



يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ



O ye who believe! stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing

Quran English Translation & Commentary

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Ma'idah

الْمَائِدَةُ

Introduction and Summary

This Surah deals, by way of recapitulation, with the backsliding of the Jews and Christians from their pure religions, to which the coping stone was placed by Islam. It refers particularly to the Christians, and to their solemn Sacrament of the Last Supper, to whose true meaning they are declared to have been false. (R).

As a logical corollary to the corruption of the earlier religions of Allah, the practical precepts of Islam, about food, cleanliness, justice, and fidelity are recapitulated.

The fourth verse contains the memorable declaration;

“This day have I perfected your religion for you”:

which was promulgated in 10 H., during the Prophet’s last Pilgrimage to Makkah. Chronologically it was the last verse to be revealed.

Summary- Beginning with an appeal to fulfil, as sacred, all obligations, human and divine, it points to certain regulations about food, as conducive to a sober and social life, without superstition and without bias or hatred (5:1-5, and C. 69).

Cleanliness of body, and justice and uprightness of dealing are nearest to Piety (5:6-11, and C. 70).

If the Jews and Christians turned back from the Truth and violated their Covenants, they have had their warning (5:12-26, and C. 71).

The murder of Abel by Cain is the type of the treatment which the just man suffers from the envious. There is punishment from Allah. The just man must not grieve (5:27-43, and C. 72).

Muslims must do impartial justice, but must protect their own Brotherhood and their Faith from insult and scorn; they must appreciate piety, humility, and other good points among the Christians (5:46-86, and C. 73).

They must enjoy with gratitude all that is good and lawful, but guard themselves against excess, Swearing, intoxication, gambling, violation of the Sanctuary, superstitions of all kinds, and false evidence are condemned (5:87-108, and C. 74).

The miracles of Jesus, and how they were misused by those who bore his name (5:109-120, and C. 75)

C. 69 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(6:1-6)

*All obligations are sacred, human
Or divine. In the spiritual world
We owe duties to Allah, which must
Be fulfilled. But whilst we are
In this world of sense, those duties
Are by no means isolated
From what we owe to ourselves
And our fellows in the world
Of men. We must respect the laws
And customs of the Sacred Mosque
And the Sacred Sanctuary.
In food our laws are simple:
All things good and pure are lawful.
We refuse not social intercourse
With men and women-
People of the Book.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ ...

1. O ye who believe!
fulfil (all) obligations.

C682. This line has been justly admired for its terseness and comprehensiveness.

Obligations: 'uqud the Arabic word implies so many things that a whole chapter of Commentary can be written on it.

First, there are the divine obligations that arise from our spiritual nature and our relation to Allah.

- He created us and implanted in us the faculty of knowledge and foresight: besides the intuition and reason which He gave us.

He made Nature responsive to our needs, and His Signs in Nature are so many lessons to us in our own inner life;

- He further sent Messengers and Teachers, for the guidance of our conduct in individual, social, and public life.

All these gifts create corresponding obligations which we must fulfil.

But in our own human and material life we undertake mutual obligations express and implied.

- We make a promise:
- we enter into a commercial or social contract;
- we enter into a contract of marriage:
- we must faithfully fulfil all obligations in all these relationships.

Our group or our State enters into a treaty; every individual in that group or State is bound to see that as far as lies in his power, such obligations are faithfully discharged.

There are tacit obligations;

- living in civil society, we must respect its tacit conventions unless they are morally wrong, and in that case we must get out of such society.
- There are tacit obligations in the characters of host and guest, wayfarer or companion, employer or employed, etc., which every man of Faith must discharge conscientiously.

The man who deserts those who need him and goes to pray in a desert is a coward who disregards his obligations.

All these obligations are inter-connected. Truth and fidelity are parts of religion in all relations of life.

This verse is numbered separately from the succeeding verses. (R).

... أَجَلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ...

Lawful unto you (for food) are all four-footed animals, with the exceptions named:

C683. That is, the exceptions named not only in the Quran but in the Sunnah as well.

See [5:3 below](#). (R).

... غَيْرَ مُحَلِّي الصَّيِّدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ...

but animals of the chase are forbidden while ye are in the Sacred Precincts or in pilgrim garb:

C684. Cf. [5:94-96](#).

Hunting and the use of game are forbidden "while ye are hurumun," i.e., while ye are;

- in the Sacred Precincts, or
- in the special pilgrim garb (ihram), as to which see n. 212, 2:196.

In most cases the two amount to the same thing. The Sacred Precincts are sanctuary both for man and beast.

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ (١)

for Allah doth command according to His Will and Plan.

C685. Allah's commands are not arbitrary. His Will is the perfect Archetype or Plan of the world.

Everything He wills has regard to His Plan, in which are reflected His perfect wisdom and goodness.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْلُوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ ...

2. O ye who believe!

violate not the sanctity of the Symbols of Allah,

C686. Cf. 2:158, where Safa and Marwa are called "Symbols (shaair) of Allah".

Here the Symbols are everything connected with the Pilgrimage, viz.,

1. the places (like Safa and Marwa, or the Ka'bah or 'Arafat, etc.);
2. the rites and ceremonies prescribed;
3. prohibitions (such as that of hunting, etc.);
4. the times and seasons prescribed. There is spiritual and moral dimension in all these.

See notes on 2:158, 2:194-200.

... وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ ...

nor of the Sacred Month,

C687. The month of pilgrimage, or else, collectively, the four sacred months (9:36), viz.,

- Rajab (7th).
- Dhu al Qadah (11th),
- Dhu al Hijjah (12th, the month of Pilgrimage), and
- Muharram (the first of the year).

In all these months War was prohibited. Excepting Rajab the other three months are consecutive.

... وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ ...

nor of the animals brought for sacrifice,

nor the garlands that mark out such animals,

... وَلَا أَمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا ...

nor the people resorting to the Sacred House, seeking of the bounty and good pleasure of their Lord.

C688. The immunity from attack or interference extended to the animals brought as offerings for sacrifice and the garlands or fillets or distinguishing marks which gave them immunity. They were treated as sacred symbols.

And of course every protection or immunity was enjoyed by the Pilgrims.

... وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا ...

But when ye are clear of the Sacred Precincts and of pilgrim garb, ye may hunt,

C689. This is the state opposite to that described in n. 684, i.e., when ye have left the Sacred Precincts, and have doffed the special pilgrim garb, showing your return to ordinary life.

... وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا ...

and let not the hatred of some people in (once) shutting you out of the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgression (and hostility on your part).

C690. See n. 205 to 2:191.

In the sixth year of the Hijrah the Pagans, by way of hatred and persecution of the Muslims, had prevented them from access to the Sacred Mosque. When the Muslims were re-established in Makkah, some of them wanted to retaliate.

Passing from the immediate event to the general principle, we must not retaliate or return evil for evil. The hatred of the wicked does not justify hostility on our part. We have to help each other in righteousness and piety, not in perpetuating feuds of hatred and enmity. We may have to fight and put down evil, but never in a spirit of malice or hatred, but always in a spirit of justice and righteousness.

... وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَى ...

Help ye one another in righteousness and piety,

... وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ...

but help ye not one another in sin and rancor:

fear Allah:

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ (٢)

for Allah is strict in punishment.

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ...

3. Forbidden to you (for food) are:

- dead meat,
- blood,
- the flesh of swine,
- and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allah,

C691. Cf. 2:173 and notes 173 and 174. The prohibition of dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which other names than that of Allah have been invoked, has been there explained.

وَالْمُنْخَنِقَةُ وَالْمَوْقُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ...

- that which hath been killed by strangling,
or by a violent blow,
or by a headlong fall,
or by being gored to death;

... وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ ...

- that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless ye are able to slaughter it (in due form);

C692. If an animal dies;

- by strangling, or
- by a violent blow, or
- a headlong fall, or

by being gored to death, or

by being attacked by a wild animal,

the presumption is that it becomes carrion, as the life-blood is congealed before being taken out of the body.

But the presumption can be rebutted. If the life-blood still flows and the solemn mode of slaughter (*zabih*) in the name of Allah is carried out, it becomes lawful as food.

... وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى التُّصْبِ ...

- that which is sacrificed on stone (altars);

C693. This was also an idolatrous rite, different from that in which a sacrifice was devoted to a particular idol or a false god.

... وَأَنْ تَسْتَفْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ذَلِكَ فِسْقٌ ...

- (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impiety.

C694. Gambling of all kinds is forbidden; 2:219.

A sort of lottery or raffle practised by Pagan Arabs has been described in n. 241.

Division of meat in this way is here forbidden, as it is a form of gambling.

... الْيَوْمَ يَبْسُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ ...

This day have those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion:

C695. So long as Islam was not recognised, with its own community and its own laws, the Unbelievers had hoped to wean the Believers from the new Teaching.

(Now that hope was gone, with the complete organisation of Islam).

... فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ ...

yet fear them not but fear Me.

... الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ
الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا ...

This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed my favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion.

C696. The last verse revealed chronologically, making the approaching end of Mustafa's ministry in his earthly life.

... فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ
رَّحِيمٌ (٣)

But if any forced by hunger, with no inclination to transgression, Allah is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ ...

4. They ask thee what is lawful to them (as food):

C697. The previous verse was negative; it defined what was not lawful for food, viz., things gross, or disgusting, or dedicated to superstition.

This verse is positive: it defines what is lawful, viz., all things that are good and pure.

... قُلْ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ ...

say:

- Lawful unto you are (all) things good and pure:

... وَمَا عَلَّمْتُم مِّنَ الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلِّبِينَ تُعَلِّمُونَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ ...

- and what ye have taught your trained hunting animals (to catch) in the manner directed to you by Allah;

... فَكُلُوا مِمَّا أَمْسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ ...

eat what they catch for you, but pronounce the name of Allah over it:

C698. In the matter of the killing for meat, the general rule is that the name of Allah, the true God should be pronounced as a rite in order to call our attention to the fact that we do not take life thoughtlessly but solemnly for food, with the permission of Allah, to whom we render the life back.

The question of hunting is then raised.

How can this solemn rite be performed when we send forth trained hawks, trained hounds, or trained cheetahs or other animals trained for the chase?

They must necessarily kill at some distance from their masters. Their game is legalized on these conditions:

1. that they are trained to kill, not merely for their own appetite, or out of mere wantonness, but for their master's food;

the training implies that something of the solemnity which Allah has taught us in this matter goes into their action; and

2. we are to pronounce the name of Allah over the quarry; this is interpreted to mean that the Takbir should be pronounced when the hawk or dog, etc., is released to the quarry. (R).

... وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ (٤)

and fear Allah; for Allah is swift in taking account.

الْيَوْمَ أَجَلٌ لَّكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ ...

5. This day are (all) things good and pure made lawful unto you.

... وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حَلٌّ لَّكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حَلٌّ لَهُمْ ...

- The food of the People of the Book is lawful unto you and yours is lawful unto them.

C699. The question is for food generally, such as is ordinarily "good and pure": in the matter of meat it should be killed with some sort of solemnity analogous to that of the Takbir.

The rules of Islam in this respect being analogous to those of the People of the Book, there is no objection to

mutual recognition, as opposed to meat killed by Pagans with superstitious rites. In this respect the Christian rule is the same:

"That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." (Acts, 15:29).

Notice the bracketing of fornication with things unlawful to eat.

... وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ...

- (Lawful unto you in marriage) are (not only) chaste women who are believers, but chaste women among the People of the Book, revealed before your time,

C700. Islam is not exclusive. Social intercourse, including inter-marriage, is permitted with the People of the Book.

A Muslim man may marry a woman from their ranks on the same terms as he would marry a Muslim woman, i.e., he must give her an economic and moral status, and must not be actuated merely by motives of lust or physical desire.

A Muslim woman **may not** marry a non-Muslim man, because her Muslim status would be affected; the wife ordinarily takes the nationality and status given by her husband's law.

Any man or woman, of any race or faith, may, on accepting Islam, freely marry any Muslim woman or man, provided it be from motives of purity and chastity and not of lewdness.

... إِذَا أَنْتَبَهُنَّ أَجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ...

when ye give them their due dowers, and desire chastity, not lewdness, nor secret intrigues.

... وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ

الْخَاسِرِينَ (٥)

If anyone rejects faith, fruitless is his work, and in the Hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost (all spiritual good).

C701. As always, food, cleanliness, social intercourse, marriage and other interests in life, are linked with our duty to Allah and faith in Him.

Duty and faith are for our own benefit, here and in the Hereafter.

C.70 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(6:6-11)

*Allah wishes us to be clean and pure,
At prayer and at other times.
But justice and right conduct,
Even in the face of spite and hatred.
Are nearest to Piety and the love
Of Allah: in Him we put our trust.*

Section 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ...

