



وَيُتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ



For Allah will turn (in mercy) to whom He will; and Allah is the All-Knowing, All-Wise.

Quran English Translation & Commentary

By

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Al Tawbah

التَّوْبَةَ

Introduction and Summary

Logically this Surah follows up the argument of the last Surah 8, and indeed may be considered a part of it, although chronologically the two are separated by an interval of seven years.

We saw that Surah 8 dealt with the large questions arising at the outset of the life of a new Ummah or organized nation; question of defence under attack, distribution of war acquisitions after victory, the virtues needed for concerted

action, clemency and consideration for one's own and for enemies in the hour of victory.

We pass on in this Surah to deal with the question; what is to be done if the enemy breaks faith and is guilty of the treachery?

No nation can go on with a treaty if the other party violates it at will; but it is laid down that a period of four months should be allowed by way of notice after denunciation of the treaty; that due protection should be accorded in the intervening period; that there should always be open the door to repentance and reunion with the people of Allah; and if all these fail, and war must be undertaken, it must be pushed with the utmost vigour.

These are the general principles deducible from the Surah. The immediate occasion for their promulgation may be considered in connection with the chronological place of the Surah.

Chronologically, verses 1-29 were a notable declaration of state policy promulgated about the month of Shawwal, A.H. 9, and read out by Ali at the Pilgrimage two months later in order to give the policy the widest publicity possible. The remainder of the Surah, verse 30-129, was revealed a little earlier, say about the month of Ramadan, A.H. 9 and sums up the lessons of the Prophet's Tabuk expedition in the late summer of A.H. 9 (say October 630).

Tabuk is a place near the frontier of Arabia, quite close to what was then Byzantine territory in the Province of Syria (which includes Palestine),. It is on the Hijaz Railway, about 350 miles northwest of Madinah, and 150 miles south of Ma'an. It had a fort and a spring of sweet water. In consequence of strong and persistent rumours that the Byzantines (Romans) were preparing to invade Arabia and that the Byzantine Emperor himself had arrived near the frontier for the purpose, the Prophet collected as large a force as he could, and marched to Tabuk. The Byzantine invasion did not come off. But the Prophet took the opportunity of consolidating the Muslim position in that direction and making treaties of alliance with certain Christian and Jewish tribes near the Gulf of Aqabah. On his return to Madinah he considered the situation. During his absence the Hypocrites had played, as always, a double game; and the

policy hitherto followed, of free access to the sacred centre of Islam to Muslims and Pagans alike- was now altered, as it had been abused by the enemies of Islam.

This is the only Surah to which the usual formula of Bismillah is not prefixed. It was among the last of the Surahs revealed, and though the Prophet had directed that it should follow Surah 8, it was not clear whether it was to form a separate Surah or only a part of Surah 8. It is now treated as a separate Surah, but the Bismillah is not prefixed to it, as there is no warrant for supposing that the Prophet used the Bismillah before it in his recitation of Quran.

The Surah is known under many names; the most commonly used are;

- Al Tawbah (Repentance), with reference to 9:104, and
- Bara'ah (The Disavowed), the opening word of the Surah.

Summary- Treaties with those Pagans who have treacherously broken their terms are denounced, but four months' time is given for adjustments or repentance. Pagan to be excluded from the sacred Mosques. Infidelity to be fought (9:1-29, and C. 93).

The People of the Book have obscured the light of Allah, but the Truth of Allah must prevail over all. We must be ready to fight for the Faith that is in us; otherwise we shall be unworthy to uphold Allah's banner, and He will raise other people in our place (9:30-42, and C. 94).

The Hypocrites and their double dealing; their evil ways pointed out. Their punishment will be as sure as the blessings of the righteous (9:43-72, and C. 95).

All evil should be resisted, unless there is repentance; falsehood is not content with breach of faith but mocks all good; it should not be envied but shunned (9:73-99, and C. 96).

The good pleasure of Allah is with those who are sincere and make sacrifices in His cause; He will forgive those who do wrong and repent, but not those who intend mischief and

foment unbelief and disunion among believers. The Believers by their self-surrender obtain eternal Felicity. Allah will turn in mercy even to those who, though they waver or fail in duty, turn at last to Him (9:100-118, and C. 97).

Those who believe should associate with the righteous and the truthful, actively doing their duty. But if the Community marches out, a part of them should remain behind for the purpose of diligently studying religion and teaching their brethren when they return. Every Surah increases the faith of those who believe, though those diseased in heart may add doubt to doubt. Trust in Allah, Lord of the Throne of Glory (9:119-129, and C. 98).

C.93 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(10:1-29)

*If the Pagans repeatedly break
Their treaties, denounce the treaties,
But give them time either to repent
Or to prepare for the just punishment
Of their treachery. Punish the chiefs
Of the treacherous, and destroy them.
But if one of them seek asylum,
Give it; let him hear the Word
Of Allah and escort him to security.
Be true to the true, but fight those
Who are false to plighted word
And taunt you for your Faith.
No one has the right to approach
The mosques of Allah unless
He believes in Allah and follows
Allah's Law, the law of righteousness.*

بِرَاءةٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ (١)

1. A (declaration) of immunity from Allah and His Messenger, to those of the pagans with whom ye have contracted mutual alliances.

C1246. Baraah: usually translated "immunity".

I do not think that word correctly represents the Arabic word in this context. The general sense is explained in the introduction to this Surah. In verse 3 below I use the periphrasis "dissolve treaty obligations." which goes some way to explain the meaning.

The Pagans and enemies of Islam frequently made treaties of mutual alliance with the Muslims. The Muslims scrupulously observed their part, but the Pagans violated their part again and again when it suited them. After some years, experience it became imperative to denounce such treaties altogether. This was done in due form, with four months' notice, and a chance was given to those who faithfully observed their pledges, to continue their alliance.

فَسِيحُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ...

2. Go ye, then, for four months, backwards and forwards, (as ye will), throughout the land, but know ye that ye cannot frustrate Allah (by your falsehood)

C1247. Four Months: Some Commentators understand by this the four forbidden months in which warfare by ancient Arabian custom was unlawful, viz., Rajah. Dhu al Qadah, Dhu al Hijjah and Muharram:

See note 209 to 2:194..

But it is better to take the signification of the four months immediately following the Declaration. Assuming that the Surah was promulgated early in Shawwal (see Introduction), the four months would be Shawwal, Dhu al Qadah, Dhu al Hijjah and Muharram, of which the last three would also be the customary Prohibited Months.

...وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْزِي الْكَافِرِينَ (٢)

but that Allah will cover with shame those who reject him.

وَأَذَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ إِلَى النَّاسِ يَوْمَ الْحَجِّ الْأَكْبَرِ...

3. And an announcement from Allah and His Messenger, to the people (assembled) on the day of the Great Pilgrimage,

C1248. The great day of Hajj is either the 9th of Dhu al Hijjah ('Arafa), or the 10th (the Day of Sacrifice).

...أَنَّ اللَّهَ بَرِيءٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَرَسُولُهُ...

that Allah and His Messenger dissolve (treaty) obligations with the pagans.

...فَإِن تَبُوءْهُ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ...

If, then, ye repent, it were best for you;

...وَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ غَيْرُ مُعْجِزِي اللَّهِ ...

but if ye turn away, know ye that ye cannot frustrate Allah.

...وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (٣)

And proclaim a grievous penalty to those who reject faith.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَنفُصُوكُمْ شَيْئًا...

4. (But the treaties are) not dissolved with those pagans with whom ye have entered into alliance and who have not subsequently failed you in aught,

C1249. The sacred duty of fulfilling all obligations of every kind, to Muslims and non Muslims, in public as well as private life, is a cardinal feature of Muslim ethics.

The question what is to be done with those who abuse this principle by failing in their duty but expect the Muslims to do their part is not to be solved (in the case of treaties) by a general denunciation of treaties but by a careful consideration of the cases where there has been fidelity and not treachery.

There we are enjoined to give the strictest fidelity, as it is a part of righteousness and our duty to Allah.

وَلَمْ يُظَاهِرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَحَدًا ...

nor aided anyone against you.

... فَأَتِمُوا إِلَيْهِمْ عَهْدَهُمْ إِلَىٰ مُدَّتِهِمْ...

So fulfil your engagements with them to the end of their term:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ (٤)

for Allah loveth the righteous.

فَإِذَا انْسَلَخَ الْأَشْهُرُ الْحُرْمُ ...

5. But when the forbidden months are past,

C1250. The emphasis is on the first clause; it is only when the four months of grace are past, and the other party show no signs of desisting from their treacherous designs by right conduct, that the state of war supervenes-between Faith and Unfaith.

... فَأَقْتُلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَيْثُ وَجَدْتُمُوهُمْ...

then fight and slay the pagans wherever ye find them

C1251. When war becomes inevitable, it must be prosecuted with vigour.

According to the English phrase, you cannot fight with kid gloves. The fighting may take the form of killing, capture, or siege, or ambush and other stratagems.

But even then there is room for repentance and amendment on the part of the guilty party, and if that takes place, our duty is forgiveness and the establishment of peace.

...وَخُذُوهُمْ وَأَحْصِرُوا لَهُمْ وَأَقْعُدُوا لَهُمْ كُلَّ مَرْصِدٍ ...

and seize them, beleague them and lie in wait for them in every stratagem (of war);

...فَإِنْ تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَخَلُّوا سَبِيلَهُمْ...

but if they repent, and establish regular prayers and practice regular charity, then open the way for them:

C1252. The repentance must be sincere, and that is shown by conduct—a religious spirit of true prayer and charity.

In that case we are not to bar the gate against the repentant. On the contrary we must do all we can to make their way easy, remembering that Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful.

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٥)

for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَأِنْ أَحَدٌ مِّنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ اسْتَجَارَكَ ...

6. If one amongst the pagans ask thee for asylum, grant it to him,

C1253. Even among the enemies of Islam, actively fighting against Islam, there may be individuals who may be in a position to require protection. Full asylum is to be given to them, and opportunities provided for hearing the Word of Allah.

If they accept the Word, they become Muslims and brethren, and no further question arises. If they do not see their way to accept Islam, they will require double protection:

- from the Islamic forces openly fighting against their people, and
- from their own people, as they detached themselves from them.

Both kinds of protection should be ensured for them, and they should be safely escorted to a place where they can be safe. Such persons only err through ignorance, and there may be much good in them.

... فَأَجِرْهُ حَتَّىٰ يَسْمَعَ كَلَامَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ أَبْلِغْهُ مَأْمَنَهُ ...

so that he may hear the word of Allah and then escort him to where he can be secure:

C1254. Ma'manah: place or opportunity of being secure from all harm.

...ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ (٦)

that is because they are men without knowledge.

Section 2

كَيْفَ يَكُونُ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ عَهْدٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَعِنْدَ رَسُولِهِ...

7. How can there be a league before Allah and His Messenger, with the pagans,

...إِلَّا الَّذِينَ عَاهَدْتُمْ عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ...

except those with whom ye made a treaty near the sacred mosque?

C1255. In this section we have the reasons why the treaties with treacherous Pagan foes were denounced.

The clause introducing the exception is a parenthetical clause. The word "Pagans" must be connected with verse 8 which follows. In that verse the word **kaifa** resumes the clause introduced by the word **kaifa** at the beginning of verse 7.

The exceptional Pagan tribes which remained true to their word were the Banu Hamza and the Banu Kinana, who swore their treaty near the Sacred Mosque and faithfully observed it. They were to be given the full benefit of their fidelity even though their kindred tribes were treacherous.

... فَمَا اسْتَقَامُوا لَكُمْ فَاسْتَقِيمُوا لَهُمْ...

As long as these stand true to you, stand ye true to them:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ (٧)

For Allah doth love the righteous.

... كَيْفَ ...

8. How (can there be such a league),

C1256. The exceptions having been stated parenthetically in verse 7, the indictment of the general mass of Pagan tribes is now set out briefly but fully and convincingly.

After that kind of behaviour how can treaty be possible with them? The counts are:

1. that whenever they got a slight advantage, they disregarded the ties both of kinship and of covenant as against the Muslims because of their Faith, thus proving doubly treacherous;
2. that they spoke fair words, but had venom in their hearts;
3. that their attitude was one of rebellion against their plighted word;
4. that they disregarded the solemn words of Allah for some miserable worldly gain;
5. that they tried to prevent other people from coming to the Way of Allah.

The first clause is repeated again as the last clause, to emphasize their double treachery, and round off the argument.

... وَإِنْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَيْكُمْ لَا يَرْفُقُوا فِيكُمْ إِلَّا وَلَا ذِمَّةً ...

seeing that if they get an advantage over you, they respect not in you the ties either of kinship or of covenant?

C1257. Among the Arabs the ties of kinship were so strong as to be almost unbreakable. The Pagan Arabs went out of their way to break them in the case of the Muslims, who were kith and kin to them.

Besides the bond of kinship there was the further bond of their plighted oath in the Treaty. They broke that oath because the other parties were Muslims!

... يُرْضُونَكُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتَأْبَى قُلُوبُهُمْ ...

With (fair words from) their mouths they entice you, but their hearts are averse from you;

...وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ (٨)

and most of them are rebellious and wicked.

اشْتَرَوْا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ...

9. The signs of Allah have they sold for a miserable price, and (many) have they hindered from His way:

...إِنَّهُمْ سَاءَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (٩)

evil indeed are the deeds they have done.

لَا يَرْفُقُونَ فِي مَوْمِنٍ إِلَّا وَلَا ذِمَّةً...

10. In a believer they respect not the ties either of kinship or of covenant!

...وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُعْتَدُونَ (١٠)

It is they who have transgressed all bounds.

C1258. The catalogue of their sins being set out, it is clear that they were aggressors in the worst possible ways; and war became inevitable.

