



# THE LUMINOUS QUR'AN

الْقُرْآنُ  
الْبَقَرَةُ وَالْأَمْرَانِ

*A faithful rendition, annotated translation  
of the first three suras of the Message of God*

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







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البقرة وآل عمران

*A faithful rendition, annotated translation  
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**Waleed Bleyhesh al-Amri**  
Associate Professor of Translation Studies,  
Taibah University

# THE LUMINOUS QUR'AN

الْقُرْآنُ الْكَرِيمُ

تَرْجَمَهُ مَعَانِي سُورَةِ الْقَاتِحَةِ  
مَعَ سُورَتَيْ الْبَقَرَةِ وَالْإِسْرَاءِ  
إِلَى اللُّغَةِ الْإِنْطِيزِيَّةِ

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## Endowment for Cherishing the Two Glorious Revelations



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Arabic calligraphy by world-renowned Qur'an calligrapher, Uthman Taha.



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



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

(Imām Aḥmad: 452)





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

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



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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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

فإن القرآن الكريم كتاب الهداية لجميع البشر كآل سَمَاءَ ﴿ إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّذِي هُوَ أَوْفَى ﴾ «١».

أنزله الله تعالى على رسوله الكريم ﷺ ليخاطب الناس به كافة على مختلف أجناسهم واختلاف سنتهم وألوانهم .. يخاطب عقولهم ويوصل إلى قلوبهم ووجدانهم بأسلوب مبين ومعجز، فيبهر به تعالى تلكم العقول ويهدي به تلك القلوب إلى صراطه المستقيم، ويخرجها من الظلمات إلى النور، ويسطرها سبيل السلام وطرفه في الدنيا والآخرة كآل سَمَاءَ ﴿ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ ﴾ ﴿يَهْدِي بِوَاوِلِّهِ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ بِرُضْوَانِهِ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴾ ﴿١٠٧﴾. وإن هذا القرآن العظيم نزل بلسان عربي مبين، وهو معجز بلفظه ومعناه، نزل للمؤمنين جميعاً فيه دينهم وشرعهم الحكيم؛ وللناس كافة له وجه العموم لدعوتهم إلى هذا الدين العظيم دين الإسلام توحيداً لله وعبادة له والتزاماً بشرعه الخفيف لإتقانه من براثن الشرك والوثنية والعبودية لعنبر الله تعالى.

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

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

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

أ.د. عباد بن زهير حافظ  
أمين عام وقف تعظيم الوحيين





## Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

*May Allah make this worthy tome benefecial!*

**Prof. 'Imād Zuhayr Hāfid**

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





## *What is the Qur'an?*

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

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

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

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1 With the exception of sura 9, *at-Tawbah* (Repentance).

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

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

## *The merit of the Qur'an*

For Muslims the merit of the Qur'an is indisputable. In fact innumerable tomes have been penned by Muslim scholars throughout the ages, invariably calling their works as *Fadā'il al-Qur'ān* (Merits of the Qur'an)<sup>2</sup>. Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) speaks of the Qur'an thus:

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

There are a number of Hadiths that encourage Believers to read the Qur'an—reciting it is an act of worship for which the reciter gets generously rewarded. Here are some of the best-known of them:

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

<sup>2</sup> Of these, for instance, are those by: Ibn Kathīr, al-Qāsim Ibn Sallām, al-Ḍarīs al-Bajalī, al-Nasā'ī, al-‘Ajalī, Ḍiyā'uddīn al-Maqdisī.

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

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



## *Keys to understanding the Qur'an*

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

- **Key 14:** *Some would willingly look at the Qur'an through the narrow eyes of the 21st century secular values and eventually would take issue with certain Qur'anic dictates.* Knowing that these so-called values are lacking and, more often than not, detrimental to humans and disastrous to their planet at large, the fact of the matter is that such a Divinely revealed Book of guidance as the Qur'an should be the yardstick against which all these "values" should be judged. But then, *"Is one who walks with his face stooped down more guided, or one who walks upright upon a straight path?"* (67: 23)
- **Key 15:** *The Qur'an is only befittingly interpreted within context.* Each word is to be read within the aya, each aya within the thematic unit, each thematic unit within the sura in which it occurs if the deep meaning is to be got at. Needless to say, context is of central importance to understanding any given message and no word or string of words should be taken out of context, if it is to be understood properly.
- **Key 16:** *Although we were not among the immediate audience addressed by the Qur'an or players in its stories, we are indeed encouraged to take heed from them, and try to bring personal insights drawn from them to bear on our circumstances.* However, this obviously comes with the caveat of not doing so without realising for certain the proper meaning of what we choose to apply to our lives. Yet one, particularly those of receptive hearts, would usually feel if what is being recited is meant for them.
- **Key 17:** *Finally, the most important of the keys to approaching the Qur'an is that it is to be read contemplatively (c.f. 4:82, 38:29, 47:24) with an open heart and a receptive mind. It is a dignified text that remains aloof and will only yield its fruits to those who approach it with the best of intentions. But for those who come to it with their hearts smitten with doubt, it remains insurmountable and its terrains are rugged indeed. "Buts and ifs" will only work as hurdles preventing the reader from getting to the core of the Message.*

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

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

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

Another translator puts it so:

Briefly, the rhetoric and rhythm of the Arabic of the Koran are so characteristic, so powerful, so highly emotive, that any version whatsoever is bound in the nature of things to be but a poor copy of the glittering splendour of the original.... My chief reason for offering this new version of a book which has been "translated", many times already is that in no previous rendering has a serious attempt been made to imitate, however imperfectly, those rhetorical and rhythmical patterns which are the glory and the sublimity of the Koran. (Arberry: 24-45)



The material form of the Qur'an, its stylistic patterns and their semantically-oriented manifestations, are as critically important as its Message. The Andalusian scholar Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064; *al-Aḥkām*, 2: 88) has it that: "The opinion of the leading scholars is unanimous about the inimitability of the Qur'an. We know for sure that if the Qur'an is translated into another language, or even were its words to be replaced by other Arabic words, this translation would not be inimitable; what is not inimitable is not a Qur'an". Ibn Ḥazm's unequivocal statement derives from the fact that there are some eleven *āyas* expressly confirming the Arabic revelation of the Qur'an (12:2, 13:37, 16:103, 20:113, 26:195, 39:28, 41:3, 41:44, 42:7, 43:3, 46:12).

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

‘It is obvious that there is no discourse more eloquent, no wisdom more profound, no speech more sublime, no form of expression more noble, than ‘this’ clear discourse and speech with which a single man challenged a people at a time when they were acknowledged masters of the art of oratory and rhetoric, poetry and prose, rhyme and soothsaying. It reduced their fancy to folly and demonstrated the inadequacy of their logic... It let them know that the evidence of the truth of what he ‘Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ)’ said, the proof of the genuineness of his Prophethood, was the *bayān* (Discourse), the *ḥikmah* (Wisdom), the *furqān* (Distinguisher), which he conveyed to them in a language like their language, in a speech

whose meanings conformed to the meanings of their speech. Then he told them all that they were incapable of bringing anything comparable to 'even` a part of 'what he had brought`, and that they lacked the power to do this.