6. O ye who believe!

when ye prepare for prayer,

... فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ

إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ ...

- wash your faces,
- and your hands (and arms) to the elbows;
- rub your heads (with water);
- and (wash) your feet to the ankles.

C702. These are the essentials of Wudu, or ablutions preparatory to prayers, viz.,

1. to bathe the whole face in water, and
2. both hands and arms to the elbows,
3. with a little rubbing of the head with water (as the head is usually protected and comparatively clean), and
4. the bathing of the feet to the ankles.

In addition, following the practice of the Prophet, it is usual first to wash the mouth, and the nose before proceeding with the face, etc.

... وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا ...

If ye are in a state of ceremonial impurity, bathe your whole body.

C703. Cf. 4:43 and n. 563.

Ritual impurity arises from sex pollution.

... وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرَضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَامَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ ...

But if ye are ill, or on a journey, or one of you cometh from offices of nature, or ye have been in contact with women,

... فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ ...

and ye find no water, then take for yourselves clean sand or earth, and rub therewith your faces and hands.

C704. This is Tayammum, or wiping with clean sand or earth where water is not available.

I take it that this substitute is permissible both for Wudhu and for a full bath, in the circumstances mentioned.

... مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ...

Allah doth not wish to place you in a difficulty,

... وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (٦)

but to make you clean, and to complete His favor to you, that ye may be grateful.

وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمِيثَاقَهُ الَّذِي وَاثَقَكُمْ بِهِ...

7. And call in remembrance the favor of Allah unto you, and His Covenant, which He ratified with you,

C705. There is a particular and a general meaning.

The particular meaning refers to the solemn Pledge and Covenant taken by two groups of people at 'Aqabah, a valley near Mina,

- the first about fourteen months before the Hijrah, and
- the second a little later.

These were Pledges of fealty to the Messenger of Allah, comparable to the Covenant under Mount Sinai taken in the time of Moses (See 2:63 and n. 78).

The general meaning has been explained in [n. 682 to 5:1](#): man is under a spiritual obligation under an implied Covenant with Allah:

Allah has given man reason, judgment, the higher faculties of the soul, and even the position of vicegerent on earth (2:30), and man is bound to serve Allah faithfully-and obey His Will.

That obedience begins with cleanliness in bodily functions, food, etc. It goes on to cleanliness of mind and thought, and culminates in purity of motives in the inmost recesses of his heart and soul.

... إِذْ قُلْتُمْ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ...

when ye said: "We hear and we obey":

... وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ (٧)

and fear Allah, for Allah knoweth well the secrets of your hearts.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ...

8. O ye who believe!

stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing,

C706. Cf. 4:135.

... وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ...

and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice.

C707. To do justice and act righteously in a favourable or neutral atmosphere is meritorious enough, but the real test comes when you have to do justice to people who hate you or to whom you have an aversion. But no less is required of you by the higher moral law.

... اْعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ...

Be just: that is next to Piety: and fear Allah,

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (٨)

for Allah is well-acquainted with all that ye do.

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ (٩)

9. To those who believe and do deeds of righteousness hath Allah promised forgiveness and a great reward.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ (١٠)

10. Those who reject faith and deny our signs will be companions of Hell-fire.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ...

11. O ye who believe!

call in remembrance the favor of Allah unto you

... إِذْ هَمَّ قَوْمٌ أَن يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ ...

when certain men formed the design to stretch out their hands against you, but (Allah) held back their hands from you:

C708. In the life-time of the Prophet it happened again and again that the enemies of Islam stretched out their hands against him, his people, and his teaching. The odds were, from a worldly point of view, in their favour, but their hands were rendered inert and powerless because they were fighting against the truth of Allah.

So does it happen always, now as it did then. True faith must take heart, and at the same time humbly recognise Allah's favour and mercy, and be grateful.

... وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (١١)

so fear Allah. And on Allah let believers put (all) their trust.

C.71 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(6:12-26)

If the men who received revelations

Before were false to their trust.

If they broke their agreements

And twisted Allah's Message from its aim,

If they rebelled against Truth and followed

Their fancies. Allah's grace was withdrawn

From them and they wandered in the wilderness.

Section 3

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ نَقِيبًا...

12. Allah did aforetime take a Covenant from the Children of Israel, and We appointed twelve captains among them,

C709. Cf. 2:63 and n. 78.

"Moses... called for the elders of the people... and all the people answered together and said, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.'" (Exod. 19:7-8).

This was under the towering height of Mount Sinai. The chieftains or elders or leaders of the people were selected, one from each of the twelve tribes (see 2:60 and n. 73).

For census purposes the names of the elders of the tribes are given in Num. 1:4-16: they are called "every one the head of the house of his fathers". Later, twelve other "heads of the Children of Israel" were selected to spy but the land of Canaan: their names are mentioned in Num. 13:1-16.

See also, below, [5:20-26](#) and notes.

... وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ ...

and Allah said: "I am with you:

... لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتُمُ الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ ...

- if ye (but) establish regular prayers,
- practice regular charity,
- believe in My apostles, honor and assist them and

... وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا ...

- loan to Allah a beautiful loan,

C710. Cf. 2:245, n. 276.

The phrase means "spending in the cause of Allah".

Allah in His infinite grace looks upon this as a loan, for which He gives a recompense manifold.

... لَأَكْفِرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ...

verily I will wipe out from you your evils, and admit you to gardens with rivers flowing beneath;

... فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ (١٢)

but if any of you, after this, resisteth faith, he hath truly wandered from the path of rectitude."

C711. The path of rectitude: or the even way:

see 2:108. n. 109.

فَبِمَا نَقَضْتَهُمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَاسِيَةً ...

13. But because of their breach of their Covenant, We cursed them, and made their hearts grow hard:

C712. Cursed them: that means that because of the breach of their Covenant, Allah withdrew His overflowing Grace from them.

The withdrawal of Grace made their hearts grow hard in two ways:

1. they were no longer protected from the assaults of evil, and
2. they became impervious even to the message of forgiveness and mercy which is open to all Allah's creatures.

... يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَن مَّوَاضِعِهِ وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ...

they change the words from their (right) places and forget a good part of the Message that was sent them,

... وَلَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ ...

nor wilt thou cease to find them, barring a few, ever bent on (new) deceptions:

C713. Israel, when it lost Allah's grace as above, began to sin against truth and religion in three ways:

1. they began to misuse Scripture itself, by either taking words out of their right meaning, or applying them to things for which they were never meant;
2. in doing so, they conveniently forgot a part of the Message and purpose of Allah: and
3. they invented new deceptions to support the old ones.

... فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاصْفَحْ ...

but forgive them and overlook (their misdeeds):

C714. Cf. 2:109 and n. 110, where I have explained the different shades of meaning in the words for "forgiveness."

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (١٣)

for Allah loveth those who are kind.

وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصَارَى أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَهُمْ ...

14. From those, too, who call themselves Christians, We did take a Covenant,

C715. The Christian Covenant may be taken to be the charge which Jesus gave to his disciples, and which the disciples accepted, to welcome Ahmad (56:6).

Glimpses of this are to be found in the Gospel of St. John even as it exists now (John 15:26. 16:7).

It is those who call themselves "Christians" who reject this. True Christians have accepted it. The enmity between those who call themselves Christians and the Jews will continue till the Last Day.

... فَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا دُكِّرُوا بِهِ ...

but they forgot a good part of the Message that was sent them:

... فَأَعْرَبْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ...

so We estranged them, with enmity and hatred between the one and the other, to the Day of Judgment.

... وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ (١٤)

And soon will Allah show them what it is they have done.

C715a. The change from the First Person in the beginning of the verse to the Third Person here illustrates the change from the personal relationship of the Covenant, to the impersonal operation of Justice at Judgment.

Cf. 35:9.

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا...

15. O People of the Book!
there hath come to you Our Messenger,

... يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِّمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ...

revealing to you much that ye used to hide in the Book, and passing over much (that is now unnecessary):

... قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ (١٥)

There hath come to you from Allah a (new) Light and a perspicuous Book.

C716. Mubin: I wish I could translate by a simpler word than "perspicuous". But "plain" may mean unadorned, the opposite of beautiful, and this Book is among the most beautiful that it is the privilege of mankind to read.

"Clear" would be right as far as it means "unambiguous, self-evident, not involved in mysteries of origin, history, or meaning, one which every one can understand as to the essentials necessary for him, without the intervention of priests or privileged persons".

Mubin has all these meanings, but it suggests, besides, some quality of a shining light, by which we are able to make things clear, to distinguish the true from the false. This I think is suggested better by "perspicuous" than by the word "clear". Besides it is hardly good idiom to speak of "a clear Book."

يَهْدِي بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ ...

16. Wherewith Allah guideth all who seek His good pleasure to ways of peace and safety,

... وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ

مُسْتَقِيمٍ (١٦)

and leadeth them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light, guideth them to a Path that is Straight.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ...

17. In blasphemy indeed are those that say that Allah is Christ the son of Mary.

... فُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ...

Say:

"Who then hath the least power against Allah,

... إِنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ...

if His Will were to destroy Christ the son of Mary, his mother, and all, everyone that is on the earth?

... وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ...

For to Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between.

... يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ...

He createth what He pleaseth.

C717. The most honoured of the prophets of Allah are but men.

All power belongs to Allah, and not to any man. Allah's creation may take many forms, but because in any particular form it is different from what we see daily around us, it does not cease to be Creation, or to be subject to the power of Allah. No creature can be God.

... وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (١٧)

For Allah hath power over all things."

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ ...

18. (Both) the Jews and the Christians say: "We are sons of Allah, and His beloved."

C718. Sons of Allah:

Cf. Job, 38:7; "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

In the 29th Psalm, 1st verse, the authorized Translation "O ye mighty" should apparently be "O ye sons of Elim". El being a name of God,

Cf. also Genesis, 6:2: "The sons of God saw the daughters of men." Beloved:

Cf. Psalms, 127:2: "He giveth his beloved sleep."

If used figuratively, these and like words refer to the love of Allah. Unfortunately, "son" used in a physical sense, or "beloved" in an exclusive sense as if Allah loved only the Jews, make a mockery of religion.

... قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ ...

Say: "Why then doth He punish you for your sins?

Nay, ye are but men, of the men He hath created:

... يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ...

He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and He punisheth whom He pleaseth:

... وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ...

and to Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between:

C719. This refrain in the last verse negatives the idea of sonship, and in this verse negatives the idea of an exclusive "Beloved".

In both cases it means that Allah is independent of physical relationship or exclusive partiality.

... وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ (١٨)

and unto Him is the final goal (of all)."

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فَتْرَةٍ مِّنَ الرَّسُلِ ...

19. O People of the Book!

now hath come unto you, making (things) clear unto you, Our Messenger, after the break in (the series of) Our messengers,

C720. The six hundred years (in round figures) between Christ and Muhammad were truly the dark ages of the world.

Religion was corrupted: the standard of morals fell low: many false systems and heresies arose; and there was a break in the succession of prophets until the advent of Muhammad.

... أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا جَاءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ ...

lest ye should say: there came unto us no bringer of glad tidings and no warner (from evil): but now hath come unto you a bringer of glad tidings and a warner (from evil):

... وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (١٩)

and Allah hath power over all things.

Section 4

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ ...

20. Remember Moses said to his people:

... يَا قَوْمِ اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ ...

"O my people! call in remembrance the favor of Allah unto you, when He produced prophets among you,

C721. There was a long line of patriarchs and prophets before Moses, e.g., Abraham, Isaac, Ismail, Jacob, etc.

... وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا ...

made you kings,

C722. From the slavery of Egypt the Children of Israel were made free and independent, and thus each man became as it were a king, if only he had obeyed Allah and followed the lead of Moses.

... وَأَاتَاكُمْ مَا لَمْ يُؤْتِ أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢٠)

and gave you what He had not given to any other among the peoples.

C723. Cf. Exod. 19:5: "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people."

Israel was chosen to be the vehicle of Allah's message, the highest honour which any nation can receive.

يَا قَوْمِ ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ...

21. "O my people! enter the holy land which Allah hath assigned unto you

C724. We now come to the events detailed in the 13th and 14th chapters of the Book of Numbers in the Old Testament. Read these as a Commentary, and examine a good map of the Sinai Peninsula, showing its connections with Egypt on the west. North-West Arabia on the east, and Palestine on the north-east.

We may suppose that Israel crossed from Egypt into the Peninsula somewhere near the northern extremity of the Gulf of Suez. Moses organized and numbered the people, and instituted the Priesthood. They went south about 200 miles to Mount Sinai where the Torah was received. Then, perhaps a hundred and fifty miles north, was the desert of Paran, close to the southern borders of Canaan.

