He then gave you a haven, aided you with His victory and blessed you with good provisions, so that you may be thankful<sup>(45)</sup>.

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لَا تُصِيبَنَّ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً وَعَلَّمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَذُكِّرُوا إِذْ أَنْتُمْ قَلِيلٌ مُسْتَضْعَفُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَخَافُونَ أَنْ يَسْحَطَ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّاسُ فَوَدَّعْتُمْ وَأَيَّدَكُمْ بِنَصْرِهِ وَزَادَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَطْيَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to say the following ‘supplication’: “O You Who turns hearts, maintain my heart on Your religion!” I said: “Messenger of Allah, we Believed in you and what you came with; do you have concerns for us?” He replied: “Yes! Indeed hearts are between two Fingers of Allah’s, He turns them however He wishes” (al-Tirmidhī: 2140, Imām Aḥmad: 12107): “We keep on turning their hearts and their sights away for not Believing in it the first time and ‘thus’ We leave them to wander aimlessly in their ‘unbending’ recalcitrance” (6: 110); “Mention Muhammad’ When Mūsā said to his people: “My people, why do you hurt me when you already know I am Allah’s Messenger to you?” So when they deviated, Allah caused their hearts to deviate; Allah does not guide the rebellious people” (61: 5).

- 44 This is another warning which goes a step further to encourage the Believers to willingly obey the call in their collectivity and not let those be among them whose Faith is shaky without admonishing them. If they fail to do so, the trial (*fitmah*) will not befall those who did wrong in society alone (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr). Believers are not only encouraged to be faithful themselves but to be the source that radiates faith all around them: “The Deniers among the Children of Israel were damned by the tongue of Dāwūd ‘David’ and ‘Isā son of Maryam for their disobedience and persistent aggression. \*They would not admonish each other over the vile deeds they committed – sordid indeed is what they used to do” (5: 78-79). al-Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The example of the one who safeguards the boundaries of Allah and he who flouts them is that of some people who drew lots as to ‘where their allotted locations would be on’ a ship. Some came at the top of the ship and others came at the bottom. Whenever the ones at the bottom wanted to get water, they would ‘inevitably’ pass by those who were at the top. They then said ‘amongst themselves’: “If we drill a hole in our ‘bottom’ part, we would not keep on troubling those above us!” ‘Now’ If they ‘the ones at the top’ let them carry out their plan, they would all perish, but if they restrain them they would be saved, all of them” (al-Bukhārī: 2493).
- 45 Here the Believers, who now emerged victorious, and realized their power, are reminded of God’s abundant favours on them: they were few in number



﴿27﴾ You who Believe, do not betray Allah and the Messenger<sup>46</sup>, and ‘do not’ betray your trusts knowingly.  
 ﴿28﴾ Know that your money and children are but a trial<sup>47</sup> and that with Allah is a great reward.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَخُونُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ  
 وَتَخُونُوا أَمْنَكُمْ وَآسِرْتُمْ تَعَامُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَأَعْلَمُوا  
 أَنَّ أَمْوَالَكُمْ وَأَوْلَادَكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ وَأَنَّ  
 اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

and helpless in Makkah and fearing that people would stanch them away and take them captive, God delivered them safe and provided them with a stronghold in Madinah, boosted their numbers with the Anṣār ‘Helpers’ Companions of Madinah, and made them emerge victorious and financially better-off due to their winning at Badr (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). This is all the more reason for them to pay heed and be thankful (cf. al-Rāzī). Being grateful makes one thankful and vice versa (cf. al-Qaṣṣāb, *al-Nukat al-Dāllah ‘Alā al-Bayān*, 1/469).

- 46 al-Rāzī provides a number of explanations he gathered from different exegetical sources as to what ‘betray’ (*yahkūnu*) actually alludes to here. These boil down to the fact that some Believers, being conscious of some bond that held between them and the Deniers, obliged the Deniers by passing on some news of the Messenger’s intentions, notably to Abū Lubābah and Ḥāṭib Ibn Abī Balta‘ah (رضي الله عنه). However, he opines that ‘betrayal’ here means misappropriation of some of the spoils of the battle without being noticed. Yet, they were entrusted with it so that they were expected to relinquish it complete.

Not with standing, both al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, who acknowledge such explanations, conclude that this is a general recommendation to the Believers to honour their pledges to God and His Messenger and obey their command. Falling short of this is tantamount to betrayal of the trust of a Most Benevolent Lord and a lovingly compassionate Messenger: “*Indeed, We offered trust to the Heavens and the Earth and the mountains, but they declined to bear it; they were apprehensive of it. But man assumed it; he is truly wrongful*” to himself”, ignorant of the consequences” (33: 72).

- 47 What would tempt one to act wrongfully is the love of both one’s own children and one’s love of money (cf. al-Rāzī). This love is but a test from God to see whether they carry out His commands when they impact upon this consideration (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “*You who Believe, among your spouses and your children there is indeed an enemy to you; so be wary of them. Yet if you pardon, forbear, and forgive, then truly God is Forgiving, Merciful. \*Your money and your children are only a trial; and Allah – with Him is a great reward. \*So be Mindful of Allah to the best of your ability, hear and obey, and spend*’ in charity’ – that will be best for you. And whoever is saved from the selfishness of their own souls, it is they who are ‘truly’ successful” (64: 14-16).

﴿29﴾ You who Believe, if you are Mindful of Allah, He will grant you a distinguisher<sup>(48)</sup>, absolve you of your foul deeds and forgive you—Allah is indeed of great favour.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَجْعَل لَّكُمْ فُرْقَانًا وَيُكَفِّرْ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٩﴾

﴿30﴾ <sup>(49)</sup> Mention Muhammad' When the Deniers plotted against you to seize you, kill you or expel you; they plot and Allah plans—Allah is verily the best of planners<sup>(50)</sup>. ﴿31﴾ <sup>(51)</sup> And when Our Signs are recited to them, they say: “We have listened!

وَإِذْ يَمَكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ الْمَكْرِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذْ أَنْتَ عَلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِنَا فَاذْكُرُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ

- 48 Obeying God and His Messenger (ﷺ) and fighting against one’s earthly desires, pays great rewards, i.e. being truly Mindful: a *furqān* luminous knowledge with which one can distinguish between Truth and falsehood, and a way out from the hardships of life (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*): “...whoever is Mindful of Allah, He will make a way out for him \*and provide for him whereof he does not anticipate...” (65: 2-3).
- 49 Although the direct addressee here is the Noble Messenger (ﷺ), Believers are further reminded of God’s favours on them, since He delivered their mentor who is also a main benefactor of theirs (cf. al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ʿĀshūr).
- 50 This is a précis of how the Qurayshites plotted to rid themselves of the Messenger (ﷺ), when he became too much for them to handle, and when argumentation became futile and cumbersome for them. They schemed to: 1) tie him down and incarcerate him, to: 2) kill him, or to: 3) to chase him out of Makkah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī). This is not a unique incident, a great many Messengers (ﷺ) were faced with the same threat: “*But those who Denied said to their Messengers: “We shall surely expel you from our land, or you shall revert to our way of life...”*” (14: 13).
- 51 Now to a summary of how the Qurayshites had plotted against the call of the Messenger before coming up with their most daring plan of getting rid of him once and for all (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqāʿī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). These people deserved to be fought against: “*Will you not fight against those who have broken their oaths and conspired to expel the Messenger? They were the first to attack you. Do you fear them? Surely Allah is more deserving of your fear, if you are ‘true’ Believers*” (9: 13).

Had we wished, we would have come up with something like this<sup>(52)</sup>; this is nothing but merely 'a retelling of the' scribbles of the ancients!<sup>(53)</sup> ﴿32﴾ 'Mention Muhammad' When they 'the Deniers' said: "O Allah, if this is the truth from You, then rain on us stones from the sky or bring us a painful punishment!"<sup>(54)</sup> ﴿33﴾ Allah would not have punished them while you 'Muhammad' were 'still' among them<sup>(55)</sup>; Allah would not punish them while they 'sincerely' seek forgiveness<sup>(56)</sup>.

لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَفُتْنَا مِثْلَ هَذَا إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيزُ  
الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَذَقَالُوا اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَتْ  
هَذَا هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِكَ فَأَمْطِرْ عَلَيْنَا  
حِجَارَةً مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ أَوْ ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٣٣﴾  
وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَأَنْتَ فِيهِمْ وَمَا كَانَ  
اللَّهُ مُعَذِّبَهُمْ وَهُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

- 52 "Who is more wrongful than he who fabricates falsehood against Allah or says: "I was given revelation", while nothing was revealed to him, and he who says: "I will send down the like of that which Allah sent down..." (6: 93).
- 53 "Some among them would listen to you; 'but' We have put sheaths over their hearts, lest they would perceive it, and in their ears there is impairment. Even if they see every Sign, they would not Believe in it; so much so that when they come to dispute with you, the Deniers would 'willingly' say: "This is nothing but merely 'a retelling of the' scribbles of the ancients!'" (6: 25).
- 54 Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: "Abū Jahl prayed: "O Allah, if this is the truth from You, then hail down on us stones from the sky or deliver to us a painful punishment!" Then this 'aya' came down: "Allah would not have punished them while you 'Muhammad' were still among them; Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness"" (al-Bukhārī: 4649, Muslim: 2796).
- 55 Exegetes agree that this means that God would never bring His punishment upon a people who have a Messenger in their midst (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr).
- 56 Seeking forgiveness (*al-istighfār*) is a sure indicator of one's realization of one's earlier bad deeds and a willingness to atone for them. One would not come to such a state of affairs unless one shrugs off all rebelliousness against God and opens up to guidance. Exegetes are of different opinions regarding this: some, i.e. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, see that this is tantamount to an invitation to the Deniers to repent and mend

﴿34﴾ But why would not Allah punish them while they turn ‘people’ away from the Sanctified Mosque; ‘although’ they were not its ‘rightful’ patrons—its ‘true’ patrons are none but the Mindful, but most of them know ‘that’ not<sup>(57)</sup>. ﴿35﴾ Their Prayer at the House was nothing but ‘hollow’ whistling and clapping; taste then the punishment<sup>(58)</sup> for your ‘adamant’ Denying.

وَمَا لَهُمْ آلَا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَهُمْ يَصُدُّونَ  
عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَمَا كَانُوا أَوْلِيَاءَهُ  
إِنْ أَوْلِيَاءُؤُهُ إِلَّا الْمُتَّفِقُونَ وَلَكِنْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ  
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ صَلَاتُهُمْ عِنْدَ  
الْبَيْتِ إِلَّا مُكَاءٌ وَتَصْدِيَةٌ فَدُؤُوفُ  
الْعَدَابِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

their ways. Others, who are a sizeable number (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr), see that the pronoun here refers to the Believers and that this is a parenthetical sentence meant for reflection and drawing lessons, especially after the demise of the Noble Messenger (ﷺ).

However, it is interesting to note that al-Sa’dī opines that the ones meant here are, actually, the Makkans who had prayed to God to hail stones or hasten His punishment on them. Knowing how ghastly such an invocation is, which they only declared as an acted charade meant for argument’s sake, were secretly seeking forgiveness for it in their heart of hearts. This reading throws light on how to interpret the next two ayas over which exegetes have held varying views. That is, their seeking forgiveness is not reason enough to repel their Heavenly punishment given their greatly grievous sin of deliberately turning people away from the Sanctified Mosque. This they did to the Messenger (ﷺ) and His Companions who deserved it most among people being justly its rightful ‘patrons’ for their sincerely Godly ways, as opposed to the Makkans who braggingly claimed to be its rightful ‘patrons’ while they only displayed hollow, groundless acts of worship around it: “It is not right for the Associators to ‘caringly’ tend Allah’s places of prostration while testifying to their own Denial: the deeds of such people will come to nothing and they will abide forever in Hell. \*The only ones who should ‘caringly’ tend Allah’s places of prostration are those who Believe in Allah and the Last Day, keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms, and fear no one but Allah: such people may well aspire to be among the rightly guided.” (9: 17-18)

57 Most of the Qurayshites do not realize this obvious fact (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’dī).

58 Their humiliating defeat, killing and captivation at Badr (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿36﴾<sup>(59)</sup> Verily those who Deny do spend their money to turn ‘people’ away from the path of Allah<sup>(60)</sup>; they will spend it, then it will be ‘a cause of’ ‘bitter’ regret for them, and then they will ‘eventually’ be overpowered<sup>(61)</sup>—those who Deny will be gathered to Hellfire. ﴿37﴾ ‘This is’ For Allah to set the evil apart from the good; He will mount the evil on top of each other making it into a heap and consign it all to Hellfire—these are the ‘real’ losers<sup>(62)</sup>.

﴿38﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’ to those who Deny if they desist they will be forgiven ‘all’ what went on before<sup>(63)</sup>, and if they return

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ لِيَصُدُّوا  
عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَسَيُنْفِقُونَهَا ثُمَّ تَكُونُ عَلَيْهِمْ  
حَسْرَةً ثُمَّ يُغْلَبُونَ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى  
جَهَنَّمَ يُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لِيَمِيزَ اللَّهُ الْخَبِيثَ  
مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَيَجْعَلَ الْخَبِيثَ بَعْضُهُ عَلَى بَعْضٍ  
فَيَرْكُمَهُ جَمِيعًا فَيَجْعَلُهُ فِي جَهَنَّمَ  
أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ يَنْتَهُوا يُعْفَرُوا  
لَهُمْ مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ وَإِنْ يَعُودُوا

- 59 When the Deniers used their power to their advantage and forcefully turned the pious away from the Holy Sanctuary, which proved to be futile, they mustered up their power and resources to eradicate Islam (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 60 al-Shinqīfī (*al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*) notes the common view among scholars that the Qurayshites used the very lucrative caravan (1,000 camels loaded with precious goods) that Abū Sufyān managed to steer to safety just before the Battle of Badr took place, to hit back at the Believers and take revenge on them.
- 61 “Truly those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, they will be among the abased. \*Allah has decreed: “I and My Messengers will certainly prevail.” Surely Allah is All-Powerful, Almighty” (58: 20-21).
- 62 That they are unceremoniously piled on top of each other is humiliation incarnate (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “So worship whatsoever you will besides Him”. Say: “Truly the ‘real’ losers are those who lose their souls and their families on the Day of Judgement. Surely, that is the manifest loss” (39: 15).
- 63 They are called to follow the call of Islam and disown Denial (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Āṣ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: “Did you not know that Islam abolishes all that went on before it?” (Muslim: 121): “Say ‘Allah says’: “O My servants, who have committed excesses against themselves, do not despair of Allah’s Mercy; Allah surely forgives all sins. He is truly the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful” (39: 53).

then the canon of the ancients<sup>(64)</sup> already came to pass. ﴿39﴾ Fight them until there is no 'more' trial and religion becomes wholly Allah's<sup>(65)</sup>. But if they desist, then Allah is surely All-Seeing of what they do. ﴿40﴾ But if they turn away, then know 'Believers' that Allah is your Ally; most honorable is the Ally, most honorable is the Supporter.

﴿41﴾ <sup>(66)</sup>And know 'Believers' that whatever gain you make a fifth<sup>(67)</sup> of it is for Allah and

فَقَدْ مَضَتْ سُنَّتُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَتَلُوهُمْ  
حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ لِلدِّينِ  
كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا  
يَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ  
اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ نِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٤٠﴾

\*وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسُهُ

- 64 *Sunnat al-awwalin* (also found in 15: 13, 18: 55, 35: 43) or *sunnat Allāh* (as in 33: 38 and 62, 35: 43, 40: 85, 48: 23) is used invariably to caution in the Qur'an; the earlier nations who rebelled against God were destroyed. People are always encouraged to consider their fate *vis-a-vis* the fate of earlier nations and contemplate this time-honoured law of God: "... then do they await except the canon of the ancients? But you shall never find any change in the canon of Allah; you shall never find any alteration in the canon of Allah. \*Have they not travelled through the land and observed how the end of those before them was; they were 'even' greater than them in power. Allah is not to be frustrated by anything in the Heavens or on the Earth – He is All-Knowing, All-Powerful" (35: 43-44).
- 65 The Believers are bade to fight the Deniers until their hostile behaviour is curbed, and until the Believers are free to practice their religion without anyone daring to interfere with their worship or turn them away from their religion, and until people are able to freely worship God alone without Associating any with Him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr al-Sa'dī, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).
- 66 Only now are the Believers answered their earnest question, which they asked of the Prophet (ﷺ) at the very beginning of the sura; after they have been sufficiently prepared for it through a number of reminders, pointers and moralizing advise.
- 67 The spoils are divided into four-fifths for the fighters and one-fifth for: 1) God Almighty (ﷻ), 2) the Messenger (ﷺ), 3) The Messenger's close relatives, 4) the orphaned young, 5) the destitute and poor, 6) and the stranded (cf. al-Jazā'irī, *al-Muyassar, al-Mukhtaṣar*). It is useful to note this issue was a topic of long and detailed discussions among scholars, however some explanation, as per the scope of this translation, is given below.

the Messenger<sup>(68)</sup>, the kith and kin<sup>(69)</sup>, the orphans, the needy, the destitute and the stranded<sup>(70)</sup>; 'that is'<sup>(71)</sup> if you have truly Believed in Allah and what We sent down<sup>(72)</sup> to Our Servant<sup>(73)</sup> on the Distinguisher Day when the two hosts met<sup>(74)</sup>—verily Allah is

وَالرَّسُولِ وَآلِهِ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ  
وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ إِن كُنْتُمْ آمَنْتُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا  
أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا يَوْمَ الْفُرْقَانِ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ  
الْجَمْعَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ

- 68 God's share is to be spent in the ways that He commanded (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). al-Baghawī concludes that most exegetes and jurists are of the opinion that God's share and the Messenger's share are one and the same. Ibn 'Ashūr further explains that most scholars are of the opinion that God's share is left to the Prophet, and the leaders of the Believers after him, to spend it as he sees fit. This part is spent for the general good of the Believing community (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*): 'Amr Ibn 'Abasah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) picked a hair from the side of a camel 'which was among the spoils' and said: "No portion of the spoils is rightfully mine – not even the measure of this 'hair' – except the fifth; even the fifth is returned to you" (Abū Dāwūd: 2755, al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 12943).
- 69 *Dhawī al-qurbā* is unanimously agreed to be the Messenger's own close relatives; namely, Banū Hāshim and Banū 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī, al-Sa'dī). Ibn Kathīr opines that this is because they, among whom were some Deniers, stood by the Messenger and those around him in the early days of his call, and especially during the hard times of the boycott that the Qurayshites imposed on the Believing community in Shi'b 'Āmir.
- 70 The Qur'an uses the expression 'the son of the road' (*ibn al-sabīl*), for those who are left without means whilst travelling, being away from home.
- 71 That is: abide by this ruling regarding the division of victory spoils (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, *Zād al-Masīr*, 2/213). That they magnanimously leave out this fifth is a branch of Faith (*shu'bah min shu'ab al-īmān*) (cf. al-Bayhaqī, *Shu'ab al-Īmān*, 6/169, al-Suyūṭī, *al-Iklīl*. p. 135).
- 72 This could be either the Qur'anic ayas and/or the Signs of Divine support, miraculous in nature as recounted in this sura, that God sent down to His Messenger (ﷺ) and those by his side (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyah, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn 'Ashūr).
- 73 'Our Servant' (*'abdīnā*) is Muhammad (ﷺ) who is God's Own sincere servant (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 74 The Day of the Distinguisher (*yawm al-furqān*) is that of the day of Battle of Badr in which God set Truth apart from falsehood (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr). It is the day when God granted victory to those on whose side He was, i.e. the Believers who were fewer in number, by far less well-equipped and less likely to win, over those who pitted themselves against Him, who were greater in number and always felt themselves to be the better side; this is enough as a distinguisher between Truth and falsehood (cf. Ibn 'Ashūr).