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

## *The exegetical problematic*

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

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

The Qur'an contains references to particular and general things (*khāṣṣ* and *'āmm*), particular references to Believers and particular references to Deniers, and general references to all people; it contains unequivocal and ambiguous passages



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

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

This is why more often than not translators resort to *tafsīrs* to understand and in turn render certain Qur'anic passages. However, this has proven to be used as a vehicle to juxtaposing and superimposing certain ideological leanings and exegetical views thus clouding further the message of the Qur'an and setting up added barriers between the reader of the translation and original Arabic Writ. Translators being no more than modern-day readers and, more often than not, adherents of any of the different schools of thought out there, hence a relationship of confluence holds between their translations and commentary. On the one hand, there is a great exegetical tradition built around this most sacred Book, which cannot be simply ignored if the end product of a translation is to be of any success. This tradition arose from either different interpretational stand points or from sincere intentions of making explicit and penetrable its language which is shrouded in the veil of time. However, the translator, while drawing on this wealth of scholarly subtexts that run along the prime text should not fall in the trap of getting himself captive to them nor allow his translation to get overloaded or the representation to be permeated by them to the extent that it would only be seen through their kaleidoscope. Such awareness, if existent in the first place, is seldom realized in the actual mentally demanding act of translating. *This long tradition of commentary is not to be ignored altogether but its flow in the final product of the translation has to be filtered through and checked if the original text is to be better represented and subservient translations are to be avoided.*

While carrying out their task two types of intervention are identifiable in the translators' work:

- *Translational intervention*: can take place both within the body of the text and outside it. Examples of translational intervention take shape in the form of: accounting for cultural and linguistic equivalence; compensating for loss; aiding reading; pronouncing pronoun referents; explaining translational choice (as in the case of diverting from certain inherited translation choices); answering for failings in translation.
- *Exegetical intervention*: may materialise in the following examples: further expounding the meanings of certain lexical items; providing the reasons for revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*); explaining

a *shar'ī* ruling; highlighting the relevance between ayas and suras; explaining the ambiguous (*tawdīh al-mubham*); spelling out the inclusive (*tafsīl al-mujmal*); precisely identifying the unrestricted (*taqyīd al-muṭlaq*); pinpointing the generalized (*takhsīs al-'ām*); and adding their own exegetical remarks.

One may yet divide intervention into two types:

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

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



## *Positioning the current translation*

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

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

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

One has got to stress that fact that Qur'an translation is an extremely dynamic interaction, where Faith is negotiated and identity is presented. Thus the history of Qur'an translation into English, as a case in hand, has been ever marked by waves of deviation: first came ferocious Orientalism, and then came sectarianism, after that came the turn of rationalism and apologia, and finally interventionist translations on socio-political grounds held sway. It would be hard

to find a translation which does not carry one or two or even more traces of these global Qur'an translation trends. What is more is that, no matter what the circumstances and the dictates of time might be these trends still carry on to this very day. However, this does not at all imply that Qur'an translations should not respond to their context and the changing world around them.

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

The methodology of the current translation can be summed up as follows:

- It represents a safe, mainstream yet non-restrictive understanding of the Message of the Grand Qur'an. The great wealth of Qur'anic commentary that we have inherited through millennia of scholarship, hard study and contemplation is considered with empathy and careful attention. This weighty inheritance is a boon to be consulted with great respect not a bane bearing the trappings of times of old, which some would consider as unbecoming of modern-day thought patterns. As you read through the translation, you will surely come to realize this and, hopefully, appreciate the work of these great scholars of Islam.
- Each sura is preceded by a brief introduction. This scene-setter is indispensable for anyone who wants to unlock some of the meaning

potential of the sura. The rationale behind the name of the sura, its major themes and keys of understanding it are provided. These are meant to be occasionally referred to as one progresses in the reading of the sura if and when the need arises. They will hopefully assist you to calibrate your reading.

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



- Bringing out the connectivity and thematic unity of the suras and ayas. I strove to achieve this through: giving the overall theme and key of the sura, thematically grouping ayas in related units, unobtrusive aya numbering, and judiciously using punctuation to highlight the intended meaning and indicate the connection between the ayas. All these are hopefully meant to make the reader appreciate the cohesion and coherence of the Message.
- Given that the language of the translation must try to reflect some of the grandiosity of the language of the Qur'an, the translation is in modern-day, non-banal, idiomatic, educated English. It further minimally employs some of well known stylistic features found in many a well-respected Qur'an translation which some would consider being archaic. The overall language is easy to understand to a reader of an appropriate educational background.
- An attempt at Islamizing English: usage of semantically non-charged, transparent English lexical items for some Islamic terminology: Sign (aya); Prayer (*ṣalāh*), and Pilgrimage (Hajj), Belief (*imān*), Denial (*kufr*) with caps to draw attention to their usage beyond that of the everyday. Doing without the italics and diacritics for some common terms for which there are no English equivalents: sura and aya. Use of the Westernized names for Allah (ﷻ) as God and those of the Prophets (ﷺ), only in my prefatory notes.

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

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

## Bibliography

In order to understand and “interpret” the Word of God I could not but stand on the shoulders of giants and draw on a wealth of scholarship—an enduring legacy bequeathed to us by the great scholars of Islam. Of these I frequently consulted the following:

### *Tafsīrs*

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

### *Hadīth Compendia*

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

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

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



**Other References**

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

سُورَةُ الْفَاتِحَةِ

*al-Fātiḥah*  
(The Opening)



## *al-Fātiḥah* (The Opening)

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

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



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

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

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

﴿1﴾ In the Name of Allah<sup>1</sup>, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful<sup>2</sup>. ﴿2﴾ Gratitude be to Allah the Lord<sup>3</sup> of all beings<sup>4</sup>; ﴿3﴾ The Most Beneficent,

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ  
الرَّحِيمِ

- 1 **Allah** (الله) is God's most unique Name, grandly referred to as *Lafẓ al-Jalālah* (The Word of Majesty). It occurs in the Qur'an 2697 times in 85 of its 114 suras. *Allah* is considered the Almighty's Supreme Name (*al-Ism al-A'zam*) by Abū Ḥanīfah (quoted in al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Āthār*, 1: 1616). According to the vast majority of scholars *Allah* is linguistically unique in that it is originally a proper and underived noun (c.f. al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awtār*: 1:18). None other than the Almighty is named by it: "Do you know any other of a Name like His?" (19: 65). In Abrahamic religions, i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the concept of God basically has the same referent. He is unlimited with regards to knowledge (omniscience), power (omnipotence), existence (omnipresence) and benevolence. However there are points of departure regarding how each religion perceives God. The most outstanding of which is that Islam Believes in a One and Only God without the slightest form of Association (c.f. 3: 64)—"Say: He is God, Unique. \*God is the Oft-Beseeded. \*He begot none, nor was He begotten. \*None is equal to Him" (sura *al-Ikhlās*). Additionally, God in Islam has unique Names and Attributes and in accordance with Muslim belief (*ʿaqīdah*) the Muslim conception of God is not anthropomorphic in the slightest form: "Nothing is like Him; he is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing" (42: 11).
- 2 The "Most Beneficent" and the "Most Merciful" here stand for the Arabic *ar-Raḥmān* and *ar-Raḥīm*, respectively. They are both intensive forms derived from the noun *raḥmah*, mercy. They both denote the trait of mercy, however, semantically they are different; *ar-Raḥmān* is more intensive than *ar-Raḥīm* (c.f. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, root: *r ḥ m*). According to exegetes *ar-Raḥmān*'s Mercy encompasses all creatures, whereas *ar-Raḥīm*'s is reserved only for the Believers (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, al-Shinqīṭī, al-Saʿdī). The extent of God's Mercy is highlighted in the following tradition: Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "God has one hundred mercies. He sent down one of them on humans, jinn, animals and venomous creatures. Through it they show mercy to each other, and through it wild beasts show mercy to their young. God has reserved ninety-nine mercies with which He bestows mercy on his servants on the Day of Judgment." (al-Bukhārī: 6000; Muslim: 2752)
- 3 The Arabic *rabb* translated here as "Lord" is semantically and lexically related to *tarbiyah*, which means to nurture, but with much care and attention (c.f. Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 2: 381). When used in its absolute form with the definite article, *al-Rabb*, it could only mean God Almighty, Who is in charge of taking care and providing for all beings.
- 4 "All beings" stands here for *al-ʿālamīn*, usually translated as "worlds". It means the Heavens the Earth and all that is there within them and all that is there between them (c.f. 26: 23-24).