فَإِن تَابُوا وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ فَإِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ...

11. But (even so), if they repent, establish regular prayers, and practice regular charity, they are your brethren in faith:

C1259. The chance of repentance and mercy to the worst enemies is again emphasised, in order that people with any understanding may not be misled into thinking that war was an easy or light matter.

This emphasis is balanced by the emphasis in the next verse on the causes which made war inevitable for those with any self-respect.

...وَنُفِّصِلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ (١١)

(thus) do We explain signs in detail, for those who understand.

وَأِنْ تَكْفُرُوا أَيْمَانُهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ عَهْدِهِمْ وَطَعَنُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ فَقَاتِلُوا أَيْمَةَ الْكُفْرِ...

12. But if they violate their oaths after their covenant, and taunt you for your faith, fight ye the chiefs of unfaith:

C1260. Not only did the enemies break their oaths shamelessly, but they even taunted the Muslims on their Faith and the "simple-minded" way in which they continued to respect their part of the treaty, as if they were afraid to fight!

...إِنَّهُمْ لَا أَيْمَانَ لَهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَنْتَهُونَ (١٢)

for their oaths are nothing to them:
that thus they may be restrained.

أَلَا تُقَاتِلُونَ قَوْمًا نَكَثُوا أَيْمَانَهُمْ وَهَمُّوا بِإِخْرَاجِ الرَّسُولِ...

13. Will ye not fight people who violated their oaths, plotted to expel the Messenger,

C1261. The argument now takes a new turn. An appeal is made to the Muslims on various grounds:

- the shameless disregard of treaties by the enemy,
- the under-hand plots to discredit the Holy Prophet, and turn him out of Madinah as he had been turned out of Makkah,
- the aggression taken by the Quraish and their confederates in Madinah after the treaty of Hudaibiyah (A.H. 6, Dhu al Qadah. Feb. 628),
- the manly attitude that fears Allah rather than men, and
- the need to prove our sincere faith by test and trial and struggle and sacrifice ([9:16](#)).

...وَهُمْ يَدَّؤُنَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ...

and took the aggressive by being the first (to assault) you?

...أَتَحْسَبُونَهُمْ...

Do ye fear them?

...فَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَخْشَوْهُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (١٣)

Nay, it is Allah whom ye should more justly fear, if ye believe!

فَاتْلُوهُمْ يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِأَيْدِيكُمْ وَيُخْزِهِمْ...

14. Fight them, and Allah will punish them by your hands, cover them with shame,

...وَيَنْصُرْكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَيَشْفِ صُدُورَ قَوْمٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ (١٤)

help you (to victory) over them, heal the breasts of believers.

C1262. Heal the breasts of believers, i.e., of wounds that they may have sustained from the assaults, taunts, and cruelty of the enemy.

وَيُدْهِبُ غَيْظَ قُلُوبِهِمْ...

15. And still the indignation of their hearts.

C1263. When the victory comes and the wounds are healed, a great peace comes to the hearts of those who have suffered, striven, and struggled.

The fighting was necessity forced by injustice and oppression. When Allah's Law is established, the fire of indignation is quelled, and the true Peace of Islam is attained.

...وَيَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ...

For Allah will turn (in mercy) to whom He will;

C1264. Allah's mercy is unlimited. When evil is destroyed, many of those who were enticed by evil will come into the fold of truth and righteousness, and the cessation of war and conflict will bring peace, certainly to those who fought for the right, but also possibly to those whose eyes have been opened to the working of Allah's Law and who in healing reconciliation become members of the Brotherhood of Peace ill Islam.

...وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (١٥)

and Allah is the All-Knowing, All-Wise.

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُتْرَكُوا وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ...

16. Or think ye that ye shall be abandoned, as though Allah did not know those among you who strive with might and main,

C1265. Some translators have taken a different verbal construction of this passage, but the ultimate effect in meaning is the same: we must all be tested and tried, but Allah knows our inmost hearts, and He will support those who strive in His way, out of sincere love for Him, His Prophet, and the body of the true men of faith.

...وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَا رَسُولِهِ وَلَا الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلِيجَةً...

and take none for friends and protectors except Allah, His Messenger, and the (community of) believers?

...وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (١٦)

But Allah is well-acquainted with (all) that ye do.

Section 3

مَا كَانَ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَعْمُرُوا مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ شَاهِدِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِم بِالْكَفْرِ...

17. It is not for such as join gods with Allah, to visit or maintain the mosques of Allah while they witness against their own souls to infidelity.

C1266. 'Amara as applied to mosques implies the following ideas:

- to build or repair:
- to maintain in fitting dignity:
- to visit for purposes of devotion: and
- fill with light and life and activity.

For brevity I have only used "maintain" in the Translation. Before the preaching of Islam the Pagans built, repaired, and maintained the Mosque, and celebrated Pagan ceremonies in it. They made an income out of it. Islam protested, and the Pagans ejected Muslims and their Leader from Makkah and shut them out from the Ka'bah itself.

When the Muslims were strong enough to re-take Makkah (A.H. 8), they purified the Mosque and re-established the worship of the true God. If they became Muslims, it was a different matter. The further question arose: should they be allowed to visit it and practice their unseemly Pagan rites?

Obviously this would be derogatory to the dignity and honour of the Mosque, and was forbidden. This was the particular occasion to which the verse refers.

The general deduction is clear. A house of Allah is a place of sincere devotion, not a theatre for vulgar rites nor a source of worldly income. Only sincere Believers have a right of entry.

Who the sincere Believers are, is explained in the next verse.

...أُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ وَفِي النَّارِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ (١٧)

The works of such bear no fruit:
in fire shall they dwell.

إِنَّمَا يَعْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ...

18. The mosques of Allah shall be visited and maintained by such as
- believe in Allah and the Last Day,

...وَأَقَامَ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَى الزَّكَاةَ وَلَمْ يَحْشَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ...

- establish regular prayers,
- and practice regular charity,
- and fear none (at all) except Allah.

C1267. See [the previous note](#).

Sincere Believers are those who have faith in Allah and the future, and have a spirit of devotion and charity -a true and abiding spirit, not merely isolated acts now and again.

Moreover they must not bow to worldly greed or ambition, which produces fear of worldly power.

...فَعَسَىٰ أَوْلِيٰكَ أَن يَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُهْتَدِينَ (١٨)

It is they who are expected to be on true guidance.

C1268. Others may call themselves by what names they like. True guidance is shown by the tests here indicated.

أَجَعَلْتُمْ سِقَايَةَ الْحَاجِّ وَعِمَارَةَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ كَمَنْ...

19. Do ye make the giving of drink to pilgrims, or the maintenance of the Sacred Mosque, equal to (the pious service of)

C1269. Giving drinks of cold water to thirsty pilgrims, and doing material services to a mosque are meritorious acts, but they are only external. If they do not touch the soul, their value is slight. Far greater, in the sight of Allah, are Faith, Endeavour, and self-surrender to Allah.

Men who practice these will obtain honour in the sight of Allah. Allah's light and guidance comes to them, and not to those self-sufficient beings who think that a little show of what the world considers piety is enough.

...أَمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَجَاهَدَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ...

those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and strive with might and main in the Cause of Allah?

... لَا يَسْتَوُونَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ...

They are not comparable in the sight of Allah:

...وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (١٩)

and Allah guides not those who do wrong.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ أَعْظَمُ

دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ...

20. Those who believe, and suffer exile and strive with might and main, in **Allah's** cause, with their goods and their persons, have the highest rank in the sight of Allah:

C1270. Here is its good description of Jihad. It may require fighting in Allah's cause, its a form of self-sacrifice. But its essence consists in;

- a true and sincere Faith, which so fixes its gaze on Allah, that all selfish or worldly motives seem paltry and fade away, and
- an earnest and ceaseless activity, involving the sacrifice (if need be) of life, person, or property, in the service of Allah.

Mere brutal fighting is opposed to the whole spirit of Jihad, while the sincere scholar's pen or preacher's voice or wealthy man's contributions may be the most valuable forms of Jihad.

...وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ (٢٠)

They are the people who will achieve (salvation).

يُبَشِّرُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِرَحْمَةٍ مِّنْهُ وَرِضْوَانٍ وَجَنَّاتٍ لَّهُمْ فِيهَا نَعِيمٌ مُّقِيمٌ (٢١)

21. Their Lord doth give them Glad tidings of a Mercy from Himself, of His good pleasure, and of gardens for them, wherein are delights that endure.

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ...

22. They will dwell therein forever.

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ (٢٢)

Verily in Allah's presence is a reward, the greatest (of all).

C1271. Those who strive and suffer in Allah's cause are promised;

- a mercy specially from Himself,
- His own good pleasure,
- gardens of perpetual delight,
- the supreme reward.

Allah's own nearness. These are in gradation:

- is a special mercy, higher than flows out to all creatures:
- is a consciousness of Allah's good pleasure, which raises the soul above itself:
- is that state of permanent assurance, and
- is the final bliss, which is the sight of Allah Himself. (R).

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا آبَاءَكُمْ وَإِخْوَانَكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ إِنِ اسْتَحَبُّوا الْكُفْرَ
عَلَى الْإِيمَانِ ...

23. O ye who believe!

take not for protectors your fathers and your brothers if they love infidelity above faith:

...وَمَنْ يَتَّخِذْهُمْ مِّنْكُمْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (٢٣)

if any of you do so, they do wrong.

قُلْ إِن كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ...

24. Say:

If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your mates,

...وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَحْسَبُونَ كَسَادَهَا...

or your kindred;

the wealth that ye have gained;

the commerce in which ye fear a decline;

...وَمَسَاكِينُ تَرْضَوْنَهَا ...

or the dwellings in which ye delight,

C1272. Man's heart clings to;

- his own kith and kin-parents, children, brothers and sisters, husbands or wives, or other relatives,
- wealth and prosperity,
- commerce or means of profit and gain, or

- noble buildings, for dignity or comfort.

If these are a hindrance in Allah's cause, we have to choose which we love most. We must love Allah even if it involves the sacrifice of all else.

... أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي سَبِيلِهِ ...

are dearer to you than Allah, or His Messenger,
or the striving in his cause;

... فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ...

then wait until Allah brings about His decision:

C1273. If we love our earthly ties and comfort's, profits and pleasures, more than we love Allah, and therefore fail to respond to Allah's cause, it is not Allah's cause which will suffer, Allah's purpose will be accomplished, with or without us. But our failure to respond to His will must leave us spiritually poorer, bereft of grace and guidance: "for Allah guides not the rebellious".

This is of universal application. But it was strikingly illustrated in the case of those faithful ones who obeyed the Prophet's call, left the comfort of their homes in Makkah and suffered exile in Madinah, gave up their trade and their possessions, strove and fought for Allah's cause, sometimes against their own kith and kin or their own tribesmen who were enemies of Islam. They won through. Others were not prepared for such sacrifice, but their failure did not stop the accomplishment of Allah's plan and purpose.

... وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ (٢٤)

and Allah guides not the rebellious.

Section 4

لَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَوَاطِنَ كَثِيرَةٍ...

25. Assuredly Allah did help you in many battlefields

...وَيَوْمَ حُنَيْنٍ ...

and on the day of Hunayn:

C1274. Hunayn is on the road to Taif from Makkah about fourteen miles to the east of Makkah. It is a valley in the mountainous country between Makkah and Taif.

Immediately after the conquest of Makkah, (A.H. 8), the Pagan idolaters, who were surprised and chagrined at the wonderful reception which Islam was receiving, organized a great gathering near Taif to concert plans for attacking the Prophet.

The Hawazin and the Thaqif tribes took the lead and prepared a great expedition for Makkah, boasting of their strength and military skill. There was on the other hand a wave of confident enthusiasm among the Muslims at Makkah, in which the new Muslims joined. The enemy forces numbered about 4,000 but the Muslim force reached a total of ten or twelve thousand, as every one wished to join. The battle was joined at Hunain, as described in the next note.

... إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنْكُمْ شَيْئًا ...

Behold! your great numbers elated you, but they availed you naught:

...وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ...

the land, for all that it is wide, did constrain you,

...ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُمْ مُدْبِرِينَ (٢٥)

and ye turned back in retreat.

C1275. For the first time the Muslims had at Hunayn tremendous odds in their favour. But this itself constituted a danger. Many in their ranks had more enthusiasm than wisdom, more a spirit of elation than of faith and confidence in the righteousness of their cause.

The enemy had the advantage of knowing the ground thoroughly. They laid an ambush in which the advance guard of the Muslim forces was caught. The country is hilly, in which the enemy concealed himself. As soon as

the Muslim vanguard entered the Hunain valley, the enemy fell upon them with fury and caused havoc with their arrows from their places of concealment.

In such ground the numbers of the Muslims were themselves a disadvantage. Many were slain, and many turned back in confusion and retreat. But the Prophet, as ever, was calm in his wisdom and faith. He rallied his forces and inflicted the most crushing defeat on the enemy.

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ...

26. But Allah did pour His calm on the Messenger and on the believers

C1276. Sakin: calm, peace, security, tranquility.

Cf. 2:248.

The Prophet never approved of over-weening confidence, or reliance merely upon human strength, or human resources or numbers. In the hour of danger and seeming disaster, he was perfectly calm, and with cool courage relied upon the help of Allah. Whose standard he carried. His calmness inspired all around him, and stopped the rout of those who had turned their backs.

It was with Allah's help that they won, and their victory was complete. They followed it up with an energetic pursuit of the enemies, capturing their camps, their flocks and herds, and their families, whom they had boastfully brought with them in expectation of an easy victory.