Able over everything. <sup>(42)</sup> <sup>(75)</sup>When you were at the nearer bank 'of the valley' and they were at the further bank<sup>(76)</sup>, and the mounters<sup>(77)</sup> were lower than you are; had you made a mutual appointment, you would have 'both' missed it<sup>(78)</sup>, but 'that' so Allah would bring to pass a foregone affair<sup>(79)</sup>. So that whoever perishes, perishes upon clear evidence and whoever lives, lives with clear evidence<sup>(80)</sup>—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤١﴾ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ  
الْدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ بِالْعُدْوَةِ الْقُصْوَى وَالرَّكْبُ  
أَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَوْ تَوَاعَدْتُمْ لَأَخْتَلَفْتُمْ  
فِي الْمِعَادِ وَلَكِنْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ  
مَفْعُولًا لِيَهْلِكَ مَنْ هَلَكَ عَن بَيْتِنَا  
وَيَحْيَى مَنْ حَيَّ عَن بَيْتِنَا وَارْتَأَى اللَّهُ  
لَسْمِيعٍ عَلَيْهِمُ

- 75 This is yet another reminder of God's immense support to them on that day despite all the inopportune circumstances that they were faced with; this is why they should feel no qualms about God's ruling regarding the spoils (cf. al-Biqā'i, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 76 The mention of the exact positions of each side is meant to show that their enemy chose a better position, to further drive the Message home that only by God's Mercy and His Favour did the Believers emerge victorious (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 77 That is the mounters (*al-rakb*), the guarding cavalry, on the camels of Abū Sufyān's caravan. The image being depicted here is of the extent of the Believers' disadvantage being much fewer in number, standing on treacherous, slippery ground and surrounded by enemies from two sides (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 78 Ka'b Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "The Messenger (ﷺ) and the Muslims set out intending nothing but to seize the Qurayshite caravan, until Allah joined them with their enemy without appointment" (al-Bukhārī: 3951, Muslim: 2769).
- 79 That is to bring to pass a predestined matter, the coming of which was inevitable; to make the Believers accomplish victory over the Deniers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*).
- 80 Now that the Truth has been so clearly set apart from falsehood on the Distinguisher Day no one is left with any doubt in their mind as to where each lies so that they choose to be guided and 'live' or to languish in Denial and 'perish' (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Sa'dī): "Is the one who was dead and We caused him to come alive and bestowed upon him a light to walk in among people be like the one who is plunged in complete darkness; there is no way for him to emerge out of which? Thus what they used to do was prettified for the Deniers" (6: 122).



﴿43﴾ (81) 'Remember' When Allah showed them to you 'Muhammad' few 'in numbers' in your sleep<sup>(82)</sup>, had He showed them numerous to you, you 'Believers' would have faltered and disagreed over the matter, but Allah saved 'the day'—He is All-Knowing of what the chests conceal<sup>(83)</sup>. ﴿44﴾ 'Remember' When He showed them to you 'Believers' few in your eyes, when you met 'each other', and He showed you few in their 'the Deniers' eyes, so that He would bring to pass a forgone affair—to Allah all matters are returned.

إِذْ يُرِيكَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنَامِكَ قَلِيلًا وَلَوْ أَرَاكَهُمْ كَثِيرًا لَفَشَسْتُمْ وَالتَّنَزَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَالْكَفَنَ اللَّهُ سَلَّمَ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَإِذْ يُرِيكُمُوهُمْ إِذِ التَّمَيُّنُ فِي أَعْيُنِكُمْ قَلِيلًا وَيُقَلِّبُكُمْ فِي أَعْيُنِهِمْ لِيَقْضِيَ اللَّهُ أَمْرًا كَانَ مَفْعُولًا ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٤٤﴾

﴿45﴾ (84) You who Believe, when you meet a force 'in battle' stand your ground<sup>(85)</sup> and mention Allah

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا لَقِيتُمْ فِئَةً فَاثْبُتُوا وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ

- 81 This passage highlights yet another means, of the many enumerated here, of how Divine intervention was decisive in the battle's result.
- 82 God showed the Messenger (ﷺ) a vision during his sleep in which the Deniers appeared fewer than their actual number (cf. al-Ṭabari, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). This vision heartened the Believers, because it was interpreted as a glad harbinger; an enemy being 'few in number' is a symbol of weakness and failing (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 83 God Knows one's inner thoughts; whisperings, fears and trepidations (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "He knows the treachery of eyes and that which conceal" (40: 19).
- 84 Here are some lessons drawn from the battle detailing the means that can help win victory in future conflicts (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). That is to: 1) stand firm, 2) mention God profusely, 3) act in accordance with the commands of God and His Messenger (ﷺ) (the Qur'an and the Sunnah), 4) maintain harmony and avoid discord, 5) remain steadfast and forbear (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Furūsiyyah*, pp. 505-506), 6) behave with due humbleness and dignity, and 7) have the best intentions at heart for the purpose of battle (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah*).
- 85 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Do not wish to meet your enemy, but if you do hold your ground" (al-Bukhārī: 3026, Muslim: 1741).

abundantly<sup>(86)</sup>, may you succeed. <sup>﴿46﴾</sup> And Obey Allah and His Messenger, do not disagree<sup>(87)</sup> then you would falter and lose your wind<sup>(88)</sup> and be steadfast—indeed Allah is with those who are steadfast. <sup>﴿47﴾</sup> Do not be like the ones who set out from the homelands, full of conceit and putting on an act for people<sup>(89)</sup>, turning ‘people’ away from the path of Allah—Allah is encompassing<sup>(90)</sup> of what they do.

<sup>﴿48﴾</sup> ‘Mention Muhammad’ When Satan prettified their deeds for them and said<sup>(91)</sup>:

كَثِيرًا لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ  
وَرَسُولَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوا فَتَفْشَلُوا وَتَذْهَبَ  
رِيحُكُمْ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾  
وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ  
بَطْرًا وَرِيَاءَ النَّاسِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَأَذَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ وَقَالَ

- 86 Upon meeting the enemy in battle, Believers are to engage in mentioning God (*dhikr Allāh*) with their hearts and tongues (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī); earnestly supplicating for Divine assistance (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*).
- 87 “Hold tightly to the rope of Allah all together, do not get splintered and remember Allah’s favour on you when you were enemies and He made your hearts join then you became brothers by His Grace...” (3: 103).
- 88 *Tadhhaba riḥukum* (lit. to lose your wind) is to lose purposefulness, will power and be unable to fight the enemy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 89 These are the Qurayshites (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah). When Abū Jahl, who was at the head of the Qurayshite army, was told that the caravan was spared and that they could turn back and head to Makkah again, he replied: “Nay, by God! Not until we drink from the watering places of Badr, slaughter camels, drink wine, the songstresses play their music to us and that all Arabs will talk about our great standing among them forever” (Ibn Kathīr).
- 90 God Almighty knows all about their stratagems. He keeps a record of everything and they will eventually be held accountable. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa’dī)
- 91 It is not exactly known or agreed upon how Satan communicated with the Qurayshites. He could have just whispered in their hearts (cf. al-Sa’dī, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Nabawīyyah*). However, a great number of exegetes relate a story (cf. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Ṭabarī; Ibn Ḥajar in *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*) deems it credible that was told by ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭalḥah whereby ‘Abdullāh

“None of all people can overcome you this day” and “I am a deliverer of yours!” When the two hosts gazed upon each other, he turned on his heels and said: “I disown you!”<sup>(92)</sup> I see that which you do not!<sup>(93)</sup> I fear Allah; Allah is severe in punishment!”<sup>(94)</sup> ‘Mention Muhammad’ When the hypocrites and those in whose hearts is disease<sup>(94)</sup> said: “These are surely hoodwinked by their religion!” But whoever puts his trust in Allah<sup>(95)</sup>, then Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

لَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ الْيَوْمَ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَإِنِّي جَارٌ  
لَّكُمْ فَلَمَّا تَرَأَتْ الْفِئْتَانِ نَكَصَ عَلَى  
عَقْبَيْهِ وَقَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنْكُمْ إِنِّي  
أَرَى مَا لَا تَرَوْنَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ وَاللَّهُ  
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٤٨﴾ إِذْ يَقُولُ الْمَصْفِقُونَ  
وَالَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ غَرَّ هَوَاهُمْ لَا يُدِينُهُمْ  
وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: “On the Day of Badr, Iblīs came with his banner at the head of an army of devils. He appeared in the form of a man from Banī Mudlij, namely Surāqah Ibn Mālik Ibn Ju’shum. He then said to the Associators: “None of all people can overcome you this day” and “I am a deliverer of yours!” When people built up their lines ‘in readiness for battle’, the Messenger (ﷺ) grabbed a handful of earth and threw it at the faces of the Associators and they fell back. Gabriel approached Iblīs while his hand was in the hand of one of the Associators. He suddenly pulled his hand and beat a hasty retreat along with his company. The man said: “Surāqah! You have just claimed to be our deliverer!” He replied: “I see that which you do not! I fear Allah; Allah is severe in punishment!” This he said when he saw the angels”: “*He promises them and makes them ever vainly wishful; Satan promises them nothing but delusion*” (4: 120).

- 92 “Like the example of Satan... who says to man: “Deny!” But when he Denies, he says: “I disown you! I fear Allah the Lord of all beings!” (59: 16).
- 93 It is reported that he saw the angels that came down to fight alongside the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa’dī).
- 94 This further underlines the fact that by mere worldly measures, the army of the Associators appeared by far to be the most likely to win, thus the hypocrites and those of failing Belief, who would usually keep their thoughts to themselves being afraid of requital, spoke from their hearts, convinced that the Believers would be annihilated on that day (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma’ād*, 3/162, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 95 “... whoever puts his trust in Allah, then He is sufficient for them. Certainly Allah achieves His Will. Allah has set a due measure for everything” (65: 3).

﴿50﴾ If only you could see ‘Muhammad’ when the angels take the lives of the Deniers beating their faces and their backsides, and ‘say to them’: “Taste you the Punishment of burning!”<sup>(96)</sup> ﴿51﴾ “That for what your hands have sent forth, verily Allah never deals ‘His’ servants unjustly.”<sup>(97)</sup> ﴿52﴾ ‘Just’ like the habitual ways of the people of Pharaoh and those ‘who came’ before them<sup>(98)</sup>; they Denied the Signs of Allah and Allah seized them ‘in Punishment’ for their sins<sup>(99)</sup>—indeed Allah is All-Powerful, severe in Punishment.

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ يَتَوَفَّى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَرَهُم وَذُفُّوا أَعْدَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿٥٠﴾ ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْت أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلْمٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ﴿٥١﴾ كَذَّابٌ ءَالٍ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَذْنُوبِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٥٢﴾

- 96 al-Ṭabarī opines that this was what the angel did and said to the Associators who perished in the Battle of Badr. Ibn Kathīr, on the other hand, sees it as being of general purport: “... if only you could see ‘Muhammad’ when the wrongdoers are in the throes of death and the angels stretch their hands to them ‘saying’: ‘Give up your souls. Today you will be rewarded the Punishment of degradation for saying what is false against Allah and snubbing His Signs’” (6: 93); “How ‘horrible’ will it be when the angels take their lives, beating their faces and their backsides?” (47: 27).
- 97 Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger said that God said: “My servants, I made injustice forbidden for Myself and I made it forbidden among you. Do not treat each other with injustice” (Muslim: 2577).
- 98 This is ‘the canon of the ancients’ (see Aya 38 above) who pitted themselves against God and His Messengers (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 99 “And the people of ‘Ād and Thamūd’ met a similar fate, which must be clear to you from their ‘ruined’ dwellings. Satan prettified their deeds to them, hindering them from the path, although they were capable of seeing. \*We’ also ‘destroyed’ Korah, Pharaoh, and Hāmān. Indeed, Mūsā had come to them with clear proofs, but they waxed arrogant in the land. Yet they could not escape ‘Us’. \*So We seized each ‘people’ for their sin: against some of them We sent a storm of stones, some were overtaken by a ‘mighty’ blast, some We caused the Earth to swallow, and some We drowned. Allah would not have treated them unjustly, but it was they who were unjust to themselves” (29: 38-40).

﴿53﴾ That for Allah would never alter a favour He bestows on a ‘certain’ people until they alter what is in themselves<sup>(100)</sup>— verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿54﴾ ‘Just’ like the habitual ways of the people of Pharaoh and those ‘who came’ before them<sup>(101)</sup>; they rejected the Signs of their Lord and We destroyed them for their sins and We drowned the people of Pharaoh; they all were unjust.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَذَّابٌ ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَهْلَكْتَهُمْ بَدُوبِهِمْ وَأَعْرَفْنَا ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَكُلَّ كَاۡنُفٍ ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾

﴿55﴾ <sup>(102)</sup> Indeed the worst of all the creatures<sup>(103)</sup> with Allah

إِنَّ شَرَّ ٱلذَّٰوَابِ عِنْدَ ٱللَّهِ

100 “But whoever exchanges the bounty of Allah ‘for Denial’ after it came to him, ‘will come to know’ that Allah is severe in Punishment” (2: 211); “‘Mention’ When your Lord proclaimed: “If you ‘people’ are grateful, I will certainly give you more. But if you Deny then surely My punishment is severe”” (14: 7); “And Allah presents an example: a city which was safe and secure, its provision coming to it in abundance from every location, but it met the favours of Allah with ungratefulness. So Allah made it taste the pall of hunger and fear for what they had been doing. \*And there had certainly come to them a Messenger from among themselves, but they denied him; so punishment overtook them while they were wrongdoers” (16: 112-113).

101 Repetition of the example of the earlier nations, prominent among whom are Pharaoh and his people, is to emphasize that what they thought was far away came to pass, especially in Badr, and that they are to take heed from it and ‘desist’. Otherwise they surely now know what is to come (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

102 This passage explains why they were ‘unjust’ and thus they deserved Divine punishment. For one thing, they doggedly Denied the Signs of God (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*): “... my son, do not Associate with Allah ‘in worship’. Indeed Association is a grave injustice” (31: 13).

103 “Indeed the worst of all the creatures with Allah are the deaf and dumb – those who cannot heed. \*Had Allah known any good in them, He would have made them listen; ‘even’ had He made them listen, they would have turned away, looking the other way” (8: 22-23); “We have indeed spawned for Hellfire many among the jinn and humans; theirs are hearts with which they comprehend naught, theirs are eyes with which they see naught and

are the ones who Denied and never do they Believe. <sup>(56)</sup> Among them are the ones with whom you 'Muhammad' forged 'peace' pacts, then they break their pact every time; never are they Mindful. <sup>(57)</sup> Whenever you encounter them in war set them as a fearsome example to those behind them, may they reflect<sup>(104)</sup>. <sup>(58)</sup> Whenever you 'Muhammad' fear<sup>(105)</sup> treachery from certain people, then cast 'their pact' to them 'so that all are' on level ground—indeed Allah Loves not the treacherous.

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ  
عَاهَدتَّ مِنْهُمْ ثُمَّ يَنْفُضُونَ عَهْدَهُمْ فِي  
كُلِّ مَرَّةٍ وَهُمْ لَا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَإِنَّمَا تَتَّقَنِهْمَ  
فِي الْحَرْبِ فَتَرِدْ بِهِمْ مَنْ خَلَفَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ  
يَدْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَإِنَّمَا تَخَافَتَ مِنْ قُوهِ  
خِيَانَةً فَأَلْبِسْهُمُ الْعَلِيَّةَ عَلَى سَوَاءٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ  
الْخَائِبِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

*theirs are ears with which they hear naught. Those are akin to livestock, nay but they are more at loss; these are the unmindful” (7: 179).*

104 The Messenger (ﷺ) was commanded to treat the treacherous, who thought little of the Believers and reneged on their peace pacts, with due severity. This is just requital for those who threaten peace and flippantly break this most serious and binding commitment. It also acts as a deterrent to others who might be tempted to do the same so that they think again about breaking their pacts with the Believers (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). This punishment is limited to the circumstance of actual war because a pact is to be honoured and upheld even though the other party could be treacherous and evasive (cf. al-Sa’dī).

105 ‘Fear’ that the other party may not uphold their commitment is not that which is based on mere surmization but here is rather that which is based on credible evidence and tell-tale signs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Ahkām al-Qur’ān*, 8/860).

Sulaym Ibn ‘Āmir narrated that: “Mu‘āwiyah (رضي الله عنه) ‘the Caliph’ had a peace pact with the Byzantine. While he was travelling through their lands, the term of the pact had elapsed and he raided them. A rider on his horse ‘came’ shouting: “Allah is the greatest! Honour and do not break ‘the pact!’” He was ‘Amr Ibn ‘Abasah (رضي الله عنه) so Mu‘āwiyah asked him about it and he replied: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “Whoever has a pact with some people, let him not come out of it, or modify it until its period has elapsed. Or he needs to cast it to them so that everyone is on level ground” ‘Upon hearing this’ Mu‘āwiyah pulled back along with his company” (Abū Dāwūd: 2759, al-Tirmidhī: 1580, al-Nasā’ī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*: 8679).

﴿59﴾ Let not the Deniers think they slipped away<sup>(106)</sup>; they can never frustrate 'Me'<sup>(107)</sup>.

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَبَقُوا إِنَّهُمْ لَا يُعْجِزُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

﴿60﴾<sup>(108)</sup> Prepare for them whatever you can of force<sup>(109)</sup> and steeds tethered<sup>(110)</sup>, to overawe with it Allah's enemy and your enemy, and others besides them that you know not<sup>(111)</sup>; Allah Knows them. <sup>(112)</sup>Whatever it is that you spend in the path of Allah will be paid back to you in full and you shall not be wronged<sup>(113)</sup>.

وَأَعِدُّوا لَهُمْ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ مِنْ قُوَّةٍ وَمِنْ رِبَاطِ الْخَيْلِ تُرْهَبُونَ بِهِمْ عَدُوَّ اللَّهِ وَعَدُوَّكُمْ وَءَاخِرِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَهُمُ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُهُمْ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

106 Given the immediate context, these are especially those who came out of Badr largely unscathed (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).

107 "Deem not those who Deny able to frustrate 'Allah' in the land; and their abode shall be the Fire; certainly evil is the resort!" (24: 57); "Or do those who commit evil deeds suppose that they will outstrip Us? Evil indeed is the judgement they make!" (29: 4).

108 The commandments in the previous passage, to be fierce in battle and to publicly denounce questionable pacts, will surely have consequences, thus the Messenger and the Believers are told here to prepare such likely forces as would make their enemies think twice before invading them (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān).

109 *Quwwah* is all which is helpful in battle, physical and mental power as well as weapons (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī). 'Uqbah Ibn 'Amir (رضي الله عنه) said: "I heard the Messenger of Allah say on the pulpit: "Prepare for them whatever you can of force"; verily 'force' is ranged weapons, verily 'force' is ranged weapons, verily 'force' is ranged weapons"" (Muslim: 1917).

110 *Ribāṭ al-khayl* refers to steeds tethered and readied for war (al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*). This is singled out of all the force that the Believing camp can muster for its special significance (cf. Ibn 'Āsūr); in those times, steeds of war epitomized sheer military prowess.

111 These are the hidden, lurking enemies that only God Knows about (cf. Riḍā).

112 Funds are necessarily required for the preparation of such a force; accordingly, Believers are called on and encouraged to donate charitably for this very worthy cause (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*).