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

مَلِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾ اِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِيَّاكَ  
نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾ اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾  
صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ  
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾



- 5 “The Day of Judgment”, a translation of *yawm ad-dīn* in this aya, is a recurrent theme in the Qur’an, however its nomenclature differs according to the effect intended. It is, *Yawm ad-Dīn* (the Day of Judgment), *Yawm al-Ḥisāb* (the Day of Reckoning), *Yawm al-Qiyāmah* (the Day of Resurrection), *al-Wāqī’ah* (the Befalling), *aṭ-Ṭammah* (the Dumfounding), *aṣ-Ṣākhkhah* (the Deafening), *ar-Rājifah* (the Quaking), *al-Faza’ al-Akbar* (the Great Fright), *al-Ḥāqqah* (the Real). These many names for one and the same thing, some of which are heart-rending indeed, signify its magnitude and drive home the message: “*Beware of a Day on which you will be returned to God*” (2: 281).
- 6 *Al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm* is the road (an Arabicized word after the Latin word *strāta*, i.e. road) which is straight, clear and has no turns or curves (al-Ṭabarī). It is used figuratively in the Qur’an to denote the correct manner in which God is to be worshipped which leads to His Pleasure, and being spared torment in the Hereafter (c.f. 6:153).
- 7 Those who know the truth and follow it: “*Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger is among the ones on whom Allah has bestowed His Grace—of the Prophets, the affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the pious—indeed the companion of these is well off.*” (4: 69).
- 8 Those who know the truth and do not follow it. (al-Ṭabarī)
- 9 Those who are ignorant of the truth and worship God following only their whims and wishful thinking. (al-Ṭabarī)

سُورَةُ الْبَقَرَةِ

*al-Baqarah*  
(The Cow)





## al-Baqarah (The Cow)

**Title:** it is named after the incident of the cow as related in the ayas 67-74, which highlight the lukewarm response of the Children of Israel to God’s commandments as He wanted to test their faith.

**Merit:** the longest sura in the Grand Qur’an totalling 286 ayas, *al-Baqarah* has a number of merits. Firstly, it is a blessing for the Muslim household Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Do not turn your homes into graveyards, the devil shuns the home in which sura *al-Baqarah* is recited” (Muslim:1860); Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Read sura *al-Baqarah* as owning it is a blessing and abandoning it is a loss, and the sorcerers cannot bear it.” (Muslim: 1910). Secondly, and very importantly, it, along with *Āl ‘Imrān* – together known as “al-Zahrāwān” (lit. The Two Luminous Suras) – will come to intercede on behalf of a person who takes them as his own on the Day of Judgment. Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Read the Qur’an for it comes on the Day of Judgment to intercede on behalf of those who associate themselves with it. Read al-Zahrāwān, *al-Baqarah* and *Āl ‘Imrān*, as they come on the Day of Judgment as if they were two clouds, or shades or two flocks of birds, keeping closely together arguing on behalf of he who owns them.” (Muslim: 1910). *Al-Baqarah* also contains some of the most meritorious ayas—the greatest aya in the Qur’an, the aya of al-Kursī (no. 255) and the last two ayas of the sura. ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Āmir (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever recites the last two ayas of *al-Baqarah*, they will suffice him ‘as a shield from evil’.” (al-Bukhārī: 5008). The longest aya in the Qur’an, aya ad-Dain (no. 282), also occurs in *al-Baqarah*.

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

**Key:** in order to unlock the meaning for this sura one is to take it as a detailed answer from Allah to the Believers’ prayer to guide them to the straight path, found at the end of *al-Fātiḥah*—here Allah tells Believers how to find this straight path and true, unshakable Belief. The first five ayas capture the essence of the message: that true guidance is to be found in the Qur’an and that true Believers are those who submit themselves unquestioningly

to Allah's Will and have unshakable faith in all that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came with. The many stories and incidents of disobedience and rebelling against Allah's commands told here are given to highlight what lack of Belief and submission is like. Also, it is a very early Madinan sura, which explains the many references given to the Children of Israel, who then resided in Madinah in multitudes, and their gentle call to the straight path of Allah, the admonishing of the hypocrites lurking within the newly-formed community, and the introduction of new laws like that of fasting the month of Ramadan, how to perform Hajj and familial matters. Many new laws for the Muslims and their community at large are introduced, in a very considerate manner, in this sura: Believers are to obey these with total submission.

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

الْقُرْآنِ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ  
الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ

- 1 Twenty nine suras in the Qur’an begin with these disjointed letters of the Arabic alphabet (known as *al-hurūf al-muqatta‘ah*). Exegetes, over time, have speculated on their meaning, however, two opinions prevail. Firstly, that they indicate the inimitable nature of the Qur’an, as it is made up of letters from the Arabic alphabet, yet the Arabs of the time of revelation, who were masters of the Arabic tongue and in no other time and place have any others been able to rival them in this respect, were totally unable to challenge it by coming up with anything like it. This is despite the fact that they were bent on it as the socio-religious overhaul that it heralded threatened their own very way of existence, and the challenge that the Qur’an itself mounted to them to author something like it in more than one place (c.f. 10: 38, 11: 13, 17: 88). This bears testimony to the inimitable, Divine source of the Qur’an (c.f. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Secondly, is the opinion that a significant number the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), including the rightly-guided Caliphs, the Followers and their followers refrained from interpreting them, and since nothing has been reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) as to their meaning, we should also follow suit and say: “God knows best”.
- 2 The fact that the demonstrative pronoun *dhālika* (that) rather than *hādihā* (this) is employed in this aya to refer to the Book, the Qur’an, underlines its loftiness and most high status. (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn, 1:28)
- 3 This aya contains a pause of *al-mu‘ānaqah* (congruence) and thus has two alternative readings. In the Uthmanic codex this type of pause is symbolized by a pair of triangular shaped dots. If one is to pause at the first position one is not to pause at the second and vice versa. In no case is one to stop at both as the meaning will be seriously altered. In this position, if we pause at the first indication, the aya could be read as: “*This Book in which there is no doubt, containing guidance to the Mindful*”, in which emphasis is laid on the infallible Divine origin of the Qur’an thus no one is to doubt it (c.f. 41:42). Stopping at the second indication gives rise to the reading represented in the translation above, which emphasizes that the Qur’an is a book of guidance (c.f. 17: 9).
- 4 *At-Taqwā*, translated here and throughout this rendition as Mindfulness, is a central Qur’anic concept. It means being aware of God and watchful of Him in all our deeds and intentions—acts of the heart. This constant vigilance nurtures within a deep sense of sincerity and relatedness to God, thus eschewing worldly temptations and distractions which would sway one from his/her real goal in life and purpose of existence: to worship God alone. Etymologically it is derived from the verb *ittaqa* of a hazard, i.e. to put a form of protection between oneself and what could inflict harm on it. The overall meaning is to be vigilant and aware of God at all times in order that a person might avoid His Punishment. (For more see: Abdul-Ḥayy al-Faramāwī, *al-Mawsū‘ah al-Qur’āniyyah al-Mutakhaṣṣiṣah*, entry “*taqwā*”, pp. 734-737).



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

<sup>6</sup> Indeed the Deniers<sup>9</sup>, whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not Believe<sup>10</sup>. <sup>7</sup> Allah has

يُفْقُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ  
مِن قَبْلِكَ وَيَأْتُونَكَ بِمُؤْتَفُونَ ﴿٤﴾ أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى  
مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَأَنْذَرْتَهُمْ  
أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾ خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ

- 5 "The Unseen" is *al-ghayb*, i.e. what lies beyond the realm of perception and is only known through revelation, thus people, particularly the materialistically oriented, find it hard to Believe in. This includes, *inter alia*, the angels, life after death, Hellfire and Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 6 "Keeping up the Prayer", *iqāmat aṣ-ṣalāh*, is performing it punctually and devoutly, observing the manner set forth by the Prophet (ﷺ), who said: "Pray as you have seen me Pray." (al-Bukhārī: 631)
- 7 That is to Believe in what Muhammad (ﷺ) came with from God and what the Messengers came with before him without differentiation among them or Denial of what they came with.
- 8 "The successful", *al-muflīhūn*, are those who succeed in attaining what they wish for, to viz. to be guided by God, and avoiding the evil of what they fear. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 9 The noun *kufr* is derived from the root verb "*kafara*", i.e. "to cover" (Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-'Arab*), by extension it entails "covering up the truth" (al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*) which is an integral part of the purport of the Qur'anic term. *al-Ladhīna kafarū*, literally, those who Deny is usually translated as disbelievers or unbelievers, however "disbelieving" in essence is denial of what the Prophet (ﷺ) came with or part of it (c.f. al-Sa'dī). Thus the choice of the term throughout this translation. Deniers, who are staunchly heedless and shamelessly cover the truth, are widely set apart from the Believers who willingly and devoutly open up to it and embrace it; they come at the other end of the divide.
- 10 Those who Denied the truth with which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came, out of arrogance and transgression, will never Believe because of their stubbornness and intransigence. But if they mend their ways and reach deep into their hearts, they could possibly open up to Beleaf (c.f. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 16: 584-589, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā' al-'Alīl*, 91).

sealed their hearts and their hearing, and over their eyes there is a veil—theirs is a grievous Punishment<sup>11</sup>.