From the camp there twelve men were sent to spy out the land, and they penetrated as far as Hebron, say about 150 miles north of their camp, about 20 miles south of the future Jerusalem. They saw a rich country, and brought from it pomegranates and figs and a bunch of grapes so heavy that it had to be carried by two men on a staff. They came back and reported that the land was rich, but the men there were too strong for them. The people of Israel had no courage and no faith, and Moses remonstrated with them.

... وَلَا تَرْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ (٢١)

and turn not back ignominiously, for then will ye be overthrown, to your own ruin."

قَالُوا يَا مُوسَىٰ ...

22. They said: "O Moses!

... إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَنَنُودِلُهَا حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا ...

in this land are a people of exceeding strength: never shall we enter it until they leave it:

C725. The people were not willing to follow the lead of Moses, and were not willing to fight for their "inheritance."

In effect they said: "Turn out the enemy first, and then we shall enter into possession."

In Allah's Law we must work and strive for what we wish to enjoy.

... فَإِن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِنَّا دَاخِلُونَ (٢٢)

if (once) they leave, then shall we enter."

... قَالَ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا ...

23. (But) among (their) God-fearing men were two on whom Allah had bestowed His Grace: they said:

C726. Among those who returned after spying out the land were two men who had faith and courage.

They were Joshua and Caleb. Joshua afterwards succeeded Moses in the leadership after 40 years.

These two men pleaded for an immediate entry through the proper Gate, which I understand to mean, "after taking all due precautions and making all due preparations". Cf. 2:189 and n. 203.

But of course, they said, they must put their trust in Allah for victory.

... ادْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ ...

"Assault them at the (proper) gate:

... فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ فَإِنَّكُمْ غَالِبُونَ ...

when once ye are in, victory will be yours.

... وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فْتَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (٢٣)

But on Allah put your trust if ye have faith."

... قَالُوا يَا مُوسَى إِنَّا لَن نَدْخُلُهَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا ...

24. They said: "O Moses!

while they remain there, never shall we be able to enter, to the end of time.

... قَادِهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هَاهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ (٢٤)

Go thou, and thy Lord, and fight ye two, while we sit here (and watch)."

C727. The advice of Joshua and Caleb, and the proposals of Moses under divine instructions were unpalatable to the crowd, whose prejudices were further inflamed by the other ten men who had gone with Joshua and Caleb.

They made an "evil report," and were frightened by the great stature of the Canaanites. The crowd was in open rebellion, was prepared to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb, and return to Egypt.

Their reply to Moses was full of irony, insolence, blasphemy, and cowardice. In effect they said:

"You talk of your God and all that: go with your God and fight there if you like: we shall sit here and watch."

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي وَأَخِي فَافْرِقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ

الْفَاسِقِينَ (٢٥)

25. He said:

"O my Lord! I have power only over myself and my bother, so separate us from this rebellious people!"

C728. "Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation." (Num. 14:5).

According to the words in the Old Testament story, Allah said: "I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them." (Num. 14:12).

Moses prayed and interceded. But as we are told here, (a spiritual touch not found in the Jewish story).

Moses was careful to separate himself and his brother from the rebellion.

قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً ...

26. Allah said:

"Therefore will the land be out of their reach for forty years;

C729. The punishment of the rebellion of these stiff-necked people, rebellion that was repeated "these ten times" (Num. 14:22) and more, was that they were left to wander distractedly hither and thither through the wilderness for forty years.

That generation was not to see the Holy Land. All those that were twenty years old and upwards were to die in the wilderness: "your carcasses shall fail in this wilderness." (Num. 14:29). Only those who were then children would reach the Promised land.

And so it happened. From the desert of Paran they wandered south, north, and east for forty years. From the head of what is now the Gulf of Aqabah, they travelled north, keeping to the east side of the depression of which the Dead Sea and the river Jordan are portions.

Forty years afterwards they crossed the Jordan opposite what is now Jericho, but by that time Moses, Aaron, and the whole of the elder generation had died.

... يَتِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ...

in distraction will they wander through the land:

... فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ (٢٦)

but sorrow thou not over these rebellious people."

C.72 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(6:27-43)

*The jealousy of Cain against Abel,
Which led to the murder
Of innocent Abel, is the type
Of the jealousy between the People
Of the Book and their younger brethren
In Islam. Jealousy leads to envy*

*And murder. Such crime against
Individuals are often crimes
Against whole peoples. There are
Men who are ready to catch up
Every lie told against a just man,
The just man should not grieve,
For that is their way.*

Section 5

وَأْتِلْ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ...

27. Recite to them the truth of the story of the two sons of Adam.
Behold!

C730. Literally; "recite to them in truth the story", etc.

The point is that the story in Gen. 4:1-15 is a bare narrative, not including the lessons now to be enforced.

The Prophet is told now to supply the truth of the matter, the details that will enforce the lessons.

C731. The two sons of Adam were Habil (in the English Bible, Abel) and Qabil (in English, Cain). Cain was the elder, and Abel the younger, -the righteous and innocent one.

Presuming on the right of the elder, Cain was puffed up with arrogance and jealousy, which led him to commit the crime of murder.

Among the Christians, Cain was the type of the Jew as against Abel the Christian. The Jew tried to kill Jesus and exterminate the Christian. In the same way, as against Muhammad, the younger brother of the Semitic family. Cain was the type of the Old Testament and New Testament people, who tried to resist and kill Muhammad and put down his people.

... إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا ...

they each presented a sacrifice (to Allah):

... فَتَقَبَّلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمْ يُتَقَبَّلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ ...

it was accepted from one, but not from the other.

... قَالَ لَأُقْتُلَنَّكَ ...

Said the latter: "Be sure I will slay thee."

... قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَنْتَقِبُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ (٢٧)

"Surely," said the former, "Allah doth accept of the sacrifice of those who are righteous.

لئن بسطت إلي يدك لتقتلني ما أنا بباسط يدي إليك لأقتلك...

28. "If thou dost stretch thy hand against me, to slay me, it is not for me to stretch my hand against thee to slay thee:

... إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢٨)

for I do fear Allah, the Cherisher of the worlds.

إني أريد أن تبوء بإثمي وإثمك فتكون من أصحاب النار...

29. "For me, I intend to let thee draw on thyself my sin as well as thine, for thou wilt be among the companions of the fire,

C732. My sin as well as thine: "My sin" has been interpreted as "the sin against me, in that thou slayest me": in that case thy "sin" may mean;

- either "thy crime in committing a murder." or
- "thy sin against thyself, for the crime causes real loss to thyself in the Hereafter."

See the last clause of the next verse.

... وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ (٢٩)

and that is the reward of those who do wrong."

C733. Abel's speech is full of meaning. He is innocent and God-fearing. To the threat of death held out by the other, he returns a calm reply, aimed at reforming the other.

"Surely," he pleads, "if your sacrifice was not accepted, there was something wrong in you, for Allah is just and accepts the sacrifice of the righteous.

If this does not deter you, I am not going to retaliate, though there is as much power in me against you as you have against me.

I fear my Maker, for I know He cherishes all His Creation. Let me warn you that you are doing wrong. I do not intend even to resist, but do you know what the consequences will be to you? You will be in torment."

فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ نَفْسُهُ قَتْلَ أَخِيهِ ...

30. The (selfish) soul of the other led him to the murder of his brother:

... فَقَتَلَهُ فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ (٣٠)

he murdered him, and became (himself) one of the lost ones.

C734. The innocent unselfish pleading of the younger brother had no effect, for the soul of the other was full of pride, selfishness and jealousy.

He committed the murder, but in doing so, ruined his own self.

فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ كَيْفَ يُورِي سَوْءَةً

أَخِيهِ ...

31. Then Allah sent a raven, who scratched the ground, to show him how to hide the shame of his brother.

C735. Sawah may mean "corpse", with a suggestion of nakedness and shame in two senses:

1. the sense of being exposed without burial, and
2. the sense of being insulted by being violently deprived by the unwarranted murder, of the soul which inhabited it,- the soul, too, of a brother.

... قَالَ يَا وَيْلَتَا أَعَجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُوَارِيَ

سَوْءَةً أَخِي ...

"Woe is me!" said he:

"Was I not even able to be as this raven, and to hide the shame of my brother?"

... فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ النَّادِمِينَ (٣١)

Then he became full of regrets.

C736. The thought at last came home to the murderer. It was dreadful indeed to slay any one-the more so as he was a brother, and an innocent righteous brother!

But worse still, the murderer had not even the decency to bury the corpse, and of this simple duty he was reminded by a raven-a black bird usually held in contempt! His regret was on that account.

That was no true repentance.

مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ...

32. On that account: We ordained for the Children of Israel

... أَنَّهُ مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ

النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ...

that if anyone slew a person -- unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land -- it would be as if he slew the whole people:

C737. The story of Cain is referred to in a few graphic details in order to tell the story of Israel.

Israel rebelled against Allah, slew and insulted righteous men who did them no harm but on the contrary came in all humility.

When Allah withdrew His favour from Israel because of its sins and bestowed it on brother nation, the jealousy of Israel plunged it deeper into sin.

To kill or seek to kill an individual because he represents an ideal is to kill all who uphold the ideal. On the other hand, to save an individual life in the same circumstances is to save a whole community.

What could be stronger condemnation of individual assassination and revenge?

... وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ...

and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people.

... وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ تَهُمُ رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ...

Then although there came to them Our Messengers with clear Signs,

... ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ (٣٢)

yet, even after that, many of them continued to commit excesses in the land.

إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

فَسَادًا...

33. The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is:

C738. For the double crime of treason against the State, combined with treason against Allah, as shown by overt crimes, four alternative punishments are mentioned, any one of which is to be applied according to the crime committed, viz.,

- execution (cutting off of the head),
- crucifixion,
- maiming, or
- exile.

These were features of the Criminal Law then and for centuries afterwards, except that tortures such as

"hanging, drawing, and quartering" in English Law, and piercing of eyes and leaving the unfortunate victim exposed to a tropical sun, which was practised in Arabia, and all such tortures were abolished.

In any case sincere repentance before it was too late was recognised as a ground for mercy.

... أَنْ يُقْتَلُوا أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِنْ خِلَافٍ ...

execution, or crucifixion, of the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides,

C739. Understood to mean the right hand and the left foot.

... أَوْ يُنْفَوْنَ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ...

or exile from the land:

... ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (٣٣)

that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْرُؤُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ...

34. Except for those who repent before they fall into your power:

... فَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٣٤)

in that case, know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

Section 6

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ...

35. O ye who believe!

... اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ ...

do your duty to Allah, seek the means of approach unto Him,

C740. Taqwa here too might be translated "fear of Allah", but the very next clause shows that "fear of Allah" does not mean "fear" in the ordinary sense, which would make you avoid the object of fear.

On the contrary the "fear of Allah" is the intense desire to avoid everything that is against His Will and Law.

It is in fact duty to Allah, for we are told to seek ardently the means by which we may approach Him, and that can only be done by striving with might and main for His cause.

... وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (٣٥)

and strive with might and main in His cause: that ye may prosper.

C741. "Prosper" in the real sense, for that is all that matters, as the life of this world is brief and fleeting, and of small account as against Eternity.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ أَنَّ لَهُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا...

36. As to those who reject Faith -- if they had everything on earth

... وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَيَفْتَدُوا بِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَا تُقْبَلُ مِنْهُمْ ...

and twice repeated, to give as ransom for the penalty of the Day of Judgment, it would never be accepted of them.

... وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٣٦)

Theirs would be a grievous penalty.

يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرَجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنْهَا...

37. Their wish will be to get out of the fire, but never will they get out therefrom:

... وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّؤِيمٌ (٣٧)

their penalty will be one that endures.

وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جَزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا...

38. As to the thief, male or female,

- cut off his or her hands:

a punishment by way of example,

C742. Here we touch upon jurisprudence. The Canon Law jurists are not unanimous as to the value of the

property stolen, which would involve the penalty of the cutting off of the hand. The majority hold that petty thefts are exempt from this punishment.

The general opinion is that only one hand should be cut off for the first theft, on the principle that "if thy hand or thy foot offends thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee" (Matt. 18:8).

Apparently in the age of Jesus thieves were crucified (Matt. 27:38).

... نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ (٣٨)

from Allah, for their crime: and Allah is Exalted in Power.

فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ...

39. But if the thief repents after his crime, and amends his conduct, Allah turneth to him in forgiveness;

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ (٣٩)

for Allah if Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ...

40. Knowest thou not that to Allah (alone) belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth?

C743. Punishment really does not belong to mortals, but to Allah alone.

Only, in order to keep civil society together, and protect innocent people from crime, certain principles are laid down on which people can build up their criminal law. But we must always remember that Allah not only punishes but forgives, and forgiveness is the attribute which is more prominently placed before us.