113 "The similitude of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, is that of a grain 'when planted, out of' which sprouts seven ears; in every ear there are one hundred grains – Allah multiplies for whom He wishes,

﴿61﴾ (114) If they incline towards peace, incline towards it 'Muhammad' and put your trust in Allah—verily He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿62﴾ If they intend to trick you, then Allah is certainly sufficient for you<sup>(115)</sup>; He is the One Who braced you with His Help and with the Believers<sup>(116)</sup>. ﴿63﴾ He also made their hearts join 'harmoniously'<sup>(117)</sup>; had you 'Muhammad' spent all that is in the Earth, you would not have joined their hearts<sup>(118)</sup>. But Allah joined them—verily He is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

﴿٦١﴾ وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاجْتَحِ لَهَا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَإِنْ يَرِيدُوا أَنْ يَخْدَعُوكَ فَإِنَّ حَسْبَكَ اللَّهُ هُوَ الَّذِي آتَاكَ بِبَصْرِهِ وَبِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَالْفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ لَوْ أَنْفَقْتَ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَيْعًا مَآ آفَتَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ آفَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٤﴾

*Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. \*Those who 'sincerely' spend their wealth and do not thereafter mar what they spend with taunts and hurt; theirs is their 'great' reward with their Lord – they will have neither fear nor will they grieve” (2: 261-262).*

- 114 The Believers' show of force is meant mainly as a deterrent, but also as a cause for the enemy to let go of their belligerence and opt for peace (cf. al-Rāzī, Riḍā).
- 115 Even if this offer of the olive branch was mere deception, the Prophet (ﷺ) was to put his trust in God and accept it; fully trusting that God would spare him evil (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr): “*Is not Allah enough for His Servant?*” (39: 36).
- 116 These are two concrete examples of how God 'sufficed' the Prophet (ﷺ) (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 117 The joining of the hearts (*ta'lif al-qulūb*) of such people who are inherently socially fragmentary and inflammatory in nature, as the Arabians of that time were to stand around the Prophet (ﷺ) as an impregnable wall, is indeed a great Divine favour (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, al-Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 118 Such was the extent of the enmity that was rampant among them in the pre-Islamic era (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Abū al-Su'ūd): “*Hold tightly to the rope of Allah all together, do not get splintered and remember Allah's favour on you when you were enemies and He made your hearts join then you became brothers by His Grace; you were on the brink of a pit of Fire and He saved you from it...*” (3: 103).



﴿64﴾ O Prophet, Allah is sufficient for you and for the Believers who follow you<sup>(119)</sup>. ﴿65﴾ O Prophet, rouse the Believers to fight; <sup>(120)</sup>if there are twenty of you who are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred and if there are a hundred of you 'who are steadfast', they will overcome one thousand of the Deniers for their being people who grasp not<sup>(121)</sup>. ﴿66﴾ Now, Allah lightened 'your load' off of you 'for' He Knows that there is weakness in you; if there are a hundred of you who are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred and if there are a thousand of you, they will overcome two thousand with Allah's permission—Allah is indeed with the steadfast.

يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ حَسْبُكَ اللَّهُ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ  
 الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾ يَأْتِيهَا النَّبِيُّ حَرِيصَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
 عَلَى الْقِتَالِ إِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ عَشْرُونَ صَابِرُونَ  
 يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتِينَ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ مِائَةٌ  
 يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِأَنَّهُمْ  
 قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ أَلَنْ خَفَّفَ اللَّهُ عَنْكُمْ  
 وَعَلِمَ أَنَّ فِيكُمْ ضَعْفًا فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ  
 مِائَةٌ صَابِرَةٌ يَغْلِبُوا مِائَتَيْنِ وَإِنْ يَكُنْ  
 مِنْكُمْ أَلْفٌ يَغْلِبُوا أَلْفَيْنِ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ  
 مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

119 Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "Ḥasbunā Allahu wa ni'ma l-Wakīlu. (Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers) was said by Ibrāhīm when he was thrown into the fire. It was also said by Muhammad (ﷺ) when they said: "Those who 'when' people said to them: "People have regrouped for you, so fear them", their Belief' only' grew firmer and they said: "Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers"" (3: 173)" (al-Bukhārī: 4563).

120 Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "When: "...if there are twenty of you who are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred..." came down, it weighed heavy on Muslims, because it dictated that one person should not flee in the face of ten. Then alleviation came and Allah said: "Now Allah lightened 'your load' off of you 'for' He Knows your weakness; if there are a hundred of you who are steadfast, they will overcome two hundred...". When Allah lessened the number, He lessened an equal measure of steadfastness" (al-Bukhārī: 4653)

121 In reality, they know nothing about God and are not hopeful of His reward; knowing not the great reward that God has prepared for those who strive in His cause, they would not fight whole-heartedly fearing they might be killed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Sa'dī): "Do not think that those who got killed in the cause of Allah are dead. Nay but they are alive with their Lord 'being handsomely' provided for" (3: 169).

﴿67﴾ (122) No Prophet should have held captives until he strikes mighty<sup>(123)</sup> in the land. You 'Believers'<sup>(124)</sup> want the goods of the worldly life and Allah wants the Hereafter—Allah is indeed All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

مَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَكُونَ لَهُ أَسْرَى حَتَّىٰ  
يُشْرَخَ فِي الْأَرْضِ تُرِيدُونَ عَرَصَ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ  
يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٧﴾

- 122 This passage turns to the affairs of Deniers who were taken into captivity by the Prophet (ﷺ) in the wake of Badr. The reason for revelation as narrated by ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) is that ‘Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) said: “When the captives were taken, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to Abū Bakr and ‘Umar: “What do you think about these captives?” Abū Bakr said: “Prophet of Allah, they are our cousins and clan. I see that you take ransom from them. That will help buttress us against the Deniers. May Allah guide them to Islam”. Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “What do you think of it son of al-Khaṭṭāb?” I said: “No, by Allah, Messenger of Allah! I do not go with Abū Bakr’s suggestion. I see that you allow us to strike their necks; you allow ‘Alī to strike the neck of ‘his brother’ ‘Aqīl and allow me to strike the neck of so and so (he named a relative of his) and I strike his neck. These are the heads of Denial and its champions”. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) liked what Abū Bakr said and did not like what I said. Then I came the day after and found the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr weeping, and I said: “Messenger of Allah, tell me why are you crying, you and your Companion? If I find reason, I will cry along with you, but if I do not find it, I will cry for your crying!” The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “I cry because of the ransom your friends proposed to take; I was shown their ‘would have been’ punishment under this tree!” ‘Pointing to’ A tree that was not far from the Prophet (ﷺ). And Allah sent down: “No Prophet should have held captives until he strikes mighty in the land... that is lawful and good...” So, Allah made the spoils lawful for them” (Muslim: 1763).
- 123 *Yuthkhina fī al-‘arḍ* that is until he has the upper hand through eliminating his enemies, who are bent on putting out the light of guidance, by devastating them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Abū Ḥātim, al-Sa‘dī): “When you meet those who Deny, strike their necks; then, when you have struck them mighty, tighten the bonds ‘taking them as captives’. Then free them graciously or hold them for ransom, till war lays down its burdens...” (47: 4).
- 124 al-Qurtubī relates that most exegetes are in agreement that the ones intended here are among the Companions who argued for taking ransom and that the Noble Messenger (ﷺ) is not included in the address (cf. also Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

﴿68﴾ Had it not been for a decree that had been passed<sup>(125)</sup>, a severe punishment would have touched you for what you took. ﴿69﴾ Eat then of what you gained<sup>(126)</sup>, that is lawful and good, and be Mindful of Allah—verily Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿70﴾ O Prophet, say to the captives under your hands: “Should Allah Know ‘any’ good in your hearts<sup>(127)</sup>, He will grant you better than what was taken from you, and forgive you—Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”. ﴿71﴾ But if they intend to betray<sup>(128)</sup> you ‘Muhammad’ then surely they had betrayed Allah<sup>(129)</sup> in the aforetime and He got ‘you’ the better of them—Allah is indeed All-Knowing, All-Wise.

لَوْلَا كِتَابٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ سَبَقَ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيمَا أَخَذْتُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا عَمِلْتُمْ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٩﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِمَن فِي أَيْدِيكُمْ مِنَ الْأَسْرَىٰ إِنَّ يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ خَيْرًا يُّؤْتِكُمْ خَيْرًا مِّمَّا أَخَذَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَإِن يُرِيدُوا خِيَانَتَكَ فَقَدْ خَانُوا اللَّهَ مِن قَبْلُ فَأَمْكَنَ مِنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾

125 This ‘decree’ (*kitāb*) is that: God had written in the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*) that He would make taking spoils and ransom permissible, that He would not punish anyone for a matter which had not been thoroughly explained previously, and that He would not punish anyone who attended Badr with the Messenger (ﷺ) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

126 This includes both the spoils and the ransom (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Gains of war were not rendered lawful to any before us. That because Allah, Glorified and Exalted is He, saw our destitution and helplessness and made it palatable for us” (al-Bukhārī: 3124, Muslim: 1747).

127 *Khayran* (lit. any good) here is a sincere will to embrace Islam (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*). The Messenger (ﷺ) is told to address them thus by way of calling them to Islam (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Nabawīyyah*).

128 That is, if these captives were deceptive and only said what they thought would placate the Messenger (ﷺ) such as: “We Believe in you”, “We testify that you are Allah’s Messenger”, “We shall be sincere to you and align ourselves with you” (cf. al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).

129 By being ungrateful to Him, Denying and rebelling against Him before the Battle of Badr (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa’dī).

﴿72﴾ (130) Verily those who have Believed, migrated and strove in the path of Allah with their money and their lives<sup>(131)</sup>, and the ones who welcomed in their fold and supported<sup>(132)</sup>; these they are the allies<sup>(133)</sup> of one another. And those who have Believed but did not migrate, their patronage is not onerous on you in the least until they migrate<sup>(134)</sup>.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ ءَاوَأُوا وَنَصَرُوا أُولَٰئِكَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يُهَاجِرُوا مَا لَكُم مِّن وَلِيَّتِهِم مِّن شَيْءٍ حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا

130 This final passage emphasizes and confirms the bond (*al-wilāyah*) that existed between Believers; united they stand. The Messenger (ﷺ) was keen on establishing a bond of brotherhood between the Makkān immigrants (*al-Muhājirūn*) and the Madinan natives, the Helpers (*al-Anṣār*), which was extremely significant especially during these early days of the establishment of the Muslim state; so much so that they were much closer to each other than their own flesh and blood. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When immigrants first came to Madinah, a Helper would inherit an immigrant, rather than his blood relatives, because of the brotherhood that the Prophet (ﷺ) established among them” (al-Bukhārī: 6747).

131 These are the most honourable immigrant Companions (رضي الله عنهم) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

132 These are the most honourable Helper Companions (رضي الله عنهم), who welcomed the Messenger (ﷺ) and the immigrant in their fold, made them dwell in their own homes, shared their possessions with them and unreservedly fought alongside them (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

133 *Awliyā’* i.e. they are each others’ aides and helpers against their foes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān): “*The Believing men and the Believing women; they are each others’ allies...*” (9: 71). Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The Messenger (ﷺ) said: “A Believer to a Believer is a single construction; they brace each other!” Then he (ﷺ) ‘demonstratively’ joined his fingers” (al-Bukhārī: 2446, Muslim: 2585); al-Nu‘mān Ibn Bashīr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “The example of the Believers’ care, sympathy and mercy for each other is that of a ‘single’ body; when an organ ails, the rest of the body calls upon each other to stay awake all night and feel feverish” (al-Bukhārī: 6011, Muslim: 2586).

134 Believers acquitted of responsibility for the protection and aid of those Believers who remained in their lands and did not make the journey to the land of Islam (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī). In these early days, this was a really important move to make (cf. 4: 97 for more on this issue).

But if they seek your support over 'a matter of' religion<sup>(135)</sup> then you have to come to their help unless against some people with whom you have a binding agreement<sup>(136)</sup>—Allah is indeed All-Seeing of what you do. ﴿73﴾ Those who Deny are allies of one another<sup>(137)</sup>; but if you 'Believers' do not abide by it<sup>(138)</sup>,

وَإِنْ أَسْتَصْرَوْكُمْ فِي الْدِينِ فَلَا يُعْذِرُكُمْ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِبَعْضِهِمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٌ ۗ أَلَا تَفْعَلُونَ

- 135 This is an exception from the earlier acquittal of responsibility whereby if the Believers are called upon to help their fellow Believers who did not migrate, over a matter of religion, then they have to come to their aid (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shawkānī).
- 136 This caveat is thus stipulated so that the Believers, who are of great moral standing, are honouring of their pledges (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sam'ānī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 137 This is to further cement the bond of the Believers among themselves, so that they would abandon their other alliances with the Deniers, who are ever allied with each other against the Believers (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Tha'ālibī): "Fight the Associators as a whole as they fight you as a whole..." (9: 36).
- 138 That is taking each other as allies abandoning all bonds that tie them with the Deniers (cf. al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-'Adhb al-Namīr, al-Muyassar, al-Mukhtaṣar): "No Believers shall take the Deniers as allies rather than the Believers. Whoever does this, he has nothing to do with Allah; except when you seek refuge from them. Allah warns you 'to beware' of Himself – to Allah shall be the 'final' return" (3: 28); "You who Believe, whoever of you renounces his religion, then Allah will 'soon enough' bring forth 'in your stead' people whom He Loves and they 'truly' love Him, lenient to the Believers, stern towards the Deniers, they strive hard in the path of Allah fearing no reproach from anyone who reproaches; that is the Grace of Allah, He grants it to whoever He wishes – Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. \*Indeed your 'true' ally is none but Allah, His Messenger and the Believers; they keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms and 'humbly' prostrate 'themselves'. \*Whoever takes Allah, His Messenger and the Believers as allies then the party of Allah are ever-victorious. \*You who Believe, do not take those who playfully take your religion as 'an object of' mockery and scorn among those who were given the Book before you and the Deniers as allies – be Mindful of Allah if only you were 'truly' Believers" (5: 54-57).

there will be trial in the land and great corruption<sup>(139)</sup>. ﴿74﴾ Those who have Believed, migrated and strove in the path of Allah, and the ones who welcomed in their fold and supported; these they are the true Believers<sup>(140)</sup>, theirs is forgiveness and generous provision. ﴿75﴾ Those ‘who have’ Believed afterwards, migrated and strove with you ‘Believers’ are also of your own<sup>(141)</sup>; and close relatives have more of a right to each other ‘as’ in the Book of Allah<sup>(142)</sup>—verily Allah has knowledge of everything.

تَكُنْ فِتْنَةً فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ كَبِيرٌ ﴿٧٤﴾  
وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
وَالَّذِينَ آوَوْا وَتَصَرَّوْا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ  
حَقًّا لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَالَّذِينَ  
آمَنُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا مَعَكُمْ  
فَأُولَئِكَ مِنْكُمْ وَأُولُوا الْأَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلَى  
بِبَعْضٍ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾



- 139 Lack of unity is indeed great corruption; Deniers will have the upper hand and manage to drive people away from the path of God (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). The evil that comes from this is immeasurable (cf. al-Sa‘ dī).
- 140 “Believers are none but the ones who Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and afterward do not doubt but they strive with their wealth and their lives in the path of Allah; these are the truthful ones” (49: 15).
- 141 “And the first forerunners ‘to the Faith’ among the immigrants and the Helpers and those who followed them with good deeds; Allah is Pleased with them and they are pleased with Him, and He has prepared for them gardens under which rivers flow, wherein they will abide forever – that is the great triumph” (9: 100); “And those who came after them say: “Our Lord! Forgive us and our brothers who preceded us to Faith, and make no rancour in our hearts toward those who Believe. Our Lord! Truly You are All-Kind, Most Merciful”” (59: 10).
- 142 This is with regards to inheritance in particular (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*). It is meant to clear up the point about Believers inheriting each other by virtue of their strong bond of alliance (cf. al-Rāzī).





سُورَةُ التَّوْبَةِ

*al-Tawbah*  
(Repentance)





## al-Tawbah (Repentance)

**Title:** potentially there are up to 14 names for this sura (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, *Muṣḥaf al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah*). However, only two of these figure large: *al-Tawbah* (cf. Abū ‘Ubaydah, *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*, p. 130, al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Awsaṭ*: 1330) and *Barā’ah* (lit. declaration of non-responsibility over an agreement; cf. al-Bukhārī: 4605, Muslim: 1618) thus named after the first word in the sura (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā’ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*, 1/227, Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Mukhtaṣar*). However, *al-Tawbah* is the more common of the two. It is titled thus because the theme of ‘repentance’ (*tawbah*, as manifested by the derivatives of the root *t-w-b*, and mentioned 17 times) is eminently recurrent in the sura (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, al-Fayrūzābādī, *Baṣā’ir Dhawī al-Tamyīz*, 1/227, Ibn ‘Āshūr, *al-Muyassar*). Between the firmness of the assertion of existence and the open door of repentance lies the essence of the *Barā’ah-cum-al-Tawbah*.

**Merit:** it, along with the earlier sura, *al-Anfāl*, make up the last one of the meritorious first seven lengthy suras of the Qur’an (cf. introductions to Suras 4 and 8). al-Barā’ Ibn ‘Āzib (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The last sura of the Qur’an that came down is *Barā’ah*” (al-Bukhārī: 4364, Muslim: 4364).

**Theme:** there are three major themes of this sura: 1) the course of conduct and action to take when dealing with disruptive elements of society: the Associators, the People of the Book and the hypocrites; 2) blowing the cover of the hypocrites, the remaining and most dangerous enemy element, for their seriously inimical role in society, and 3) accounting for many of the rulings and directions for the emerging Muslim state.

**Key:** this sura cannot be properly understood without a thorough grounding in the historical and social events that were in order at the time of its revelation. For one, it is telling to know that this was the last sura of the Qur’an to come down. It was revealed, piecemeal, after the Tabuk Expedition during the 9<sup>th</sup> year of Hijrah, which the Messenger (ﷺ) and the army of Believers undertook to face up to the northern threat of the Byzantine Empire. This after having seized Makkah, the Arabian metropolis, on the previous year and which ended their long, drawn out

malignant tug of war, one that threatened the Believing community's very existence. The sura calls Believers to establish their state, the stronghold of Islam, on stable grounds and to eliminate or sideline all threats that may jeopardise or compromise stability and its rising to its full potential. The accounts of the deep seated hostility, which reveals existential estrangement, and lack of respect for pacts of mutually binding nature; the lessons drawn from the Tabuk Expedition; the call to take up arms with resoluteness; the detailed exposé of the different segments of society and the all-embracing call for repentance; all fall under one overall goal; if the Believers were to secure for themselves a domain where their religion ruled unthreatened, they would have to be prepared for battle.