﴿8﴾ Some people say: “We Believe in Allah and in the Last Day”, while, in fact, they do not Believe<sup>12</sup>.

﴿9﴾ They seek to deceive Allah<sup>13</sup> and the Believers—they only deceive themselves, not realizing it<sup>14</sup>. ﴿10﴾ In their hearts there is disease and thus ‘because of it’ Allah has increased their disease<sup>15</sup>. Theirs is a painful Punishment for their ‘persistent’ lying. ﴿11﴾ When it is said to them: “Do not sow corruption in the land”, they say: “We are only but reformers”. ﴿12﴾ Nay! They are the corruptors but they do not realize it! ﴿13﴾ When it is said to them: “Believe as the ‘other’ people Believed”, they say: “Should we Believe as the feeble-minded<sup>16</sup>

قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِمْ ۗ وَعَلَىٰ أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشْوَةٌ ۖ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧﴾

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَيَأْتُونَهُ  
الْآخِرَ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨﴾ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ  
وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَمَا يُخَادِعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ  
وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ  
اللَّهُ مَرَضًا ۗ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۖ بِمَا كَانُوا  
يَكْذِبُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي  
الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ ﴿١١﴾ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ  
هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُونَ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٢﴾  
وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا كَمَا ءَامَنَ النَّاسُ  
قَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ كَمَا ءَامَنَ السُّفَهَاءُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ هُمُ  
السُّفَهَاءُ وَلَٰكِن لَّا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

11 ‘*Adhāb*, translated here as “Punishment”, means that they are condemned to painful suffering in Hellfire (c.f. al-Baghawī, al-Sa‘dī).

12 These are the hypocrites or *al-munāfiqūn* (63: 1), whose hidden truth, Denial, is in contrast to what they show to people, i.e. Belief. The fact of their matter is told here quite lucidly (ayas 8-20), exposing their pretence so that people would make no mistake about them. They are a third party in-between Believers (spoken of in ayas 1-5) and Deniers (spoken of in ayas 6-7) (c.f. Ibn Kathīr).

13 C.f. 58: 18.

14 C.f. 4: 142.

15 C.f. 9:125. They were stricken with cancerous doubt. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī)

16 *Al-Sufahā*, translated here are “the feeble-minded”, is an adjective for the noun *safah* (feeble-mindedness). *Safah* on a person’s side is his inability to distinguish between what is good and what is not for oneself. Thus a person of this nature, unwittingly, inflicts harm on himself. The hypocrites are saying that the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) were not able of discerning what is good for them and consequently they Believed. Little did they know that they are the feeble-minded (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

Believed?” Indeed they are the feeble-minded but they know not. <sup>14</sup> When they meet those who Believe, they say: “We Believe!”, but when they are alone with their devils<sup>17</sup>, they say: “Surely we are with you. We are but mocking”. <sup>15</sup> Allah mocks<sup>18</sup> them and slackens the reins for them to wander aimlessly in their blindness<sup>19</sup>. <sup>16</sup> These are the ones who traded in guidance for loss. Their trade did not flourish nor were they guided. <sup>17</sup> Their similitude is that of one who kindles a fire; as soon as it casts light on what is around him, Allah takes away their light leaving them in ‘utter’ darkness<sup>20</sup>, unable to see<sup>21</sup>; <sup>18</sup> deaf, dumb, and blind, they will not find their way back<sup>22</sup>. <sup>19</sup> Or like a downpour from the sky, in which there is darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears from thunderclaps<sup>23</sup>, fearing death—

وَإِذَا لَقُوا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا  
إِلَىٰ شَيْطَانِهِمْ قَالُوا إِنَّا مَعَكُمْ إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ  
مُسْتَهْزَءُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ اللَّهُ يَسْتَهْزِئُ بِهِمْ وَيَمُدُّهُمْ فِي  
طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا  
الضَّلَالََةَ بِالْهُدَىٰ فَمَا رَبِحَت تِّجَارَتُهُمْ وَمَا  
كَانُوا مُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ مَثَلُهُمْ كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي  
أَسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ ذَهَبَ  
اللَّهُ بِنُورِهِمْ وَتَرَكَهُمْ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾  
صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمْىٌ فَهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوْ كَصَيْبٍ  
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ فِيهِ ظُلُمَاتٌ وَرَعْدٌ وَنُقُرٌّ يُجْعَلُونَ  
أَصْلِحَ لَهُمْ فِيءَ إِذَا نُهُم مِّنَ الصَّوْعِقِ حَذَرَ  
الْمَوْتِ وَاللَّهُ فُحِيطٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

17 Their leaders in this evil. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

18 God mocks them by making their squalid condition look good to them. On the Day of Judgment, God will give them light just like that of the Believers, then when they walk in it, God will snatch it away from them leaving them desolate in complete darkness. Great is their despair after hope! C.f. 57:14. (al-Sa’adī)

19 *Ṭughyān*, lit. transgression and exceeding the limits. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 41; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, 321)

20 *Zulimāt*, is an intensive plural form of *zalmā’* or *zulmah*, i.e. darkness. These are the darkness of doubt and that of Denial (c.f. Ibn Kathīr).

21 The illuminating fire here denotes Belief, which dissipates darkness; their nominal Belief did them as much a transitory source of light does in utter darkness. (Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

22 C.f. 22: 46 and 63:3.

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



Allah is surrounding<sup>24</sup> the Deniers. <sup>(20)</sup> The lightning<sup>25</sup> almost snatches away their sight; whenever it flashes they walk in its light and when the light goes, they stand still<sup>26</sup>. If Allah so willed, He could have taken away their hearing and their sight—Allah is Able over everything.

<sup>(21)</sup> O People! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you so that you might be Mindful<sup>27</sup>. <sup>(22)</sup> He who made the land a carpet<sup>28</sup> and the sky a roof<sup>29</sup> for you, and sent water down from the sky and grew with it 'all sorts of ' produce as provisions for you. Therefore, knowing this, do not set up 'rivalling' equals for Him<sup>30</sup>. <sup>(23)</sup> And if you are in doubt about what We have sent down to Our servant<sup>31</sup>, come up with a single

يَكَادُ الْبَرْقُ يَخْطِفُ أَبْصَرَهُمْ كَمَا أَضَاءَ لَهُمْ  
مَشَوْا فِيهِ وَإِذَا أَظْلَمَ عَلَيْهِمْ قَامُوا وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ  
لَذَهَبَ بِسَمْعِهِمْ وَأَبْصَرِهِمْ إِنَّا لِلَّهِ عَلَى كُلِّ  
شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ  
وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ  
الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ  
مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ فَلَا  
تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّا نَزَّلْنَا عَلَىٰ عَبْدِنَا فَأْتُوا بِسُورَةٍ مِثْلِهِ  
مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾

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

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

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

27 Being heedful of your Creator and Provider.

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

29 C.f. 21: 32.

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

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



sura<sup>32</sup> like it, and call ‘for your aid’ your witnesses<sup>33</sup> apart from Allah, if only you were truthful. <sup>﴿24﴾</sup> But if you will not do it – and you will never ‘ever’ do it – be Mindful of the Fire, the fuel of which is people and stones<sup>34</sup>, that has been prepared for the Deniers. <sup>﴿25﴾</sup> Give glad tidings to those who Believe and do good deeds that theirs are Gardens<sup>35</sup> under which rivers flow; whenever they are provided with a fruit from it, they would say: “This is what we have been provided with before!<sup>36</sup>” They have been provided with it resembling each other<sup>37</sup>. For them in it are purified<sup>38</sup> spouses—they will abide therein forever.