It is not our wisdom that can really define the bounds of forgiveness or punishment, but His Will or Plan, which is the true standard of righteousness and justice.

... يُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَيَعْفُو لِمَن يَشَاءُ...

He punisheth whom He pleaseth, and He forgiveth whom He pleaseth:

... وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٤٠)

and Allah hath power over all things.

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ لَا يَحْزُنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ ...

41. O Messenger!

let not those grieve thee, who race each other into unbelief:

C744. Two classes of men are meant, viz.,

- the Hypocrites and
- the Jews.

For both of them Al-Mustafa labored earnestly and assiduously, and it must have been a cause of great grief and disappointment to him that some among them showed so much insincerity, great grief and cunning, and hardness of heart.

These are types not yet extinct.

... مِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا آمَنَّا بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَلَمْ تُؤْمِن قُلُوبُهُمْ...

(whether it be) among those who say: "We believe" with their lips but whose hearts have no faith;

... وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ هَادُوا سَمَّاعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ سَمَّاعُونَ لِقَوْمٍ آخَرِينَ لَمْ يَأْتُوكَ...

or it be among the Jews, men who will listen to any lie, will listen even to others who have never so much as come to thee.

C745. There were men among the Jews who were eager to catch up any lie against the Prophet. They had their ears open even to tales from people who had never so much as come near to the Prophet.

If we understand "for" instead of "to" before "others" (for the Arabic word would bear both meanings), the sense will be:

They are keen listeners or spies for any lies they can catch; and they will act as spies for others (their Rabbis, etc.) who are in the background but to whom they carry false tales.

... يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوَاضِعِهِ...

They change the words from their (right) times and places;

C746. Cf. 5:14.

The addition of the words *min ba'di* here suggests the change of words from their right times as well as places.

They did not deal honestly with their Law, and misapplied it, by distorting the meaning.

Or it may be that as tale-bearers they distorted the meaning by misrepresenting the context.

... يَقُولُونَ إِنْ أُوتِينَا هَذَا فَخُذُوهُ وَإِنْ لَمْ تُؤْتَوْهُ فَاحْذَرُوا...

they say, "If ye are given this, take it, but if not, beware!"

... وَمَنْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ فِتْنَتَهُ فَلَنْ تَمْلِكَ لَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا...

If anyone's trial is intended by Allah, thou hast no authority in the least for him against Allah.

... أَوْلَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُرِدِ اللَّهُ أَنْ يُطَهِّرَ قُلُوبَهُمْ...

For such it is not Allah's will to purify their hearts.

... لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَلَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ (٤١)

For them there is disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter a heavy punishment.

سَمَاعُونَ لِلْكَذِبِ أَكَّالُونَ لِلسُّحْتِ...

42. (They are fond of) listening to falsehood, of devouring anything forbidden.

C747. Devouring anything forbidden: both in a literal and in a figurative sense.

In the figurative sense, it would be:

- the taking of usury or bribes, or
- taking undue advantage of people's weak position or
- their own fiduciary powers to add to their own wealth.

... فَإِنْ جَاؤُوكَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ أَوْ أَعْرَضْ عَنْهُمْ ...

If they do come to thee, either judge between them, or decline to interfere.

C748. Where it is merely a trick to catch out the unwary, a just man may honorably decline to interfere in a cause submitted to him, as also in a case where the parties are not honestly desirous of justice, but each hopes that some partiality will be shown to it.

... وَإِنْ تُعْرَضْ عَنْهُمْ فَلَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ شَيْئًا ...

If thou decline, they cannot hurt thee in the least.

... وَإِنْ حَكَمْتَ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْقِسْطِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ (٤٢)

If thou judge, judge in equity between them; for Allah loveth those who judge in equity.

وَكَيْفَ يُحْكُمُونَكَ وَعِنْدَهُمُ التَّوْرَةُ ...

43. But why do they come to thee for decision, when they have (their own) laws before them?

C749. This is a searching question as to the motive of the Jews in bringing their cases for decision to the Prophet. They came either;

- to ridicule whatever he said, or
- to deceive him as to facts and snatch a favourable decision which was against equity.

If their own Law did not suit their selfish interests, they sometimes twisted it. But Muhammad was always inflexible in his justice.

... فِيهَا حُكْمُ اللَّهِ ...

Therein is the (plain) command of Allah;

... ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَمَا أُولَئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ (٤٣)

yet even after that, they would turn away.

For they are not (really) People of Faith.

C.73 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(6:44-86)

*True justice accords with Allah's Law.
Follow not men's selfish desires,
But Allah's Will, which was revealed
To Moses and Jesus, and now to Muhammad.
Take not for friends and protectors
Those in whose hearts is a disease-
To whom religion is a mockery
Or a plaything-who worship evil.
Proclaim the Truth of Allah, and be
Not afraid. Eschew their inequities,
Which were denounced by David,
And Jesus. But recognize with justice
Those who are sincere and humble,
Though they may be themselves
Not of your flock, if they witness to Truth.*

Section 7

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ فِيهَا هُدًى وَنُورٌ...

44. It was We who revealed the Law (to Moses);
therein was guidance and light.

C750. Guidance, with reference to conduct,

light, with reference to insight into the higher realms of the spirit.

... يَحْكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّونَ الَّذِينَ أَسْلَمُوا لِلَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ...

By its standard have been judged the Jews, by the Prophet who bowed (as in Islam) to Allah's Will, by the Rabbis and the doctors of Law:

C751. Rabbaniiyyun may, I think, be rightly translated by the Jewish title of Rabbi for their learned men. Jewish learning is identified with Rabbinical literature.

Ahbar is the plural of hibr or habr, by which we may understand Jewish Doctors of Law.

Later the term was applied to those of other religions.

Query:

Is this word connected with the same root as "Hebrew", or "Eber" (Gen. 10:21), the ancestor of the Hebrew race?

This seems negated by the fact that the Arabic root connected with the word "Hebrew" is 'Abar, not Habar.

... بِمَا اسْتُحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا عَلَيْهِ شُهَدَاءَ ...

for to them was entrusted the protection of Allah's Book, and they were witnesses thereto:

C752. They were living witnesses to the truth of Scripture, and could testify that they had made it known to the people:

Cf. 2:143, and 4:135.

... فَلَا تَخْشَوُا النَّاسَ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَشْتَرُوا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ...

therefore fear not men, but fear Me, and sell not My Signs for a miserable price.

C753. Two charges are made, against the Jews:

1. that even the books which they had, they twisted in meaning, to suit their own purposes, because they feared men rather than Allah:
2. that what they had was but fragments of the original Law given to Moses, mixed up with a lot of semi-historical and legendary matter, and some fine poetry.

The Tawrah mentioned in the Quran is not the Old Testament as we have it: nor is it even the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament, containing the

Law embedded in a great deal of semi-historical and legendary narrative).

See [Appendix II](#), on the Tawrah (printed at the end of this Surah).

... وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْكَافِرُونَ (٤٤)

If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) Unbelievers.

وَكَتَبْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيهَا ...

45. We ordained therein for them:

C754. The retaliation is prescribed in three places in the Pentateuch, viz., Exod. 21:23-25: Leviticus 24:18-21, and Deut, 19:21.

The wording in the three quotations is different, but in none of them is found the additional rider for mercy, as here.

Note that in Matt. 5:38. Jesus quotes the Old Law "eye for eye," etc., and modifies it in the direction of forgiveness, but the Quranic injunction is more practical.

Even where the injured one forgives, the State or Ruler is competent to take such action as is necessary for the preservation of law and order in Society. For crime has a bearing that goes beyond the interests of the person injured: the Community is affected: see [5:32](#).

... أَنْ النَّفْسَ بِالنَّفْسِ وَالْعَيْنَ بِالْعَيْنِ ...

- "Life for life,
- eye for eye,

... وَالْأَنْفَ بِالْأَنْفِ وَالْأُذُنَ بِالْأُذُنِ وَالسِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ وَالْجُرُوحَ قِصَاصٌ ...

- nose for nose,
- ear for ear,
- tooth for tooth,
- and wounds equal for equal."

... فَمَنْ تَصَدَّقَ بِهِ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَّهُ ...

But if anyone remits the retaliation by way of charity, it is an act of atonement for himself.

C755. This is not part of the Mosaic Law, but the teaching of Jesus and of Muhammad.

Notice how the teaching of Jesus is gradually introduced as leading up to the Quran.

... وَمَنْ لَمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ (٤٥)

And if any fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) wrongdoers.

C756. The seeming repetitions at the end of verses 44, 45 and 46 are not real repetitions. The significant words in the three cases are:

- Unbelievers,
- wrong-doers, and
- rebellious;

and each fits the context.

- If the Jews tamper with their books they are Unbelievers;
- if they give false judgments, they are wrong-doers.
- If the Christians follow not their light, they are rebellious.

وَقَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم بِعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ ...

46. And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Law that had come before him:

... وَأَتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ فِيهِ هُدًى وَنُورٌ ...

We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light,

C757. Guidance and light: see n. 750 above.

For the meaning of the **Gospel (Injil)**, see [Appendix III](#), "On the Injil", (printed at the end of this Surah).

... وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ (٤٦)

and confirmation of the Law that had come before him:
a guidance and an admonition to those who fear Allah.

وَلِيَحْكُمَ أَهْلَ الْإِنجِيلِ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ ...

47. Let the People of the Gospel judge by what Allah hath revealed therein.

... وَمَن لَّمْ يَحْكَمْ بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ (٤٧)

If any do fail to judge by (the light of) what Allah hath revealed, they are (no better than) those who rebel.

C758. See [n. 756 above](#).

وَأَنزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ
وَمُهَيِّمًا عَلَيْهِ ...

48. To thee We sent the Scripture in truth, confirming the scripture that came before it, and guarding it in safety;

C759. After the corruption of the older revelations, the Quran comes with a twofold purpose:

1. to confirm the true and original Message, and
2. to guard it, or act as a check to its interpretation.

The Arabic word **Muhaymin** is very comprehensive in meaning. It means one who;

- safeguards,
- watches over,
- stands witness,
- preserves, and
- upholds.

The Quran safeguards "the Book", for it has preserved within it the teachings of all the former Books. It watches over these Books in the sense that it will not let their true teachings to be lost. It supports and upholds these Books in the sense that it corroborates the Word of Allah

which has remained intact in them. It stands a witness because it bears testimony to the Word of Allah contained in these Books and helps to sort it out from the interpretations and commentaries of the people which were mixed with it: what is confirmed by the Quran is the Word of Allah and what is against it is that of the people. (R).

... فَاحْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ عَمَّا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ...

so judge between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires, diverging from the truth that hath come to thee.

... لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا ...

To each among you have We prescribed a Law and an Open Way.

C760. Law: shirat, rules of practical conduct.

Open Way: Minhaj. The finer things which are above the law, but which are yet available to everyone, like a sort of open highway. The light in verses 44 and 46 though laws and rules may take different forms among different People.

... وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَجَعَلَكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً ...

If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people,

... وَلَكِنْ لِنَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ ...

but (His plan is) to test you in what He hath given you: so strive as in a race in all virtues.

C761. By origin mankind were a single people or nation: 4:1, and 2:213. That being so Allah could have kept us all alike, with one language, one kind of disposition, and one set of physical conditions (including climate) to live in. But in His wisdom, He gives us diversity in these things, not only at any given time, but in different periods and ages.

This tests our capacity for Unity (*Wahdaniyat*) still more, and accentuates the need of Unity and Islam.

... إلى الله مرجعكم جميعاً فينبئكم بما كنتم فيه تختلفون (٤٨)

The goal of you all is to Allah;

it is He that will show you the truth of the matters in which ye dispute.

C762. Men are wont to make conflicting claims regarding Allah, the ultimate destiny of man, and other questions of vital importance.

No matter how vehement and eloquent the proponents of false doctrines might be, their efforts will prove fruitless and it will be indisputably clear on the Day of Judgment as to who entertained false notions and who cherished the truth. (Eds).

وَأَن احْكُم بَيْنَهُم بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ...

49. And this (He commands): Judge thou between them by what Allah hath revealed, and follow not their vain desires,

... وَأَحْذَرُهم أَن يَقْتِنُوكَ عَن بَعْضِ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ ...

but beware of them lest they beguile thee from any of that (teaching) which Allah hath sent down to thee.

... فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَاَعْلَمُ أَنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَن يُصِيبَهُمْ بِبَعْضِ ذُنُوبِهِمْ ...

And if they turn away, be assured that for some of their crimes it is Allah's purpose to punish them.

... وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ لَفَاسِقُونَ (٤٩)

And truly most men are rebellious.

أَفْحَكَمَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبْعُونَ ...

50. Do they then seek after a judgment of (the Days of) Ignorance?

C763. The Days of Ignorance were the days of tribalism, feuds and selfish accentuation of differences in man. Those days are really not yet over.

It is the mission of Islam to take us away from that false mental attitude, towards the true attitude of Unity. If our Faith is certain (and not merely a matter of words). Allah will guide us to that Unity.

... وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ حُكْمًا لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ (٥٠)

But who, for a people whose faith is assured, can give better judgment than Allah?

Section 8

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ...

51. O ye who believe! take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors:

C764. That is, look not to them for help and comfort. They are more likely to combine against you than to help you. And this happened more than once in the lifetime of the Prophet, and in after-ages again and again.

He who associates with them and shares their counsels must be counted as of them. The trimmer loses whichever way the wheel of fortune turns.

... بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ...

they are but friends and protectors to each other.

... وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِّنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ...

And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them.

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ (٥١)

Verily Allah guideth not a people unjust.

فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ...

52. Those in whose heart is a disease, thou seest how eagerly they run about amongst them,

C765. Cf. 2:10.

يَقُولُونَ نَحْشَىٰ أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ...

saying: "We do fear lest a change of fortune bring us disaster."

... فَعَسَىٰ اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ...

Ah! perhaps Allah will give (thee) victory, or a decision according to His Will.

... فَيُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا أَسْرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ تَادِمِينَ (٥٢)

Then will they repent of the thoughts which they secretly harbored in their hearts.

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ إِنَّهُمْ
لَمَعَكُمْ...

53. And those who believe will say:

"Are these the men who swore their strongest oaths by Allah, that they were with you?"

C766. The Hypocrites, while matters were doubtful, pretended to be with Muslims, but were in league with their enemies. When matters came to a decision and Allah granted victory to Islam, their position was awkward.

They were not only disowned by the Muslims, but the Muslims could well say in reproach to their enemies:

"Are these the men who swore friendship for you?"

What was their friendship worth to you?

Where are they now?"

... حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا خَاسِرِينَ (٥٣)

All that they do will be in vain, and they will fall into (nothing but) ruin.

... يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ...

54. O ye who believe!

... مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهُ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ ...

if any from among you turn back from his faith, soon will Allah produce a people whom He will love as they will love Him,

... أَدْلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ...

lowly with the believers, mighty against the rejecters,

... يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ...

fighting in the way of Allah, and never afraid of the reproaches of such as find fault.

C767. As "most men are rebellious" (5:49), it is inevitable that there should be apostates even from such a religion of reason and common-sense as Islam. But here is a warning to the Muslim body that they should not repeat the history of the Jews, and become so self-satisfied or arrogant as to depart from the spirit of Allah's teaching. If they do, the loss will be their own.

Allah's bounty is not confined to one group or section of humanity. He can always raise up people who will follow the true spirit of Islam. That spirit is defined in two ways:

- first in general terms; they will love Allah and Allah will love them; and
- secondly, by specific signs;

amongst the Brethren, their attitude will be that of humility, but to wrong-doers they will offer no mealy-mouthed compromises;

they will always strive and fight for truth and right;

they will know no fear, either physical, or that more insidious form, which says; "What will people say if we act thus?"

They are too great in mind to be haunted by any such thought. For, as the next verse says, their friends are Allah, His Prophet, and His people, the people who judge rightly, without fear or favour.

... ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٥٤)

That is the Grace of Allah, which He will bestow on whom He pleaseth:

and Allah encompasseth all, and He knoweth all things.

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ...

55. Your (real) friends are (no less than) Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers,

... الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ (٥٥)

those who establish regular prayers and regular charity, and they bow down humbly (in worship).

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ (٥٦)

56. As to those who turn (for friendship) to Allah, His Messenger, and the (fellowship of) believers, it is the fellowship of Allah that must certainly triumph.

Section 9

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَكُمْ هُزُوءًا وَلَعِبًا...

57. O ye who believe!

take not for friends and protectors those who take your religion for a mockery or sport,

... مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أَوْتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَافِرَ أَوْلِيَاءَ...

whether among those who received the Scripture before you, or among those who reject Faith;

C768. It is not right that we should be in intimate association with those to whom religion is either a subject of mockery or at best is nothing but a plaything.

They may be amused, or they may have other motives for encouraging you. But your association with them will sap the earnestness of your Faith, and make you cynical and insincere.

... وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (٥٧)

but fear ye Allah, if ye have Faith (indeed).

وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ اتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُوءًا وَلَعِبًا...

58. When ye proclaim your call to prayer, they take it (but) as mockery and sport;

... ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَّا يَعْقِلُونَ (٥٨)

that is because they are a people without understanding.

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ هَلْ تَنْقُمُونَ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ ...

59. Say: "O People of the Book! do ye disapprove of us for no other reason than that we believe in Allah,

... وَمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ مِن قَبْلُ ...

and the revelation that hath come to us and that which came before (us),

... وَأَنْ أَكْثَرَكُمْ فَاسِقُونَ (٥٩)

and (perhaps) that most of you are rebellious and disobedient?"

C769. There is the most biting irony in this and the next verse,

You People of the Book!

Do you hate us because we believe in Allah and not only our scripture, but yours also?

Perhaps you hate us because we obey and you are in rebellion against Allah! Why hate us?

There are worse things than our obedience and our Faith. Shall I tell you some of them?

Our test will be:

what treatment Allah meted out to the things I mention. Who were the people who incurred the curse of Allah? (See Deut. 11:28, and 28:15-68: and numerous passages like Hosea 8:14, and 9:1).

Who provoked Allah's wrath? (See numerous passages like Deut. 1:34; Matt. 3:7).

Who forsook Allah, and worshipped evil? (See Jeremiah, 16:11-13).

That is your record. Is that why you hate us?'

قُلْ هَلْ أَنْبِئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِّنْ ذَلِكَ مَثُوبَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ...

60. Say: "Shall I point out to you something much worse than this, (as judged) by the treatment it received from Allah?

... مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَعَظِيبَ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمْ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ
الطَّاغُوتَ ...

Those who incurred the curse of Allah and His wrath, those of whom some He transformed into apes and swine, those who worshipped Evil;

C770. For apes see 2:65.

For men possessed by devils, and the devils being sent into swine, see Matt. 8:28-32.

Or perhaps both apes and swine are allegorical; those who falsified Allah's scriptures became lawless like apes, and those who succumbed to filth, gluttony, or gross living became like swine.

... أُولَئِكَ شَرٌّ مَكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ عَنْ سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ (٦٠)

these are (many times) worse in rank, and far more astray from the even Path!

وَإِذَا جَاؤُوكُمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا ...

61. When they come to thee, they say: "We believe":

... وَقَدْ دَخَلُوا بِالْكَفْرِ وَهُمْ قَدْ خَرَجُوا بِهِ ...

but in fact they enter with a mind against Faith, and they go out with the same:

... وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْتُمُونَ (٦١)

but Allah knoweth fully all that they hide.

... وَتَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتَ ...

62. Many of them dost thou see, racing each other in sin and rancor, and their eating of things forbidden.

C771. Eating of things forbidden: may be construed in a literal or a figurative sense.

From its juxtaposition with sin and hatred, it is better to construe it in a figurative sense, as referring to their fraudulent misappropriations of other people's property or trust property.

"Eating" is used in 5:66 below in the general sense of enjoyment and happiness.

... لَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ (٦٢)

Evil indeed are the things that they do.

لَوْلَا يَنْهَاهُمُ الرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ عَنْ قَوْلِهِمُ الْإِثْمَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتَ ...

63. Why do not the Rabbis and the doctors of laws forbid them from their (habit of) uttering sinful words and eating things forbidden?

... لَيْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ (٦٣)

Evil indeed are their works.

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَعْلُومَةٌ ...

64. The Jews say: "Allah's hand is tied up."

C772. Cf. 5:12, and 2:245, for a "beautiful loan to Allah",

and 3:181, for the blasphemous taunt, "Then Allah is poor!" It is another form of the taunt to say, "Then Allah's hands are tied up. He is close-fisted. He does not give!"

This blasphemy is repudiated. On the contrary, boundless is Allah's bounty, and He gives, as it were, with both hands outstretched,-a figure of speech for unbounded liberality.

... غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلَعْنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا ...

Be their hands tied up and be they accursed for the (blasphemy) they utter.

... بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ يُنفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ ...

Nay, both His hands are widely outstretched: He giveth and spendeth (of His bounty) as He pleaseth.

... وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا ...

But the revelation that cometh to thee from Allah increaseth in most of them their obstinate rebellion and blasphemy.

C773. Their jealousy-because Al-Mustafa is chosen for Allah's Message-is so great that it only confirms and strengthens their rebellion and blasphemy.

... وَالْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ...

Amongst them We have placed enmity and hatred till the Day of Judgment.

C774. Cf. 5:14. where the eternal warring of the Christian sects, among themselves and against the Jews, is referred to.

The reference is to the whole of the People of the Book, Jews and Christians-their internal squabbles and their external disputes, quarrels, and wars.

... كُلَّمَا أُوقِدُوا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ

فَسَادًا ...

Every time they kindle the fire of war, Allah doth extinguish it; but they (ever) strive to do mischief on earth.

C775. The argument of the whole verse may be thus stated.

The Jews blaspheme and mock, and because of their jealousy, the more they are taught, the more obstinate they become in their rebellion.

But what good will it do to them?

Their selfishness and spite sow quarrels among themselves, which will not be healed till the Day of Judgment.

When they stir up wars, especially against the innocent. Allah's Mercy is poured down like a flood of water to extinguish them. But their wickedness continues to devise ever new mischief.

And Allah loves not mischief or those who do mischief.

... وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ (٦٤)

And Allah loveth not those who do mischief.

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَكَفَّرْنَا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ ...

65. If only the People of the Book had believed and been righteous,
We should indeed have blotted out their iniquities

... وَلَا نُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ النَّعِيمِ (٦٥)

and admitted them to gardens of Bliss.

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ...

66. If only they had stood fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the
revelation that was sent to them from their Lord,

... لِأَكْلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ ...

they would have enjoyed happiness from every side.

C776. The literal translation of this line would be:

"They would have eaten from above them and from
below their feet."

To eat (akala) is a very comprehensive word, and
denotes enjoyment generally, physical, social, mental
and moral, and spiritual.

"To eat what is forbidden" in verses 62 and 63 referred
to taking unlawful profit, from usury or trust funds or in
other ways.

Here "**eating**" would seem to mean receiving
satisfaction or happiness in this life as well as in the life
to come.

"From above them" may refer to heavenly or spiritual
satisfaction, and "from below their feet" to earthly
satisfaction.

But it is better to take the words as a general idiom, and
understand "satisfaction or happiness from every side."
(R).

... مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُقْتَصِدَةٌ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ (٦٦)

There is from among them a party on the right course;
but many of them follow a course that is evil.

Section 10

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ...

67. O Messenger! proclaim the (Message) which hath been sent to thee from thy Lord.

C777. Muhammad had many difficulties to contend with, many enemies and dangers to avoid.

Hi; mission must be fulfilled. And he must-as he did-go forward and proclaim that Message and fulfil his mission, trusting to Allah for protection, and unconcerned if people who had lost all sense of right rejected it or threatened him.

... وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَّغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ ...

If thou didst not, thou wouldst not have fulfilled and proclaimed His mission:

... وَاللَّهُ يَعْصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ...

and Allah will defend thee from men (who mean mischief).

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ (٦٧)

For Allah guideth not those who reject Faith.

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ ...

68. Say: "O People of the Book!

... لَسْتُمْ عَلَى شَيْءٍ حَتَّى تُفِيمُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ

رَبِّكُمْ...

ye have no ground to stand upon unless ye stand fast by the Law, the Gospel, and all the revelation that has come to you from your Lord."

... وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا ...

It is the revelation that cometh to thee from thy Lord, that increaseth in most of them their obstinate rebellion and blasphemy.

... فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ (٦٨)

But sorrow thou not over (these) people without Faith.

C778. In 5:26, Moses was told not to sorrow over a rebellious people. Here Muhammad is told not to sorrow over people without Faith.

The second situation is even more trying than the first. Rebellion may be a passing phase. Want of faith is an attitude of mind that is well-nigh hopeless. Yet the Prophet patiently reasoned with them and bore their taunts and insults.

If the argument runs, you do not believe in anything, even in the things that you may be expected to believe in, how can you receive in Faith Allah's Message that has come in another form? In fact your jealousy adds to your obstinacy and unbelief.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئُونَ وَالنَّصَارَى...