﴿1﴾ 'This is' A repudiation<sup>(1)</sup> 'declared' by Allah and His Messenger to those of the Associators with whom you have forged pacts. ﴿2﴾ Roam around then 'you Associators' in the land for four months<sup>(2)</sup> and know that you

بَرَاءَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِنَ  
الْمُشْرِكِينَ ۖ فَسِجُّوهُمُ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ  
أَشْهُرٍ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّهُمْ

- ❖ It is notable that this sura, of all the suras of the Qur'an, is not preceded by the usual opening statement, known as *al-basmalah*: "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful". Scholars are of different opinions about the reason behind this. Ibn Kathīr says: "One is not to recite the *al-basmalah* at the beginning of it '*al-Tawbah*' because the 'honourable' Companions did not write it down at the beginning of this sura in the canonical codex on the behest of the leader of the Believers, 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān (رضي الله عنه)" (cf. also Ibn Hajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, 4/101). It is reported that 'Uthmān Ibn 'Affān (رضي الله عنه) said: "Both *al-Anfāl* and *Barā'ah* were called at the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), *al-qarīnatayn* (lit. the two conjoined suras). This is why I included them both in the seven lengthy suras 'in the Uthmanic codex' and did not write: "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful" 'at the beginning of *al-Tawbah*'" (al-Naḥḥās, *al-Nāsikh wa al-Mansūkh*, 3/208, also al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*, 7/327; other opinions also exist).
- 1 The sura begins with this unqualified declaration of non-responsibility for the pacts that the Muslims, under the leadership of the Messenger (ﷺ), had with the Associators of Arabia (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-'Arabī, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*), announcing thus that the upper hand in the land is now for the Believers (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr). Among the reasons behind this unequivocal declaration and the four months reprieve are: 1) so that the Associators would think deeply about their state of affairs and be ready for what was to come; 2) acquitting the Believers from any responsibility incumbent on the severance of any agreement and 3) the Messenger (ﷺ) intended to perform pilgrimage (later known as the Farewell Pilgrimage) the next year and he did not want to witness the custom, outright vice (cf. 7: 28), of people circumambulating around the Ka'bah naked (cf. al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Nabawīyyah*).
- 2 They were afforded unrestricted freedom of movement for four months (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī). This, so that they could find themselves a safe place to depart to (cf. Ibn Kathīr).

shall not frustrate Allah<sup>3</sup>) and that Allah shall disgrace the Deniers.

<sup>3</sup> And a proclamation<sup>4</sup> from Allah and His Messenger on the greater day of pilgrimage that Allah is disassociated from the Associators and His Messenger 'is disassociated from them too'. But if you repent then it is better for you and if you turn away then know that you shall not frustrate Allah; give tidings to those who Deny of a painful punishment.

<sup>4</sup> Except those with whom you have forged pacts and have not failed you in anything 'agreed' nor lent support to anyone against you<sup>5</sup>), then observe their pact for them until the end of its term—verily Allah loves the Mindful.

عَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْزِي الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣﴾

وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ إِن تَابْتُمْ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ عَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٤﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنْقُصُوكُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا فَأَتِمُّوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَىٰ مُدَّتِهِمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٥﴾

3 This is a warning that should they choose to stick to their ways, even if the Believers are not to touch them, God's punishment is ever-close. That is, they are encouraged to repent (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī).

4 This proclamation (*adhān*) was to be delivered to all people, both the Believers and Deniers, when they are gathered from all parts of Arabia on the great day of pilgrimage, the day on which people slaughter their sacrifices (*yawm al-naḥr*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī): "Whenever you 'Muhammad' fear treachery from certain people, then cast 'their pact' to them 'so that all are' on level ground—indeed Allah loves not the treacherous" (8: 58). Ḥumayd Ibn 'Abdulrahmān Ibn 'Awf narrated that Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said: "Abū Bakr sent me on that day along with other announcers to announce to people in Mina on *yawm al-naḥr* that: no Associator shall perform pilgrimage after this year and no naked person shall 'hereafter' circumambulate around the Ka'bah..." (al-Bukhārī: 4655, Muslim: 1347).

5 Those of the Deniers who upheld the terms of agreement in whole and did not lend support to the warring enemies of the Believers were to be allowed until the agreed date of the agreement has come to pass. This is an exception from the four months reprieve that was announced (cf. al-Wāḥidī, al-Basīṭ, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-'Adhb al-Namūr).

﴿5﴾ <sup>6</sup>When the sacrosanct months are drawn away, kill then the Associators wherever you find them, seize them and enclose them, and lie for them in wait in every lookout. But if they repent<sup>7</sup>, keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms then let them go their way—verily Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿6﴾ Should any of the Associators seek your protection ‘Muhammad’<sup>8</sup>, then grant him protection, may he listen to the words of Allah,

فَإِذَا انسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ فَاقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصِرُواهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصَدٍ فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾ وَإِن أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّى يَسْمَعَ كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ

6 This is what needed to take place after the given four months period had elapsed. Now that fighting between the two camps had resumed, Believers were to take any (cf. al-Suyūṭī, *al-Iklīl*, p. 138, Ibn ‘Āshūr) of the necessary measures needed to ensure that their campaign paid dividends: 1) to kill them wherever they were found; 2) take them captive; 3) tightly enclose them in their strongholds; 4) keep a vigilant eye out for them in every watch post (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah*).

Some prominent scholars of Islam are of the opinion that this applies especially to combatant Associators who pose a threat to Muslims (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, Ibn al-‘Arabī, *Ahkām al-Qur‘ān*, al-Baidāwī, *Anwār al-Tanzīl*, al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī*, al-Nasafī, *Madārik al-Tanzīl*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah*): “They ask you about the sacrosanct month ‘whether there is’ fighting during it! Say: “Fighting in it is grave”; ‘but’ turning ‘people’ away from the path of Allah, Denying Him and ‘preventing access to’ the Sanctified Mosque, and driving its people away from it are graver before Allah—surely trial is more grievous than killing. They will keep on fighting you until they turn you back from your religion, if they could...” (2: 217). The next few ayas reveal who these really are and what they did to deserve such retaliatory measures.

7 That is, abandon Association and become Believers themselves (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*), so that the cause of their belligerence is eliminated (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah*).

8 Even if any of the combatant enemies sought asylum (*istijārah*), he would be granted it; the person would be delivered the Message of the Qur‘ān but not coerced into accepting it. Thereafter, if he chooses not to accept it, he will be set free under a cover of security to reach the land where he feels safe (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

then deliver him to a place of safety, that for them being people who know not<sup>(9)</sup>. ﴿7﴾ How can there be a pact for the Associators with Allah and with His Messenger!<sup>(10)</sup> Except those with whom you have forged a pact at the Sanctified Mosque<sup>(11)</sup>; as long as they remain upright to you 'Believers', then remain upright to them—verily Allah loves the Mindful. ﴿8﴾ How 'can it be'<sup>(12)</sup>, when if they were to have the upper hand over you, they would have no respect for either kinship or oaths concerning you! They placate you with their mouths<sup>(13)</sup>,

ثُمَّ أْبَلِغْهُ مَا مَنَّهُ، ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧﴾ كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ فَمَا اسْتَقْتَمُوا لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٨﴾ كَيْفَ وَإِن يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ لَا يَرْقُبُوا فِيكُمْ إِلَّا وَاذِمَّةً يُرْضُونَكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ

- 9 Their belligerence and animosity stems from the fact they know nothing about the religion of God (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*); people are enemies to what they do not know!
- 10 Since some might wonder why their pledge was denounced, it is explained here, especially in the next aya, that these were dead set on betrayal and aggression (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 11 This is the Treaty of Hdaybiyah which was sealed in the environs of the Sanctified Mosque (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 12 The exclamation is repeated here with an explanation (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*); should circumstances turn to the Associators' advantage, they would be ruthless with the Believers, sparing not the slightest thought to considerations of any form of relationship that tied them with the Believers (*illan*) or word of honour (*dhimmah*) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).
- 13 However, now that the fact of the matter being that the Believers are the ones who are in a stronger position, the Associators try to appease them, only scantily hiding the pure hatred which their hearts are full of. Elsewhere, God vividly describes this state of affairs: "You who Believe, do not take as 'intimate' confidants anyone who is not of your own: they will stop at nothing to cause you destruction; they wish you hardship; hatred reeks from their mouths but what their breasts conceal is 'much' greater. We have explained the signs clearly for you, if only you are perceptive. \*Here you are, you love them but they do not love you; you Believe in the whole Book; 'but' when they meet you they say: "We Believe!" yet when they are

but their hearts 'vehemently' refuse; indeed most of them are transgressors<sup>(14)</sup>.

﴿9﴾ (15) They traded off the Signs of Allah for a pittance<sup>(16)</sup> and hence turned 'people' away from His path<sup>(17)</sup>—sordid indeed what they used to 'persistently' commit. ﴿10﴾ They respect neither kinship nor oaths concerning any Believer; these are the real aggressors!<sup>(18)</sup> ﴿11﴾ But if they repent, keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms then 'they are' your brothers in religion<sup>(19)</sup>; We expound the Signs for people who know<sup>(20)</sup>.

وَتَأْتِي قُلُوبُهُمْ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨﴾

أَشْرَوْا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَصَدُّوا عَن سَبِيلِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩﴾  
لَا يَرْقُبُونَ فِي مُؤْمِنٍ إِلَّا أَوْلَادَ مَنَّهُ وَأَوْلِيَاءَهُ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ وَنَفَصِلَ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

alone they bite their fingertips out of rage at you. Say 'Muhammad': "Die of your rage"; Allah knows what lurks in the chests! \*Should a good thing come your way, they become saddened by it, and it elates them if a calamity befalls you. But if you forbear and are Mindful you will not be harmed in the least by their guile—Allah encompasses what they do" (3: 118-120).

- 14 They cannot be trusted because they constantly renege on their pledges, break their promises and do not uphold their word of honour (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī): "Among them are the ones with whom you 'Muhammad' forged 'peace' pacts, then they break their pact every time; never are they Mindful" (8: 56).
- 15 More explicatory reasons are given here as to why these should be sidelined (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 16 Although these community leaders came to know full well, especially after the Conquest of Makkah, the truthfulness of the Message, they preferred the worldly gains they reaped by virtue of their deviance (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 17 In order to maintain the status quo and their source of income, they barred their folks from embracing the call and blocked their way to it (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 18 So much so that they would not think twice about inflicting harm on anyone who was a Believer (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī), irrespective of all ties and pledges (cf. al-Naḥḥās, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*).
- 19 No matter how vile their deeds were the door of repentance is open with no repercussions (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 20 Those who traded God's Signs for a pittance, realize that it is the Truth, and hence they are to think again (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).



﴿12﴾ But if they revoke their oaths hence 'taken' and slander your religion, then fight the heads of Denial – indeed they honour not their 'binding' oaths – so that they may desist<sup>(21)</sup>.

﴿13﴾ <sup>(22)</sup> Would you not fight 'those' folks who revoked their oaths, were intent on expelling the Messenger<sup>(23)</sup>; being the ones who started it off against you first! Do you fear them? Then Allah is more worthy that you should fear Him<sup>(24)</sup>—that is if only you were 'truly' Believers. ﴿14﴾ Fight them; Allah will make them suffer at your hands, disgrace them, grant you victory over them, heal the hearts of 'some' Believing folks<sup>(25)</sup>,

وَإِنْ نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ  
وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أئِمَّةَ الْكُفْرِ  
إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَالَهُمْ بِتَيْهَتِهِمْ ﴿١٢﴾

أَلَا تَقَاتِلُونَ قَوْمًا نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ  
وَهُمْوَأُ بِإِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ وَهُمْ بَدءُوكُمْ  
أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ فَآخَضُونَهُمْ فَأَلَّاهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ  
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ قَاتِلُوهُمْ بَعْدَ بَيْعِهِمْ  
اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ وَيَبْصُرْ كُورِعَالِيهِمْ  
وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤﴾

21 This is the purpose of fighting; to curb evil and make the road to virtue and Truth easy to reach and follow (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā).

22 Here the Believers are encouraged and provided with further reasons as to why their campaign is legitimate and justified.

23 Symbolic of the forces of darkness driving away the source of guidance who, instead, merited the greatest respect. Many exegetes (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn Kathīr) are of the opinion that this alludes to their plotting to expel him from Makkah (cf. 8: 30), however others (cf. Ibn 'Atīyyah, Ibn Abū Zamaṇīn, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'Azīz*, Ibn 'Āshūr) see that they also plotted to expel the Messenger (ﷺ) from Madinah. It shows how determined these were on destabilizing the Islamic state by targeting its head figure: "And surely they purposed to unsettle you from the land that they might expel you from it, but then they would not have survived after you 'had left' except for a little while" (17: 76)

24 "It is indeed Satan sowing fear of his allies. Do not fear them but fear Me, if you are 'true' Believers" (3: 175).

25 This could mean all the dispossessed who were subjected to oppression and were long aggressed against (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr). However, exegetes are of the opinion (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-'Adhb al-Namīr*) that these are the Banū Khuzā'ah clan, the allies of the Messenger (ﷺ) who were

﴿15﴾ and dispel the bitterness of their hearts. Allah relents on whoever He wishes<sup>(26)</sup>—Allah is indeed All-Knowing, All-Wise. ﴿16﴾ Or you ‘Believers’ thought that you would be left ‘alone’ ere Allah Knows<sup>(27)</sup> those of you who strove and did not take any, besides Allah, nor the Messenger, nor the Believers as bosom friends<sup>(28)</sup>—Allah is indeed Knowledgeable of whatever you do.

﴿17﴾ <sup>(29)</sup>It is not for the Associators to ‘devoutly’ tend<sup>(30)</sup> Allah’s places of prostration,

وَيُدْهِبُ عَذَابَ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَن تُتْرَكُوا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَا رَسُولِهِ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلِجَنَّةٍ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمُرُوا مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ

under his protection as per the Hodaybiyah Treaty, whom the Qurayshites and their allies, the Banū Bakr clan, had mercilessly slaughtered and traumatised, thus violating their pact with the Messenger (ﷺ).

- 26 Whoever repents of these fervent Deniers, God will accept his repentance (cf. *al-Muyassar*).
- 27 An all-evident knowledge, seen by all, on which reward and punishment are based (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn al-Jawzī): “Allah would not have left the Believers as you were, until He sorted out the bad from the good...” (3: 179); “Do people think they will be left alone after saying: “We Believe” without being put to trial?” (29: 2); “And We shall test you until We know those among you who strive ‘in the path of Allah’ and those who are patient, and We shall verify your proclamations” (47: 31).
- 28 An inner circle of close confidants (*walījah*) among the Deniers with whom they align themselves and to whom they reveal the Believers’ secrets (cf. 5: 51-53, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 29 This is in response to anyone who raises a point about the idolaters’ doing seemingly good deeds in response to God’s command of disowning them (cf. al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 30 *‘Imārat al-masājid* (tending places of prostration) is to take care of them and look after their needs. *‘Imārah* comes from the root *‘-m-r* which denotes maintaining longevity (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Ibn Rajab (*Fath al-Bārī*, 2/481) notes that tending places of prostration has two senses. Firstly, materially by building, looking after, and restoring them. Secondly, nonmaterially by praying, mentioning God, reciting the Qur’an and performing acts of devotional worship. He concludes, citing unanimity, that this second sense is what is meant in the aya here.

while they bear witness against themselves of Denial<sup>(31)</sup>. These, their deeds will come to nothing and in Hellfire they abide eternally<sup>(32)</sup>. ﴿18﴾ (33)None truly devoutly tends Allah's places of prostration except who Believes in Allah, the Last Day, keeps up the Prayer, gives out the prescribed alms and fears none but Allah<sup>(34)</sup>; may these very well be among the guided<sup>(35)</sup>.

شَاهِدِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنفُسِهِمْ بِالْكُفْرِ أُولَٰئِكَ  
حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ وَفِي النَّارِهِمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٨﴾  
إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مِنْ ءَامِنٍ يَلَّهِ  
وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَى الرَّكْعَةَ  
وَلَمْ يَخْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَعَسَىٰ أُولَٰئِكَ أَن يَكُونُوا  
مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٨﴾

- 31 They did so by both their words and deeds. They installed idols in and around the Sanctified Mosque, even inside the Ka'bah itself, prayed to them and performed devotional acts of worship in their names, thus Associated them with God Almighty (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr). Effectively, they bore witness against themselves that they are Deniers: “Verily pure religion is owed to Allah alone. Those who take allies besides Him say”: “We worship them only so that they may bring us nearer to Allah...” (39: 3)
- 32 “Whosoever desires the life of this world and its adornment, We shall pay them in full for their deeds therein, and therein they will be deprived none of their due. \*They are those for whom there shall be naught in the Hereafter but the Fire. Whatsoever they had crafted therein shall come to naught, and vain was that which they used to do” (11: 15-16).
- 33 This perspective sets the matter aright and hands guardianship over the Sanctified Mosque to its rightful owners (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).
- 34 “Truly places of prostration are for Allah alone, so do not pray to anyone other than Allah” (72: 18); “That light shines in houses of worship which Allah has ordered to be raised, and where His Name is mentioned. He is glorified there morning and evening \*by men who are not distracted, either by trade nor sale, from mentioning Allah, keeping up the Prayer, and give out the prescribed alms, fearing a Day when hearts and eyes will turn over” (24: 36-37). ‘Uthmān Ibn ‘Affān (رضي الله عنه) said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: “Whoever builds a mosque seeking none but the Face of Allah, Allah will build him the like of it in Paradise” (al-Bukhārī: 450, Muslim: 533); Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “There will be Seven types whom Allah will shade on the Day of Judgement, when there is no shade but His... and a man whose heart is attached to mosques...” (al-Bukhārī: 6806, Muslim: 1031).
- 35 Their guidedness will lead them to Paradise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Baghawī).

﴿19﴾ Do you 'people' deem alike 'your' providing water for pilgrims and 'outwardly' tending the Sanctified Mosque, and who Believes in Allah and the Last Day and strives in Allah's path!<sup>(36)</sup> They are never equal before Allah—Allah never guides the unjust people.

﴿20﴾ <sup>(37)</sup> Verily those who have Believed, migrated and striven in the path of Allah with their money and their lives are greater in rank before Allah—these are the 'true' winners<sup>(38)</sup>. ﴿21﴾ Allah gives them the glad tidings of a Mercy from Him, Pleasure and Gardens in which theirs is everlasting bliss<sup>(39)</sup>.

﴿١٩﴾ أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَجَاهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَوُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

﴿٢٠﴾ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ أَكْبَرُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَعَلَتْ لَهُمْ فِيهَا نَجْمًا مَّقِيمًا ﴿٢١﴾

- 36 This is a rebuttal of the Qurayshites who took special pride in being responsible for maintaining the Sanctified Mosque and providing water for pilgrims. Real pride lies in purity of Faith, and sincere acts of self denial (cf. al-Ṭabari): “*Or do those who perpetrate evil deeds suppose that We will make them like those who have Believed and do righteous deeds, so that their lives and deaths will be the same? How bad their judgement is!*” (45: 21).
- 37 This passage spells out and accentuates the special privilege of the true Believers. The truly humble, devout Believers by far outweigh, in the Sight of Allah, the characteristically arrogant who think that their so-called privileges, of being historically the guardians of the Sanctified Mosque, make them better than anyone else (cf. al-Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah). Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Do not utter profanity against my Companions, should any of you spend ‘charitably’ the alike of ‘Mount’ Uḥud in gold, that would not come close to equalling a bucket ‘charitably spent’ by any of them; not even half of that!” (al-Bukhārī: 3673, Muslim: 2540).
- 38 “*The dweller of the Fire and the dweller of Paradise are not equal; the dweller of Paradise who are the ‘true’ winners*” (59: 20).
- 39 “*My servants, there is no fear for you Today, nor will you grieve* \* - ‘those’ who Believed in Our Signs and ‘devoutly’ submitted ‘to Us’ - \*enter Paradise, you and your spouses, rejoicing. \*Dishes and goblets of gold will be passed around them with all that their souls desire and their eyes delight in.

﴿22﴾ They last therein forever— verily with Allah lies a great reward.