<sup>﴿26﴾</sup> Allah does not shy away from giving a gnat<sup>39</sup> as an example or even less than it<sup>40</sup>. Those who

فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا وَلَنْ تَفْعَلُوا فَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ  
الَّتِي وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ أُعِدَّتْ  
لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا  
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي  
مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا  
مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا  
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأَنْتُمْ بِهَا مُتَسَبِّهَاتٌ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا  
أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

\*إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي ۚ أَنْ يَضْرِبَ مَثَلًا مَّا  
بُعُوضَةٌ فَمَا فَوْقَهَا فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا فَيَعْلَمُونَ

- 32 Sura is a Qur’anic chapter. There are 114 suras in the Qur’an.
- 33 Your aides and partners who would readily interpose for you. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 34 C.f. 21: 98.
- 35 *Al-Jannah* or Paradise the plural of which is *jannāt* as in this aya.
- 36 There is an element of a renewed pleasant surprise involved here.
- 37 The fruits of Paradise look like each other or that of this worldly life, but their taste is different. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Qurṭubī)
- 38 Pure and clean both bodily and spiritually. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa’dī)
- 39 Such an insignificant creature can be used to present to people evidence of the truthfulness of the Message. Besides the Qur’an and its Signs (ayas) no matter how small or belittled the evidence is, it still is enough proof for those who seek the truth with open hearts.
- 40 The expression used here is: *fa mā fawqahā*, which literally means: “or what is above it”, i.e. either smaller or larger in size. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

Believe will know that it is the truth from their Lord, but those who Deny will say: “What need does Allah have for this example!” He ‘Allah’ misguides with it ‘this example’ a great number of people and guides with it a great number of people<sup>41</sup>. But He only misguides the Transgressors<sup>42</sup>; <sup>﴿27﴾</sup> those who break the covenant of Allah<sup>43</sup> after it has been set as binding, sever what Allah ordained to be joined, and sow corruption in the land. These are, indeed, the Losers. <sup>﴿28﴾</sup> How could you Deny Allah, while you were dead and He made you alive; He then will take your lives, then bring you to life again, and after that you will be returned to Him again?<sup>44</sup> <sup>﴿29﴾</sup> He is the one Who created for you all that there is in Earth, then made for<sup>45</sup> the sky and formed it into seven skies. He has knowledge of everything<sup>46</sup>.

أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
فَيَقُولُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا يُضِلُّ  
بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَيَهْدِي بِهِ كَثِيرًا وَمَا يُضِلُّ  
بِهِ إِلَّا الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾ الَّذِينَ يَنْقُضُونَ عَهْدَ  
اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مِيثَاقِهِ وَيَقْطَعُونَ مَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ  
بِهِ أَنْ يُوصَلَ وَيُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أُولَئِكَ  
هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ كَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِاللَّهِ  
وَكُنْتُمْ أَمْوَاتًا فَأَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمَيِّتُكُمْ ثُمَّ  
يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ هُوَ  
الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا  
ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ  
سَمَاوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

41 C.f. 9: 124-125.

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

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

44 These are the cycles of life and death that humans go through: seeds in the loins of men, creation and birth, death, bringing back to life at resurrection and being held accountable for one’s deeds. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

45 This translation of the Divine Attribute *Istawā* follows after: al-Wāhidi in *al-Wajīz*, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī and Ibn ‘Uthaymīn. Alternatively it could mean that Almighty God rose to the sky in a manner befitting Him only, which in al-Baghawī’s opinion is the interpretation of Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) and most of the exegetes of his generation.

46 This aya is further expounded in the ayas 41: 9-12.

﴿30﴾ 'Mention Muhammad'<sup>47</sup> When your Lord said to the angels: "I shall instate a successor<sup>48</sup> on Earth!" They said: "Will you instate in it one who sows corruption and sheds blood, whereas we 'incessantly' glorify You in gratitude to You and exalt You?"<sup>49</sup> He said: "I know that which you do not". ﴿31﴾ He taught Adam all the names 'of things', then showed them to the angels and said: "Tell Me the names of these, if only you were truthful!" ﴿32﴾ They said: "Glorified may You be! We have no knowledge but what You have taught us. You are All-Knowing, All-Wise". ﴿33﴾ He said: "Adam! Tell them their names". When he told them their names, He said: "Did I not instruct you that I know what is hidden in the Heavens and the Earth?—and I know what you hide and what you make public"<sup>50</sup>.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّىْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةًۭ قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِیْهَا مَنْ یُّفْسِدُ فِیْهَا وَیَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَۗ قَالَ اِنِّىْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾  
 وَعَلَّمَآدَمَ الْاَسْمَآءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلٰى الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ فَقَالَ اٰتُوْنِىْ بِاَسْمَآءِ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ قَالُوْۤا سُبْحٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَاۤ اِلَّاۤ مَا عَلَّمْتَنَاۤ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿۳۲﴾  
 قَالَ يٰۤاٰدَمُ اَنْۢبِئْهُمْ بِاَسْمَآئِهِمْۙ فَلَمَّآ اَنْۢبَاَهُمْ بِاَسْمَآئِهِمْۙ قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ لَّكُمْ اِنِّىْۤ اَعْلَمُ غَیْبَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَاَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُوْنَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُوْنَ ﴿۳۳﴾

47 Abū al-Baqā' al-Kafawī (*al-Kullīyyāt*, p. 69) says: "Whenever 'the particle' *idh* is mentioned in the Qur'an it implies 'the command' 'mention!' That is mention 'Muhammad' to them 'the ones to whom the Qur'an is being recited' or recall in your mind... most exegetes agree to this."

48 *Khalīfah* is derived from *khalafa* which denotes standing in place of someone else (Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*. 2: 210; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, p. 294). Here it means someone who comes after another and takes his place; these are mankind, Adam and his prosperity, who successively take over each other's place, generation after generation, until the Day of Judgment. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī)

49 Abū Dharr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) was asked: "What is the best utterance?" He replied: "Whatever Allah chose for His angels and servants: "*Subhān Allāh wa bi-ḥamdih* (Glorified be Allah and 'we do this' in gratitude to Him)." (Muslim: 2731)

50 This quiz was posed to the angels, the closest of God's creation to Him, to prove to them with a practical example the truth of God's All-Encompassing Knowledge, and, in turn, the wisdom of His Choice. It is also a concrete manifestation of the infinite Justice of God, the Most Able of Sovereigns, who allows for questioning by even the most obedient of subjects, the angels, and answers their concerns.