...وَأَنْزَلَ جُنُودًا لَمْ تَرَوْهَا وَعَذَّبَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا...

and sent down forces which ye saw not:

He punished the unbelievers:

...وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ (٢٦)

thus doth He reward those without faith.

ثُمَّ يَنْتَوِبُ اللَّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ...

27. Again will Allah, after this, turn (in mercy) to whom He will:

C1277. Examples of Allah's mercy and grace in difficult circumstances in one case illustrate His grace and mercy at all times to those who have faith.

...وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٢٧)

for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا...

28. O ye who believe!

...إِنَّمَا الْمُشْرِكُونَ نَجَسٌ...

truly the pagans are unclean;

C1278. Unclean: because Muslims are enjoined to be strict in cleanliness, as well as in purity of mind and heart, so that their word can be relied upon.

... فَلَا يَفْرَبُوا الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ بَعْدَ عَامِهِمْ هَذَا ...

so let them not, after this year of theirs, approach the Sacred Mosque.

C1279. This year of theirs: there is a two-fold meaning:

1. now that you have complete control of Makkah and are, charged with the purity of worship there, shut out all impurity from this year:
2. you have seen how the Pagans have behaved this year; their year of power and misuse of that power may be called their year; it is over, and now you Muslims are responsible.

...وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ عَيْلَةً فَسَوْفَ يُغْنِيكُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنْ شَاءَ...

And if ye fear poverty, soon will Allah enrich you, if He wills, out of His bounty,

C1280. The concourse in Makkah added to the profits of trade and commerce. "But fear not," we are told: "the Pagans are a waning power, bound to disappear, and you should strengthen your own community, that they

may more than counter-balance the apparent loss of custom; and Allah has other means of improving your economic position."

This actually happened. The Pagans were extinguished from Arabia, and the concourse of pilgrims from all parts of the world increased the numbers more than a hundred-fold.

Here is commonsense, wisdom, and statesmanship, even if we look at it from a purely human point of view.

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (٢٨)

for Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

فَاتْلُوا الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَا بِالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ...

29. Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last Day,

...وَلَا يُحَرِّمُونَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ...

nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger,

...وَلَا يَدِينُونَ دِينَ الْحَقِّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ...

nor acknowledge the religion of truth, (even if they are) of the People of the Book,

...حَتَّى يُعْطُوا الْجِزْيَةَ ...

until they pay the Jizyah

C1281. Jizyah: the root meaning is compensation.

The derived meaning, which became the technical meaning, was a poll-tax levied from those who did not accept Islam, but were willing to live under the protection of Islam, and were thus tacitly willing to submit to its ideals being enforced in the Muslim State.

There was no amount permanently fixed for it. It was in acknowledgment that those whose religion was tolerated would in their turn not interfere with the preaching and progress of Islam. Imam Shafi'i suggests one dinar per year, which would be the Arabian gold dinar of the Muslim States.

The tax varied in amount, and there were exemptions for the poor, for females and children (according to Abu Hanifa), for slaves, and for monks and hermits. Being a tax on able-bodied males of military age, it was in a sense a commutation for military service. But see the next note.

... عَنْ يَدٍ وَهُمْ صَاغِرُونَ (٢٩)

with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued.

C1282. 'An Yadin: literally, from the hand, has been variously interpreted. The hand being the symbol of power and authority. I accept the interpretation "in token of willing submission."

The **Jizyah** was thus partly symbolic and partly a commutation for military service, but as the amount was insignificant and the exemptions numerous, its symbolic character predominated. See the last note.

C.94 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(10:30-42)

*The enemies of Faith would fain put out
Allah's light, but Allah's light will shine
More glorious than ever. Wealth
Is for use and on trust for mankind:
Hoard not, nor misuse it. Fight
A straight fight in the cause of Right:
Go forth bravely to strive and struggle,
And prove yourselves worthy of Allah.*

Section 5

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ...

30. The Jews call Uzayr a son of God,

C1283. In n. 718 to 5:18, I have quoted passages from the Old Testament, showing how freely the expression "sons of Allah" was used by the Jews. A sect of them called 'Uzair a son of Allah, according to Baidhawl.

In Appendix II (Surah 5) I have shown that the constitution of Judaism dates from 'Uzair (Ezra). The Christians still call Christ the Son of God.

...وَقَالَتُ اللَّصَّارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ...

and the Christians call Christ the son of God.

...ذَلِكَ قَوْلُهُمْ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ...

That is a saying from their mouths;

يُضَاهَوْنَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ...

(in this) they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say.

C1284. Taking men for gods or sons of Allah was not a new thing. All ancient mythologies have fables of that kind. There was less excuse for such blasphemies after the Prophets of Allah had clearly explained out true relation to Allah than in the times of primitive ignorance and superstition.

...قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ (٣٠)

Allah's curse be on them:

how they are deluded away from the truth!

C1285. Cf. 5:75.

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ...

31. They take their priests and their anchorites to be their lords in derogation of Allah,

C1286. Ahbar: doctors of law; priests; learned men. Cf. 5:44. where they are associated with Rabbis.

Ruhban: monks, ascetics, anchorites, men who have renounced the world; where there is a celibate clergy, the term can be applied to them as well as to members of monastic orders.

It is also permissible to apply the term to "saints", where they are deified or credited with divine powers, or where people pray to them as they do in the Roman Catholic Church.

C1287. Priest worship, and the worship of saints and ascetics is a form of superstition to which men have been prone in all ages. The growth of Jewish superstition is shown in the Talmud, and of Christian superstition in the doctrine of papal infallibility and the worship of saints. The mere idea of a separate order of priesthood to stand between Allah and man and be the exclusive repository of Allah's secrets is derogatory to the goodness and all-pervading grace of Allah.

The worship of "lords many and gods many" was not confined only to the Pagans. The deification of the son of Mary is put here in a special clause by itself, as it held (and still holds) in its thrall a large portion of civilized humanity.

... وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ...

and (they take as their Lord) Christ the son of Mary;

... وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا...

Yet they were commanded to worship but one God:

... لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ...

there is no god but He.

... سُبْحَانَهُ...

Praise and glory to Him:

C1288. Cf. 6:100.

... عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ (٣١)

(far is He) from having the parents they associate (with him).

... يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُطْفِئُوا نُورَ اللَّهِ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ...

32. Fain would they extinguish Allah's Light with their mouths,

C1289. With their mouths: there is a twofold meaning:

- the old-fashioned open oil lamps were extinguished by blowing with the mouth; the Unbelievers would like to blow out Allah's Light as it is a cause of offence to them;
- false teachers and preachers distort the Message of Allah by the false words of their mouth.

Their wish is to put out the light of Truth for they are people of darkness; but Allah will perfect His Light, i.e., make it shine all the brighter in the eyes of men.

His Light in itself is ever perfect, but it will penetrate the hearts of men more and more, and so become more and more perfect for them.

...وَيَأْبَى اللَّهُ إِلَّا أَنْ يُنَمَّ نُورُهُ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكَافِرُونَ (٣٢)

but Allah will not allow but that His Light should be perfected, even though the unbelievers may detest (it).

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ...

33. It is He who hath sent His Messenger with guidance and religion of truth,

...لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ (٣٣)

to proclaim it over all religions, even though the pagans may detest (it).

C1290. Every religion which commends itself widely to human beings and lasts through some space of time has a glimpse of Truth in it. But Islam being the perfect light of Truth is bound to prevail.

As the greater Light, through its own strength, outshines all lesser lights, so will Islam outshine all else, in spite of the displeasure of those to whom light is an offence.

See also 48:28, n. 4912, and 61:9, n. 5442.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا...

34. O ye who believe!

إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لَيَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ...

there are indeed many among the priests and anchorites, who in false hood devour the substance of men

C1291. Bil-batili: in falsehood. i.e., by false means, pretences, or in false or vain things.

This was strikingly exemplified in the history of Mediaeval Europe. Though the disease is apt to attack all peoples and organizations at all times. Priests got rich by issuing indulgences and dispensations; they made their office a stepping stone to worldly power and possessions.

Even the Monastic Orders, which took vows of poverty for individuals grew rich with corporate property, until their wealth became a scandal, even among their own nations.

...وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...

and hinder (them) from the way of Allah.

...وَالَّذِينَ يَكْنِزُونَ الذَّهَبَ وَالْفِضَّةَ وَلَا يَنْفِقُونَهَا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...

And there are those who bury gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah:

C1292. Misuse of wealth, property, and resources is frequently condemned, and in three ways:

1. do not acquire anything wrongfully or on false pretences;
2. do not hoard or bury or amass wealth for its own sake but use it freely for good, whether for yourself or for your neighbors; and
3. be particularly careful not to waste it for idle purposes, but only so that it may fructify for the good of the people.

...فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ (٣٤)

announce unto them a most grievous penalty.

يَوْمَ يُحْمَىٰ عَلَيْهَا فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ فَيُكْفَىٰ بِهَا جِبَاهُهُمْ وَجُنُوبُهُمْ
وَأُظْهُرُهُمْ ...

35. On the day when heat will be produced out of that (wealth) in the fire of hell, and with it will be branded their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs,

C1293. Gold and silver, symbolizing wealth which these people cherished even more than the good pleasure of their Lord, will not only be the cause but the instrument whereby they would receive a grievous punishment. (Ed.).

... هَذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ لَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ...

"This is the (treasure) which ye buried for yourselves:

C1294. The voice enforces the moral:

"did you expect satisfaction or salvation from the treasures that you misused?

Behold! they add to your torment!"

... فَذُوقُوا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ (٣٥)

taste ye, then, the (treasures) ye buried!"

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ...

36. The number of months in the sight of Allah is twelve (in a year) so ordained by Him the day He created the heavens and the earth;

C1295. This and the following verse must be read together. They condemn the arbitrary and selfish conduct of the Pagan Arabs, who, because there was a long-established custom of observing four months as those in which fighting was forbidden, changed the months about or added or deducted months when it suited them, to get an unfair advantage over the enemy.

The four Prohibited Months were:

- Dhu al Qadah,
- Dhu al Hijjah,

- Muharram, and
- Rajab.

If it suited them they postponed one of these months, and so a prohibited month became an ordinary month: while their opponents might hesitate to fight, they got an undue advantage. It also upset the security of the Month of Pilgrimage. This very ancient usage made for fair dealing all round, and its infraction by the Pagans is condemned.

The question of a solar astronomical year as against the lunar Islamic year does not arise here. But it may be noted that the Arab year was roughly luni-solar like the Hindu year, the months being lunar and the intercalation of a month every three years brought the year nearly but not accurately up to the solar reckoning.

From the year of the Farewell Pilgrimage (A.H.10) the Islamic year was definitely fixed as a purely lunar year of roughly 354 days, the months being calculated by the actual appearance of the moon. After that, every month of the Islamic year came about 11 days earlier in the solar year, and thus the Islamic months travelled all round the seasons and the solar year. (R).

... مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرْمٌ...

of them four are sacred;

... ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ...

that is the straight usage. So wrong not yourselves therein,

C1296. The Muslims were at a disadvantage on account of their scruples about the Prohibited Months. They are told not to wrong themselves in this. If the Pagans fought in all months on one pretence or another, they were allowed to defend themselves in all months. But self-restraint was (as always) recommended as far as possible.

... وَقَاتِلُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ كَافَّةً كَمَا يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ كَافَّةً...

and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together.

...وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ (٣٦)

But know that Allah is with those who restrain themselves.

إِنَّمَا النَّسِيءُ زِيَادَةٌ فِي الْكُفْرِ ...

37. Verily the transposing (of a prohibited month) is an addition to unbelief:

C1297. To meddle with an old-established custom of close time for warfare during Prohibited or Sacred Months was not only a demonstration of the Unbelievers against the Muslims on account of their Faith, but was wrong and unjust in itself, as it abolished a wholesome check on unregulated warfare, and prejudiced the law-abiding side by arbitrary decisions.

... يُضِلُّ بِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ...

the unbelievers are led to wrong thereby:

...يُحِلُّونَهُ عَامًا وَيُحَرِّمُونَهُ عَامًا لِيُوَاطُّوْا عِدَّةَ مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ...

for they make it lawful one year, and forbidden another year, in order to adjust the number of months forbidden by Allah

...فَيَحِلُّوْا مَا حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ...

and make such forbidden ones lawful.

...زُيِّنَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ أَعْمَالِهِمْ...

The evil of their course seems pleasing to them.

C1298. Cf. 6:122.

The lawless man thinks he is doing a great thing in getting the better of those who are careful to observe a law they believe in. But the lawless man loses the guidance of Faith he will therefore lose in the end.

...وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ (٣٧)

But Allah guideth not those who reject faith.

Section 6

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَا لَكُمْ ...

38. O ye who believe!

what is the matter with you,

C1299. The immediate reference is to the expeditions to Tabuk (A.H. 9), for which see the Introduction to this Surah.

But the lesson is perfectly general. When a call is made on behalf of a great cause, the fortunate ones are those who have the privilege of responding to the call.

The unfortunate ones are those who are so engrossed in their parochial affairs that they turn a deaf ear to the appeal. They are suffering from a spiritual disease.

... إِذَا قِيلَ لَكُمْ انْفِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ اثَّاقَلْتُمْ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ...

then, when ye are asked to go forth in the Cause of Allah, ye cling heavily to the earth?

C1300. The choice is between two courses:

- will you choose a noble adventure and the glorious privilege of following your spiritual leader, or
- grovel in the earth for some small worldly gain or for fear of worldly loss?

The people who hesitated to follow the call of Tabuk were deterred by;

- the heat of the summer, in which the expedition was undertaken on account of the threat to the existence of the little community, and
- the fear of losing the fruit harvest, which was ripe for gathering.

... أَرْضَيْتُمْ بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مِنَ الْآخِرَةِ ...