69. Those who believe (in the Qur'an), those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures), and the Sabians and the Christians,

... مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا...

any who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness,

C779. Here, as in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:62), the Quran underscores the importance of true and genuine faith, which is to be judged by a sincere belief in Allah and man's accountability to Him backed by a righteous conduct rather than by mere forms or labels.

At both the places it repudiates the false claims of the People of the Book that they had a special relationship with Allah for they were the children of Abraham; that they were a chosen people with special privileges, and no matter what they did, their high status would remain unaffected.

Here this false notion is refuted and the People of the Book are being reminded that it is through sincere belief and righteous conduct rather than pretentious claims

that man can win his Lord's pleasure and achieve ultimate success.

The verse does not purport to lay down an exhaustive list of the articles of faith. Nor does it seek to spell out the essentials of a genuine belief in Allah, which has no meaning unless it is accompanied by belief in His Prophets for it is through their agency alone that we know Allah's Will and can abide by it in our practical lives.

This is especially true of His final Prophet, Muhammad (peace be on him) whose message is universal, and not confined to any particular group or section of humanity.

Belief in the Prophethood of Muhammad (peace be on him) is thus an integral part and a logical corollary of belief in Allah. Moreover, it is also an essential test of genuineness of such belief. This becomes clear when the verse is read in conjunction with other relevant verses of the Quran.

See, for instance, 4:170, 5:15, 19, 7:157, 158, 21:107, 25:I, 33:40, 61:6.

See also 2:40, 3:31-32, 4:150-151. (Eds).

... فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ (٦٩)

on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

لَقَدْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَارْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ رُسُلًا ...

70. We took the Covenant of the Children of Israel and sent them Messengers.

... كُلَّمَا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ بِمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنفُسُهُمْ فَرِيقًا كَذَّبُوا وَقَرِيبًا

يَقْتُلُونَ (٧٠)

Every time there came to them an apostle with what they themselves desired not --

some (of these) they called impostors, and some they (go so far as to) slay.

C780. Cf. 2:87, and n. 91.

وَحَسِبُوا أَلَّا تَكُونَ فِتْنَةٌ فَعَمُوا وَصَمُّوا...

71. They thought there would be no trial (or punishment); so they became blind and deaf:

C781. That is, they turned away their eyes from Allah's Signs and they turned a deaf ear to Allah's Message.

... ثُمَّ تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ عَمُوا وَصَمُّوا كَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ ...

yet Allah (in mercy) turned to them: yet again many of them became blind and deaf.

... وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ (٧١)

But Allah sees well all that they do.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ...

72. They do blaspheme who say: "Allah is Christ the son of Mary."

... وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ...

But said Christ: "O children of Israel! worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord."

C782. Cf. Matt. 4:10, where Christ rebukes Satan for desiring the worship of other than Allah:

John 20:17, where Christ says to Mary Magdalene, "Go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God.

"Cf. also Luke 18:19, where Christ rebukes a certain ruler for calling him Good Master: "Why callest thou me good? None is good, save One, that is, Allah."

In Mark 12:29 Jesus says: "The first of all the commandments is, Hear O Israel; the Lord our God is One Lord."

... إِنَّهُ مَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَأْوَاهُ النَّارُ ...

Whoever joins other gods with Allah, Allah will forbid him the garden, and the Fire will be his abode.

... وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ (٧٢)

There will be for the wrongdoers no one to help.

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَلَاثَةٌ وَوَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ...

73. They do blaspheme who say: Allah is one of three in a Trinity: for there is no god except One Allah.

... وَإِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهُوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٧٣)

If they desist not from their word (of blasphemy), verily a grievous penalty will befall the blasphemers among them.

أَفَلَا يَتُوبُونَ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُونََّهُ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٧٤)

74. Why turn they not to Allah, and seek His forgiveness? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

مَا الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ ...

75. Christ the son of Mary was no more than a Messenger;

... قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ ...

many were the Messengers that passed away before him.

... وَأُمُّهُ صِدِّيقَةٌ ...

His mother was a woman of truth.

C783. She never claimed that she was a mother of God, or that her son was God. She was a pious virtuous woman.

... كَانَا يَأْكُلَانِ الطَّعَامَ ...

They had both to eat their (daily) food.

... انظُرْ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الْآيَاتِ ...

See how Allah doth makes His Signs clear to them;

C784. Note how logically the argument has led up from Jewish back-sliding and want of faith, to blasphemies associated with the names of Jesus and Mary, and in the following verses to the worship of senseless stocks and stones.

Allah is One; His Message is one; yet how people's perversity transforms truth into falsehood, religion into superstition!

... تَمَّ انظُرْ أَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ (٧٥)

yet see in what ways they are deluded away from the truth!

فَلْ أَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا...

76. Say:

Will ye worship, besides Allah, something which hath no power either to harm or benefit you?

... وَاللَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ (٧٦)

But Allah, He it is that heareth and knoweth all things."

فَلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لَا تَغْلُوا فِي دِينِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ...

77. Say:

"O People of the Book! exceed not in your religion the bounds (of what is proper), trespassing beyond the truth,

C785. Excess, as opposed to moderation and reason, is the simplest test by which a hypocrite or a selfish man who "trades" on religion, is known from a sincere, pious, and truly religious man.

Excess means that truth is sometimes concealed or trampled upon, that the fashions of ancestors or contemporaries are copied or overdone, and Allah's name is dishonoured by blasphemies or the setting up of false gods or fetishes, or that good (or even bad) men are deified and worshipped. The true path is the even path, the path of rectitude.

(Cf. 2:108, and 5:13).

... وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا أَهْوَاءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوا مِن قَبْلُ وَأَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا...

nor follow the vain desires of people who went wrong in times gone by, who misled many,

... وَضَلُّوا عَن سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ (٧٧)

and strayed (themselves) from the even way.

Section 11

لُعِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَلَى لِسَانِ دَاوُدَ ...

78. Curses were pronounced on those among the Children of Israel who rejected faith, by the tongue of David.

C786. The Psalms of David have several passages of imprecations against the wicked.

Cf. Psalms 109:17-18; 78:21-22, "Therefore the Lord heard this and was wroth; so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; because they believed not in God, and trusted not in His salvation";

Psalms 69:22-28, and Psalms 5:10.

... وَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ...

and of Jesus the son of Mary:

C787. Cf. Matt. 23:33, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?

also Matt. 12:34.

... ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ (٧٨)

because they disobeyed and persisted in excesses.

كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُنْكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ...

79. Nor did they (usually) forbid one another the iniquities which they committed:

C788. There are bad men in every community, but if leaders connive at the misdeeds of the commonalty, - and even worse, if leaders themselves share in the misdeeds, as happened with the Pharisees and Scribes against whom Jesus spoke out, then that community is doomed.

... لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ (٧٩)

evil indeed were the deeds which they did.

تَرَى كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا...

80. Thou seest many of them turning in friendship to the unbelievers.

... لَيْسَ مَا قَدَّمْتَ لَهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ أَنْ سَخِطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي الْعَذَابِ هُمْ

خَالِدُونَ (٨٠)

Evil indeed are (the works) which their souls have sent forward before them (with the result), that Allah's wrath is on them, and in torment will they abide.

وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَا اتَّخَذُوهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ...

81. If only they had believed in Allah, in the Prophet, and in what hath been revealed to him, never would they have taken them for friends and protectors,

... وَلَكِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ (٨١)

but most of them are rebellious wrongdoers.

لَتَجِدَنَّ أَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا ...

82. Strongest among men in enmity to the believers wilt thou find the Jews and Pagans;

... وَلَتَجِدَنَّ أَقْرَبَهُمْ مَّوَدَّةً لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصَارَى...

and nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say: "We are Christians:"

C789. The meaning is not that they merely call themselves Christians, but that they were such sincere Christians that they appreciated Muslim virtues, as did the Abyssinians to whom Muslim refugees went during the persecution in Makkah. (R).

... ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ قِسِّيِينَ وَرُهْبَانًا ...

because amongst these are men devoted to learning and men who have renounced the world,

C790. Qissis: I have translated as "devoted to learning," following the Commentators. it seems to be a foreign word, possibly Abyssinian rather than Syriac, as the reference seems to be to the Abyssinian Christians.

Their real devotion to learning and the renunciation of the world by the Monastic Orders are contrasted with the hypocrisy and arrogance of the Pharisees and Scribes.

... وَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ (٨٢)

and they are not arrogant.

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوا مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُولِ ...

83. And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger,

... تَرَى أَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوا مِنَ الْحَقِّ ...

thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth:

... يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ (٨٣)

they pray:

"Our Lord! we believe; write us down among the witnesses.

وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا جَاءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ...

84. "What cause can we have not to believe in Allah and the truth which has come to us,

... وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُدْخِلَنَا رَبَّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصَّالِحِينَ (٨٤)

seeing that we long for our Lord to admit us to the company of the righteous?"

فَأْتَانَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا قَالُوا جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا...

85. And for this their prayer hath Allah rewarded them with gardens, with rivers flowing underneath, their eternal home.

... وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (٨٥)

Such is the recompense of those who do good.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ (٨٦)

86. But those who reject faith and belie our Signs, they shall be companions of Hell-fire.

C.74 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(6:87-108)

*In the physical pleasures of life
The crime is excess; there is no merit
In abstention from things that are good
And lawful. Take no rash vows,
But to solemn oaths be faithful. Shun
As abominations drinking and gambling,
And superstitions of all kinds.
But be reverent to what is sacred
In rites and associations. Not the same
Are things good and things evil,
Learn to distinguish, but pry not
Into questions beyond your ken.
Guard your own souls in truth
And justice, and no harm can befall you.*

Section 12

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُحَرِّمُوا طَيِّبَاتِ مَا أَحَلَّ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا...

87. O ye who believe!

make not unlawful the good things which Allah hath made lawful for you, but commit no excess:

C791. In pleasures that are good and lawful the crime is excess. There is no merit merely in abstention or asceticism, though the humility or unselfishness that may go with asceticism may have its value.

In [5:82](#), Christian monks are praised for particular virtues, though here and elsewhere monasticism is disapproved of.

Use Allah's gifts of all kinds with gratitude, but excess is not approved of by Allah.

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (٨٧)

for Allah loveth not those given to excess.

وَكُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ حَلَالًا طَيِّبًا...

88. Eat of the things which Allah hath provided for you, lawful and good:

... وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَنْتُمْ بِهِ مُؤْمِنُونَ (٨٨)

but fear Allah, in Whom ye believe.

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا عَقَدْتُمُ الْأَيْمَانَ ...

89. Allah will not call you to account for what is futile in your oaths, but He will call you to account for your deliberate oaths:

C792. Vows of penance or abstention may sometimes be futile, or even stand in the way of really good or virtuous act.

See 2:224-226, and notes 251, 252.

The general principles established are:

1. take no futile oaths;
2. use not Allah's name, literally or in intention, to fetter yourself against doing a lawful or good act;
3. keep to your solemn oaths to the utmost of your ability;
4. where you are unable to do so, expiate your failure by feeding or clothing the poor, or obtaining some one's freedom, or if you have not the means, by fasting. This is from a spiritual aspect.

If any party suffers damage from your failure, compensation will be due to him, but would be question of law or equity.

... فَكَفَّارَتُهُ ...

for expiation,

... إِطْعَامُ عَشْرَةِ مَسَاكِينَ مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعَمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ أَوْ كِسْوَتُهُمْ أَوْ

تَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ ...

- feed then indigent persons, on a scale of the average for the food of your families;
- or clothe them;
- or give a slave his freedom.

... فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ ...

- If that is beyond your means, fast for three days.

... ذَلِكَ كَفَّارَةٌ لِمَائِمِكُمْ إِذَا حَلَفْتُمْ وَاحْفَظُوا أَيْمَانَكُمْ ...

That is the expiation for the oaths ye have sworn.

But keep to your oaths.

... كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (٨٩)

Thus doth Allah make clear to you His Signs, that ye may be grateful.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ ...

90. O ye who believe!

- intoxicants and gambling,

C793. Cf. 2:219, and notes 240 and 241.

... وَالْأَنْصَابُ ...

- (dedication of) stones,

C794. Cf. 5:3.

The stones there referred to were stone altars or stone columns on which oil was poured for consecration, or slabs on which meat was sacrificed to idols. Any idolatrous or superstitious practices are here condemned.

The **ansab** were objects of worship, and were common in Arabia before Islam.

See Renan, "History of Israel", Chapter 6, and *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*. Part 1. p. 154: Illustrations Nos. 123 and 123 *bis* are Phoenician columns of that kind, found in Malta.

... وَالْأَزْلَامُ ...

- and (divination by) arrows,

C795. Cf. 5:3.