﴿34﴾ ‘Mention Muhammad’ When We said to the angels: “Bow down to Adam!”<sup>51</sup>; they bowed down except Iblīs<sup>52</sup>; he refused, became arrogant<sup>53</sup> and was one of the Deniers. ﴿35﴾ We said: “Adam! Dwell yourself and your wife in the Garden<sup>54</sup> and eat thereof ‘bountifully’ aplenty whatever you wish, but do not come near this tree, or ‘else’ you will be from among the wrongful”. ﴿36﴾ Satan tripped them into it<sup>55</sup> and drove them out from where they were<sup>56</sup>; We said: “Go down, as enemies to each other. In Earth will be your dwelling and livelihood for a given time<sup>57</sup>”. ﴿37﴾ Adam received a few words<sup>58</sup> from His Lord, and He forgave him; He is the All-Forgiving the Most Merciful. ﴿38﴾ We said<sup>59</sup>: “Go down all of you<sup>60</sup>,

وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا  
 إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَقُلْنَا  
 بَقَاءُكُمْ اسْكُنْ أَنْتَ وَزَوْجُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَكَلَّا  
 مِنْهَا رِعْدًا حَيْثُ شِئْتُمَا وَلَا تَقْرَبَا هَذِهِ  
 الشَّجَرَةَ فَتَكُونَا مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَأَزَلَّهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ  
 عَنْهَا فَأَخْرَجَهُمَا مِمَّا كَانَا فِيهِ وَقُلْنَا اهْبِطُوا  
 بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُسْتَقَرٌّ  
 وَمَتَعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَتَلَقَىٰ آدَمَ مِنْ رَبِّهِ كَلِمَاتٍ  
 فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾ قُلْنَا  
 اهْبِطُوا مِنْهَا جَمِيعًا فِيمَا يَأْتِيكُمْ مِنْهُ هُدًى  
 فَمَنْ تَبِعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ  
 يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

- 51 The command of the angels to bow down to Adam is an act of worship to God and reverence to Adam who was honoured by God Himself. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)
- 52 Iblīs is Satan. Etymologically *iblis* comes from *iblas*, i.e. having no hope in good things, grief and sadness caused by utter despair. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, p. 23; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, p. 143)
- 53 His arrogance is spelled out elsewhere in the Qur‘an; 7: 12, 38: 76, 15: 33.
- 54 This Garden is Paradise the very Heavenly abode of eternal bliss. (al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 4: 347, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 55 How he managed to do this is told in more details in 7: 20-22.
- 56 The great blessing of dwelling in Paradise.
- 57 Until the Day of Judgment. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 58 These *kalimāt* or “words”, or supplication, are provided in 7: 23: “They ‘both’ said: “Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers.”
- 59 What follows is the original covenant: to follow the path of guidance shown to them by God’s Messengers. Those who Believe in the Message will lead a life of felicity but those who Deny will meet Hellfire as their final destination.
- 60 The addressees were Adam, Eve and Satan. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr)



whenever guidance comes to you from Me whoever follows it will have neither fear nor will they grieve. <sup>439</sup> As for those who Deny and disbelieve in our Signs these are the company of the Fire; forever they will abide therein<sup>61</sup>.

<sup>440</sup> Children of Israel<sup>62</sup>! Remember My favour which I conferred on you, and fulfil 'your obligations to' My pledge and I will honour 'My obligations to' your pledge<sup>63</sup>; and fear none but Me. <sup>441</sup> Believe in what I have sent down confirming what you have<sup>64</sup>, do not be the first to Deny it, do not trade my Signs<sup>65</sup> for a pittance<sup>66</sup> and be Mindful of Me, <sup>442</sup> do not mix up truth with falsehood, and do not suppress the truth while you are aware of it, <sup>443</sup> keep up the Prayer, give out

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ  
النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

يَسْبِقِ إِسْرَائِيلَ أَذْكَرُوا نِعْمَتِي الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ  
وَأَوْفُوا بِعَهْدِي أُوفِ بِعَهْدِكُمْ وَإِنَّي فَأَرْهَبُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾  
وَأَمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتُ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَكُمْ وَلَا تَكُونُوا  
أُولَٰئِكَ فَاسِقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَا تَشْرَوْا بِآيَاتِي ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا  
وَإِنَّي فَاتَّقُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ  
وَتَكْتُمُوا الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا  
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَارْكَعُوا مَعَ  
الرَّكَعِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

- 61 The episode of Adam's creation and his encounter with Satan are spelled out in detail in 20:116-123.
- 62 Israel is Prophet Jacob (ﷺ). The use of the epithet "Children of Israel" for the Israelites is meant to act as a reminder to them to follow in the footsteps of the Patriarch of whom they are directly descended.
- 63 God's pledge to the Children of Israel and theirs to Him are given in 5: 12. This mutual pledge is related as: if the Children of Israel keep up the Prayer, give charity, Believe in and support the Prophets, and spend in the cause of God, God will, in return, expiate their sins and admit them in the Gardens through which rivers flow, i.e. Paradise.
- 64 God is inviting the Children of Israel to Believe in the Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad's (ﷺ) Message in fulfilment of their pledge to Him (c.f. 7: 156-157, in which the Children of Israel are enjoined to Believe in the gentile Prophet whom they find mentioned in the Torah). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)
- 65 The Torah in which there is mention of the Messengership of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).
- 66 Their leaders used to reap shares from their devoted folk's wealth, so they tried to hide the truth about Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) fearing that they will lose these gratuities.

the prescribed alms and bow down 'in Prayer' with those who bow down<sup>67</sup>. <sup>44</sup> How could you enjoin people to do what is right and forget 'about it' yourselves, while you read the Book<sup>68</sup>; have you no sense? <sup>45</sup> Seek help in patience and Prayer<sup>69</sup>; indeed they are hard save for the dedicated<sup>70</sup>. <sup>46</sup> Those who firmly Believe that they will be meeting their Lord and that they are returning to Him.

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

\* أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ  
وَأَنْتُمْ تَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾  
وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا  
عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا  
رَبِّهِمْ وَأَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

يَذِكُرُ إِسْرَائِيلَ إِذْ ذُكِرُوا بِعَمَلِ آلِي نَعْمٍ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَأَنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا  
تُجْزَى نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا  
شَفَعَةٌ وَلَا يُؤْخَذُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

67 This is an invitation from God to the Children of Israel to join the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions and become Believers performing acts of worship accordingly (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr). Furthermore al-Wāḥidī is of the opinion that the command to “bow down with those who bow down” is specifically mentioned to denote performing congregational, obligatory Prayers.

68 The Torah.

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

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

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

72 The Day of Judgment.

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

74 The Deniers.

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

وَإِذْ نَجَّيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَسُومُونَكُمْ  
سُوءَ الْعَذَابِ يُدَبِّحُونَ بِآيَاتِكُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيُونَ  
نِسَاءَكُمْ وَفِي ذَلِكَ لَكُمْ بَلَاءٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٤٩﴾  
وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمْ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا  
آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا  
مُوسَىٰ أَنزَلْنَاهُ لَيْلَةَ نُورٍ أَنخِذْنَاهُ الْغَجَلَ مِنْ  
بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ ثُمَّ عَقَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ  
مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَإِذْ  
ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ  
إِنَّكُمْ ظَلَمْتُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ بِاتِّخَاذِكُمُ الْعِجْلَ فَتُوبُوا  
إِلَىٰ بَارِيكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ  
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ عِنْدَ بَارِيكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
إِنَّهُ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥٤﴾

75 C.f. 26: 61-66.

76 The place of the meeting for Moses where he was to receive the Torah is specified elsewhere in the Quran; 20: 80.

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

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

79 Mujāhid and al-Rabī' Ibn Anas are of the opinion that the Book is the same as the *Furqān* (the Distinguisher) that distinguishes truth from falsehood; the Torah is the *Furqān* in this aya. (Ibn Abī Hātim)

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



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

﴿58﴾ ‘Remember’ When We said: “Enter this town<sup>85</sup> and eat from it whatever you like plentifully; and enter through the gate prostrating ‘in thankfulness’ and say: “*hiṭṭah!*”<sup>86</sup>, and We shall forgive

وَاذْقَلْتُمْ يَلْمُوسَىٰ لَنْ نُؤْمِنَ بِكَ حَتَّىٰ تَرَىٰ اللَّهَ  
جَهْرَةً فَأَخَذَتْكُمُ الصَّاعِقَةُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾  
ثُمَّ بَعَثْنَاكُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَوْتِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾  
وَوَضَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْعِمَامَةَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَنَّ  
وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلُّوْا مِّن طَيِّبَاتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَمَا  
ظَلَمُونَا وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

وَاذْقَلْنَا أَدْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا  
حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ رَغَدًا وَأَدْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا  
وَقُولُوا حِطَّةٌ نَّغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطَايَاكُمْ  
وَسَزِيدَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾

- 81 When the punishment of the thunderbolt struck them they died, then God brought them back to life so that they may become grateful to Him. (al-Ṭabarī)
- 82 This is an account of sparing the Israelites the glare of the sun in the wilderness in which they were lost. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim)
- 83 In Arabic *al-mann* and *al-salwā*, respectively. They both have linguistic roots in Arabic; *al-mann* means that which is God-given without effort, while *al-salwā* means that in which one finds consolation and comfort. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Ashur)
- 84 Rhetorical shifts (known as *uslub al-iltifāt*) from, for instance as in this aya, the first person plural pronoun “you” into the third person plural pronoun “they” is very common in the Qur’anic discourse; a well-known, well-researched linguistic feature. It is employed to serve a number of rhetorical purposes. In this instance it is meant to announce that enumeration of the Israelites’ repeated offenses has come to an end and that talk is directed to other nations so that they may take heed and not fall in the same trap (c.f. al-Qāsimī, Ibn ‘Ashūr, al-Dabl, *Dalīl al-Balāghah al-Qur’āniyyah*, p. 39).
- 85 This Divine command the Children of Israel to “enter” the town is explained in 7: 161 as “reside” in the town, Jerusalem.
- 86 That is “forgiveness”; they were asked to seek forgiveness. It is derived from *ḥaṭṭa*, i.e. to put down a burden (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 50; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*. 2: 13), but they subtly twisted their tongues to mean “barley”, *hiṭṭah* (al-Bukhārī: 4641, cf. particularly al-‘Asqalānī’s comment).



you your sins and We shall increase 'the reward of' those who do good".<sup>(59)</sup> The wrongdoers among them substituted what was said to them for something else, and We sent down on the wrongdoers a plague<sup>87</sup> from the sky for exceeding the limits.<sup>(60)</sup> 'Remember' When Moses prayed 'earnestly' for water for his people. We said: "Strike the rock with your staff"; twelve springs gushed out from it. Every people<sup>88</sup> knew their own fountain. "Eat and drink from what Allah has provided for you and do not stalk the land corrupting".<sup>(61)</sup> 'Remember' When you said: "Moses, we will not bear with you for one type of food. Ask your Lord to bring out for us from what the earth grows: herbs, cucumber, garlic<sup>89</sup>, lentils and onions. He said: "Would you exchange what is better for that which is worse? Go down to 'just' any town, for there will be yours what you asked for". Humiliation and indignity were stamped on them, and they deserved the Wrath of Allah, all because they used to Deny Allah's Signs and kill the Prophets, this is because they defied and took to 'habitually' exceeding the limits.

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي قِيلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ \* وَإِذْ أَسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ ۖ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنثَىٰ مِن مَّشْرِهُنَّ كُفُوًا وَشَرِبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْتَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَىٰ طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُثْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَقِثَآئِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِهَا وَبَصِلَهَا قَالَ أَسْتَبْدِلُونَ الَّذِي هُوَ أَدْنَىٰ بِالَّذِي هُوَ خَيْرٌ أَهْبِطُوا مَصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ مِمَّا سَأَلْتُمْ وَصُرِّيتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ وَبَاءَ وَيَعَصِبُ مِنَ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيَّاتِ بَعِيرِ الْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

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

88 Each clan among the twelve clans of the Children of Israel. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sa'dī*)

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

﴿62﴾ Certainly, the Believers, the Jews, the Christians and the Sabians whoever Believes in Allah and the Last Day and does good among them, theirs will be their reward from their Lord, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve<sup>90</sup>. ﴿63﴾ ‘Remember’ When We took your pledge<sup>91</sup>, and raised the mountain<sup>92</sup> above you<sup>93</sup>; “Hold fast to what We have given you and bear in mind what came into it, so that you might be Mindful”. ﴿64﴾ Then you turned away after that. Had it not been for Allah’s favour and mercy, you would have been among the Losers. ﴿65﴾ You know ‘what befell’ those who transgressed on the Sabbath<sup>94</sup>. We said to them: “Be apes, despised!” ﴿66﴾ We made it ‘this town’ a ‘severe’ lesson to those of its time and those that came after it, and an admonishment to the Mindful.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِرِينَ  
وَالصَّالِحِينَ مَنْ ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
الْآخِرِ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ  
عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ  
وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا  
مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا  
مَاءَ آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَاذْكُرُوا مَا فِيهِ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ  
مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ  
عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾  
وَلَقَدْ عَمَتْهُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدَوْا مِنْكُمْ  
فِي السَّبْتِ فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً  
خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالًا  
لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا  
وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

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

91 C.f. 2: 83-85.

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

93 This is further underlined in 7: 171.

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

﴿67﴾ ‘Remember’ When Moses said to his people: “Surely Allah commands you to slaughter a cow”<sup>95</sup>. They said: “Are you deriding of us?” He said: “I seek refuge by Allah, that I should be an ignoramus!”<sup>96</sup> ﴿68﴾ They said: “Pray to your Lord to tell us ‘clearly’ what it is”. He said: “He says: “It is a cow not too old, neither is it too young, but somewhere in the middle. So do what you are being commanded to!”<sup>96</sup> ﴿69﴾ They said: “Pray to your Lord to tell us what its colour is”. He said: “He says: “It is a yellow cow, bright is its colour, pleasing to the beholders”<sup>70</sup> ﴿70﴾ They said: “Pray to your Lord to tell us what exactly it is; all cows look alike to us. At this we shall, Allah willing, be guided”<sup>71</sup> He said: “He says: “It is a cow neither humbled by tilling the earth, nor by watering plants; unblemished, and its colour is untainted”<sup>71</sup>. They said: “Now you have come with the truth!” They slaughtered it—barely did they do so. ﴿72﴾ ‘Remember’ When you killed a soul and disputed over it<sup>97</sup>. Allah reveals what you were

وَاذْ قَالِ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَذْبَحُوا بَقْرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا قَالَ أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَا فَارِضٌ وَلَا بَكْرٌ عَمَّانٌ يُبَيِّنُ ذَلِكَ فَأَفْعَلُوا مَا تَأْمُرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْ هُنَّ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ صَفْرَاءُ فَاقْعُ لَوْ هُنَّ نَسْرُ النَّظِيرَاتِ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَ تَشَابَهَ عَيْنًا وَإِنَّا إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَا ذَلُولٌ تُثِيرُ الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَمَّمَةٌ لَا إِشْيَاءَ فِيهَا قَالُوا أَلَنْ جِئْتِ بِالْحَقِّ فَذَبْحُوهَا وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادْرَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجٌ مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُمُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

95 Moses asked them to slaughter no specific cow in particular. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

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

97 This aya concludes the episode of the cow and the debate surrounding it. Commentators agree that there is a case of foregrounding here, as the details of how the people of Moses argued with him in what has been Divinely ordained is foregrounded. Al-Biqā‘ī is of the opinion that the episode has been divided into two sections by way of drawing attention to two separate favours. Firstly, the favour of



bent on hiding. <sup>73</sup> We said: “Strike him ‘the victim’ with a piece of it ‘the cow’<sup>98</sup>”. It is in this manner that Allah brings to life the dead and shows you His Signs so that you might think<sup>99</sup>. <sup>74</sup> ‘Yet’ After that your hearts became akin to rocks or ‘even’ harder; truly among rocks some from which rivers gush forth, some crack and water seeps through, and some come tumbling down in fear of Allah—Allah is not heedless to what you do.

<sup>75</sup> Do you ‘Believers’ then hope that they will Believe in you<sup>100</sup>,

فَقُلْنَا أَصْرُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللَّهُ الْمَوْتَى  
وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ ثُمَّ قَسَتْ  
قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ  
أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ  
الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَقَّقُ فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ  
الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا  
اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

\*أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِالْكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانَ قَرِيْقٌ

forgiveness for being reluctant to obey what is Divinely ordained. Secondly, the favour of revealing the killer by way of a miracle. On the other hand, al-Biqā'ī also sees that attention is being drawn to the fact that there is an issue of admonishment here. Firstly, they are being admonished for not being polite enough with their Prophet by accusing him of “deriding” them, and not being observant enough to God’s commands. Secondly, they are being reproached for killing an inviolable, sacrosanct soul, and the evil such an act would incur. Al-Biqā'ī then concludes that this instance of foregrounding is, consequently, more relevant to the preceding numerous violations. The theme of reproach is still being carried out here.