﴿23﴾ (40) You who Believe, do not hold your fathers and brothers as allies should they prefer Denial over Belief. Whoever of you takes them as allies, then these are the 'real' wrongdoers. ﴿24﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "If your fathers, children, brothers, spouses, clans, 'hard' earned wealth, a trade that you fear decline for and abodes you are pleased with are dearer to you than Allah, His Messenger<sup>(41)</sup> and striving in His path, then lie in wait until Allah brings His command 'to pass'<sup>(42)</sup>—Allah never guides the transgressing people.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ  
عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا ءَابَاءَكُمْ  
وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ ءَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ  
عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ فَاُولَٰئِكَ  
هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ إِن كَانَ ءَابَاؤُكُمْ  
وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ  
وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ  
تَخْتَمُونَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسَٰكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا  
أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ  
فِي سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهَ  
بِأَمْرٍ ءُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَٰسِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

*\*There you will forever remain. \*Such is the Paradise which you have been made to inherit because of what you used to do; \*there is abundant fruit in it for you to eat” (43: 68-73).*

- 40 al-Rāzī opines that this aya comes in response to another point raised about disowning the Deniers. Many of the Believers had Associators among their closest relatives and severance of such blood relations was argued as an unworkability, and hence carrying out the Divine command, was thought, in turn, unfeasible; therefore, this categorical reply. The aya following it further drives the message home and rouses by means of a threat, since not all people are predisposed equally (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 41 Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “‘There are’ Three ‘traits’, whoever has them will experience the sweetness of Faith by their virtue: that Allah and His Messenger are dearer to him than anything else; that he loves a person for nothing but the sake of Allah; and that he loathes reverting back to Denial now that Allah has delivered him from it, as much as he fears being thrown into Fire” (al-Bukhārī: 16, Muslim: 43); He also narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “None among you ‘truly’ attains Faith, unless I am dearer to him than his children, parents and all people!” (al-Bukhārī: 15, Muslim: 44)
- 42 That is, punishment (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-’Adhb al-Namīr*).

﴿25﴾ (43) Indeed Allah granted you victory in many a field<sup>(44)</sup>, but on the day of Ḥunayn as you gloated over your multitude<sup>(45)</sup>, it availed you nothing and the land tightened around you despite its vastness<sup>(46)</sup> and you fled turning on your heels<sup>(47)</sup>. ﴿26﴾ Then Allah sent down His tranquility on His Messenger and on the Believers. And He sent down soldiers that you did not see<sup>(48)</sup>; He tormented the Deniers—that is the ‘just’ requital of the Deniers<sup>(49)</sup>.

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ وَيَوْمَ  
حُنَيْنٍ إِذْ أَعْجَبْتَكُمْ أَنْتُمْ تُكْفِرُونَ  
تُغْنِي عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا وَصَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ  
الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحَبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُمْ مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾  
ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى  
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ  
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

- 43 What is given here is a concrete example of God’s support to those who sacrifice all in His cause (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Riḍā). Mere worldly considerations are of no use and success lies with God (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī). When people obey God and the Messenger (ﷺ) they will be helped, but they will be left alone when worldly considerations are topmost on their minds (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr).
- 44 That is the battles the Messenger (ﷺ) fought along with his noble Companions (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 45 There is a contrast here between fully putting one’s trust in God and relying on mere worldly means. God granted them victory when they fully put their trust in Him. They also acted on the necessary means for engaging in battle, little as they were. By contrast, when they thought that the means would suffice, relished their numbers and said: “We shall not be defeated today because of our number”, they were made to taste retreat (cf. Ibn ‘Ashūr, *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*). Had it not been for Divine intervention, they would have been defeated.
- 46 A vivid description of their psychological state and the hardship that hit them when they saw that their enemy had got the better of them; they could not find in the vastness of the land a place to retreat to for safety (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī).
- 47 Not all the army of Believers retreated, especially the hardcore, sincerest early Immigrants and Helpers Companions, not to mention the noblest Prophet (ﷺ) himself. However, this naturally caused a commotion (for firsthand accounts of this battle see: al-Bukhārī: 2864, 4337, Muslim: 1059, 1775, 1776).
- 48 The angels (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 49 When they realized how much humbly in need of God they stood, He came to their aid. God will help people for as much as they realize they need Him (cf. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, 3/198).

﴿27﴾ Then after that Allah relents on whoever He wishes; Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

ثُمَّ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾

﴿28﴾ <sup>(50)</sup>You who Believe, the Associators are but impure<sup>(51)</sup> so let them not come near the Sanctified Mosque after this year of theirs<sup>(52)</sup>. If you fear want<sup>(53)</sup>, then Allah will enrich you with His bounty, should He will<sup>(54)</sup>—verily Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ فَلَا يَقْرَبُوا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَذَا وَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمْ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنْ شَاءَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَاتَّبِعُوا الْبَيْتَ لَا يُؤْمِرُ

﴿29﴾ <sup>(55)</sup>Fight those who do not Believe

- 50 The result of all that came before, is that pure Faith's reign over the Sanctified Mosque, this holiest of all sites, is to be established once and for all (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Nabawiyyah*).
- 51 They are called *najas* (lit. an impurity) for their Denial, belligerence, vile manners and unholy character. Impurity here is meant in an abstract, nonmaterial sense (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qāsimī, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī).
- 52 The ninth year of Hijrah when it was declared to people during pilgrimage that no Associator should perform pilgrimage after that year and no naked person should 'hereafter' circumambulate around the Ka'bah (cf. al-Bukhārī: 4655, Muslim: 1347, Abū al-Su'ūd, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa'dī).
- 53 That they would be severely financially affected (*'aylah*) because of loss of trade with the Deniers as a result of barring them from holy pilgrimage sites. This was the major trading season in Arabia at that time (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, al-Qaṣṣāb, *al-Nukat al-Dāllah 'alā al-Bayān*).
- 54 God's willingness is conditional here because richness is not necessarily resultant on sincere Faith (*īmān*) in this worldly life, and is not a sign of God's love (cf. al-Sa'dī).
- 55 Now that the most dangerous threat had been dealt a blow, especially with the Conquest of Makkah and victory in the Battle of Ḥunayn, and that the land had become subject to Islam, the Believers were directed to yet another no less imminent a threat; the Jews, on the one hand, who sided, right from the start, with the Associators against the Believers despite their pact with the Messenger (ﷺ) which is enshrined in the Madinah Constitution,

in Allah and the Last Day, neither do they deem forbidden what Allah and His Messenger forbade and do not abide by the religion of Truth among those who were given the Book<sup>(56)</sup> until they hand in the *jizyah* 'tax' while humbled.

بِاللَّهِ وَلَا يَأْتِيَوْمَ الْأَخِرِ وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ  
مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ  
الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَتَّى  
يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾

particularly their treachery in the Battle of Aḥzāb (the Confederates), which would have proven fatal to the Believing community had God not intervened. The Christians, particularly in northern Arabia, on the other hand, who were ruled by the Ghassanids, a client state to the Byzantine Empire, who had their eyes open, especially after the Messenger's (ﷺ) communiqué to Emperor Heraclius, and who were unsettled by this turn of events and were readying themselves for an offensive (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr). 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) narrates: "... I had a friend among the Helper Companions. When I was not around, he would bring me the news and when he was not around I would bring him the news. In those days we were full of dread of a Ghassanid king who was reported to be preparing to march towards us, causing us much consternation. Suddenly, my friend the Helper knocked on my door saying: "Open! Open!" I replied: "What Did the Ghassanid come?"..." (al-Bukhārī: 4913, Muslim: 3765; in another narration: "The word among us was that the Ghassanids were shoeing their horses to attack us.")

56 This aya should be read with an eye on the next six ayas which spell out much of what is being alluded to here. The Believers are to fight those of the People of the Book who: do not Believe in God and the Last Day, a true Belief which reflects on their deeds and actions (Ayas 34-35) and leads to worshipping God alone without any form of Association (Ayas 30-31); do not abide by the commands God and His Messenger (ﷺ) nor follow the religion of Truth (Aya 33) (cf. al-Rāzī, *al-Muyassar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*; other interpretations of this aya abound).

That their threat is both combative (cf. the previous note) and disruptive (cf. 3: 98-103), being People of the Book, who were considered with respect and as knowledgeable, fighting is meant to continue until they are no longer a threat to the community (cf. al-Sa'dī) and that they are 'humbled'. Their 'humbling' is indicated by them paying the *jizyah* tax, which demonstrates them being subject to societal order. The *jizyah* is taken from only those who can afford it – as much as able Muslims are required to pay the zakah prescribed alms – to enjoy the privileges such as protection, freedom of religion, and fair and equitable treatment (cf. *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).



﴿30﴾ The Jews said: “Uzayr<sup>(57)</sup> |

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ

57 This statement caused much speculation as to its purport among scholars early and late, Muslim and non-Muslim. Some postulated that only some of the Jews said so (this view is held by many an early scholar of exegesis), particularly among those of who lived in 7<sup>th</sup> century Arabia; others speculated about this historical personality and what he was or did; some even went to the extent of theorizing about what the lexical term ‘uzayr’ really meant; yet others saw that this alludes to the famous Biblical Hebrew epithet *bānē ha-Ēlōhīm* (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים), sons of God). All of this is discussed at length in books and articles elsewhere.

However, it is important to note that Islam emphasizes absolutely the purest form of monotheism (*tawhīd*) and warns in the strongest of terms against Associating (*shirk*) any being with God Almighty, even in the least. In the next Aya Jews and Christians are condemned for practicing what is seen as *shirk*: “*They took their rabbis and their monks as Lords besides Allah – and Messiah, son of Maryam – while they were not bade except to worship Allah, the One; there is no god but Him—exalted be He over what they Associate*”. This is because they followed the laws set by their leaders and not those of God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). Of these, rabbi and monk ‘Lord’ or ‘*bānē ha-Ēlōhīm*’ Ezra could have been singled out for the Jews as, in Muhammad Asad’s words, he: “occupies a unique position in the esteem of all Jews, and has always been praised by them in the most extravagant terms. It was he who restored and codified the Torah after it had been lost during the Babylonian Exile, and ‘edited’ it in more or less in the form which it has today; and thus “he promoted the establishment of an exclusive, legalistic type of religion that became dominant in later Judaism” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1963, Vol. IX, p. 15). Ever since then he has been venerated to such a degree that his verdicts on the Law of Moses have come to be regarded by the Talmudists as being practically equivalent to the Law itself: which, in Qur’anic ideology, amounts to the unforgivable sin of *shirk*, inasmuch as it implies the elevation of a human being to the status of a quasi-divine law-giver and the blasphemous attribution to him - albeit metaphorically - of the quality of ‘sonship’ in relation to God. Cf. in this connection Exodus iv, 22-23 (“*Israel is My son*”) or Jeremiah xxxi, 9 (“*I am a father to Israel*”): expressions to which, because of their idolatrous implications, the Qur’an takes strong exception”. This fact is undeniable and it tallies with the Qur’anic outlook (and the Sunnah as in al-Bukhārī: 4581 and Muslim: 183) and is borne out by the relationship that ties Ayas 30 and 31 together and how the latter is delicately worded and reflects on our reading of the earlier: “*They said: “Allah has taken to Himself a child”. Glory be to Him! Nay! But all that is in the Heavens and the Earth are His, they are all submitting to Him*” (2: 116).

is the son of Allah!” and the Christians said: “The Messiah is the son of Allah!” That is what they say with their mouths<sup>(58)</sup>, emulating ‘thus’ the saying of those who Denied before<sup>(59)</sup>; Allah damns them<sup>(60)</sup>, how far do they avert ‘from the Truth’!<sup>(31)</sup> They took their rabbis and their monks as Lords<sup>(61)</sup> besides Allah

أَبْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ الْنَّصْرَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَذُنَ يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَابَهُمْ وَرُهَيْبَتَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ

- 58 That is these claims have no proof, are mere word of mouth (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Baghawī, Ibn Kathīr); thus implicating (*kināyah*) its falsehood (cf. al-Qurtūbī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 59 Exegetes are of different opinions as to who those who Denied before them exactly were (cf. al-Rāzī, al-Māwardī, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn al-Jawzī). The point being made is how deviated in their religion they had become: “Deniers indeed are those who say: “Allah is the Messiah, son of Maryam”. ‘While’ The Messiah ‘himself’ said: “Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord. Indeed whoever Associates with Allah, then Allah will surely forbid him ‘entry into’ Paradise and his home will be Hellfire—the wrongdoers will never have helpers”. \*Deniers indeed are those who say: “Allah is one of three!” There never would ever be a God but One. If they do not desist from what they say, those of them who Deny will be touched by a painful Punishment. \*Would they not ‘then’ repent to Allah and seek His forgiveness! Indeed Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. \*The Messiah son of Maryam is no more than a Messenger who comes in a line of ‘many’ Messengers and his mother is an affirmer of Truth, they both used to eat food. Look how We lay plain the Signs for them and look how they turn away ‘from the Truth’. \*Say ‘Muhammad’: “Do you worship besides Allah ‘any’ who can neither harm nor benefit you! Allah is the one who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. \*Say: “People of the Book, do not take an extremely hard line on your religion, that is besides the Truth, and do not follow the desires of ‘those’ folk who ‘themselves’ had become misguided before, lead a great many astray and missed the right path ‘themselves’” (5: 72-77).
- 60 *Qātalahum Allāh* (lit. May Allah fight them!) is an interjection intended to impart incredulous amazement (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 61 ‘Adiyy Ibn Hātim al-Ṭā’iyy (ؓ), who was Christian before embracing Islam, narrated that he came to the Messenger (ﷺ) while he was reciting the aya: “They took their rabbis and their monks as Lords besides Allah – and Messiah, son of Maryam – while they were not bade except to worship Allah, the One; there is no god but Him—exalted be He over what they Associate”. Then he said to the Messenger: “We do not worship them!” He replied: “Do they not

– as well as the Messiah, son of Maryam – while they were not commanded except to worship One God<sup>(62)</sup>; there is no god but Him—exalted be He over what they Associate ‘with Him’.

﴿32﴾<sup>(63)</sup> They want to extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah refuses ‘all’ but only to perfect His Light<sup>(64)</sup>; even to the acrimony of the Deniers<sup>(65)</sup>.

وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ سُبْحَانَهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

يُرِيدُونَ أَن يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَن يُتِمَّ نُورَهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

deem unlawful what Allah allowed and you follow them making it unlawful, and declare lawful what Allah forbade and you follow them making it lawful?” ‘Adiyy said: “Indeed!” then he (ﷺ) said: “That is their worship!” (al-Tirmidhī: 3095; also Matthew 15: 1-9, Isaiah 29:13, Jeremiah 8: 8).

- 62 “Those who were given the Book did not become divided until after the clear proof had come to them. \*They were not bade but to worship Allah, devoting religion entirely to Him, rightly-oriented, and keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms—that is the upright religion” (98: 4-5).
- 63 This reveals what malicious intentions they harboured towards Islam, God’s Light to humanity, once it had come into prominence, by weaving and fabricating lies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah); all the more reason to fight them (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). They did their best to prove the Messenger (ﷺ) a liar, turn people away from Islam, aiding and abetting Islam’s enemies by spreading confusion and rumours, inciting the Deniers into resisting and fighting the call. All this was done by blowing hot air from their mouths, little did they know that “light” cannot be put out by air (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Remember When ‘Isā, son of Maryam, said: “Children of Israel! I am truly Allah’s Messenger to you, confirming the Torah which came before me, and giving glad tidings of a Messenger after me whose name is Aḥmad.” Yet when he came to them with clear proofs, they said: “This is pure magic!” \*Who could be more unjust than someone who fabricates lies against Allah when called to submit to Him? God does not guide the unjust people: \*They want to extinguish the Light of Allah with their mouths, but Allah will surely perfect His Light; even to the acrimony of the Deniers. \*He is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth to make it outshine all other religions; even to the acrimony of the Associators” (61: 6-9).
- 64 “...today I have perfected your religion for you, finalized My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you...” (5: 3).
- 65 “To establish the Truth and abolish falsehood, even to the acrimony of the criminal” (8: 8).

﴿33﴾ He is Who sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of Truth to make it outshine all 'other' religions; even to the acrimony of the Associators.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

﴿34﴾ <sup>(66)</sup>You who Believe, many of the rabbis and monks devour people's money in falsehood and turn 'others' away from the path of Allah. <sup>(67)</sup>Those who hoard

﴿٣٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لِيَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ

66 This exposes the immorality of many among those whose followers take as 'Lords' besides Allah, by following their laws instead of God's laws; they are no more than greedy money-grubbers (cf. al-Shinqīfī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

67 This is a timely moralizing parenthesis directed mainly at the Believers to encourage them to spend out of their money (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Rāzī, al-Shinqīfī, *Adwāʾ al-Bayān*). Financial resources were much needed at that time to build the Muslim state, especially as this aya came down in the aftermath of the Tabuk Expedition, also known as the Expedition of Undersupply (*al-ʿusrah*), a condition which is clearly described in the coming ayas as the sura unfolds (cf. Ibn ʿĀshūr).

"Let not those who are miserly with what Allah has 'bountifully' bestowed on them from His Grace think that this is better for them. Nay, but it is evil for them; they will be collared 'around their necks' with what they withheld on the Day of Judgement..." (3: 180). Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "They are the worst losers by the Lord of the Ka'bah!" I said: "My dearest Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)! Who are they?" He said: "They are the wealthiest. Except the one who does like this, and this, and this – 'gesturing open-handed spending' from his front, back, right and left – but few are these really. No owner of camels, cows and sheep who does not give out their due zakah, except them coming on the Day of Judgement as big and fat as they have ever been, butting him with their horns and trampling him with their hooves. When the last of them has finished doing so, the first comes around to do the same to him 'again', until the Judgement of 'all' people has finished" (al-Bukhārī: 6638, Muslim: 990); Thawbān (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "When the aya came down regarding gold and silver was revealed, people wondered: "So what type of money shall we take?" 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said: "I shall seek knowledge of this matter for you!" He then sped his camel, while I followed him, until he caught up with the Prophet (ﷺ). He said: "Messenger of Allah, what type of money shall we take?" He (ﷺ) replied: "Let one of you take a thankful heart, a tongue which mentions 'Allah all the time' and a Believing wife who helps him over matters of the Hereafter" (al-Tirmidhī: 3094, Ibn Mājah: 1856)

gold and silver and do not spend them in the cause of Allah give them 'Muhammad' the tidings of a painful Punishment. <sup>(35)</sup> On the Day when they are heated up in Hellfire and seared with them will be their foreheads, their sides and their backs<sup>(68)</sup>: "This is what you hoarded for yourselves; taste then what you used to hoard!"

الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ <sup>(35)</sup> يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَتُكْوَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ وَسُلُوبُهُمْ هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ <sup>(36)</sup>

<sup>(36)</sup> <sup>(69)</sup> Verily the number of months with Allah is twelve months – 'so ordained' in the Book of Allah<sup>(70)</sup> 'from the time' when He created the Heavens and Earth<sup>(71)</sup> –

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ

- 68 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "None of the owners of gold and silver, who does not give out their due 'charity', without them, on the Day of Judgement, turned into sheets of fire and heated up in Hellfire to sear his side, forehead and back by them. Whenever they cool down, they will be heated up again for him on a Day the duration of which is fifty thousand years. 'It goes on' Until Allah judges between people and looks into his matter 'and consigns him' either to Hellfire or Paradise" (Muslim: 987).
- 69 As much as the People of the Book, the pagan Arabs also sabotaged some of God's laws to their advantage. For this they deserved a much stronger condemnation (cf. Abū Ḥayyān).
- 70 Most exegetes agree that the Book of Allah mentioned here is the Preserved Tablet (*al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfūz*) (cf. al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*).
- 71 Ibn Rajab (*Laṭā'if al-Ma'ārif*, p. 112, cf. also al-Sa'dī) explains this: "Allah Almighty" Glorified be He says that since He created the Heavens and Earth...and created all that is in the sky..., He made the sun and the moon swim in their 'respective' orbits. The darkness of night and whiteness of day are a result of that. Ever since then He made the year 12 months long, according to the crescent. The year in the 'Divine' law is counted after the moon's movement and its emergence": "He it is Who made the sun a radiance, and the moon a light, and determined for it stations, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning 'of time'. God did not create these, save in Truth. He expounds the Signs for a people who know" (10: 5).

four of which are sacrosanct<sup>(72)</sup>. That is the upright religion; so do not wrong yourselves during them<sup>(73)</sup>. <sup>(74)</sup>Fight the Associators as a whole as they fight you as a whole and know that Allah is with the Mindful. <sup>(75)</sup>Indeed 'practicing' the *nasī'* 'deferral'<sup>(76)</sup> is nothing but an increase in Denial with which those who Deny are mislead; they deem it lawful one year and unlawful another year so that they match the number of what Allah made sacrosanct.

مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْقِيَمَةُ  
فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَقَاتِلُوا  
الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ  
كَافَّةً وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾  
إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ يُضِلُّ  
بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُحْلِفُونَ عَامًا وَيُحْرِمُونَ  
عَامًا لِيُؤْطِئُوا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ فَيَحِلُّوا  
مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ

- 72 *al-Ashhur al-Hurum*, lit. the sacrosanct, inviolable months, in which it was agreed that no fighting, or aggression, was permissible: namely, Rajab, Dhū al-Qi‘dah, Dhū al-Ḥijjah, al-Muḥarram (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī). They were deemed so by God for Abraham (ﷺ) to make pilgrimage possible and for the benefit of people (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Allah made the Ka‘bah, the Sanctified House, a bastion of well-being; as well as the sacrosanct month, gifted offerings, garlanded sacrifices are instituted for good cause...” (5: 97).
- 73 By violating them and committing misdeeds (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*): “You who Believe, do not pronounce lawful ‘violation of the sanctity of:’ Allah’s Symbols, the sacrosanct month...” (5: 2).
- 74 God gives Believers permission to fight back should the Associators initiate aggression during these months by way of taking advantage of the loophole they, themselves, created in the law (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “The sacrosanct month is by way of ‘replacement for’ the sacrosanct month; ‘violation of’ what is prohibited is repayable. Whoever transgresses against you, transgress against them as much as they did and be Mindful of Allah and know that Allah is with the Mindful” (2: 194).
- 75 The previous aya introduces this one (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 76 *al-Nasī’* (lit. deferral) was a practice common among the pagan Arabs in which they would declare the number of four months sacrosanct, not necessarily exactly the God-ordained ones. They would accordingly defer and/or replace some of the sacrosanct months with other ones as it suited their fighting agenda. So to just match the number four, they would declare one of these months that suited them most one year lawful and unlawful over the next year (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Muḥarrar*).

Prettified for them was made the wickedness of their deeds; Allah guides not the 'ardently' Denying people.

رُزِّبَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ أَعْمَالِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

﴿38﴾ (77) You who Believe, what is it with you when it is said to you: "Mobilize in the path of Allah!" you sluggishly move, clinging heavily to the ground?<sup>(78)</sup> Are you satisfied<sup>(79)</sup> with the worldly life rather than the Hereafter?

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ ائْتِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَتَأْتِرُونَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ اَّرَضِيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنْ الْآخِرَةِ

- 77 Now the sura turns to the lessons drawn from the Tabuk Expedition, exposing at length in the process a third type of disruptive segments amongst the population, the hypocrites, whose danger was yet more serious than the rest; they are lurked among the Believers, posing as Believers themselves, all the while sabotaging society and trying to weaken it from within.
- 78 *Iththāqaltum* (translated here as: sluggishly move, clinging heavily to the ground) is a distinctly marked Qur'anic lexical phrase where sound and meaning are inseparably conflated. V. Abdur Rahim explains: "One can feel that the phonetic sequence *ith-thā* where a *sukūn* 'diacritic' is followed by a long *fathah* 'diacritic', and the heavy consonant *th* is doubled resulting in a lingering effect, more effectively suggests the idea of clinging to earth coupled with unwilling effort to get up than the original sequence *ta-thā*" (*Iththāqaltum: A study of some lesser-known phonetic and morphological changes in some Qur'anic words*, pp. 14-15, it is also discussed by al-Qurṭubī, al-Zamakhsharī and Ibn 'Āshūr). Therefore a simple translation of it is not possible, and would cloud over a beautiful aspect of Qur'anic diction. What is being captured here is the image of the languid reaction of some among the Believers to the call to arms for the Tabuk Expedition. Such unexpected reaction can only be appreciated within its context: people were of extremely meagre resources, the land was dry, the time was of sweltering heat, the palm dates 'the staple food of Madinah' were ripe for harvest, the journey was far away and required much preparation and the enemy was, by far, much greater in number and probably the best in the world at that time (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Rāzī, al-Zajjāj, *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*).
- 79 *Raḍītum* (accept, agree to) is more expressive than the more likely alternatives such as *āhartum* or *faḍḍaltum* (prefer, opt for) because it denotes a willingness of the heart (cf. Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn 'Āshūr).

How 'very' little is the enjoyment of the worldly life 'compared to that' in the Hereafter<sup>(80)</sup>. ﴿39﴾ Should you not mobilize, He will inflict a severe punishment on you and replace another people in your stead<sup>(81)</sup>, and you will not harm Him in the least—Allah is indeed Able over everything. ﴿40﴾ Should you not aid him 'The Messenger (ﷺ)', then Allah had aided him, when those who Denied expelled him<sup>(82)</sup>, 'as he was' one of two in the 'small' cave<sup>(83)</sup> when he said to his Companion: "Grieve not, Allah is verily with us."<sup>(84)</sup>

فَمَا مَتَعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ  
 اِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ اَلَا تَنْفِرُوْا يٰعَدُوْكُمْ عَدٰٓبًا  
 اَلِيْمًا وَّيَسْتَبَدِّلُ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَّلَا تَنْصُرُوْهُ  
 شَيْئًا وَّاَللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾  
 اَلَا تَنْصُرُوْهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللّٰهُ اِذْ اَخْرَجَهُ  
 الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ثٰنِيْ اٰثِنِيْنَ اِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ  
 اِذْ يَقُوْلُ لِصٰلِحِيْهِ لَآ تَحْزَنْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ مَعَنَا

- 80 al-Mustawrid Ibn Shaddād (رحمته الله) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "By Allah, this worldly life by comparison to the Hereafter is like a person who dips this finger (pointing his index finger) in the sea; see how much he draws from it!" (Muslim: 2858).
- 81 Others who would answer the call more willingly (cf. al-Tabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr): "... 'If you turn away, He will replace you with other people. And they will not be like you'. (47: 38); 'You who Believe, whoever of you renounces his religion, then Allah will 'soon enough' bring forth 'in your stead' people whom He loves and they 'truly' love Him, lenient to the Believers, stern towards the Deniers, they strive hard in the path of Allah fearing no reproach from anyone who reproaches...' (5: 54).
- 82 The Deniers compelled the Messenger (ﷺ) to leave his hometown of Makkah (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr).
- 83 The Messenger (ﷺ) and Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) hid away from the Deniers in a small cave (*ghār*) in the Mount of Thawr near Makkah at the beginning of their migratory journey to Madinah (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAḥb al-Namīr*; for a detailed account of how this journey commenced, see: al-Bukhārī: 3905).
- 84 Anas Ibn Mālīk (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) told him: "I looked at the feet of the Associators above our heads while we were in the small cave and said: "Messenger of Allah, if anyone of them looks down at his feet he would see us!" He said: "Abū Bakr, what do you think of two 'people' whom Allah is their third!" (al-Bukhārī: 3653, Muslim: 2381).



Then Allah sent down His tranquillity on him, braced him with soldiers that you did not see<sup>(85)</sup> and “thus” made the word of those who Deny the lower one; and the Word of Allah is “ever” the higher<sup>(86)</sup>—verily Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَ وَهَاجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَىٰ وَكَلِمَةُ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾

﴿41﴾<sup>(87)</sup> Mobilize, light and heavy<sup>(88)</sup>, and strive with your money and lives in the path of Allah; that is better for you if “only” you know<sup>(89)</sup>.

انْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

85 These were angels who came to the Messenger’s aid in the small cave. How they did so is disputed (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Ashūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).

86 That is as God Almighty made His religion, Islam, prevail (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Muḥarrar*).

87 This is the call for general mobilization (*al-naḥīr al-‘āmm*) from which no able person of war age is exempted (cf. Ibn Kathīr, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn ‘Ādil, Riḍā). Those who are and were exempted is mentioned in Aya 91 below.

88 Whether the call is facile or arduous, you are youthful or elderly, rich or poor, strong or weak, vigorous or feeling idle, have nothing to occupy you or busy. Whatever the case, the call must be answered (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Māwardī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Qurtubī). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “When you are called to mobilize, mobilize” (al-Bukhārī: 3077, Muslim: 1353).

89 “Fighting is prescribed for you, as much as you hate it; might you hate a thing which is good for you and might you love a thing which is evil for you—Allah knows and you do not know” (2: 216); “They are not equal: those of the Believers who are staying back – except those with hindrances – and those who strive in the path of Allah with their money and lives. Allah favours those who strive with their money and lives over the inert by a rank – ‘but’ to both Allah promises what is most pleasing; Allah favours those who strive over the staying back with a great reward: \*lofty’ ranks ‘conferred’ by Him, and forgiveness and mercy—verily Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful” (4: 95-96); “You who Believe, shall I point to you a bargain that will save you from painful punishment? \*It is that` You Believe in Allah and His Messenger and strive in the path of Allah with your money and your lives. That is best for you, if only you know. \*He will forgive your sins, and admit you into Gardens under which rivers flow, and` house you in` splendid abodes in the Gardens of Eternity. That is the ultimate triumph. \*And` you will obtain` another` favour`

﴿42﴾ (90) Had it been a handy 'worldly' gain or a convenient travel, they would have followed you but far away was the 'gruelling' journey for them. They will swear 'to you' by Allah: "Were we able, we would have set out with you!" They destroy themselves! (91) Allah Knows that they are indeed liars.

﴿43﴾ (92) May Allah forgive you 'Muhammad', why did you grant them permission 'to stay behind'? 'You should have not' Until it became clear to you those who are truthful and you know the liars (93).

﴿44﴾ Those who Believe in Allah and the Last Day would not seek your permission 'Muhammad' not to strive with their money and lives—Allah is All-Knowing of the Mindful.

لَوْ كَانَتْ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَسَفَرًا قَاصِدًا  
لَاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَٰكِن بَعَدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الشُّقَّةُ  
وَسَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَوِ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا  
مَعَكُمْ يُهْلِكُونَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ  
لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذِنَتْ لَهُمْ  
حَتَّىٰ يَتَّبِعَنَّ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ  
الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾

لَا يَسْتَعِدُّنَا الَّذِينَ يَوْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
الْآخِرَاتِ يَجَاهِدُونَ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ  
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

*that you love; victory from Allah and an imminent conquest; and give good tidings to the Believers” (61: 10-13).*

- 90 Now those whose faith was not sincere, the hypocrites, who lingered behind and did not join the Messenger (ﷺ) and the army of Believers for the Tabuk Expedition, are turned to (cf. al-Rāzī).
- 91 They expose themselves to ruination by incurring God's Wrath and His punishment (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, al-Sa'dī).
- 92 The hypocrites came to the Messenger (ﷺ) with all sorts of excuses, swearing that they were not able to join the campaign and he pardoned them; an action the propriety of which is gently pointed out to him by God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 93 That is those who have valid excuses and those who do not (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Shawkānī). The hypocrites were intent on not joining the campaign in any case, whether given permission to stay or not. So it is pointed out here that none should have been given permission, so as to see who set out with the Believing army, the truthful, and who did not, the liars who were smitten with doubt (cf. Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Abū Ḥayyān, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿45﴾ None will seek your permission but those who do not Believe in Allah and the Last Day<sup>(94)</sup> and their hearts are suspicious; so they are ‘perpetually’ fluctuating, ‘immersed’ in their suspicion<sup>(95)</sup>.  
 ﴿46﴾ Had they ‘really’ meant to set out, they would have prepared for it with ‘proper’ preparation<sup>(96)</sup>. But Allah was averse to their arising and put a damper on them<sup>(97)</sup>

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
 الْآخِرِ وَآزَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ  
 يَتَرَدَّدُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ \*وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا  
 لَهُمْ عُدَّةً وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ إِنبَعَثَهُمْ فَبَطَّطَهُمْ

- 94 They do not really Believe that there will be a Day of Judgement to which they are resurrected, when they are held accountable for their deeds and after which they will be either rewarded or punished (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī): “Some people say: “We Believe in Allah and in the Last Day”, while, in fact, they do not Believe. \*They seek to deceive Allah and the Believers—they only deceive themselves, not realizing it. \*In their hearts there is disease and thus ‘because of it’ Allah has increased their disease. Theirs is a painful Punishment for their ‘persistent’ lying” (2: 8-10).
- 95 The hypocrites live in a state of perpetual quandary and constant perplexity. They are stricken with doubt and always experiencing a state of dilemma: “They are wavering; neither ‘belonging’ to these nor to these—whoever is misguided by Allah, you will surely find no way ‘out’ for him” (4: 143). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The example of the hypocrites is that of a sheep, which comes in the middle of two herds; this time it joins this herd and shortly after it joins the other” (Muslim: 2784). The following is a description of the squalid, worry-stung lives they lead: “Their similitude is that of one who kindles a fire; as soon as it casts light on what is around him, Allah takes away their light leaving them in ‘utter’ darkness, unable to see; \*deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not find their way back. \*Or like a downpour from the sky, in which there is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears from thunderclaps, fearing death—Allah is surrounding the Deniers. \*The lightning almost snatches away their sight; whenever it flashes they walk in its light and when the light goes, they stand still. If Allah so willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight—Allah is Able over everything” (2: 17-20).
- 96 Their unpreparedness highlights how unwilling they were to join the campaign in the first place (cf. al-Zajjāj, Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 97 God actually made them feel lazy and the going heavy (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

and it was said 'to them': "Sit with those who are sitting!"<sup>(98)</sup>

﴿47﴾ Had they set out among you, they would have increased you nothing but quandary and they would have hurried about in your midst<sup>(99)</sup>; they wish you 'nothing but turbulent' trial and among you are those who 'are prone to' lend them their ears—Allah is indeed All-Knowing of the wrongdoers.

﴿48﴾ They had meant you 'Believers, turbulent' trial before<sup>(100)</sup> and turned matters on all sides 'hatching plots' against you 'Muhammad'<sup>(101)</sup> until the Truth came<sup>(102)</sup> and Allah's command<sup>(103)</sup> prevailed to their acrimony.

وَقِيلَ أَقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ لَوْ خَرَجُوا فِيكُمْ مَا زَادُوكُمْ إِلَّا جَبَالًا وَلَا وُضِعُوا فِيكُمْ لَكُمْ يُتَغَوَّنَكُمْ الشَّنَئَةَ وَفِيكُمْ سَمَّاعُونَ لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

لَقَدْ أَتَغَوَّأَ الْفِتْنَةَ مِنْ قَبْلِ وَقَلْبُوا لَكَ الْأُمُورَ حَتَّى جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَظَهَرَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

- 98 Those who are not meant to fight; the terminally weak, women and younger boys (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). They are in a way being dishonoured and their status being lowered (cf. al-Rāzī), particularly in a culture that regarded bravery with the greatest respect.
- 99 That is, no sooner than they joined the ranks of the Believers, they would go about spreading malicious gossip and rumours causing dissent and would have tried their best to dampen the Believers' fighting spirit (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Juzayy).
- 100 Their malicious intentions and seditious stratagems are nothing new. They have always sought to cause Believers trials and tribulations (*fitnah*).
- 101 They spared no effort to put their cunning, insidious artifice into action against the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers (cf. al-Sam'ānī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī).
- 102 God's victory (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Shawkānī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-ʿAdhb al-Namīr*): "And say: "The Truth has come, and falsehood has withered away; for falsehood is bound to wither away" (17: 81).
- 103 The religion of God, Islam, which He commanded to be followed (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, al-Sa'dī).

﴿49﴾ (104) Among them<sup>(105)</sup> are those who say: “Grant me permission and do not expose me to trial!” Nay, but into trial they have ‘really’ fallen!<sup>(106)</sup> Hell is verily surrounding the Deniers.<sup>(107)</sup> ﴿50﴾ Should a good thing come your way ‘Muhammad’, they become saddened by it<sup>(108)</sup>, if a calamity befalls you, they would say: “We have already taken our precautions!”<sup>(109)</sup> and they turn away elated.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَقُولُ أُنذِرْنِي وَلَا تَجِدْنِي فِي الْأَفْئَةِ  
الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطُوا وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ  
بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ إِنَّ تُصَبِّكَ حَسَنَةً  
تَسْؤُهُمْ وَإِنْ تُصَبِّكَ مُصِيبَةً يَقُولُوا  
قَدْ أَخَذْنَا أَمْرًا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ  
فَرِحُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

104 Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say to al-Jadd Ibn Qays: “Jadd, how do you feel about a scuffle with the blonde race ‘the Byzantines?’” He replied: “Or, pardon me, Messenger of Allah. I am a man who has a soft spot for women and I am afraid that I would be tried and fall for the women of the blond race!” The Messenger (ﷺ) said to him while looking away from him: “I pardon you”. Then Allah sent down: “Among them those who say: “Grant me permission and do not subject me to trial!” Nay, but into trial they have ‘really’ fallen!” (al-Albānī deemed its chain of narration sound in *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah*; see also Ibn ‘Abbās’s similar narration in al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, 2/275)

105 This is the first in a series of “among them” (*wa minhum*) phrases through which God laid bare the hypocrites’ trickery. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: “*al-Tawbah* is *al-Fāḍiḥah* (lit. the exposer). “Among them... among them” kept on coming down until they ‘the hypocrites’ thought that it would leave none of them unmentioned!” (al-Bukhārī: 4882, Muslim: 3031)

106 The major trial of hypocrisy (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *al-Mukhtaṣar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*).

107 “They urge you ‘Muhammad’ to hasten the punishment; Hell is verily surrounding the Deniers. \*On the Day when the Punishment will cover them from above and from beneath their feet, and it shall be said: “Taste that which you used to do!”” (29: 54-55).

108 Such is the nature of dormant, bitter enemies: “Should a good thing come your way, they become saddened by it, and it elates them if a calamity befalls you. But if you forbear and are Mindful you will not be harmed in the least by their guile—Allah encompasses what they do” (3: 120).

109 By not setting out on the campaign with the Messenger (ﷺ) and the Believers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī).

﴿51﴾<sup>(110)</sup> Say 'Muhammad': "Nothing will befall us except what Allah decreed for us<sup>(111)</sup>; He is our Ally!<sup>(112)</sup>" Let the Believers put their trust in Allah. ﴿52﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Do you 'expectantly' await for us nothing but one of the two good things!<sup>(113)</sup>

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿51﴾  
 قُلْ هَلْ تَرْتَضُونَ بِنَا إِلَّا أَحَدَى الْحَسَنَيْنِ

- 110 True Believers whose Faith is steely know that what is predestined (*al-qadar*) by God cannot be evaded and that whatever happens to them is God's Own decree and it can only be for the best of the Believers (cf. al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr); the wisdom of it may not be immediately obvious. Ṣuḥayb al-Rūmī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Wondrous is the affair of the Believer. His affair is all good and that is true only to a Believer. When a happy occurrence comes his way, he shows gratitude and that is better for him. And when a hurtful occurrence befalls him, he shows patience and that is better for him" (Muslim: 2999).
- 111 "No calamity befalls on the Earth or in yourselves except that it is in a Register before We bring it into being—indeed that, for Allah, is easy. \*So you need not grieve for what you miss or gloat over what you gain..." (57: 22-23); "No calamity befalls 'anyone' except by Allah's Will; whoever Believes in Allah, He will guide his heart 'through adversity'—Allah is indeed All-Knowing of everything" (64: 11).
- 112 The ones whose Ally (*Mawlā*) is God, they will not be let down (cf. Ibn Rajab, *Majmū' al-Rasā'il*, 3/146).
- 113 Either martyrdom or victory (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Adhb al-Namīr*). Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "When your brothers were struck down in the Battle of Badr, Allah placed their souls in the 'abdominal' cavities of green fowls, they drink from the rivers of Paradise, eat from its fruits and come back at the end of the day to repose in chandeliers hung in the Shadow of the 'Majestic' Throne. For all of this, they 'the martyred Believers' said: "Who would tell our brothers about us; that we are in Paradise being handsomely provided for so that they may not give up fighting in the cause of Allah or cower in war?" Allah Almighty said: "I will tell them on your behalf". Then He revealed: "Do not think that those who got killed in the cause of Allah are dead. Nay but they are alive with their Lord 'being handsomely provided for'" (Abū Dāwūd: 2520, Aḥmad: 2388; another version is found in Muslim: 1887) Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the

But what we 'expectantly' await for you is that Allah afflicts you with a punishment from His side, or at our hands! So await, for we surely are awaiting with you!"