The arrows there referred to were used for the division of meat by a sort of lottery or rate.

But arrows were also used for divination, i.e., for ascertaining lucky or unlucky moments, or learning the wishes of the heathen gods, as to whether men should undertake certain actions or not. All superstitions are condemned.

... رَجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ ...

are an abomination, of Satan's handiwork:

... فَاجْتَنِبُوهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (٩٠)

eschew such (abomination), that ye may prosper.

إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَنْ يُوقِعَ بَيْنَكُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ فِي الْخَمْرِ
وَالْمَيْسِرِ ...

91. Satan's plan is (but) to

- excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling,

... وَيَصُدَّكُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَعَنِ الصَّلَاةِ ...

- and hinder you from the remembrance of Allah, and from prayer:

... فَهَلْ أَنْتُمْ مُنْتَهُونَ (٩١)

will ye not then abstain?

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَاحْذَرُوا...

92. Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and beware (of evil):

C796. We are asked to obey the commands of Allah (which are always reasonable), instead of following superstitions (which are irrational), or seeking undue stimulation in intoxicants or undue advantage in gambling.

To some there may be temporary excitement or pleasure in these, but that is not the way either of prosperity or piety.

... فَإِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا عَلَى رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ (٩٢)

if ye do turn back, know ye that it is Our Messenger's duty to proclaim (the Message) in the clearest manner.

C797. Cf. 5:67.

Both the worldly and the spiritual aspects of loss are pointed out.

Can Allah's Message do more?

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعِمُوا...

93. On those who believe and do deeds of righteousness there is no blame for what they ate (in the past),

... إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا

وَأَحْسَنُوا...

when they guard themselves from evil and believe, and do deeds of righteousness, (or) again, guard themselves from evil and do good.

... وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (٩٣)

For Allah loveth those who do good.

C798. There is a subtle symphony in what appears at first sight to be a triple repetition. The relation of such simple regulations as those of food, or game, or the reverence due to a sacred place or sacred institution, has to be explained vis-à-vis man's higher duties.

Baydawi is right in classifying such duties under three heads;

- those due to Allah,
- those due from a man to himself (his self-respect), and
- those due to other creatures of Allah.

Or perhaps all duties have this threefold aspect.

- The first may be called Believing or Faith;
- the second, Guarding ourselves from evil, or Conscience: and
- the third, doing good or Righteousness.

But the simplest physical rules, e.g., those about eating, cleanliness, etc., if they are good, refer also to the higher aspects.

If we eat bad food, we hurt ourselves, we cause offence to our neighbors, and we disobey Allah.

If we have faith and righteousness, are we likely to be wanting in conscience?

If we have conscience and faith, are we likely to fail in righteousness?

If we have conscience and righteousness, what can be their foundation but faith?

All three manifest themselves in a willing obedience to Allah, and love for Him. We realise His love in loving and doing good to His creatures, and our love for Him is meaningless without such good.

Section 13

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا...

94. O ye who believe!

... لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ اللَّهُ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيْدِ تَنَالَهُ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَرِمَاحُكُمْ لِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن
يَخَافُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ...

Allah doth but make a trial of you in a little matter of game well within reach of your hands and your lances, that He may test who feareth Him unseen:

C799. Literally, "know" Cf. 3:166, and 3:154, n. 467.

Game is forbidden in the Sacred Precincts. If we deliberately break that injunction, we have no faith and reverence.

... فَمَن اعْتَدَىٰ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ قَلَهُ عَدَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (٩٤)

any who transgress thereafter will have a grievous penalty.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْتُلُوا الصَّيْدَ وَأَنتُمْ حُرُمٌ...

95. O ye who believe!

kill not game, while in the Sacred Precincts or in pilgrim garb.

C800. See [5:1](#), and [n. 684](#).

The pilgrim garb, Ihram, has been explained in n. 212, 2:196.

... وَمَنْ قَتَلَهُ مِنْكُمْ مُتَعَمَّدًا فَجَزَاءٌ ...

If any of you doth so intentionally, the compensation is

... مِّثْلُ مَا قُتِلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحْكُمُ بِهِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنكُمْ هَدِيًّا بَالِغٌ

الْكَعْبَةِ...

- an offering, brought to the Ka'bah of a domestic animal equivalent to the one he killed, as adjudged by two just men among you;

C801. For an inadvertent breach of the game rule there is apparently no penalty. Intentional breach will be prevented, if possible, by previous action.

If in some case the preventive action is not effective, the penalty is prescribed. The penalty is in three alternatives:

- an equivalent animal should be brought to the Ka'bah for sacrifice; if so, the meat would be distributed to the poor; or the poor must be fed, with grain or money, according to the value of the animal if one had been sacrificed: or
- the offender must fast as many days as the number of the poor who would have been fed under the second alternative.
- Probably the last alternative would only be open if the offender is too poor to afford the first or second, but on this point Commentators are not agreed.

The "equivalent animal" in the first alternative would be a domestic animal of similar value or weight in meat or of similar shape (e.g., goat to antelope), as adjudged by two just men on the spot.

The alternatives about the penalty and its remission ("Allah forgives what is past") or exaction explain the last two lines of the verse: being "Exalted and Lord of Retribution", Allah can remit or regulate according to His just laws.

... أَوْ كَفَّارَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسَاكِينَ أَوْ عَدْلُ ذَلِكَ صِيَامًا لِيَذُوقَ وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِ ...

- or by way of atonement, the feeding of the indigent;
- or its equivalent in fasts:

that he may taste of the penalty of his deed.

... عَفَا اللَّهُ عَمَّا سَلَفَ ...

Allah forgives what is past:

... وَمَنْ عَادَ فَيَنْتَقِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْهُ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ (٩٥)

for repetition Allah will exact from him the penalty: for Allah is Exalted, and Lord of Retribution.

أَحَلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدَ الْبَحْرِ وَطَعَامَهُ مَتَاعًا لَكُمْ وَلِلسَّيَّارَةِ...

96. Lawful to you is the pursuit of water-game and its use for food, for the benefit of yourselves and those who travel;

C802. Water-game: i.e., game found in water, e.g., fish, etc.

"**Water**" includes sea, river, lake, pond, etc.

... وَحُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدَ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرُمًا ...

but forbidden is the pursuit of land-game: as long as ye are in the Sacred Precincts or in pilgrim garb.

... وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ (٩٦)

And fear Allah, to whom ye shall be gathered back.

جَعَلَ اللَّهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيَامًا لِلنَّاسِ ...

97. Allah made the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, an asylum of security for men,

... وَالشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ ...

as also the Sacred Months,

C803. The Sacred or Prohibited Months are explained in n. 209. 2:194, and [n. 687, 5:2](#).

... وَالْهَدْيَ وَالْقَلَائِدَ ...

the animals for offerings, and the garlands that mark them:

C804. See [5:2](#) and [n. 688](#).

... ذَلِكَ لِيَتَّعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ...

that ye may know that Allah hath knowledge of what is in the heavens and on earth

... وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ (٩٧)

and that Allah is well acquainted with all things.

C805. All sorts of people from all parts of the earth gather during the Pilgrimage. They must not think that they are strangers, that nobody knows them, and that they may behave as they like.

It is the House of Allah, and He has supreme knowledge of all things, of all thoughts, and all motives.

As the next verse says, while He is Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. He is also strict in enforcing respect for His ordinances.

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ...

98. Know ye that Allah is strict in punishment

... وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (٩٨)

and that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

مَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ ...

99. The Messenger's duty is but to proclaim (the Message):

... وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ (٩٩)

but Allah knoweth all that ye reveal and ye conceal.

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ الْخَبِيثِ...

100. Say:

"Not equal are things that are bad and things that are good, even though the abundance of the bad may dazzle thee;

C806. Cf. 2:204.

People often judge by quantity rather than quality. They are dazzled by numbers: their hearts are captured by what they see everywhere around them. But the man of understanding and discrimination judges by a different standard. He knows that good and bad things are not to be lumped together, and carefully chooses the best, which may be the scarcest, and avoids the bad, though evil may meet him at every step.

... فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (١٠٠)

so fear Allah, O ye that understand! that (so) ye may prosper."

Section 14

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَسْأَلُوا عَنَ أَشْيَاءَ إِن تُبَدَ لَكُمْ تَسْؤُكُمْ ...

101. O ye who believe!

ask not questions about things which, if made plain to you, may cause you trouble.

... وَإِن تَسْأَلُوا عَنْهَا حِينَ يُنَزَّلُ الْقُرْآنُ تُبَدَ لَكُمْ ...

But if ye ask about things when the Qur'an is being revealed, they will be made plain to you:

C807. Many secrets are wisely hidden from us. If the future were known to us, we need not necessarily be happy.

In many cases we should be miserable. If the inner meaning of some of the things we see before our eyes were disclosed to us, it might cause a lot of mischief.

Allah's Message, in so far as it is necessary for shaping our conduct, is plain and open to us. But there are many things too deep for us to understand, either individually or collectively. It would be foolish to pry into them, as some people tried to do in the time of the Prophet.

Where a matter is mentioned in the Quran, we can reverently ask for its meaning. That is not forbidden. But we should never pass the bounds of

- our own capacity to understand,
- the time and occasion when we ask questions, and
- the part of the Universal Plan which it is Allah's purpose to reveal to us.

... عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهَا وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ (١٠١)

Allah will forgive those: for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

قَدْ سَأَلَهَا قَوْمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَصْبَحُوا بِهَا كَافِرِينَ (١٠٢)

102. Some people before you did ask such questions, and on that account lost their faith.

C808. For example, the merely fractious questions asked of Moses by the Jews: 2:68-71.

They showed that they had no faith. When foolish questions are asked, and there is no answer, it also shakes the faith of the foolish ones.

مَا جَعَلَ اللَّهُ ...

103. It was not Allah Who instituted (superstitions like those of)

C809. A number of Arab Pagan superstitions are referred to.

The Pagan mind, not understanding the hidden secrets of nature, attributed certain phenomena to divine anger and were assailed by superstitious fears which haunted their lives.

- If a she-camel or other female domestic animal had a large number of young, she (or one of her offspring) had her ear slit and she was dedicated to a god: such an animal was a **bahira**.
- On return in safety from a journey, or on recovery from an illness a she-camel was similarly dedicated and let loose for free pasture: she was called a **saiba**.
- Where an animal bore twins, certain sacrifices or dedications were made to idols: an animal so dedicated was a **wasila**.
- A stallion-camel dedicated to the gods by certain rites was a **ham**.

The particular examples lead to the general truth: that superstition is due to ignorance, and is degrading to men and dishonouring to Allah.

... مِنْ بَحِيرَةٍ وَلَا سَائِبَةٍ وَلَا وَصِيلَةٍ وَلَا حَامٍ...

- a slit-ear she-camel,
- or a she-camel let loose for free pasture,
- or idol sacrifices for twin-births in animals,
- or stallion-camels freed from work;

... وَلَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَفْتَرُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ ...

it is blasphemers who invent a lie against Allah,

... وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ (١٠٣)

but most of them lack wisdom.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ وَإِلَى الرَّسُولِ ...

104. When it is said to them: "Come to what Allah hath revealed; come to the Messenger":

... قَالُوا حَسْبُنَا مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا ...

they say: "Enough for us are the ways we found our fathers following."

C810. Cf. 2:170.

Where a Messenger of Truth comes to teach us the better way, it is foolish to say: "What our ancestors did is good enough for us."

... أُولُو كَانٍ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ (١٠٤)

What! even though their fathers were void of knowledge and guidance?

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ...

105. O ye who believe!

... عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَن ضَلَّ إِذَا اهْتَدَيْتُمْ ...

guard your own souls:

if ye follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray.

... إِلَى اللَّهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (١٠٥)

The goal of you all is to Allah:

it is He that will show you the truth of all that ye do.

C811. The unity of the one Judge will do perfect justice to each one's conduct, however different in form it may have appeared in this world.

يا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ...

106. O ye who believe!

... شَهَادَةٌ بَيْنَكُمْ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمْ الْمَوْتُ ...

when death approaches any of you, (take) witnesses among yourselves

... حِينَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنَانِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ أَوْ آخَرَانِ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ ...

when making bequests, two just men of your own (brotherhood) or others from outside

... إِنْ أَنْتُمْ ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةُ الْمَوْتِ ...

if ye are journeying through the earth, and the chance of death befalls you (thus).

... تَحْبِسُونَهُمَا مِنْ بَعْدِ الصَّلَاةِ فَيُقْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ ...

If ye doubt (their truth), detain them both after prayer, and let them both swear by Allah:

... إِنْ ارْتَبْتُمْ لَا نَشْتَرِي بِهِ نَمْنًا وَلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبَى ...