Do ye prefer the life of this world to the hereafter?

...فَمَا مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فِي الْآخِرَةِ إِلَّا قَلِيلٌ (٣٨)

But little is the comfort of this life, as compared with the hereafter.

إِلَّا تَنْفَرُوا يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا...

39. Unless ye go forth, He will punish you with a grievous penalty,

C1301. Tanfiru: go forth, march onward, be ready to strive and suffer.

For this is the condition of all progress in the spiritual and moral, as well as in the physical, world. According to the homely English proverb, God helps those who help themselves.

Inactivity and lethargy are fatal. No one can rest on his oars. Man is not necessary to Allah, but Allah is necessary to man. If a nation receives favours and fails to deserve them, it will be replaced by another: as has so often happened in history. We may take this as a special warning to Islamic nations.

...وَيَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ وَلَا تَضُرُّهُ شَيْئًا...

and put others in your place;

but Him ye would not harm in the least.

...وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٣٩)

For Allah hath power over all things.

إِلَّا تَنْصُرُوهُ فَقَدْ نَصَرَهُ اللَّهُ ...

40. If ye help not (your Leader), (it is no matter): for Allah did indeed help him:

C1302. The Tabuk expedition was not a failure. Though some hesitated, many more joined in.

But a more striking example was when the Prophet was hunted out of Makkah and performed his famous Hijrah. His enemies plotted for his life. He had already sent his followers on to Madinah. Ali had volunteered to face his

enemies in his house. His single companion was Abu Bakr.

They two concealed themselves in the cave of Thaur, three miles from Makkah, for three nights, with the enemy prowling around in great numbers in fruitless search of them.

"We are but two," said Abu Bakr.

"Nay," said Muhammad, "for Allah is with us."

Faith gave their minds peace, and Allah gave them safety. They reached Madinah, and a glorious chapter opened for Islam. The forces that helped them were not seen, but their power was irresistible. (R).

... إِذْ أَخْرَجَهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ثَانِيَ اثْنَيْنِ...

when the unbelievers drove him out: he had no more than one companion:

C1303. Literally, "The second of two," which afterwards became Abu Bakr's proud title.

إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ...

they two were in the cave,

... إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا...

and he said to his companion,

"Have no fear, for Allah is with us":

... فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَيَّدَهُ بِجُنُودٍ لَمْ تَرَوْهَا...

then Allah sent down His peace upon him, and strengthened him with forces which ye saw not,

C1304. Cf. [9:26](#).

... وَجَعَلَ كَلِمَةَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا السُّفْلَى وَكَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ هِيَ الْعُلْيَا...

and humbled to the depths the word of the unbelievers.

But the word of Allah is exalted to the heights:

C1305. The superlatives in the Arabic I have rendered by the periphrasis "humbled to the depths" and "exalted

to the heights," as they accord better with the genius of the English language.

The enemies of Islam had boasted that they would root it out: the result showed them up as ridiculous and despicable.

...وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (٤٠)

for Allah is Exalted in might, Wise.

انْفِرُوا خِفَافًا وَثِقَالًا وَجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...

41. Go ye forth, (whether equipped) lightly or heavily, and strive and struggle, with your goods and your persons, in the Cause of Allah.

C1306. Whether equipped lightly or heavily: to be taken both literally and metaphorically.

All were invited, and they were to bring such resources as they had, light-armed or heavy-armed, on foot or mounted, experienced men for posts of danger, raw men for duties for which they were fit. All would and should help. Even those who were too old or feeble to go could contribute such money or resources as they had.

...ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ (٤١)

That is best for you, if ye (but) knew.

لَوْ كَانَ عَرَضًا قَرِيبًا وَسَفَرًا قَاصِدًا لَاتَّبَعُوكَ وَلَكِنْ بَعُدَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ

السُّقَّةُ...

42. If there had been immediate gain (in sight), and the journey easy, they would (all) without doubt have followed thee, but the distance was long, (and weighed) on them.

...وَسَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَوِ اسْتَطَعْنَا لَخَرَجْنَا مَعَكُمْ ...

They would indeed swear by Allah,

"If we only could, we should certainly have come out with you"

...يُهْلِكُونَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ...

they would destroy their own souls;

C1307. The arts and excuses of the Hypocrites are here exposed. If there had been booty in sight or an easy walk-over, they would have come. All their oaths are false, and in taking the false oaths they are destroying their spiritual life.

Indeed the backsliders are jeopardizing their own physical lives in hanging back. If the enemy succeeded, they would all suffer.

... وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ (٤٢)

for Allah doth know that they are certainly lying.

C.95 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(10:43-72)

*The Believers do their duty, and make
No excuses-unlike the Hypocrites,
Who are a burden whether they join you
Or hold back. No help should be accepted
From these last, as they are false and insincere.
And have a slanderous tongue. Alms
Are for the poor and needy, nor for those
Who come in hypocrisy and mock
At things solemn. But the Hypocrites
Will be found out and receive due punishment.
While the righteous will be rewarded
With bliss and the good pleasure of Allah.*

Section 7

عَفَا اللَّهُ ...

43. Allah give thee grace!

C1308. Literally, "Allah give thee forgiveness!"

But there is no question of fault here, and Imam Razi understands the expression to mean an exclamation, -as one might say in English, "God bless you!"

In Shakespeare "God save you!" is a simple friendly greeting, without any question of danger: e. g., in "Much Ado about Nothing." iii. 2, 82.

Note that in 3:152, last clause, "forgiveness" is put in juxtaposition to "grace" as having closely allied meanings.

What the Holy Prophet had done in the Tabuk expedition was that he had been granting exemptions which may appear from a military point of view too liberal. He was not actuated by motives of kindness as well as policy:-

- kindness, because, in the urgency of the moment he did not wish any one who had a real excuse to be refused exemption:
- and policy, because, if any one did not come with hearty good-will, he would be a burden instead of a help to the army.

The policy was justified, because in fact 30,000 men or more followed him. But that did not in any way justify the slackers, and in a review of the position, the slackers and hypocrites are justly condemned.

... عَنْكَ لِمَ أَذْنَتَ لَهُمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَكَ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَتَعْلَمَ الْكَاذِبِينَ (٤٣)

Why didst thou grant them exemption until those who told the truth were seen by thee in a clear light, and thou hadst proved the liars?

لَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ....

44. Those who believe in Allah and the Last Day ask thee for no exemption

...أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ...

from fighting with their goods and persons.

...وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ (٤٤)

And Allah knoweth well those who do their duty.

إِنَّمَا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ...

45. Only those ask thee for exemption who believe not in Allah and the Last Day,

...وَأَرْتَابَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي رَيْبِهِمْ يَتَرَدَّدُونَ (٤٥)

and whose hearts are in doubt, so that they are tossed in their doubts to and fro.

C1309. Doubt takes away all stability of conduct, while Faith makes a man firm in action and cool and collected in mind.

وَلَوْ أَرَادُوا الْخُرُوجَ لَأَعَدُّوا لَهُ عُدَّةً...

46. If they had intended to come out, they would certainly have made some preparation therefor;

...وَلَكِنْ كَرِهَ اللَّهُ انبِعَاتِهِمْ فَتَبَطَّطَهُمْ وَقِيلَ اقْعُدُوا مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ (٤٦)

but Allah was averse to their being sent forth; so He made them lag behind and they were told,

"Sit ye among those who sit (inactive)."

لَوْ خَرَجُوا فِيكُمْ مَا زَادُوكُمْ إِلَّا خَبَالًا...

47. If they had come out with you, they would not have added to your (strength) but only (made for) disorder,

... وَلَا أُضْعَعُوا خِلَالَكُمْ يَبْغُونَكُمْ الْفِتْنَةَ...

hurrying to and fro in your midst and sowing sedition among you,

C1310. Khilal has more than one meaning, but I follow the interpretation of Raghib and the majority of accepted Commentators, who take it to mean "in your midst".

...وَفِيكُمْ سَمَاعُونَ لَهُمْ ...

and there would have been some among you who would have listened to them.

...وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ (٤٧)

But Allah knoweth well those who do wrong.

لَقَدْ ابْتَعُوا الْفِتْنَةَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَقَلَبُوا لَكَ الْأُمُورَ...

48. Indeed they had plotted sedition before, and upset matters for thee,

...حَتَّى جَاءَ الْحَقُّ وَظَهَرَ أَمْرُ اللَّهِ وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ (٤٨)

until The Truth arrived, and the Decree of Allah became manifest, much to their disgust.

C1311. Evil plotters against Truth are only too glad to get an opportunity of meddling from within with affairs which they want to spoil or upset.

They plot from outside, but they like to get into the inner circle, that their chances of intrigue may be all the greater. They are, however, unwilling to incur any danger or any self-sacrifice. Their whole activities are directed to mischief.

Great wisdom is required in a leader to deal with such a situation, and the best of such leaders must need divine guidance, as was forthcoming in this case.

وَمِنْهُمْ مَن يَفُوقُ اٰنْذٰنَ لِيْ وَلَا تَقْنِيْ ...

49. Among them is (many) a man who says:

"Grant me exemption and draw me not into trial."

C1312. Fitnahl, as explained in n. 1198, 8:25, may mean either trial or temptation, or else tumult, turmoil, or sedition.

The Commentators here take the former meaning, and explain that some Hypocrites claimed exemption from service in the Tabuk expedition in the direction of Syria on the plea that they could not withstand the charms of Syrian women and ought best to stay at home. The answer is:

"But you have already fallen into temptation here by refusing service and disobeying the call."

But perhaps the other meaning of "turmoil" may also be permissible as a secondary echo; in that case they object to be drawn into the turmoil of war, but they are told that they are already in a moral turmoil in advancing a disingenuous plea.

In using the English word "trial" in the translation, I have also had in my mind the two shades of meaning associated with that word in English.

...أَلَا فِي الْفِتْنَةِ سَقَطُوا...

Have they not fallen into trial already?

...وَأِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ (٤٩)

And indeed hell surrounds the unbelievers (on all sides).

إِنْ تُصِيبَكَ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُؤْهُمْ ...

50. If good befalls thee, it grieves them;

...وَأِنْ تُصِيبَكَ مُصِيبَةٌ يَقُولُوا قَدْ أَخَذْنَا أَمْرًا مِنْ قَبْلُ...

but if a misfortune befalls thee, they say,

"We took indeed our precautions beforehand,"

...وَيَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ فَرِحُونَ (٥٠)

and they turn away rejoicing.

قُلْ لَنْ يُصِيبَنَا إِلَّا مَا كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَنَا هُوَ مَوْلَانَا...

51. Say: "Nothing will happen to us except what Allah has decreed for us: He is our Protector":

...وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (٥١)

and on Allah let the believers put their trust.

قُلْ هَلْ تَرَبَّصُونَ بِنَا إِلَّا إِحْدَى الْحُسَيْنَيْنِ...

52. Say:

"Can you expect for us (any fate) other than one of two glorious things (martyrdom or victory)?"

...وَنَحْنُ نَتَرَبَّصُ بِكُمْ أَنْ يُصِيبَكُمْ اللَّهُ بِعَذَابٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ أَوْ بِأَيْدِينَا...

But we can expect for you either that Allah will send His punishment from Himself, or by our hands.

...فَتَرَبَّصُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُتْرَبِّصُونَ (٥٢)

So wait (expectant); we too will wait with you."

C1313. The waiting of the Unbelievers and that of the Believers are in different senses.

The Unbelievers wish for disaster to the Believers, but the Believers will either conquer or die as martyrs in the Cause, in either case happy in the issue.

The Believers expect punishment for the Unbelievers for their infidelity, either through their own instrumentality, or in some other way in Allah's Plan, and the Unbelievers would not like it in either case.

Cf. 6:158.

قُلْ أَنْفِقُوا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا لَنْ يُتَقَبَلَ مِنْكُمْ ...

53. Say:

"Spend (for the cause) willingly or unwillingly: not from you will it be accepted:

C1314. The Hypocrites, who secretly plotted against Islam, might sometimes (and they did) make a show of making some contribution to the Cause in order to keep up their pretence.

Their contributions were not acceptable, whether they seemed to give willingly or unwillingly, because rebellion and disobedience were in their hearts. Three reasons are specifically given for their rejection, in the next verse:

1. they did not believe;
2. their prayers were not earnest, but for mere show: and
3. in reality their hearts were not behind the contributions which they offered.

Nothing is acceptable to Allah which does not proceed from a pure and sincere heart.

...إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ (٥٣)

for ye are indeed a people rebellious and wicked."

وَمَا مَنَعَهُمْ أَنْ تُقْبَلَ مِنْهُمْ نَفَقَاتُهُمْ إِلَّا أَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَبِرَسُولِهِ...

54. The only reasons why their contributions are not accepted are:

- that they reject Allah and His Messenger;

...وَلَا يَأْتُونَ الصَّلَاةَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كُسَالَى...

- that they come to prayer without earnestness;

...وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا وَهُمْ كَارِهُونَ (٥٤)

- and that they offer contributions unwillingly.

فَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ...

55. Let not their wealth nor their (following in) sons dazzle thee:

C1315. If they appeared to be prosperous, with their purses and their quivers full (metaphorically), they were not to be envied. In reality their wealth and their sons might themselves be a snare: Cf. 8:28.

On this particular occasion this was proved to the hilt. The wealth of the Pagans filled them with pride, darkened their understanding, and led to their destruction. Their sons and followers adopted the Faith which their fathers had fought against, much to the chagrin of the fathers, whose spiritual death was even worse than their discomfiture in this world.

...إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا...

in reality Allah's plan is to punish them with these things in this life

C1316. Cf. 3:176-178.

...وَتَزْهَقَ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ (٥٥)

and that their souls may perish in their (very) denial of Allah.

وَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُمْ لَمِنكُمْ...

56. They swear by Allah that they are indeed of you;

...وَمَا هُمْ مِّنكُمْ وَلَكِنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ يَفْرُقُونَ (٥٦)

but they are not of you; yet they are afraid (to appear in their true colors).

لَوْ يَجِدُونَ مَلْجَأً أَوْ مَغَارَاتٍ أَوْ مُدْخَلًا لَّوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَهُمْ يَجْمَحُونَ (٥٧)

57. If they could find a place to flee to, or caves, or a place of concealment, they would turn straightway thereto, with an obstinate rush.

C1317. Jamaha: to be ungovernable, to run like a runaway horse, to rush madly and obstinately.

...وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَلْمِزُكَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ...

58. And among them are men who slander thee in the matter of (the distribution of) the alms.

C1318. Sadaqah: aims that which is given in Allah's name, mainly to the poor and needy, and for the cognate purposes specified in the next verse but one:

Zakah is the regular and obligatory charity in an organized Muslim community, usually 2 1/2 per cent, of merchandise and 10 per cent, on the fruits of the earth. There is a vast body of literature on this subject. The main points may be studied in the *Hidaya filfurū* of Sheikh Burhan ud din Ali.

As against Zakah the term sadaqah has a much wider connotation, and is inclusive of Zakah as in the verse 60 of this Surah. (R).

...فَإِنْ أَعْطُوا مِنْهَا رِضْوَانًا وَإِنْ لَمْ يُعْطُوا مِنْهَا إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ (٥٨)

If they are given part thereof, they are pleased, but if not, behold! they are indignant!

...وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ رَضُوا مَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ...

59. If only they had been content with what Allah and His Messenger gave them,

...وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ سَيُؤْتِينَا اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَرَسُولَهُ...

and had said,

"Sufficient unto us is Allah! Allah and His Messenger will soon give us of His bounty:

...إِنَّا إِلَى اللَّهِ رَاغِبُونَ (٥٩)

to Allah do we turn our hopes!"

(That would have been the right course.)

C1319. Selfish men think that charitable funds are fair game for raids, but the Islamic standards on this subject are very high. The enforcement of such standards is always unpopular, and even the Holy Prophet was subjected to obloquy and slander for his strictness to principle.

In doubtful cases, claimants who are disappointed should not blame the principles or those who enforce them, but put their trust in Allah, whose bounties are unbounded, and are given to all, whether rich or poor, according to their needs and their deserts. For every one it is excellent advice to say: deserve before you desire.

Section 8

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا...

60. Alms are for

- the poor and the needy,
- and those employed to administer the (funds);

...وَالْمُؤَلَّفَةِ فُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرِّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأَبْنِ السَّبِيلِ...

- for those whose hearts have been (recently) reconciled (to truth);
- for those in bondage and in debt;
- in the Cause of Allah;
- and for the wayfarer:

C1320. Alms or charitable gifts are to be given to the poor and the needy and those who are employed in their

service. That is, charitable, funds are not to be diverted to other uses, but the genuine expenses of administering charity are properly chargeable to such funds.

Who are the needy?

Besides the ordinary indigent, there are certain classes of people whose need is great and should be relieved. Those mentioned here are:

1. men who have been weaned from hostility to Truth, who would probably be persecuted by their former associates, and require assistance until they establish new connections in their new environment:
2. those in bondage, literally and figuratively:
captives of war must be redeemed:
slaves should be helped to freedom-,
those in the bondage of ignorance or superstition or unfavorable environment should be helped to freedom to develop their own gifts:
3. those who are held in the grip of debt should be helped to economic freedom:
4. those who are struggling and striving in Allah's Cause by teaching or fighting or in duties assigned to them by the Islamic State, who are thus unable to earn their ordinary living: and
5. strangers stranded on the way.

All these have a claim to charity. They should be relieved by individual or organized effort, but in a responsible way.

In this verse, the word **sadaqah** refers to obligatory charity (Zakah).

See [n. 1318 above](#). (R).

...فَرِيضَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (٦٠)

(thus is it) ordained by Allah, and Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.

وَمِنْهُمْ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ النَّبِيَّ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ أُذُنٌ...

61. Among them are men who molest the Prophet and say,
"He is (all) ear."

C1321. The assonance of the Arabic words "Yu'dhuna" and "udhnun" is of course lost in the Translation. But the sense remains.

Detractors of the Prophet said. "O! he listens to everybody!"

"Yes," is the answer,

"he listens for their good: he is a mercy and a blessing to all men of Faith, but specially to you (who are addressed)."

The general statement is emphasised for the particular people addressed.

قُلْ أَذُنٌ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَيُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ...

Say, "He listens to what is best for you; he believes in Allah, has faith in the believers,

وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ...

and is a Mercy to those of you who believe":

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٦١)

but those who molest the Prophet will have a grievous penalty.

يَخْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُم لِيَرْضَوْكُمْ...

62. To you they swear by Allah. In order to please you:

...وَاللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُرْضَوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ (٦٢)

but it is more fitting that they should please Allah and His Messenger if they are believers.

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّهُ مَنْ يُحَادِدِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَأَنَّ لَهُ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا...

63. Know they not that for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, is the fire of Hell? --
wherein they shall dwell.

...ذَلِكَ الْخِزْيُ الْعَظِيمُ (٦٣)

That is the supreme disgrace.

يَحْذَرُ الْمُنَافِقُونَ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُورَةٌ تُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ...

64. The Hypocrites are afraid lest a Surah should be sent down about them, showing them what is (really passing) in their hearts.

C1322. The dissection of the motives of the Hypocrites alarmed them. For it meant that they would fail in their policy of having the best of both worlds and undermining the loyalty of the weaker members of the Muslim community. So they turn it off as a jest. But they are sharply rebuked:

"Can you make such solemn matters subjects of playful jokes? Fie upon you! You are found out, and your guile is of no effect." (R).

...قُلْ اسْتَهْزِؤُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُخْرِجٌ مِمَّا تَحْذَرُونَ (٦٤)

Say: "Mock ye! but verily Allah will bring to light all that ye fear (should be revealed)."

وَلَنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ لِيَقُولْنَ إِنَّمَا كُنَّا نَخُوضُ وَنَلْعَبُ...

65. If thou dost question them, they declare (with emphasis):

"We were only talking idly and in play."

...قُلْ أِبَالَهُ وَآيَاتِهِ وَرَسُولِهِ كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَهْزِؤُونَ (٦٥)

Say: "Was it at Allah, and His signs, and His Messenger, that ye were mocking?"

لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا قَدْ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ...

66. Make ye no excuses:

ye have rejected faith after ye had accepted it.

...إِنْ نَعْفُ عَنْ طَائِفَةٍ مِّنْكُمْ نُعَذِّبْ طَائِفَةَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا مُجْرِمِينَ (٦٦)

If We pardon some of you, We will punish others amongst you, for that they are in sin.

C1323. See [last note](#).

Hypocrisy is a half-way house, a state of indecision in the choice between good and evil.

- Those who definitely range themselves with good obtain forgiveness:
- those who pass definitely to evil suffer the penalties of evil.

Section 9

الْمُنَافِقُونَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ...

67. The Hypocrites, men and women, (have an understanding) with each other:

C1324. Literally, "the Hypocrites... are of each other".

The forms of hypocrisy may vary, but they are all alike, and they understand each other's hypocrisy. They hold together.

...يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمُنْكَرِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَقْبِضُونَ أَيْدِيَهُمْ...

they enjoin evil, and forbid what is just, and are close with their hands.

C1325. The English phrase "close-fisted" would cover only a part of the meaning.

The hand is the symbol of power, help, and assistance. This may be financial, or it may be in other ways.

The Hypocrites pretend a great deal, but are of no use or real help to any one.

...نَسُوا اللَّهَ فَنَسِيَهُمْ...

They have forgotten Allah; so He hath forgotten them.

C1326. Cf. 7:51. and n. 1029.

They ignore Allah: and Allah will ignore them.

...إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (٦٧)

Verily the Hypocrites are rebellious and perverse.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْكُفَّارَ نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا...

68. Allah hath promised the Hypocrites, men and women, and the rejecters of faith, the fire of hell: therein shall they dwell:

...هِيَ حَسْبُهُمْ...

sufficient is it for them:

...وَلَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيمٌ (٦٨)

for them is the curse of Allah, and an enduring punishment,

C1327. "Curse," here as elsewhere, is deprivation of grace and mercy, brought about by the rejection of Allah by the Unbelievers.

كَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِنْكُمْ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرَ أَمْوَالًا وَأَوْلَادًا...

69. As in the case of those before you:

they were mightier than you in power and more flourishing in wealth and children.

...فَاسْتَمْتَعُوا بِخَلْقِهِمْ فَاسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِخَلْقِكُمْ كَمَا اسْتَمْتَعَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ...

They had their enjoyment of their portion: and ye have of yours, as did those before you;

...بِخَلْقِهِمْ وَخُضْتُمْ كَالَّذِي خَاضُوا...

and ye indulge in idle talk as they did.

...أُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ...

They! their works are fruitless in this world and in the hereafter,

...وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ (٦٩)

and they will lose (all spiritual good).

...أَلَمْ يَأْتِهِمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ...

70. Hath not the story reached them of those before them?

The people of Noah, and Ad, and Thamud;

C1328. The story:

- of Noah is told in 7:59-64;
- of 'Ad in 7:65-72; and
- of Thamud in 7:73-79;
- of Abraham in numerous places, but see specially 6:74-82;
- of Midianites in 7:85-93; and
- of Lut and the Cities of the Plain overthrown for their wickedness, in 7:80-84.

...وَقَوْمِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَأَصْحَابِ مَدْيَنَ ...

the people of Abraham,

the men of Madyan,

C1329. In the case of Noah and Abraham, the word I have translated as "people of..." is **qaum**:

these prophets were messengers each to his own people or nation, as was also Hud to the 'Ad people and Salih to the Thamud people.

The word used for the Midianites is **Ashabi Madyan**, which I have translated "men of Midian" for want of a better word.

The Midianites were for the greater part of their history nomads, with pasture grounds but no settled territory or town. The town of Madyan on the Gulf of 'Aqaba refers to much later times when the Midianites as a people had ceased to count.

See n. 1053 to 7:85.

...وَالْمُؤْتَفِكَاتِ ...

and the cities overthrown.

C1330. The Cities of Plain, Sodom and Gomorrah, to whom Lut preached in vain to desist from their abominations: 7:80-84.

...أَتَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ...

To them came their Messengers with clear signs.

...فَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ (٧٠)

It is not Allah who wrongs them, but they wrong their own souls.

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ...

71. The believers, men and women, are protectors, one of another:

...يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ...

- they enjoin what is just, and forbid what is evil:

...وَيَقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيَطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ...

- they observe regular prayers,

- practice regular charity,

- and obey Allah and His Messenger.

...أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (٧١)

On them will Allah pour His mercy:

for Allah is Exalted in power, Wise.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا...

72. Allah hath promised to believers, men and women, gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein,

...وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتِ عَدْنٍ...

and beautiful mansions in gardens of everlasting bliss.

...وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ...

But the greatest bliss in the Good Pleasure of Allah:

...ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (٧٢)

that is the supreme felicity.

C.96 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(10:73-99)

*The hardest striving and fighting are needed
To combat evil and hypocrisy; for sin
Can reach a stage when the doors of forgiveness
Are closed. The good must shun all evil
As unclean, and gladly welcome all chance
Of service and sacrifice, as bringing them closer
To the Presence and Mercy of Allah.*

Section 10

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ جَاهِدِ الْكُفَّارَ وَالْمُنَافِقِينَ وَاغْلُظْ عَلَيْهِمْ...

73. O Prophet!

strive hard against the unbelievers and the Hypocrites,
and be firm against them.

...وَمَا أَوْلَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ (٧٣)

Their abode is hell,
an evil refuge indeed.

يَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ مَا قَالُوا وَلَقَدْ قَالُوا...

74. They swear by Allah that they said nothing (evil),

...كَلِمَةَ الْكُفْرِ وَكَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِسْلَامِهِمْ وَهَمُّوا بِمَا لَمْ يَنَالُوا...

but indeed they uttered blasphemy, and they did it after accepting
Islam;

and they meditated a plot which they were able to carry out:

C1331. The reference is to a plot made by the Prophet's enemies to kill him when he was returning from Tabuk. The plot failed.

It was all the more dastardly in that some of the conspirators were among the men of Madinah who were

enriched by the general prosperity that followed the peace and good government established through Islam in Madinah. Trade flourished: justice was firmly administered with an even hand. And the only return that these men could make was a return of evil for good. That was their revenge, because Islam aimed at suppressing selfishness, stood for the rights of the poorest and humblest, and judged worth by righteousness rather than by birth or position.

...وَمَا نَقْمُوا إِلَّا أَنْ أَغْنَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ...

this revenge of theirs was (their) only return for the bounty with which Allah and His Messenger had enriched them!

...فَإِنْ يَتُوبُوا يَكُ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ...

If they repent, it will be best for them;

...وَإِنْ يَتَوَلَّوْا يُعَذِّبُهُمُ اللَّهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ...

but if they turn back (to their evil ways), Allah will punish them with a grievous penalty in this life and in the hereafter:

...وَمَا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ (٧٤)

they shall have none on earth to protect or help them.

...وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ عَاهَدَ اللَّهُ لَئِنْ آتَانَا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ لَنَصَّدَّقَنَّ...

75. Amongst them are men who made a Covenant with Allah that if He bestowed on them of His bounty, they would give (largely) in charity,

...وَلَنَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ (٧٥)

and be truly amongst those who are righteous.