وَنَحْنُ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ اللَّهُ  
بِعَذَابٍ مِنْ عِنْدِهِ أَوْ بَأْيَدِنَا فَوَلَّيْتُمْ  
إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُتَرَبِّصُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

﴿53﴾ (114) Say: "Spend willingly or grudgingly; it will not be accepted from you<sup>(115)</sup> for your being contravening people!"

قُلْ أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَنْ يُتَقَبَلَ  
مِنْكُمْ إِنَّا كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾  
وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقَبَلَ مِنْهُمْ نَفَقَتُهُمْ  
إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَلَا  
يَأْتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَى  
وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كَاهُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾

﴿54﴾ (116) What prevented their expending being accepted from them was nothing but their Denial in Allah and His Messenger; they only come to Prayers being sluggish<sup>(117)</sup> and only spend being grudging.

Messenger (ﷺ) said: "Allah has made a pledge to one who sets out in His path: "Nothing drives him except 'the pure intention of' striving in My path, Believing in Me and acceptance of My Messengers. He has got My Pledge that I will admit him into Paradise or return him back 'safe' to the home he sat out from loaded with what he earned; reward and spoils..." (Muslim: 1876).

- 114 In a bid to conceal their dubious design, some hypocrites, offered financial help by way of making up for not answering the call (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*, Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 115 Whatever the case might be, God will not accept this ostensibly 'pious' expenditure of theirs (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr): "Indeed Allah accepts only from the Mindful" (5: 27).
- 116 Further reasons for God not accepting their payment are provided, this being the result of their lack of faith (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).
- 117 "Indeed the hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, 'but in reality' He Deceives them; when they rise up for Prayer, they rise sluggishly 'only' showing off to people and little do they 'truly' mention Allah" (4: 142); "Seek help in patience and Prayer; indeed they are hard save for the dedicated. \*Those who firmly Believe that they will be meeting their Lord and that they are returning to Him" (2: 45-46).

﴿55﴾ (118) Let not 'Muhammad' their wealth nor their sons amuse you<sup>(119)</sup>; Allah wants nothing but to punish them with these<sup>(120)</sup> in the worldly life and their souls to expire while they are 'still' Deniers. ﴿56﴾ They swear by Allah that they are surely 'part' of you but they are not 'part' of you<sup>(121)</sup>, 'in reality' they are 'ever' terrified folks; ﴿57﴾ (122) should they find 'themselves just' any hideout, a cavity or a bolthole, they would have darted to it galloping.

فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَيَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنْهُمْ لَمِنْكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِمَنَّكُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ يَفْرُقُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجَأًا أَوْ مَعْدَرَاتٍ أَوْ مَدْخَلًا لَوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ يَجْمَحُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

- 118 Whatever they might deem beneficial and are keen to keep to themselves, prominently money and sons, who were of great benefit to their fathers in those days, are nothing to be impressed with. They will be a cause of much pain and misery to those who are not willing to put them on the line for a Godly cause (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīl*, Ibn 'Āshūr). Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: "The one whose topmost concern is the Hereafter, Allah places abundance in his heart, makes all his affairs easily manageable and he will have the world at his feet. While the one whose topmost concern is the worldly life, Allah places scarcity constantly before his eyes, makes all his affairs fly in his face, and he only gets out of this world as much as what was predestined for him" (Ibn Mājah: 4105, Ibn Hībān, *al-Shāḥih*: 680).
- 119 "And do not gaze longingly at what We have given some of them to enjoy, the finery of this present life: We test them through this, but the provision of your Lord is better and more lasting" (20: 131).
- 120 "Do they reckon that, "on account of" the wealth and the children that We have provided them, \*that We hasten to 'honour' them 'with' all kinds of good? Nay! They are not aware" (23: 55-56).
- 121 In their precarious situation, they adopt bare-faced lying as a line of defence, a desperate measure (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī): "When they meet those who Believe, they say: "We Believe!", but when they are alone with their devils, they say: "Surely we are with you. We are but mocking"" (2: 14); "When the hypocrites come to you 'Muhammad', they say: "We bear witness that you are the verily the Messenger of Allah!" Allah Knows that you truly are His Messenger and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are 'relentless' liars" (63: 1).
- 122 This vividly depicts the lives of constant distress and anguish they lead.



﴿58﴾ Among them some who snide at you regarding 'the prescribed' alms<sup>(123)</sup>; if given from it, they become contented, but if they are not given from it, they no sooner become spiteful. ﴿59﴾<sup>(124)</sup> If only they contended themselves with what Allah and His Messenger had given them, and said: "Allah is sufficient for us; Allah – and His Messenger – will provide for us from His Bounty. We 'only' turn to our Lord 'in hope'." ﴿60﴾<sup>(125)</sup> "The prescribed' Alms are but for the destitutes, the needy<sup>(126)</sup>,

وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَلْمُكَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ فَإِنْ أُعْطُوا مِنْهَا رَضُوا وَإِنْ لَمْ يُعْطُوا مِنْهَا إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَخْطُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسْكِينِ

- 123 This is yet another section of the hypocrites who used to insinuate that the noble Messenger (ﷺ) was not fair in his division of the zakah revenues (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī). Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "While the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was dividing, 'a man known as' Dhū al-Kuwayṣirah of the clan of Tamīm stood and said: "Messenger of Allah, be fair!" The Messenger (ﷺ) replied to him: "Woe betides you! Who could 'ever' be fair, if I am not fair! You would have been lost if I were not fair...." (al-Bukhārī: 6933, Muslim: 1064).
- 124 This provides the correct course of action that the sincerely faithful would take in such a situation, which is in sharp contrast to those bereft of the sweetness Faith (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Nazm al-Durar*).
- 125 The One Who divides the zakah is God Almighty Himself. This explanation in a way addresses the accusation of the ignorant hypocrites who insinuated that the Messenger (ﷺ) was not fair (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī). Please note that the finer details of these who deserve the money fall beyond the scope of this translation. The explanations given here are only meant to clear the meaning.
- 126 *al-Fuqarā'* and *al-Masākīn* are, respectively, the destitutes who have nothing at all and the needy who hardly have anything at all (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "The needy '*al-miskīn*' is not who goes about 'begging from' people and will be satisfied by a morsel or two or a palm date or two. But the needy is he who cannot find enough to suffice him, he does not appear to people as in need of charity, and he would not go about asking people" (al-Bukhārī: 1479, Muslim: 1039).

those who work on them<sup>(127)</sup>, the heart-attracted<sup>(128)</sup>, by way of ‘freeing’ necks<sup>(129)</sup>, the ‘deeply’ indebted<sup>(130)</sup>, in the path of Allah<sup>(131)</sup> and the stranded<sup>(132)</sup>; an obligation ordained by Allah—Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

وَالْعَمَلِيَّتِ عَلَيْهِا وَالْمَوْلَفَةَ قُلُوبُهُمْ  
وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْعَرَمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ  
عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾

﴿61﴾ Among them are those who hurt the Prophet and say: “He is an ear ‘credulous’!”<sup>(133)</sup> Say: “‘An ear’ for your best!”<sup>(134)</sup>

وَمِنَهُمُ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ  
هُوَ آذُنٌ قُلُّ أذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ

- 127 *al-‘Āmilīna ‘alayhā* are those who are put in charge of collecting and distributing the zakah (cf. Ṭabarī, Ṭaḥāwī, *Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, 1/365, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr).
- 128 *al-Mu‘allaḥah Qulūbuhum* (lit. those whose hearts are bonded) are those whose hearts are attracted and softened towards Faith (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).
- 129 *Fī al-riqāb*, is to use the money to emancipate slaves from bondage (cf. *al-Muyassar*, *Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: “Whoever frees a Muslim ‘slave’ neck, Allah will free for every part ‘of the body of the freed’ a ‘matching’ part of his from the Fire; even the private parts for the private parts” (al-Bukhārī: 6715, Muslim: 1509).
- 130 *al-Ghārimīn* are those who fall into debt for a cause which is neither sinful nor from excess and who cannot pay off their debtors (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 131 *Fī sabīl Allāh* to help those who fight in the path of Allah to carry out their mission (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī).
- 132 *Ibn al-sabīl* (lit. the son of the road) is the traveller who finds himself stranded in a place with no means to provide for himself (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).
- 133 They think of the Messenger (ﷺ) lightly and say that he is gullible and listens to all what is being said to him and accepts it at face value unquestioningly, even their own blatant lies and lame excuses (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Rāzī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr).
- 134 The answer dictated here is a witty repartee, a rejoinder that rebounds their own words at them in an unexpected manner; tweaking the same words to attain an originally unintended aim (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). In other words, he is an ‘ear’ who listens but to what is good and not to evil; when news of your evil reaches him, he listens and overlooks. Being of such a virtuous nature,

He Believes in Allah and believes the Believers<sup>(135)</sup>; a mercy to those who have ‘truly’ Believed among you.<sup>(136)</sup>” Those who hurt the Messenger of Allah, theirs is a painful Punishment.<sup>(137)</sup> <sup>(62)</sup> They swear by Allah to you ‘Believers’ to reconcile with you<sup>(138)</sup>, but Allah and His Messenger have more right to reconcile with<sup>(139)</sup>, if ‘only’ they were Believers.<sup>(63)</sup> Did they not know that whoever takes a stand against Allah and His Messenger, his is Hellfire forever he abides therein—that is the great disgrace!<sup>(140)</sup>

يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَرَحْمَةٌ  
لِّلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا مِنكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ  
رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾ يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ  
لَكُمْ لِيُرْضَوْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ  
أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٢﴾ أَلَمْ  
يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَن يُحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ  
لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْخِزْيُ  
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٦٣﴾

he turns a blind eye when you come to him with fabrications (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

- 135 In reality, the Messenger (ﷺ) was not as easily fooled as they thought. He Believes in what is revealed to him by God, among which is to pardon people and to make allowance for the ignorant (cf. 7: 199), as well as acknowledges what sincere Believers tell him, but not hypocrites or Deniers (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).
- 136 His listening and pardoning, which they have mistaken for incredulity, is for the best of those who when afforded the opportunity to become heedful, their hearts open up and Believe (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 137 “*Verily those who offend Allah and His Messenger Allah condemns them in this world and the Hereafter. And He has prepared for them a humiliating Punishment*” (33: 57).
- 138 They dishonestly swear to distance themselves from their offence to the Messenger (ﷺ) about which God has just told him (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āṭīyah, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr; see also: Imām Aḥmad: 2407, al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*: 12307).  
Listening to those who may not necessarily tell the truth and who swear to what they say, especially when one is not fooled by them, is considered an act of chivalry in the Arabian culture befitting only the noblest thus, they afford the speaker the chance to save face.
- 139 By being honest, which is more becoming of those who claim to be true Believers (cf. Ibn ‘Āṭīyah, Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 140 “*Verily those who take a stand against Allah and His Messenger will be suppressed, like those before them: We have surely sent down clear Signs;*

﴿64﴾ The hypocrites dread that a sura will be brought down on them, revealing to them what is ‘hidden’ in their hearts<sup>(141)</sup>; say: “Keep on mocking; verily Allah will expose what you dread”. ﴿65﴾ Should you ‘Muhammad’ ask them, they will say: “We were just ‘idly’ chitchatting<sup>(142)</sup> and passing time!”<sup>(143)</sup> Say: “Were you mocking of Allah, His Signs and His Messenger!”

يَحْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ تُنزَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ  
سُورَةٌ نَسِبَتْ لَهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلْ اسْتَهْزِءُوا  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْرِجٌ مِمَّا تَحْذَرُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ  
سَأَلْتَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ  
قُلْ أَيْدِي اللَّهِ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَرَسُولُهُمْ كُنْتُمْ  
تَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

and humiliating Punishment awaits the Deniers” (58: 5); “Verily those who take a stand against Allah and His Messenger will be among the most abased!” (58: 20).

- 141 While many hypocrites were sure that the Messenger (ﷺ) was truthful but decided not to acknowledge him, others were truly in doubt (cf. al-Qurtubi, Ibn ‘Āshūr): “Or do those in whose hearts is disease think that Allah will not expose their spite? \*If We willed, We would show them to you ‘Muhammad’ so that you would know them by their mark. And you will certainly know them by their tone of speech; Allah Knows your deeds” (47: 29-30).
- 142 *Yakhūdu* is to pass time in hearsay. Originally, it means to waddle in water and carries the added meaning of muddling up. Throughout the Qur’an it is used to cast negative light on what is being described (cf. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-İşfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).
- 143 Being hypocritical, secretly maligning God, His Messenger and His Signs seems to have been their pastime of choice (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr). ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “During the Tabuk Expedition a man said in a gathering: “I never set eyes on any who are more gluttonous, lying and cowardly than these reciters ‘indicating the most noble Companions who recite the Qur’an’ of ours!” A man in the same gathering replied to him: “Liar! But indeed you are a hypocrite! I shall tell the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ)!” When the news reached the Messenger (ﷺ), ‘some ayas of the Qur’an came down ‘regarding the incident’.” The narrator continues: “I saw him clinging to the belly strap of the Messenger’s (ﷺ) she camel, saying: “Messenger of Allah! We were only chitchatting and passing time!” While the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was reciting: “Were you mocking of Allah, His Signs and His Messenger”” (cf. Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Ṭabarī, al-Shinqīṭī, *al-‘Adhb al-Namīr*).

﴿66﴾ “Do not apologize! You have truly Denied<sup>(144)</sup> after your ‘outwardly’ Belief! Should We pardon a bunch of you, We would ‘conversely’ punish another bunch for being staunchly criminal!”<sup>(145)</sup>

لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ إِنَّ  
تَعَفُّوْا عَنْ طَآئِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ يُغَادِثُ طَآئِفَةٌ  
بِآثِمِهِمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

﴿67﴾ The hypocrites, both male and female, take after each other<sup>(146)</sup>; they enjoin what is unacceptable and advise against virtue, and clinch their fists<sup>(147)</sup>. They forgot Allah and He Forgot them<sup>(148)</sup>—verily the hypocrites are the contravening ones. ﴿68﴾ Allah promises the hypocrites, male and female, and the Deniers Hellfire, forever they abide therein; it is sufficient for them and that Allah Damns them—their ‘therein’ is resident Punishment.” ﴿69﴾<sup>(149)</sup> Just like the ones before them:

الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِّنْ  
بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُكْرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ  
عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ نَسُوا اللَّهَ  
فَنَسِيَهُمْ إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾  
وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ وَالْكُفَّارَ  
نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ  
وَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَذَابٌ مُّقْتَدِرٌ ﴿٦٨﴾  
كَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ

144 They have now revealed their Denial while in the past they feigned Belief (cf. al-Zajjāj, al-Sam‘ānī, Abū Ḥayyān, al-Shawkānī, al-Qāsimī).

145 Those who honestly repent will be forgiven, but the stubbornly, irrevocably Denying will be punished (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). The door of repentance is still open for them (cf. al-Sa‘dī).

146 They are one and the same, their deeds and motives are the same and they are each other’s allies (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa‘dī). They were a close-knit society who were up to no good, encouraging each other only to evil.

147 That is they are tight-fisted when it comes to giving. This highlights how callous they were (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr) and how less prone they were to yield to the call of Faith (cf. Riḍā).

148 “It will be said: “This Day We will Forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours! Your resort will be the Fire, and you shall have no helpers” (45: 34).

149 The following good bad examples, whom they even compare unfavorable with, are cited for them to think over their state of affairs.

“They were mightier in strength than you are and greater in wealth and children. They enjoyed their ‘worldly’ portion and you enjoyed your portion as much as the ones before you enjoyed their portion, and you indulged as much as they indulged; these their deeds were nullified in this worldly life and in the Hereafter—these are ‘the real’ losers. ﴿70﴾ Had not the news of those who came before them reached them: the people of Nūḥ, ‘the tribes of’ ‘Ād and Thamūd, the people of Ibrāhīm, the companions of Midian and the overturned<sup>(150)</sup>; their Messengers came to them with clear evidences! Allah would not have wronged them but they were bent on wronging themselves.

كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ آمَالًا  
وَأَوْلَادًا فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلْقِهِمْ فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ  
بِخَلْقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ  
قَبْلِكُمْ بِخَلْقِهِمْ وَخُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِي  
خَاضُوا أُولَئِكَ حِطَّتْ أَعْمَلُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا  
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾  
أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ  
وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ وَقَوْمِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَأَصْحَابِ  
مَدْيَنَ وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَةَ أَتَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ  
فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا  
أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

﴿71﴾ <sup>(151)</sup> And Believers, male and female, are ‘mutually’ each other’s allies<sup>(152)</sup>. They enjoin virtue and advise against what is unacceptable<sup>(153)</sup>,

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ  
يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

150 *al-Mu 'tifikāt* (lit. the overturned) are the villages of the people of Prophet Lot (ﷺ) that were flipped upside down (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr).

151 The contrast between the Believers, both male and female, to the hypocrites, male and female, is meant to show how far away the wicked from the virtuous are so that sound human nature may prevail and they may repent (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Nāẓm al-Durar*); they also are encouraged by being let to know what God has prepared for the virtuous.

152 Their alliance (*wilāyah*) is that of Islam, where both parties are equal and no one is a blind follower of the other; unlike the hypocrites who take their evil traits each from the other, almost blindly (cf. Ibn 'Āshūr).

153 “Let there be among you a legion calling for goodness; enjoining virtue and advising against what is unacceptable—those are the

keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms, and obey Allah and His Messenger; those Allah will have mercy on them—verily Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. <sup>﴿72﴾</sup> Allah promised the Believers, male and female, Gardens under which rivers flow forever they abide therein and comely abodes in Gardens of Eternity<sup>(154)</sup>, but a Pleasure<sup>(155)</sup> from Allah is ‘ever’ greater<sup>(156)</sup>; that is ‘truly’ the great triumph.

وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٧١﴾ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَمَسْكَنٍ طَيِّبَةٍ فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٧٢﴾

*successful*” (3: 104); “*You are indeed the best nation the world has seen: you enjoin virtue, advise against what is unacceptable and Believe in Allah*” (3: 110).