"We wish not in this for any worldly gain, even though the (beneficiary) be our near relation:

... وَلَا نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللَّهِ إِنَّا إِذَا لَمِنَ الْإِثْمِينَ (١٠٦)

we shall hide not the evidence before Allah: if we do, then behold! the sin be upon us!"

C812. Ordinarily this oath should be decisive, and the matter must rest here.

But if it gets known that the oath was false, other evidence may be taken as in the next verse.

فَإِنْ عُرِّرَ عَلَىٰ أَنَّهُمَا اسْتَحَقَّ إِثْمًا ...

107. But if it gets known that these two were guilty of the sin (of perjury).

C813. Istahaqqa: Deserved having something (good or evil) attributed to one; hence the alternative meanings:

- committed or was guilty (of a sin):
- had or claimed a lawful right (to property).

The procedure was followed in an actual case in the Prophet's life-time.

A man from Madinah died abroad, having made over his goods, to two friends, to be delivered to his designated heirs in Madinah. They, however, kept back a valuable silver cup. When this was found out, oaths were taken from those who knew, and justice was done.

... فَأَخْرَانَ يَوْمَانَ مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَوْلِيَانِ ...

Let two others stand forth in their places, nearest in kin from among those who claim a lawful right:

... فَيُؤْسِمَانِ بِاللَّهِ ...

let them swear by Allah:

... لَشَهَادَتُنَا أَحَقُّ مِنْ شَهَادَتَيْهِمَا وَمَا اعْتَدَيْنَا إِنَّا إِذَا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ (١٠٧)

"We affirm that our witness is truer than that of those two, and that we have not trespassed (beyond the truth): if we did, behold! the wrong be upon us!

ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يَأْتُوا بِالشَّهَادَةِ عَلَىٰ وَجْههَا ...

108. That is most suitable: that they may give the evidence in its true nature and shape,

... أَوْ يَخَافُوا أَنْ تُرَدَّ أَيْمَانٌ بَعْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ ...

or else they would fear that other oaths would be taken after their oaths.

... وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاسْمَعُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ (١٠٨)

But fear Allah, and listen (to His counsel):

for Allah guideth not a rebellious people.

C.75 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(6:109-120)

*Jesus did feed his disciples by miracles,
But he claimed not divinity; he was
A true servant of Allah, to Whom doth belong
The dominion of the heavens and the earth'
Glory and Power are His, and His alone.*

Section 15

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ الرُّسُلَ فَيَقُولُ مَاذَا أُجِبْتُمْ...

109. One day will Allah gather the Messengers together, and ask:

"What was the response ye received (from men to your teaching)?"

... قَالُوا لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ (١٠٩)

They will say:

"We have no knowledge: it is Thou who knowest in full all that is hidden."

C814. A scene of the Day of Reckoning is put before us in graphic words, showing the responsibility and the limitations of the Prophets of Allah, sent to preach His Message to men, with special reference to the Message of Jesus.

The Messengers are sent to preach the Truth. What fantastic forms the Message takes in men's reactions to it was beyond their knowledge, at the time, and beyond their responsibility. (R).

إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ادْكُرْ نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَتِكَ...

110. Then will Allah say:

"O Jesus the son of Mary! recount My favor to thee and to thy mother.

C815. In a solemn scene before the Court of Judgment, Jesus is asked to recount all the mercies and favours shown to him, so that his followers should become ashamed of their ingratitude in corrupting that Message, when they could have done so much in profiting by its purity and spiritual truth.

This argument continues to the end of the Surah.

... إِذْ أَيَّدْتَكَ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ...

Behold! I strengthened thee with the holy spirit,

C816. Cf. 2:87, and 3:62, n. 401.

... نَكَلَّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا ...

so that thou didst speak to the people in childhood and in maturity.

C817. Cf. 3:46, and n. 388.

... وَإِذْ عَلَّمْتُكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ...

Behold! I taught thee the Book and Wisdom, the Law and the Gospel.

C818. Cf. 3:48.

... وَإِذْ تَخْلُقُ مِنْ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ بِإِذْنِي ...

And behold! thou makest out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, by My leave,

C819. Cf. 3:49, and n. 390.

... فَتَنْفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِي ...

and thou breathest into it, and it becometh a bird by My leave,

C820. Note how the words "by My leave" are repeated with each miracle to emphasize the fact that they arose, not out of the power or will of Jesus, but by the leave and will and power of Allah, who is supreme over Jesus as He is over all other mortals.

... وَتُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَةَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ بِإِذْنِي ...

and thou healest those born blind, and the lepers by My leave.

... وَإِذْ تُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِي ...

And behold! thou bringest forth the dead by My leave.

... وَإِذْ كَفَفْتُ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ عَنْكَ ...

And behold! I did restrain the Children of Israel from (violence to) thee

C821. The Jews were seeking to take the life of Jesus long before their final attempt to crucify him: see Luke 4:28-29.

Their attempt to crucify him was also foiled, according to the teaching we have received: 4:157.

... إِذْ جِئْتَهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ ...

when thou didst show them the Clear Signs, and the unbelievers among them, said:

... إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ (١١٠)

'This is nothing but evident magic'.

C822. According to Luke (11:15) when Christ performed the miracle of casting out devils the Jews said he did it through the chief of the devils. i.e., they accused him of black magic.

No such miracle of casting out devils is mentioned in the Quran. But Moses, Jesus and Muhammad were all accused of magic and sorcery, by those who could find no other explanation of Allah's power. (R).

وَإِذْ أَوْحَيْتُ إِلَى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِي وَبِرَسُولِي...

111. "And behold! I inspired the Disciples to have faith in Me and My Messenger:

... قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَاشْهَدْ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ (١١١)

they said, "We have faith, and do thou bear witness that we bow to Allah as Muslims."

C823. "Thou" refers to Jesus, who is being addressed by his Disciples. Cf. 3:52.

C824. Before or after Muhammad's life on this earth, all who bowed to Allah's Will were Muslims, and their religion is Islam.

Cf. 3:52, and n. 392.

إِذْ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ ...

112. Behold! the disciples said:

... يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ هَلْ يَسْتَطِيعُ رَبُّكَ أَنْ يُنَزِّلَ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ ...

"O Jesus the son of Mary! can thy Lord send down to us a table set (with viands) from heaven?"

... قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ (١١٢)

Said Jesus: "Fear Allah, if ye have faith."

C825. The request of the Disciples savors a little of

1. want of faith,
2. too much attention to physical food, and
3. a childish desire for miracles or Signs.

All these three can be proved from the Canonical Gospels.

1. Simon Peter, quite early in the story, asked Jesus to depart from him, as he (Simon) was a sinful man (Luke 5:8).

The same Peter afterwards denied his Master three times shamelessly when the Master was in the power of his enemies. And one of the Disciples (Judas) actually betrayed Jesus.

2. Even in the Canonical Gospels, so many of the miracles are concerned with food and drink, e.g. the turning of the water into wine (John, 2:1-11); the conversion of five loaves and two small fishes into food for 5,000 men (John 6:5-13), this being the only miracle recorded in all the four Gospels;

the miraculous number of fishes caught for food (Luke 5:4-11);

the cursing of the fig tree because it had no fruit (Matt. 21:18-19);

the allegory of eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood (John 6:53-57).

3. Because the Samaritans would not receive Jesus into their village, the Disciples James and John wanted a fire to come down from heaven and consume them (Luke 9:54).

قَالُوا نُرِيدُ أَنْ نَأْكَلَ مِنْهَا وَنَطْمِئِنَّ قُلُوبُنَا...

113. They said: "We only wish to eat thereof and satisfy our hearts,

... وَنَعْلَمَ أَنْ قَدْ صَدَقْتَنَا وَتَكُونُ عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ (١١٣)

and to know that thou hast indeed told us the truth; and that we ourselves may be witnesses to the miracle."

قَالَ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ...

114. Said Jesus the son of Mary:

... اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّنَا أَنْزِلْ عَلَيْنَا مَائِدَةً مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ...

"O Allah our Lord! send us from heaven a table set (with viands), that there may be for us --

C826. The words of the Prayer seem to suggest the Last Supper.

Cf. also the vision of Peter in "The Acts of the Apostles." 10:9-16.

... تَكُونُ لَنَا عِيدًا لِأَوَّلِنَا وَآخِرِنَا وَآيَةً مِّنكَ ...

for the first and the last of us -- a solemn festival and a sign from Thee;

... وَارزُقْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ (١١٤)

and provide for our sustenance, for Thou art the best Sustainer (of our needs)."

C827. As in Islam, so in Christ's Prayer, sustenance should be taken for both physical and spiritual strength, especially the latter.

"Give us this day our daily bread" seems the rendering of a literalist whose attention was fixed too much on bread.

قَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مُنزِّلَهَا عَلَيْكُمْ ...

115. Allah said: "I will send it down unto you:

... فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بَعْدُ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنِّي أُعَذِّبُهُ عَذَابًا لَّا أُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَدًا مِّنْ

الْعَالَمِينَ (١١٥)

but if any of you after that resisteth faith, I will punish him with a penalty such as I have not inflicted on anyone among all the peoples."

C828. It is a wicked generation that asks for Signs and Miracles. Usually they are not vouchsafed. But where they are, the responsibility of those who ask for them is increased. If, after that, they reject faith, invent lies, and go after false gods or false ideals, their penalty will be worse than that of other people.

How this works out practically among those who call themselves Christians is exemplified in such books as the late Mr. W.T. Stead's "If Christ Came to Chicago?"

Section 16

وَإِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ ...

116. And behold! Allah will say "O Jesus the son of Mary!

... أَأَنْتَ قُلْتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُونِي وَأُمَّيَ إِلَهَيْنِ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ...

didst thou say unto men, 'worship me and my mother as gods in derogation of Allah?'"

... قَالَ سُبْحَانَكَ مَا يَكُونُ لِي أَنْ أَقُولَ مَا لَيْسَ لِي بِحَقٍّ...

He will say:

"Glory to Thee! never could I say what I had no right (to say).

... إِنْ كُنْتُ قُلْتُهُ فَقَدْ عَلِمْتَهُ ...

Had I said such a thing, Thou wouldst indeed have known it.

... تَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِي وَلَا أَعْلَمُ مَا فِي نَفْسِكَ ...

Thou knowest what is in my heart, though I know not what is in Thine.

... إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ (١١٦)

For Thou knowest in full all that is hidden.

C829. Jesus disclaims here any knowledge of the sort of things that are attributed to him by those who take his name.

The worship of Mary, though repudiated by the Protestants, was widely spread in the earlier churches, both in the East and the West.

مَا قُلْتُ لَهُمْ إِلَّا مَا أَمَرْتَنِي بِهِ أَنْ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ...

117. "Never said I to them aught except what Thou didst command me to say, to wit,

'Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord';

C830. Cf. [5:72](#) and [n. 782](#).

... وَكُنْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهِيدًا مَّا دُمْتُ فِيهِمْ...

and I was a witness over them whilst I dwelt amongst them;

... فَلَمَّا تَوَقَّيْتَنِي كُنْتَ أَنْتَ الرَّقِيبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ...

when Thou didst take me up, Thou wast the Watcher over them,

... وَأَنْتَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ (١١٧)

and Thou art a Witness to all things.

C831. Jesus here acknowledges that he was mortal, and that his knowledge was limited like that of a mortal.

إِنْ تُعَذِّبُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ عَبْدَاكَ...

118. "If Thou dost punish them, they are Thy servants:

... وَإِنْ تَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ فَإِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (١١٨)

if Thou dost forgive them, Thou art the Exalted, the Wise."

C832. A Master can justly punish His servants for disobedience: no one can say Him nay, for He is high

above all. But if He chooses to forgive. He in His wisdom sees things that we mortals cannot see.

This is the limit of intercession that men of God can make on behalf of sinners.

قَالَ اللَّهُ هَذَا يَوْمٌ يَنْفَعُ الصَّادِقِينَ صِدْقُهُمْ ...

119. Allah will say: "This is a day on which the truthful will profit from their truth:

... لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ...

theirs are Gardens, with rivers flowing beneath, their eternal home:

... رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ ...

Allah well-pleased with them, and they with Allah:

... ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ (١١٩)

that is the great Salvation, (the fulfillment of all desires)."

C833. Fauz: Felicity, happiness, achievement, salvation, the attainment or fulfilment of desires.

What a beautiful definition of salvation or the end of life! -that we should win Allah's good pleasure and that we should reach the stage at which His good pleasure is all-in-all to us.

لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا فِيهِنَّ ...

120. To Allah doth belong the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is therein,

... وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (١٢٠)

and it is He who hath power over all things.



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