...فَلَمَّا آتَاهُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ بَخِلُوا بِهِ وَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ (٧٦)

76. But when He did bestow of His bounty, they became covetous, and turned back (from their Covenant), averse (from its fulfillment).

...فَأَعْقَبَهُمْ نِفَاقًا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ يَلْقَوْنَهُ بِمَا أَخْلَفُوا اللَّهَ...

77. So He hath put as a consequence hypocrisy into their hearts, (to last) till the day whereon they shall meet Him:

C1332. If men are false to their covenants and words, the natural consequence will be hypocrisy to cover their falsehood. Such consequences will last till the Day of Judgment, when they will have to account for their deeds.

They may think that they are deceiving men by their hypocrisy, but they cannot deceive Allah, to Whom all their most secret thoughts and plots and doings are known.

...مَا وَعَدُوهُ وَبِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ (٧٧)

because they broke their Covenant with Allah, and because they lied (again and again).

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ...

78. Know they not that Allah doth know their secret (thoughts) and their secret counsels,

...وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ (٧٨)

and that Allah knoweth well all things unseen?

الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَّوِّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ...

79. Those who slander such of the believers as give themselves freely to (deeds of) charity,

...وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ...

as well as such as can find nothing to give except the fruits of their labor, and throw ridicule on them,

C1333. When financial help is necessary for the Cause, every Muslim contributes what he can. Those who can afford large sums are proud to bring them in of their own free-will, and those who are very poor contribute their mite or their labour.

Both kinds of gifts are equally precious because of the faith and good-will behind them, and only cynics will laugh at the scantiness of the one or the lavishness of the other.

Sometimes they not only laugh, but attribute wrong motives to the givers. Such conduct is here reprimanded.

...سَخَرَ اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٧٩)

Allah will throw back their ridicule on them:
and they shall have a grievous penalty.

اسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ أَوْ لَا تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ إِنْ تَسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ...

80. Whether thou ask for their forgiveness or not, (their sin is unforgivable):

...سَبْعِينَ مَرَّةً فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ...

if thou ask seventy times for their forgiveness, Allah will not forgive them:

C1334. An awful warning for those who actively oppose the Cause of Allah.

The Holy Prophet was by nature full of mercy and forgiveness. He prayed for his enemies. But in such a case even his prayers are nullified by their attitude of rejecting Allah.

...ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ...

because they have rejected Allah and His Messenger;

...وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ (٨٠)

and Allah guideth not those who are perversely rebellious.

Section 11

فَرَحَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ بِمَقْعَدِهِمْ خِلَافَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ...

81. Those who were left behind (in the Tabuk expedition) rejoiced in their inaction behind the back of the Messenger of Allah:

...وَكَرَهُوا أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَالُوا لَا تَنْفِرُوا

فِي الْحَرِّ...

they hated to strive and fight, with their goods and their persons, in the Cause of Allah: they said,

"Go not forth in the heat."

C1335. The Tabuk expedition had to be undertaken hurriedly in the heat of summer, because of a threat or fear of Byzantine invasion. They marched from Madinah about the month of September or October in the solar calendar.

...فَلَنْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ أَشَدُّ حَرًّا لَوْ كَانُوا يَفْقَهُونَ (٨١)

Say,

"The fire of Hell is fiercer in heat."

If only they could understand!

...فَلْيَضْحَكُوا قَلِيلًا وَلْيَبْكُوا كَثِيرًا ...

82. Let them laugh a little: much will they weep:

C1336. They may sneer or ridicule or rejoice now: that will be only for a little: much will they have to weep for afterwards.

... جَزَاءَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (٨٢)

a recompense for the (evil) that they do.

فَإِنْ رَجَعَكَ اللَّهُ إِلَى طَائِفَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسْتَأْذِنُوكَ لِلْخُرُوجِ...

83. If, then, Allah bring thee back to any of them, and they ask thy permission to come out (with thee),

...فَقُلْ لَنْ تَخْرُجُوا مَعِيَ أَبَدًا وَلَنْ تُقَاتِلُوا مَعِيَ عَدُوًّا...

say:

"Never shall ye come out with me, nor fight an enemy with me:

...إِنَّكُمْ رَضِيتُمْ بِالْفُجُودِ أَوْلَّ مَرَّةٍ فَافْعُدُوا مَعَ الْخَالِفِينَ (٨٣)

for ye preferred to sit inactive on the first occasion:
then sit ye (now) with those who lag behind."

وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّتَّ أَبَدًا وَلَا تَقُمْ عَلَىٰ قَبْرِهِ...

84. Nor do thou ever pray for any of them that dies, nor stand at his grave:

C1337. On the death of a Muslim, it is the pious duty of every neighbouring Muslim who can, to assist in the simple funeral ceremonies, -the prayer for mercy before the body is consigned to the grave, and the consignment of the body to the grave, by a simple, solemn, and dignified ritual.

For those who have shown hostility to Islam, this would not be seemly and is forbidden. (R).

إِنَّهُمْ كَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ (٨٤)...

for they rejected Allah and His Messenger, and died in a state of perverse rebellion.

وَلَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ...

85. Nor let their wealth nor their (following in) sons Dazzle thee:

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ بِهَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَتَزْهَقَ أَنْفُسُهُمْ وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ (٨٥)...

Allah's plan is to punish them with these things in this world, and that their souls may perish in their (very) denial of Allah.

C1338. Except for the omission of a single word ("life"), this verse repeats verse 55 above. But the repetition indicates the harmonious closing of the same argument in two aspects.

- In 9:55 it occurred in connection with the reasons for refusing to receive the contributions of such persons to the expenses of an enterprise which though vital to Islam's defence was secretly opposed by such persons.
- Here (in 9:85) it is a question of refusing to participate in the obsequies of such persons after their death: it is natural to omit the word "life" in this case.

وَإِذَا أَنْزَلْتُمْ سُورَةَ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَجَاهِدُوا مَعَ رَسُولِهِ...

86. When a Surah comes down, enjoining them to believe in Allah and to strive and fight along with his Messenger,

...اسْتَأْذَنَكَ أَوْلُوا الطَّوْلَ مِنْهُمْ وَقَالُوا دَرْنَا نَكُن مَعَ الْقَاعِدِينَ (٨٦)

those with wealth and influence among them ask thee for exemption, and say:

"Leave us (behind): we would be with those who sit (at home)."

رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ...

87. They prefer to be with (the women), who remain behind (at home):

C1339. Khawalif, plural of Khalifah, those (feminine) who remain behind at home when the men go to war: women. There is a stinging taunt in this, a suggestion that such men were cowards, preferring to remain behind like women when stiff work was to be done by men in defending their homes.

They were not only cowards, but fools: as they did not understand their own best interests. If the enemy got the better of their brethren, they would themselves be crushed.

"Their hearts are sealed": the habits of cowardice and hypocrisy which they have adopted have become their second nature.

...وَطَبَعَ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ (٨٧)

their hearts are sealed and so they understand not.

لَكِن الرِّسَالُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ جَاهِدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ...

88. But the Messenger, and those who believe with him, strive and fight with their wealth and their persons:

...وَأَوْلِيكَ لَهُمُ الْخَيْرَاتُ ...

for them are (all) good things:

C1340. "Good things," and "prosperity," are to be understood both in the physical and in the highest spiritual sense as the next verse makes clear.

... وَأَوْلِيكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (٨٨)

and it is they who will prosper.

أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا...

89. Allah hath prepared for them gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein:

...ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (٨٩)

that is the supreme felicity.

C1341. In this verse there is a reminiscence, but not an exact repetition, of verse 72 above. This balances the parallel repetition or reminiscence in verse 85 above. See n. 1338.

The symmetry of the argument is thus completed, as regards the Hypocrites of Madinah before we pass on to consider the case of the Hypocrites among the desert Bedouins in section 12.

Section 12

وَجَاءَ الْمُعَذِّرُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ لِيُؤْذَنَ لَهُمْ...

90. And there were, among the desert Arabs (also), Men who made excuses and came to claim exemption;

...وَقَعَدَ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ...

and those who were false to Allah and His Messenger (merely) sat inactive.

C1342. Not only had the Hypocrites a nest in Madinah, but their tactics affected some of the village or desert Bedouins, who loved war and would have followed a standard of war even if no question of Faith or a sacred Cause was involved.

But some of them, though professing Islam, were frightened by the hardships of the Tabuk expedition and the prospect of meeting the trained armies of the great Roman (Byzantine) Empire. They made all sorts of lying excuses, but really their want of faith made them ineligible for being enlisted in a sacred Cause, in the terms of 9:46-47 and 9:53-54. Some came to make

excuses: other did not even come , but sat at home, ignoring the summons.

...سَيُصِيبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٩٠)

Soon will a grievous penalty seize the unbelievers among them.

لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَاءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضَى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ
مَا يُنْفِقُونَ حَرَجٌ ...

91. There is no blame on those who are infirm, or ill, or who find no resources to spend (on the cause),

C1343. Though active service in person or by contributing resources is expected in emergencies of every person who believes in the Cause, there are some who must necessarily be exempted without the least blame attaching to them.

Such would be those who are weak in body on account of age, sex, infirmity, or illness. Personal service in their case is out of the question, but they could contribute towards expenses if they are able. But if they are too poor to afford even such assistance, they are excused. But in all cases the motive must be sincere, and there should be a desire to serve and do such duty as they can.

With such motives people are doing good or right in whatever form they express their service: sometimes, in Milton's words, "they also serve who only stand and wait."

In any case their purity of motive would get Allah's grace and forgiveness, and we must not criticize even if we thought they might have done more.

... إِذَا نَصَحُوا لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ...

if they are sincere (in duty) to Allah and His Messenger:

... مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ مِنْ سَبِيلٍ ...

no ground (of complaint) can there be against such as do right:

... وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٩١)

and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ إِذَا مَا أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ...

92. Nor (is there blame) on those who came to thee to be provided with mounts,

C1344. Hamala, yahmilu, here seems to mean: to provide means of transport, viz., mounts (horses, camels, etc.) for riding, and perhaps beasts of burden for carrying equipment and baggage, suitable to the rank of those concerned.

It may possibly mean other facilities for getting about, such as boots and shoes, or provisions: for an army's march depends upon all these things.

Where people fight as volunteers for a cause, without an extensive war fund, those who can afford it provide such things for themselves, but those without means, yet anxious to serve, have to be left behind. Their disappointment is in proportion to their eagerness to serve.

... قُلْتَ لَا أَجِدُ مَا أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ ...

and when thou saidst, "I can find no mounts for you,"

... تَوَلَّوْا وَأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوا مَا يُنْفِقُونَ (٩٢)

they turned back,

their eyes streaming with tears of grief that they had no resources wherewith to provide the expenses.

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيلُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يَسْتَأْذِنُونَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَاءُ...

93. The ground (of complaint) is against such as claim exemption while they are rich.

... رَضُوا بِأَنْ يَكُونُوا مَعَ الْخَوَالِفِ ...

They prefer to stay with the (women) who remain behind:

... وَطَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ (٩٣)

Allah hath sealed their hearts; so they know not (what they miss).

C1345. Cf. 9:87, where similar phrases are used for a similar shirking of duty by towns-folk, while here we are considering the desert folk.

It is not only a duty, but a precious privilege, to serve a great Cause by personal self-sacrifice. Those who shirk such an opportunity know not what they miss.

يَعْتَذِرُونَ إِلَيْكُمْ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ...

94. They will present their excuses to you when ye return to them.

... قُلْ لَا تَعْتَذِرُوا لَنْ تُؤْمِنَ لَكُمْ قَدْ نَبَّأَنَا اللَّهُ مِنْ أَخْبَارِكُمْ...

Say thou:

"Present no excuses: we shall not believe you:

Allah hath already informed us of the true state of matters concerning you:

... وَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ...

it is your actions that Allah and His Messenger will observe:

... ثُمَّ تُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ...

in the end will ye be brought back to Him who knoweth what is hidden and what is open:

... فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (٩٤)

then will He show you the truth of all that ye did.

سَيَحْلِفُونَ بِاللَّهِ لَكُمْ إِذَا انْقَلَبْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لِنُعْرَضُوا عَنْهُمْ ...

95. They will swear to you by Allah, when ye return to them, that ye may leave them alone.

... فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمْ ...

So leave them alone:

... إِنَّهُمْ رَجِسٌ ...

For they are an abomination,

... وَمَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ جَزَاءَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ (٩٥)

and Hell is their dwelling place, a fitting recompense for the (evil) that they did.

يَحْلِفُونَ لَكُمْ لِتَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ فَإِن تَرْضَوْا عَنْهُمْ ...

96. They will swear unto you, that ye may be pleased with them

... فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَرْضَىٰ عَنِ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ (٩٦)

but if ye are pleased with them, Allah is not pleased with those who disobey.

الْأَعْرَابُ أَشَدُّ كُفْرًا وَبِقَافًا وَأَجْدَرُ أَلَّا يَعْلَمُوا حُدُودَ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ رَسُولِهِ...

97. The Arabs of the desert are the worst in unbelief and hypocrisy, and most fitted to be in ignorance of the command which Allah hath sent down to His Messenger:

... وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (٩٧)

but Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ مَغْرَمًا وَيَتَرَبَّصُّ بِكُمْ الدَّوَابِرَ...

98. Some of the desert Arabs Look upon their payments as a fine, and watch for disasters for you:

C1346. The payments refer to the regular Charity established by Islam-the obligatory alms. If you look upon them as a fine or a burden, their virtue is lost.

If you rejoice that you have there an opportunity of helping the Community to maintain its standards of public assistance and to suppress the unseemly beggary and loathsome importunity whose relief is only governed by motives of getting rid of awkward obstacles on the way, then your outlook is entirely different. You wish for organized and effective efforts to solve the problems of human poverty and misery.