- 154 *Jannāt ‘Adn* (lit. gardens of eternal residence) (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Prophet (ﷺ) said: “In the Gardens of Eternity, ‘there are’ two gardens their utensils and all that is there is made of silver; ‘and another’ two gardens their utensils and all that is there is made of gold. Nothing separates its dwellers from seeing their Lord except the Mantle of Loftiness on His Face” (al-Bukhārī: 4878, Muslim: 180).
- 155 Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Allah Almighty will call the people of Paradise: “People of Paradise!” They will reply: “All pleasure is Yours our Lord, yes!” He says: “Are you satisfied?” They reply: “Why wouldn’t we be when You gave us what You did not give any other of your creation!” He says: “I shall give you ‘yet’ better than that!” They reply: “Lord! What is better than that?” He says: “I bestow My Pleasure upon you and I shall never be Displeased with you again”.” (al-Bukhārī: 6549, Muslim: 2829)
- 156 God’s Pleasure (*Riḍwān*) is greater and better than all the bliss of Paradise (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Qurṭubī): “*Allah says: “This is the Day on which the Truthfulness of the Truthful avails them; for them are Gardens under which rivers flow forever after they abide therein; Allah is Pleased with them and they are pleased with Him—that indeed is the greatest gain”*” (5: 119).

﴿73﴾ (157) O Prophet, strive<sup>(158)</sup> against the Deniers and the hypocrites and be tough on them, their resort is Hellfire; dire indeed is the end<sup>(159)</sup>. ﴿74﴾ (160) They swear 'to you' that they did not utter 'the word of Denial<sup>(161)</sup>'; surely they have uttered the word of Denial so they Denied after their 'professing' Islam<sup>(162)</sup>.

يَتَّيِبَهَا الَّذِي جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ  
وَأَعْلَظْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَمَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبئْسَ  
الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٧٣﴾ يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ مَا قَالُوا وَلَقَدْ  
قَالُوا كَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِسْلَامِهِمْ

- 157 The stubbornly heedless are to be confronted and treated sternly and toughly (cf. al-Biqā'ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).
- 158 The command “*jāhid*” (strive) is of a general purport and trying to say exactly what it entails inevitably limits its meaning, and, in turn, its application (cf. al-Rāzī). Exegetes do not agree unanimously on what ‘striving’ here exactly implies. However, mostly they agree that the Deniers and the hypocrites are to be striven against and confronted: the Deniers with arms and the hypocrites with argumentation (cf. *al-Muyassar, al-Mukhtaṣar, Tafṣīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*): “Fight them until there is no trial, and the religion becomes sincerely Allah’s own. If they desist, only the wrongdoers shall be transgressed against” (2: 193).  
The hypocrites are conjoined together with the Deniers and treated as combatants to give them the message that should they be conspicuously disruptive and more audacious, they now know what is to come. The threat of force ensures that they remain dormant and therefore less disorderly in society (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).
- 159 “...indeed Allah will gather the hypocrites and the Deniers in Hellfire altogether” (4: 140).
- 160 What the hypocrites said and did, their slandering and plotting, and even conspiring to assassinate the Messenger (ﷺ), amounted to outright Denial (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr, *Riḍā*). They are still being forewarned and the cover over their machinations is blown in the most glaring of terms so that they may ponder and repent.
- 161 The ‘word of Denial’ (*kalimat al-kufr*) is the speech that indicates Denial (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr), for example, insulting the Messenger (ﷺ) and attacking the religion (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Wasīṭ*, al-Shawkānī, al- Sa’dī).
- 162 By uttering the word of Denial, they revealed once and for all their true mettle; although they were Muslims to all appearances, they were in fact Deniers (cf. al-Baghawī, al-Qurtubī).  
Ibn ‘Aṭīyah makes a point about word choice, which further sheds light on the meaning; the word “*islām*” and not “*īmān*” (sincere Faith) is used



They resolved 'to carry out' what they failed to attain<sup>(163)</sup>; they only bore grudges after Allah – and His Messengers – enriched them with His bounty!<sup>(164)</sup> If they repent, it would be better for them but if they turn away, Allah will inflict a painful punishment on them 'both' in the worldly life and in the Hereafter—and then' they will have no ally or helper.

وَهُمْ أَيْمَانُ يَتَّبِعُونَ وَمَا نَقَمُوا إِلَّا أَنْ  
أَغْنَاهُمْ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ فَإِنْ يَتُوبُوا  
يَكْ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ وَإِنْ يَتَوَلَّوْا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ  
عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ  
فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٧٤﴾

﴿75﴾ <sup>(165)</sup> Among them are those who pledged to Allah: “Should He bestow on us from His bounty, we would 'commit to' spend charitably and 'commit to' be among the righteous”.

\* وَمِنْهُمْ مَن عَاهَدَ اللَّهُ لَيْنَ آتِنَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ  
لَتَصَّدَّقَنَّ وَلَتَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾

here because Islam can be professed with mere words, i.e. the testimony of monotheism, but *imān* is a much further step, because it tackles what the heart holds: “*The herds people said: “We have Believed!” Say ‘Muhammad’: “You have not Believed. But say: “We have professed Islam” for ‘true’ Faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger ‘wholeheartedly’, He will not discount anything from ‘the reward of’ your deeds—Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful*” (49: 14).

163 They devised to assassinate the Messenger (ﷺ) upon his return from the Tabuk Expedition, but their plot was foiled (cf. al-Baghawī, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma‘ād*, 3/477-478, Ibn Kathīr, al-Alūsī, al-Sa‘dī).

164 A fact that should have had the opposite effect on them (cf. al-Zajjāj, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān*, Ibn A‘ṭiyah, Ibn Kathīr). But such is always the way of venomous people; no act of kindness will ever allay them. Whatever one does will only increase their hatred towards one. When the renowned linguist, al-Bajalī, was asked about where to find the following Arab adage in the Qur’an: “Beware of the evil of the person you have shown kindness to”, he quoted this portion of the aya (cf. al-Dhababī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, 13/414).

165 The hypocritical traits spelled out earlier are reiterated here: dishonoring of pledges, repaying kindness with spitefulness, miserliness and lack of empathy, and persistent lying (cf. al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). They are also still being warned to pay heed.

﴿76﴾ But when He bestowed on them from His bounty, they became miserly with it, and ‘wilfully’ turned away paying no heed. ﴿77﴾ Then there pursued them hypocrisy in their hearts until the day they meet Him<sup>(166)</sup>; for renegeing on what they pledged to Allah and for their persistent lying<sup>(167)</sup>. ﴿78﴾ Did they not know that Allah Knows their secrets and their private conversations, and that Allah is ever All-Knower of all the unseen!

فَلَمَّا آتَتْهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ بَخِلُوا بِهِ  
وَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نِقَافًا  
فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ  
مَا وَعَدُوهُ وَمَا كَانَ نَايِكًا يُكْذِبُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ أَلَمْ  
يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ  
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿٧٨﴾

﴿79﴾ <sup>(168)</sup>Those who snide at the ‘generously’ benefacting among the Believers regarding alms, as well as ‘the sincere’ who can find nothing ‘to give’ but their

الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ

166 Their hypocrisy will linger in their hearts until the day they die, upon which they meet God (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Qurṭubī).

167 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “Three are the ‘tell-tale’ indicators of a hypocrite: lying when speaking, breaking promises and betraying trust” (al-Bukhārī: 33, Muslim 59).

168 The hypocrites do not only practice what they preach themselves (“...enjoin what is unacceptable and advise against virtue, and clinch their fists...”) (Aya 68 above), they hate to see others doing otherwise (cf. al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*). Abū Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When we were bade to give charity, ‘having nothing to give’ we went on to work as porters ‘in the market, to secure the money for charity’. Abū ‘Aqīl came with half a bucket ‘of palm dates as charity’, another person came with more than that, and the hypocrites said: “Allah is in no need of this one’s charity ‘meaning Abū ‘Aqīl’, and this other one only did it to show off”. Then the aya came down: “Those who snide at the benefacting among the Believers regarding alms as well as ‘the sincere’ who can find nothing ‘to give’ but their own effort ...” (al-Bukhārī: 4668, Muslim: 1018). They hurtle sneering comments on both the well-off who give generously, saying that they do so to show off, and those who can only help out with the very little that they have, and deride them for it (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, al-Sa‘dī).

own effort – they ridicule them – may Allah Ridicule them<sup>(169)</sup> and theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿80﴾ (170) Ask ‘Muhammad’ for forgiveness for them, or do not ask for forgiveness for them; should you ask for forgiveness for them seventy times<sup>(171)</sup>, Allah will not forgive them. That for their Denying of Allah and His Messenger; Allah guides not the ‘persistently’ contravening people.

فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾ اَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

169 “When they meet those who Believe, they say: “We Believe!”, but when they are alone with their devils, they say: “Surely we are with you. We are but mocking”. \*Allah mocks them and slackens the reins for them to wander aimlessly in their blindness” (2: 14-15).

170 ‘Umar Ibn al-Khattāb (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When ‘the head of the hypocrites’ ‘Abdullāh Ibn Ubayy Ibn Salūl died, the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was summoned to Pray for him. As the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) stood up ‘for Prayer’, I sprang to him and said: “Messenger of Allah, will you Pray over Ibn Ubayy, in spite of him saying so and so on the day of so and so!” I recounted to him (ﷺ) what he said ‘of many slanders’. The Messenger (ﷺ) smiled and said: “Move away from me ‘Umar.” When I had argued a great deal with him, he said: “I was given a choice and I made my choice. Had I known that if I were to seek forgiveness for him more than seventy times he would be forgiven, I would have sought it more!” The Messenger (ﷺ) Prayed and then left. It was just a short while after that the two ayas in Barā’ah ‘i.e. al-Tawbah’ came down: “Do not ever Pray ‘Muhammad’ over anyone of them who dies ... died while in a state of contravention”...” (al-Bukhārī: 1366).

171 The number 70 is not meant to give an exact number but is rather used to denote numerosness *per se* (cf. al-Zamakhsharī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Khāzin, al-Muyassar, Tafsīr al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah): “It is all the same for them whether you ‘Muhammad’ ask for forgiveness for them ‘the hypocrites’ or do not ask for forgiveness for them, Allah will never forgive them; verily Allah guides not the contravening people” (63: 6).

﴿81﴾ (172) The stay-backers were pleased with their station behind the Messenger of Allah; they hated to strive in the path of Allah with their money and lives and said: “Do not mobilize in the heat!” Say ‘Muhammad’: “The heat of Hellfire is surely more severe” (173) – if only they would discern.

﴿82﴾ Let them laugh a little but weep much they shall; a ‘just’ requital for what they used to earn.

﴿83﴾ Should Allah return you back ‘Muhammad’ to a band of them<sup>(174)</sup> and they sought your permission to set out, say: “You shall never set out with me ever and shall never fight an enemy with me. You were satisfied to stay back in the first time!<sup>(175)</sup>

فَرِحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خَلْفَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ وَكَرَهُوا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا فِي الْحَرِّ قُلْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨١﴾  
فَإِضْحِكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

فَإِنْ رَجَعَكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِنْهُمْ فَاسْتَدْنُوكَ لِخُرُوجٍ فَقُلْ لَنْ أَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَدًا وَلَنْ تَقْتُلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا إِنَّكُمْ رَضِيتُمْ بِالْقُعُودِ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ

172 This and the next three passages generally deal with not abiding by the command to mobilize when called upon. The depravity surrounding such an act of defiance is varyingly highlighted through the use of a defamatory label of the same root *kh-l-f*: *al-mukhallafūna* (the stay-backers, lit. the ones made to stay back), *al-khālifūna* (the fall-behinders) and *al-khawālif* (the ‘incapacitated’ stayers, which is repeated twice) (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).

173 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said: “This fire of yours, which the son of Adam inflames, is ‘only’ one part of seventy parts of the heat of Hell. They ‘the Companions’ said: “By Allah it ‘the worldly fire’ is sufficient ‘as punishment’, Messenger of Allah!” He said: “It ‘Hell’ has been made severer that this one sixty nine times over. Each of them is equal to the worldly fire” (al-Bukhārī: 3265, Muslim: 2849).

174 These are the group of hypocrites who sought the Messenger’s permission without valid excuses to stay in Madinah and not join him on his way to Tabuk (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn Kathīr).

175 The ‘tough’ punishments mentioned here and in the next aya, amount to naming and shaming (cf. al-Rāzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr); they are being pointed out as discordant to the rest of society (cf. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah).

Stay then with the fall-behinders!<sup>(176)</sup> ﴿84﴾ Do not ever Pray ‘Muhammad’ over anyone of them who dies and do not stand at his grave<sup>(177)</sup>; they had Denied Allah and His Messenger and died while in a state of contravention. ﴿85﴾ (178) Let not ‘Muhammad’ their wealth and their sons amuse you; Allah wants nothing but to punish them with these in the worldly life and their souls to expire while they are ‘still’ Deniers.

﴿86﴾ (179) When a sura is brought down ‘commanding people’ to Believe in Allah and strive with His Messenger, the well-off<sup>(180)</sup> among them seek your permission and say: “Leave us to be with those who sit ‘at home’!<sup>(181)</sup>”

فَاقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْخَالِفِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَلَا تَصَلِّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُم مَّا تَبَدَّلُوا وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَى قَبْرِهِ إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ فَسِقُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَلَا تَعْجَبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

وَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةً أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَجَاهِدُوا مَعَ رَسُولِهِ اسْتَأْذِنَكَ أُولُو الطَّوْلِ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالُوا ذَرْنَا نَكُنْ مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾

176 *al-Khālif* (plural *al-khālifūn*) is the person who remains behind because of lack or incapacity (cf. *al-Iṣfahānī*, *al-Mufradāt*). It is used here to impart a derogatory sense (cf. *al-Ṭabarī*).

177 To oversee the burial and/or ask for forgiveness or pray for the deceased (cf. *al-Ṭabarī*, *al-Wāḥidī*, *al-Basī*, *Ibn Kathīr*).

178 The wording of this aya is almost identical to Aya 55 above, reiterating its message and further driving it home (cf. *al-Rāzī*, *Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah*, *Abū Ḥayyān*); all the grandeur with which they are surrounded amounts to nothing but a cause of pain and misery and a deceptive illusion that haunts them until they die without repentance (cf. *al-Qurṭubī*, *Ibn Kathīr*).

179 Yet another subdivision of the hypocrites, i.e. the able-bodied and the wealthy, is exposed here to further chastise them (cf. *Ibn ‘Āshūr*).

180 *Ulū al-ṭawl* (lit. those in possession of expanse/reach, cf. *al-Sijjistānī*, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, *Ibn Fāris*, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, *al-Iṣfahānī*, *al-Mufradāt*) are those who are financially well-off (cf. *al-Ṭabarī*, *Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah*, *al-Qurṭubī*). Yet other commentators include, along with the wealthy, the ones who are bodily fit and healthy (cf. *al-Qāsimī*, *Riḍā*, *Ibn ‘Āshūr*).

181 *al-Qā‘idūna* are the weak, the terminally ill and the incapacitated (cf. *al-Ṭabarī*, *Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah*, *al-Qurṭubī*).

﴿87﴾ They were content to be among the ‘incapacitated’ stayers<sup>(182)</sup> and Allah stamped on their hearts so that they would not discern<sup>(183)</sup>.

﴿88﴾ But the Messenger and Believers alongside him strove with their money and lives; those are the ones for whom is all good ‘things’<sup>(184)</sup> and those are the winners.<sup>﴿89﴾</sup> Allah readied for them Gardens under which rivers flow forever they abide therein; that is ‘truly’ the great triumph.

﴿90﴾ And the permission seekers<sup>(185)</sup> among the herds people came to be pardoned, but those who

رَضُوا بِأَن يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطُبِعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ لَكِنَّ الرَّسُولَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ جَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ الْحَيْرَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٨٩﴾

وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذَّرُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ

182 *al-Kawālif* are mainly women (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, cf. al-Sijjīstānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*). Obviously, they were known with this designation because they would not join fighting campaigns. The hypocrites, however, are still being denigrated (cf. Ibn ‘Āshūr).

183 They were bereft of the faculty of discernment; they did not grasp the wisdom and benefits of God’s commands (cf. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr). Also had they been discerning, they would not have been gratified with classification alongside the less bodily able segment of society (al-Sa’dī): “... *but the hypocrites discern not!*” (9: 87).

184 *al-Khayrāt* (intensive plural of *khayr*, i.e. good) denotes good aplenty both in this worldly life and in the Hereafter (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsimī, al-Sa’dī): “*You who Believe, shall I show you a trade that will save you from painful punishment? \*That you Believe in Allah and His Messenger, and strive in the path of God with your money and lives; that is best for you, if you only knew. \*He will forgive you your sins and admit you in Gardens under which rivers flow and comely abodes in Gardens of Eternity; that is ‘truly’ the great triumph*” (61: 10-12).

185 These nomad permission seekers either had valid excuses (in Ya’qūb’s Qur’anic mode of reading where it is read as: *al-Mu’dhirūna*, cf. Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/280) or did not (in all other Qur’anic modes of reading it is read as: *al-Mu’adhdhirūna*, cf. Ibn al-Jazarī, *al-Nashr*, 2/280) (cf. al-Wāhidī, *al-Basīṭ*, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

lied to Allah and His Messenger stayed<sup>(186)</sup>; a painful Punishment shall befall those who Denied among them. <sup>(91)</sup> There is no guilt upon the weak, or the sick, or those who cannot find the means to spend, should they be honest to Allah and His Messenger; there is no way against the good-doers—Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. <sup>(92)</sup> Neither is there ‘a way’ against those who when they come to you to mount them ‘on riding animals’ – you ‘Muhammad’ would say: “I cannot secure what to mount you on” – they turn back with their eyes swelling with tears, deeply sorrowful that they cannot find the means to spend. <sup>(93)</sup> The way is only ‘rightly sought’ against those who seek your permission while they are well-to-do; they were content to be among the ‘incapacitated’ stayers and Allah stamped on their hearts so that they would not know<sup>(187)</sup>.

كَذَبُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٩١﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا اتَّوَكَّلُوا لَتَحْمِلنَّهُمْ فُلٌ لَا آجِدُ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَرَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَاءُ رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ وَطَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

186 These are the hypocrite nomads who did not even bother to come to the Messenger (ﷺ) to seek his permission (cf. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

187 They did not realize the consequences of not joining the Messenger (ﷺ) in his campaign and were ignorant of the great rewards they were missing out on in this world and in the Hereafter (cf. al-Ṭabarī, al-Alūsī, al-Sa‘dī).

# THE GRAND QUR'AN

The First Third

الْقُرْآنُ الْعَظِيمُ  
تَرْجُمَةٌ مَعَانِي الثُّلُثِ الْأَوَّلِ

At surface level, taken at face value, the Qur'an can be striking for some whilst daunting for others, especially to those whose hearts are not possessed of the sweet, blessed Faith. Yet, much of the Quran's beauty and real significance is to be found in what lies beneath. One can only begin to have a feel of this deep meaning once the surface is left behind and one dives deep to explore what intricate mesh of relationships ties with what hits the eyes at first appearance. Such is the life-long quest that has engaged many a celebrated scholar and many a sincere person in search of the Truth: "Would they not ponder the Qur'an or are there on some hearts their locks!" (47: 24)

**The Quran** is an incredibly deep text. Deeper than oceans, indeed God says: "Say, "If the sea were ink for the Words of my Lord, the sea would be exhausted before the Words of my Lord were exhausted, even if We brought the like thereof to replenish it" (18: 109). This depth is indicated, to name but a few, by the relationship that holds each sura with the preceding and following ones, the relevance of each aya to the next, parallel ayas which are similar, or slightly different, and that are to be found in different places, how the same word is strategically deployed along the suras, stories told many times over from different angles, the judicious use of synonymous and near-synonymous words, homographs, dialectical variations, grammar and syntax as also graphic representations. If at all, this translation only manages to allude to such depth, direct the inquisitive mind to it, but it would be weaving a tall story indeed to say that it has got to its bottom. This can only be found in the many centuries of scholarship that have permeated the past and will continue to do so throughout many future ones.

"This translation will mark a distinctive watershed in the history of Qur'an translations."

*Dr. V. Abdur Rahim*

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