In doing so, you get nearer to Allah, and you earn the good wishes and prayers of godly men, led by our Holy Leader Mustafa.

... عَلَيْهِمْ دَآئِرَةُ السَّوْءِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٩٨)

on them be the disaster of evil:

for Allah is He that heareth and knoweth (all things).

وَمِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ...

99. But some of the desert Arabs believe in Allah and the Last Day,

... وَيَتَّخِذُ مَا يُنْفِقُ قُرْبَاتٍ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَصَلَوَاتِ الرَّسُولِ...

and look on their payments as pious gifts bringing them nearer to Allah and obtaining the prayers of the Messenger.

... أَلَا إِنَّهَا قُرْبَةٌ لَهُمْ ...

Aye, indeed they bring them nearer (to Him):

... سَيُدْخِلُهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ...

soon will Allah admit them to His Mercy:

C1347. The Mercy of Allah is always present, as the sun is always shining. But when we have prepared ourselves to receive it, we come to the full enjoyment of it, as a man who was in a shade comes out by his effort into the open, and basks in sunshine.

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٩٩)

for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

C.97 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(10:100-118)

*The vanguard of Faith think nothing
Of self-sacrifice. Their reward is God's
Good Pleasure. Even those who do wrong*

*But repent will obtain His Mercy: not so
Those who persist in Unfaith, Hypocrisy
And Mischief. Allah's grace is free and abounding
For the righteous. Even if they waver
Or fail, He will turn to them in Mercy,
If only they repent and come back unto Him.*

Section 13

وَالسَّابِقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ
بِإِحْسَانٍ...

100. The vanguard (of Islam) -- the first of those who forsook (their homes) and of those who gave them aid, and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds,

C1348. The **vanguard** of Islam--those in the first rank--are those who dare and suffer for the Cause and never flinch. The first historical examples are the Muhajirs and the Ansar.

- The Muhajirs--those who forsook their homes in Makkah and migrated to Madinah, the Holy Prophet being among the last to leave the post of danger, are mentioned first.
- Then come the Ansar, the Helpers, the citizens of Madinah who invited them, welcomed them, and gave them aid, and who formed the pivot of the new Community.
- Then are mentioned all who follow them in good deeds: not only the early heroes and ordinary men and women who had been Companions of the Prophet or had seen him, but men and women in all ages who have lived noble lives.

In spite of all their sacrifice and suffering they rejoice in the precious gift of the Good Pleasure of Allah, and their Salvation is the Supreme Felicity which such Good Pleasure gives, symbolized by the Gardens of Heaven.

... رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ...

well pleased is Allah with them, as are they with him:

... وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ...

for them hath He prepared gardens under which rivers flow, to dwell therein for ever:

... ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (١٠٠)

that is the supreme felicity.

C1349. Note the description of the final accomplishment of the destiny of man. In mathematical science it would be like a letter or formula which would sum up a long course of reasoning.

In this very Surah it occurs before in [9:72](#) and [9:89](#), where see [n. 1341](#). (R).

وَمِمَّنْ حَوْلَكُم مِّنَ الْأَعْرَابِ مُنَافِقُونَ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ ...

101. Certain of the desert Arabs round about you are hypocrites, as well as (desert Arabs) among the Medina folk:

C1350. The desert Arabs were not all simple folk. There were cunning hypocrites among them: both among certain tribes encamped round about Madinah and certain others in Madinah itself.

I understand that both groups are of the Arab, to whom the context refers, and not of the settled citizens of Madinah, whose Hypocrites were already referred to in previous sections. They might look simple, but they were, in their ignorance, all the more obstinate and hypocritical.

... مَرَدُّوْا عَلَى النِّفَاقِ لَا تَعْلَمُهُمْ ...

they are obstinate in hypocrisy: thou knowest them not:

... نَحْنُ نَعْلَمُهُمْ ...

We know them:

... سَنُعَذِّبُهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ عَظِيمٍ (١٠١)

twice shall We punish them and in addition shall they be sent to a grievous penalty.

C1351. Their punishment in this world was double, viz., not only in their discomfiture, but because in their obstinate ignorance, they failed to understand the accomplished facts, while cleverer men realized that their hostility to Islam was hopeless.

In addition to their discomfiture in this life, they would have to meet the penalties to come.

وَأَخْرُونَ اعْتَرَفُوا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ خَلَطُوا عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَآخَرَ سَيِّئًا...

102. Others (there are who) have acknowledged their wrongdoings: they have mixed an act that was good with another that was evil.

C1352. There were some whose will was weak and succumbed to evil, although there was much good in them. To them is held out the promise of forgiveness if they would repent and undertake all acts of Muslim charity, which would purify their souls, aided by the prayers of Allah's Messenger. Then would they get the Peace that comes from purity and right conduct.

... عَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ...

Perhaps Allah will turn unto them (in mercy):

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (١٠٢)

for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

... خُذْ مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَتُزَكِّيهِمْ بِهَا وَصَلِّ عَلَيْهِمْ ...

103. Of their goods take alms, that so thou mightest purify and sanctify them; and pray on their behalf.

... إِنَّ صَلَاتَكَ سَكَنٌ لَهُمْ ...

Verily thy prayers are a source of security for them:

... وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (١٠٣)

and Allah is One who heareth and knoweth.

أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَأْخُذُ الصَّدَقَاتِ...

104. Know they not that Allah doth accept repentance from His votaries and receives their gifts of charity,

... وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ النَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (١٠٤)

and that Allah is verily He, the Oft-Returning, Most-Merciful?

وَقُلْ اْعْمَلُوا ...

105. And say:

"Work (righteousness):

C1353. The repentant should be encouraged, after their repentance, to amend their conduct. The kindly interest of their brethren in them will strengthen them in virtue and blot out their past. When they go back into Eternity, they will understand the healing grace which saved them, just as the evil ones will then have their eyes opened to the real truth of their spiritual degradation (9:94). The similar words, in verse 84 and here, clench the contrast.

... فَسِيرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ...

soon will Allah observe your work, and His Messenger, and the believers:

... وَسَنُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ...

soon will ye be brought back to the knower of what is hidden and what is open:

... فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (١٠٥)

then will He show you the truth of all that ye did."

وَأَخْرُونَ مُرْجُونَ لِأَمْرِ اللَّهِ إِمَّا يُعَذِّبُهُمْ وَإِمَّا يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ...

106. There are (yet) others, held in suspense for the command of Allah, whether He will punish them, or turn in mercy to them:

C1354. Three categories of men are mentioned, whose faith was tested and found wanting in the Tabuk affair, but their characteristics are perfectly general, and we may here consider them in their general aspects:

1. the deep-dyed hypocrites, who when found out make excuses because otherwise they will suffer ignominy; they are unregenerate and obstinate, and there is no hope for them (9:101);
2. there are those who have lapsed into evil, but are not altogether evil; they repent and amend, and are accepted (9:102-105); and
3. there are doubtful cases, but Allah will judge them (9:106). A fourth category is mentioned in ix. 107, which will be discussed later.

... وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (١٠٦)

and Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

وَالَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مَسْجِدًا ضِرَارًا وَكُفْرًا وَتَفْرِيقًا بَيْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ...

107. And there are those who put up a mosque by way of mischief and infidelity, to disunite the believers,

C1355. Three categories of Hypocrites having already been mentioned (n. 1354), a fourth class of insidious evil-doers is now mentioned, whose type is illustrated in the story of the Quba "Mosque of mischief (dirar)".

Quba is a suburb of Madinah about three miles to the south-east. When the Holy Prophet arrived at Madinah for Hijrah, he rested four days in Quba before entering the town of Madinah. Here was built the first mosque, the "Mosque of Piety" to which he frequently came during his subsequent stay in Madinah.

Taking advantage of these sacred associations, some Hypocrites of the Tribe of Bani Ghanam built an opposition mosque in Quba, pretending to advance Islam. In reality they were in league with a notorious enemy of Islam, one Abu 'Amir, who had fought against Islam at Uhud and who was now, after the battle of Hunain (A.H. 9), in Syria: his confederates wanted a mosque for him to come to, but it would only be a source of mischief and division, and the scheme was disapproved.

... وَإِرْصَادًا لِّمَنْ حَارَبَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ...

and in preparation for one who warred against Allah and His Messenger aforetime.

C1356. Abu 'Amir, surnamed the Rahib (Monk), as he had been in touch with Christian monks.

See [last note](#).

... وَلِيَحْلِفْنَ إِنَّ أَرَدْنَا إِلَّا الْحُسْنَى...

They will indeed swear that their intention is nothing but good;

... وَاللَّهُ يَشْهَدُ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ (١٠٧)

but Allah doth declare that they are certainly liars.

لَا تَقُمْ فِيهِ أَبَدًا...

108. Never stand thou forth therein.

... لِمَسْجِدٍ أُسِّسَ عَلَى التَّقْوَى مِنْ أَوَّلِ يَوْمٍ أَحَقُّ أَنْ تَقُومَ فِيهِ ...

There is a mosque whose foundation was laid from the first day on piety; it is more worthy of thy standing forth (for prayer) therein.

C1357. The original "Mosque of Piety" built by the Holy Prophet himself.

... فِيهِ رِجَالٌ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَتَطَهَّرُوا...

In it are men who love to be purified;

... وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُطَهَّرِينَ (١٠٨)

and Allah loveth those who make themselves pure.

C1358. The true Muslim must be pure in body, mind, and heart. His motives should always be sincere, and his religion without any alloy of worldly gain.

أَفَمَنْ أُسِّسَ بُنْيَانُهُ عَلَى تَقْوَى مِنْ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٍ خَيْرٌ...

109. Which then is best?

he that layeth his foundation on piety to Allah and His good pleasure?

... أَمْ مَنْ أَسَّسَ بُنْيَانَهُ عَلَىٰ شَقَا جُرْفٍ هَارٍ ...

or he that layeth his foundation on an undermined sand-cliff ready to crumble to pieces?

C1359. A man who builds his life on Piety (which includes sincerity and the purity of all motives) and his hopes on the Good Pleasure of Allah, builds on a firm foundation of rock that will never be shaken. In contrast to him is the man who builds on a shifting sand-cliff on the brink of an abyss, already undermined by forces which he does not see.

The cliff and the foundations all crumble to pieces along with him, and he is plunged into the Fire of misery from which there is no escape.

... فَأَنْهَارَ بِهِ فِي نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ ...

And it doth crumble to pieces with him, into the fire of Hell.

... وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (١٠٩)

And Allah guideth not people that do wrong.

لَا يَزَالُ بُنْيَانُهُمُ الَّذِي بَنَوْا رِيبَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ إِلَّا أَنْ تَقَطَّعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ...

110. The foundation of those who so build is never free from suspicion and shakiness in their hearts, until their hearts are cut to pieces.

C1360. The parable is continued further. The heart of man is the seat of his hopes and fears, the foundation of his moral and spiritual life. If that foundation is on an undermined sand-cliff already crumbling to pieces, what security or stability can he have?

He is being shaken by alarms and suspicions and superstitions, until like the edge of a sand-cliff they are cut clean away and fall into a heap of ruin and his spiritual life and all its land-marks are destroyed.

... وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (١١٠)

And Allah is All-Knowing, Wise.

Section 14

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَى مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ...

111. Allah hath purchased of the believers their persons and their good; for theirs (in return) is the garden (of Paradise):

C1361. In a human bargain both sides give something and receive some advantage. In the divine bargain of Allah with man, Allah takes man's will and soul and his wealth and goods, and gives him in return ever-lasting Felicity.

Man fights in Allah's Cause and carries out His will. All that he has to give up is the ephemeral things of this world, while he gains eternal salvation, the fulfilment of his highest spiritual hopes, -a supreme achievement indeed.

... يُفَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ...

they fight in His cause, and slay and are slain:

... وَعَدًّا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْآنِ ...

a promise binding on Him in truth, through the Law, the Gospel, and the Qur'an:

C1362. We offer our whole selves and our possessions to Allah, and Allah gives us Salvation. This is the true doctrine of redemption: and we are taught that this is the doctrine not only of the Quran but of the earlier Revelations, -the original Law of Moses and the original Gospel of Jesus.

Any other view of redemption is rejected by Islam, especially that of corrupted Christianity, which thinks that some other person suffered for our sins and we are redeemed by his blood. It is our self-surrender that counts, not other people's merits.

Our complete self-surrender may include fighting for the cause, both spiritual and physical. As regards actual fighting with the sword there has been some difference in theological theories at different times, but very little in the practice of those who framed those theories.

The Jewish wars were ruthless wars of extermination. The Old Testament does not mince matters on this subject. In the New Testament St. Paul, in commending the worthy fruits of Faith, mentions Gideon. Barak, and other warriors of the Old Testament as his ideals, "Who through faith subdued kingdoms... waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens..." (Hebrews, 11:32-34).

The monkish morality of the Gospels in their present form has never been followed by any self-respecting Christian or other nation in history. Nor is it common-sense to ignore lust of blood in unregenerate man as a form of evil which has to be combated "within the limits, set by Allah" (9:112). (R).

... وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ...

and who is more faithful to his Covenant than Allah?

... فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ...

Then rejoice in the bargain which ye have concluded:

... وَذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (١١١)

that is the achievement supreme.

... التَّائِبُونَ

112. - Those that turn (to Allah) in repentance:

C1363. We are to rejoice that by giving up such small things as ourselves and our possessions we are to be rewarded with such a great thing as the eternal life of felicity. The truly righteous, whose lives in various aspects are described in this verse, do so rejoice. The good news is to be proclaimed to all Believers, including the weakest among us, so that they may profit by that example.

... الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِدُونَ السَّائِحُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ...

- that serve Him, and praise Him;
- that wander in devotion to the Cause of Allah;
- that bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer;

... الْأَمْرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ...

- that enjoin good and forbid evil;

وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ اللَّهِ ...

- and observe the limits set by Allah; (these do rejoice).

... وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (١١٢)

So proclaim the glad tidings to the Believers.

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوا أَوْلِيَا
فُرَبَى ...

113. It is not fitting, for the prophet and those who believe, that they should pray for forgiveness for pagans, even though they be of kin,

... مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ (١١٣)

after it is clear to them that they are companions of the Fire.

C1364. This is usually understood to refer to the prayer for the dead,

- if they died unrepentant after Islam was preached to them,
- if they actively resisted or opposed the Faith to the last. And
- if the person praying knows that on account of deliberate contumacy the deceased may be said to have had the doors of mercy closed to him.

How is he to know?

The knowledge must come from special commands as declared by the Holy Prophet in his lifetime regarding individuals. Where no light is available from this source we must follow the best Judgement we can.

وَمَا كَانَ اسْتِغْفَارُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لِأَبِيهِ إِلَّا عَن مَّوْعِدَةٍ وَعَدَّهَا إِثْمًا...

114. And Abraham prayed for his father's forgiveness only because of a promise he had made to him.

C1365. Abraham and his unbelieving father are referred to in 6:74.

Apparently when Abraham was convinced that the conditions mentioned in the last note applied to his father, he gave up praying for him, as the physical bond was cut off by the spiritual hostility. For the promise to pray for his father, see 19:47.

... فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ أَنَّهُ عَدُوٌّ لِلَّهِ تَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُ...

But when it became clear to him that he was an enemy to Allah, he dissociated himself from him:

... إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ لَأَوَّاهٌ حَلِيمٌ (١١٤)

for Abraham was most tender-hearted, forbearing.

C1366. Abraham was loyal and tender-hearted, and bore with much that he disapproved, being in this a prototype of Al-Mustafa, and it must have gone against his grain to cut off relations in that way.

But it would obviously be wrong for a human being to entreat Allah for mercy on people who had finally rejected Allah.

وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِلَّ قَوْمًا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَاهُمْ حَتَّى يُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ مَا يَتَّقُونَ...

115. And Allah will not **mislead** a people after He hath guided them, in order that He may make clear to them what to fear (and avoid) --

C1367. Allah's clear commands are given, so that Believers may not be misled by their human frailty into unbecoming conduct.

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (١١٥)

for Allah hath knowledge of all things.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ...

116. Unto Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth.

He giveth life and He taketh it.

... وَمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ (١١٦)

Except for Him ye have no protector nor helper.

لَقَدْ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ فِي سَاعَةِ
الْعُسْرَةِ...

117. Allah turned with favor to the Prophet, the Muhajirs, and the Ansar, who followed Him in a time of distress,

C1368. Cf. [9:100](#).

The Muhajirs were the people who originally forsook their homes in Makkah and followed Al-Mustafa in exile to Madinah.

The Ansar were the Madinah people who received them with honour and hospitality into their city.

Both these groups were staunch supporters of Islam, and proved their Faith by great sacrifices. But in the difficult days of the Tabuk expedition some of them, not perversely, but out of lethargy and human weakness, had failed to follow the standard. They were forgiven, and they afterwards acquitted themselves with zeal

... مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا كَادَ يَزِيغُ قُلُوبَ فَرِيقٍ مِّنْهُمْ ...

after that the hearts of a part of them had nearly swerved (from duty);

C1369. Note that the "swerving from duty" was merely an inclination due to the weakness of human nature in the face of new difficulties: that it only affected a part of the men for a time: and that it was overcome even in their case by the grace of Allah, so that they all did their duty, and were freely forgiven their incipient weakness, which they conquered.

There were three exceptions, which are referred to in the next verse.

... ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ ...

but He turned to them (also):

... إِنَّهُ بِهِمْ رُؤُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ (١١٧)

for He is unto them Most Kind, Most Merciful.

وَعَلَى الثَّلَاثَةِ الَّذِينَ خَلَفُوا...

118. (He turned in mercy also) to the three who were left Behind:
(they felt guilty)

... حَتَّىٰ إِذَا ضَاقَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ...

to such a degree that the earth seemed constrained to them, for all its spaciousness

C1370.

- Among the Faithful, the largest number consisted of those who were perfectly staunch and ever ready to do their duty. They obtained the love and good pleasure of Allah.
- Next came a few who wavered because their will was weak and they were daunted by the dangers and difficulties that faced them; Allah's saving grace protected them and they conquered their weakness, and did not fail in their duty; Allah forgave them and accepted their repentance.
- Lastly, in the illustration taken from the Tabuk affair, there were some who actually failed in their duty, not from contumacy or ill-will, but from thoughtlessness, slackness, and human weakness: they actually failed to obey the Holy Prophet's summons, and were naturally called on to explain, and were excluded from the life of the Community.

Their mental state is here described graphically. Though the earth is spacious, to them it was constrained. In their own souls they had a feeling of constraint. In worldly affluence they felt poor in spirit.

They realized that they could not flee from Allah, but could only find solace and refuge in coming back to Him. They freely repented and showed it in their deeds, and Allah freely forgave them and took them to His grace.

Though illustrated by the particular examples of Ka'b, Mararah and Hilal, the lesson is perfectly general and is good for all times.

... وَصَافَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ وَظَنُّوا أَنْ لَا مَلْجَأَ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا إِلَيْهِ ...

and their (very) souls seemed straitened to them, and they perceived that there is no fleeing from Allah and no refuge but to Himself.

... ثُمَّ تَابَ عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَتُوبُوا ...

Then He turned to them, that they might repent:

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ (١١٨)

for Allah is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

C.98 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(10:119-129)

*To be true in word and deed is to hold
Our selfish desires at bay, and follow
Allah's Call: in this is our fullest satisfaction
And reward. But our striving should include
Study and teaching, for the Brethren's benefit
For Allah's Message increases our Faith
And leads us to love Him and trust Him,
The Lord of the Throne of Glory Supreme.*

Section 15

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ (١١٩)

119. O ye who believe!

fear Allah and be with those who are true (in word and deed).

مَا كَانَ لِأَهْلِ الْمَدِينَةِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ أَنْ يَتَخَلَّفُوا عَنْ
رَسُولِ اللَّهِ...

120. It was not fitting for the people of Medina and the bedouin Arabs
of the neighbourhood, to refuse to follow Allah's Messenger,

وَلَا يَرْغَبُونَ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ...

nor to prefer their own lives to his:

... ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ لَا يُصِيبُهُمْ ظَمَأٌ وَلَا نَصَبٌ وَلَا مَخْمَصَةٌ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...

because nothing could they suffer or do,

but was reckoned to their credit as a deed of righteousness,

whether they suffered thirst, or fatigue, or hunger, in the Cause of
Allah,

... وَلَا يَطُؤُونَ مَوْطِنًا يَغِيظُ الْكُفَّارَ ...

or trod paths to raise the ire of the unbelievers,

... وَلَا يَنَالُونَ مِنْ عَدُوِّ نَيْلًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عَمَلٌ صَالِحٌ...

or received any injury whatever from an enemy:

C1371. Again, the illustration is that of Tabuk, but the
lesson is general.

We must not hold our own comfort or lives dearer than
that of our leader, nor desert him in the hour of danger.
If we have true devotion, we shall hold our own lives or
comfort cheap in comparison to his.

But whatever service we render to the Cause of Allah,
and whatever sufferings, hardships, or injuries we
endure, or whatever resources we spend for the Cause, -

all goes to raise our degree in the spiritual world. Nothing is lost. Our reward is far greater in worth than any little service we can render, or any little hardship we can suffer, or any little contributions we can make to the Cause. We "painfully attain to joy".

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (١٢٠)

for Allah suffereth not the reward to be lost of those who do good;

وَلَا يُنْفِقُونَ نَفَقَةً صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً ...

121. Nor could they spend anything (for the Cause), small or great,

... وَلَا يَقْطَعُونَ وَادِيًا إِلَّا كُتِبَ لَهُمْ ...

nor cut across a valley, but the deed is inscribed to their credit;

C1372. Cut across a valley: this is specially mentioned, as denoting an individual act of heroism, dash, or bravery. To march with the troops along valleys, tread paths of danger along with our Comrades, is good and praiseworthy:

Notice that both the things mentioned in this verse,- the spending of resources and the dashing across a valley- are individual acts, while those mentioned in the last verse are collective acts, which are in some ways easier.

The individual acts having been mentioned, the next verse follows naturally.

... لِيَجْزِيَهِمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (١٢١)

that Allah might requite their deed with the best (possible reward).

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لِيَنْفِرُوا كَافَّةً ...

122. Nor should the believers all go forth together:

... فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ ...

if a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion,

... وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ (١٢٢)

and admonish the people when they return to them, that thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil).

C1373. Fighting may be inevitable, and where a call is made by the ruler of an Islamic State, it should be obeyed.

But fighting is not to be glorified to the exclusion of all else. Even among those who are able to go forth, a party should remain behind for purposes of study, so that when the fighters return home, their minds may be attuned again to the more normal interests of religious life, under properly instructed teachers.

The students and teachers are soldiers of the Jihad in their spirit of obedience and discipline. (R).

Section 16

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ يَلُونَكُمْ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ وَلِيَجِدُوا فِيكُمْ غِلْظَةً...

123. O ye who believe!

fight the unbelievers who gird you about, and let them find firmness in you;

C1374. When conflict becomes inevitable, the first thing is to clear our surroundings of all evil, for it is only evil that we can rightly fight. To evil we must put up a stout and stiff resistance.

Mealy-mouthed compromises are not right for soldiers of truth and righteousness. They are often a compound of cowardice, weariness, greed, and corruptibility.

... وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ (١٢٣)

and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.

وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلْنَا سُورَةً فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ أَيُّكُمْ زَادَتْهُ هَذِهِ إِيمَانًا...

124. Whenever there cometh down a Surah, some of them say:

"Which of you has had his faith increased by it?"

C1375. The incompatibility of Unfaith and Faith are contrasted in this section in respect of revelation and the divine teacher.

The Unbelievers laugh at revelation, and say to each other mockingly: "Does this increase your faith?"

To the Believer every new aspect of Allah's truth as revealed increases his faith, and wonder, and gratitude. He rejoices, because he gets added strength for life and achievement.

... فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فزَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَهُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ (١٢٤)

Yea, those who believe, their faith is increased, and they do rejoice.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فزَادَتْهُمْ رِجْسًا إِلَى رِجْسِهِمْ...

125. But those in whose hearts is a disease, it will add doubt to their doubt,

C1376. Cf. 2:10 and several similar passages.

Just as the light, which to healthy eyes gives enlightenment, causes pain to the diseased eye, which emits unclean matter, so to those spiritually diseased. Allah's grace is unwelcome, and they put forth more doubts to cover their disease. And they die in their disease, and of their disease.

Note the aptness of the metaphor.

... وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كَافِرُونَ (١٢٥)

and they will die in a state of unbelief.

أَوَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّهُمْ يُفْتَنُونَ فِي كُلِّ عَامٍ مَرَّةً أَوْ مَرَّتَيْنِ...

126. See they not that they are tried every year once or twice?

C1377. Yet, in spite of their infidelity, one or two chances are given them every year. The door is not closed to them. Yet they deliberately turn away, and take no heed of all the warnings which their own nature and the teaching and example of good men should give them.

... ثُمَّ لَا يَتُوبُونَ وَلَا هُمْ يَذَّكَّرُونَ (١٢٦)

Yet they turn not in repentance,
and they take no heed.

وَإِذَا مَا أَنْزَلَتْ سُورَةً نَّظَرَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ...

127. Whenever there cometh down a Surah, they look at each other,
(saying),

... هَلْ يَرَاكُمْ مِّنْ أَحَدٍ ثُمَّ انصَرَفُوا...

"Doth anyone see you?"

Then they turn aside:

... صَرَفَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ بَأْتَهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ (١٢٧)

Allah hath turned their hearts (from the light); for they are a
people that understand not.

C1378. Even the Unbelievers, in their heart and conscience, feel uncomfortable when they turn away from Faith and Truth, and therefore their turning aside is figured by furtive glances, such as we may suppose literally to have been cast by the Hypocrites in the assemblies of the Holy Prophet, Then they slink away, feeling superior in their minds.

And yet, if they only knew it, their contumacy deprives them of Allah's grace and light. They are turning Grace away, and when Allah withdraws it altogether, they perish utterly.

لَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ...

128. Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves:

... عَزِيزٌ عَلَيْهِ مَا عَنِتُّمْ حَرِيصٌ عَلَيْكُمْ...

it grieves him that ye should perish:

ardently anxious is he over you:

... بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ رَؤُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ (١٢٨)

to the believers is he most kind and merciful.

C1379. The tender heart of the Teacher is grieved that any among his flock should rush headlong to ruin. He watches ardently over them, and whenever any of them show signs of Faith, his kindness and mercy surround him and rejoice over him.

فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ...

129. But if they turn away, Say:

"Allah sufficeth me:

there is no god but He:

... عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ ...

on Him is my trust,

... وَهُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ (١٢٩)

He the Lord of the throne (of Glory) Supreme!"

C1380. But if the Message is rejected, he still proclaims the burning Faith of his heart, which is unquenchable. Allah is sufficient to all.

To trust Him is to find the accomplishment of all spiritual desire. His grandeur is figured by a lofty Throne, supreme in glory! Thus have we been led, through a notable incident in Al-Mustafa's earthly career, to truths of the highest spiritual import.



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