- 98 It is reported that having been hit with a piece of the cow, the victim came back to life and pointed out his killer. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)
- 99 They were invited in such wise to think over their actions and be more heedful, obeying God more willingly. (al-Ṭabarī, Sa‘dī)
- 100 That is to listen to you and Believe in what you call them to (al-Ṭabarī). This is the reason behind recounting in detail the numerous violations of the Israelites in the previous ayas. The residents of Madinah, who made up the majority of the Believing community at the time, had lived alongside the Jews for a very long time and came to regard them highly as their moral superiors, having the Book and the knowledge that they lacked. These views were also shared further afield by other Arab illiterate pagans, who only had a most rudimentary knowledge of the religion of Abraham (ﷺ). The Israelites were so imprinted in the Arab psyche that nothing but telling their truth in great detail, would actually make them fully comprehend their reality. It is in a way establishing Faith on a clean slate (but not exactly from scratch as we will be told shortly of the relatedness of Islam to the creed of Abraham), and correcting collective societal misconceptions.



when a party of them used to hear the words of Allah<sup>101</sup> and distort them even after they had fully comprehended them and fully realizing what they were doing? <sup>﴿76﴾</sup> When they meet up with the Believers, they say: “We Believe!”, but when they are alone with each other, they say: “Do you tell them what Allah has blessed you with the knowledge of which<sup>102</sup> so that they might use it in argument against you before your Lord; have you no sense? <sup>﴿77﴾</sup> Did they not know that Allah is in on what they hide and what they reveal? <sup>﴿78﴾</sup> Some of them are unlettered<sup>103</sup>, ‘they’ do not know the Book only wishfully<sup>104</sup> thinking—they only guess. <sup>﴿79﴾</sup> Woe betides those who write the Book<sup>105</sup> with their own hands, then say: “This is from Allah!”, so that they may exchange it for a pittance. Woe betides them for what their hands have written, and woe betides them from what they earn.

مَهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يُحَرِّفُونَهُ  
 مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِذَا لَقُوا  
 الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بِبَعْضِهِمْ  
 إِلَى بَعْضٍ قَالُوا لَوْلَا نُحَدِّثُوهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ اللَّهُ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ لِيُحَاجُّوكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا  
 تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا  
 يُرْسِرُونَ وَمَا يَحْتَكِرُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُونَ لَا  
 يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَانِينَ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا  
 يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَوْلِ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُوبُونَ الْكِتَابَ  
 بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لَيْسَ تَرَوُا  
 بِهِءَ تَمَنَّاءَ قَلِيلًا قَوْلِ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِمَّا كَتَبَتْ  
 أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَقِيلِ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِمَّا يَكْتُوبُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

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

102 That their Book tells forth of the advent of a Messenger who is described in much details (c.f. 2:89). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Atīyah)

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

104 They dream up false wishes. God has given examples of their false wishes in 2: 111 and 4: 123.

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

﴿80﴾ They say: “The Fire will not touch us except for a limited number of days”<sup>106</sup>. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Have you ‘got’ a promise from Allah? For Allah never breaks His promise. Or do you say about Allah that of which you have no knowledge?” ﴿81﴾ Nay, but whoever commits a foul deed and is surrounded by his sin<sup>107</sup>, will be ‘among’ the company of the Fire, forever they abide therein. ﴿82﴾ ‘But’ Those who Believe and do good deeds are the company of the Paradise, forever they abide therein.

﴿83﴾ ‘Mention’ When We took the pledge of the Children of Israel that: you should worship none but Allah; be kind to your parents, relatives, orphans and the needy; speak nicely to people; and keep up Prayer and give out the prescribed alms; then you turned away – save a few of you – paying no heed. ﴿84﴾ ‘Remember’ When We took your pledge that: you should not shed one another’s blood and that you should not expel one another out of your lands; then you vowed bearing witness to it! ﴿85﴾ After ‘all’ this, here you are killing one another and driving a group of you out of their lands, rallying against them unjustly and out of aggression. ‘But’ When they come to you as captives, you

وَقَالُوا لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَةً  
قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا فَلَنْ يُخْلَفَ  
اللَّهُ عَهْدَهُ ۗ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا  
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ بَلَىٰ مِنْ كَسْبِ سَيِّئَةٍ وَآخَظَّتْ  
بِهِ خَطِيئَتُهُ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۖ  
هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا  
الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ ۖ هُمْ  
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ  
إِلَّا اللَّهَ ۖ وَيَالِ الْوَالِدِينَ إِحْسَانًا وَيَذَى الْفُرْيِ  
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَقُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ  
حُسْنًا وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ  
ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ  
مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ  
دِمَاءَكُمْ وَلَا تَخْرُجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ  
دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْهَدُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾  
ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتَخْرُجُونَ  
فِرْيَاقًا مِّنْكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ تَطَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِم بِالْإِثْمِ  
وَالْعَدْوَانِ وَإِنْ يَأْتُوكُمْ أُسْرَىٰ فَتَدَّوهُمْ  
وَهُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجُهُمْ أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ  
بِعِضِّ الْكِتَابِ وَتَكْفُرُونَ بِعِضِّ مَا جَاءَ

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

<sup>107</sup> *Aḥātat bihi khaṭī’atuhu* “surrounded by his sin”, is, in other words, immersed in sin.

ransom them, while driving them out 'in the first place' is forbidden for you. Do you Believe in parts of the Book and Deny others?<sup>108</sup> What then will be the punishment of who does this, but abasement in this worldly life, and in the Hereafter they will be consigned to the harshest of Punishments? Allah is not unaware of what you commit. ﴿86﴾ Those are the ones who exchanged the Hereafter for this worldly life<sup>109</sup>; because of this their Punishment will not be alleviated nor will they be aided.

﴿87﴾ We gave Moses the Book<sup>110</sup> and sent Messengers after him in succession<sup>111</sup>; and gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear evidences<sup>112</sup> and aided him with the Holy Spirit<sup>113</sup>. Is

مَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيًا فِي الْحَيَاةِ  
الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ  
وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ  
اشْتَرَوْا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ فَلَا يَخَفُفُ  
عَنَّهُمُ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ  
بَعْدِهِ بِالرُّسُلِ ۖ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ  
الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَإِنَّا لَهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَهُمْ

108 There were three Jewish tribes who allied themselves with the two paganistic Arab tribes of Madinah before Islam falling thus into two rivalling parties. On the one hand, there were the Jewish Banū Qaynuqā' the allies of the Arab tribe of al-Khazraj and, on the other, there were Banū al-Naḍīr and Banū Qurayzah who took sides with the Arab tribe of al-Aws. In their infamous prolonged feuds, the Jewish clans fought alongside their allies against their brethren knowing what the Torah says about killing one another and driving one another out of their land. However, when the arms were laid aside they used to ransom one another. Thus this Divine admonition. (al-Sa' dī)

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

110 The Torah.

111 C.f. 5: 44.

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

113 *Rūḥ al-Qudus* (lit. the sanctified spirit) is Angel Gabriel (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)



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

رَسُولٍ يَمَا لَا تَهْوَىٰ أَنفُسُكُمْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ  
فَفَرِّقَا كَذِبُكُمْ وَفَرِّقَا تَقْتُلُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا  
غُلْفٌ بَل لَّعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ فَقَلِيلًا مَّا  
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ  
اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ  
يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ  
مَّا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾  
يَسْمَأَ آسْتَرُوا بِهِ ؕ أَنفُسُهُمْ أَن يَكْفُرُوا  
بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بَغْيًا أَنْ يَنْزِلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ؕ عَلَى  
مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادٍ ؕ فَبَاءُ وَبِعَضْبٍ عَلَى  
عَضْبٍ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

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

115 The Qur’an.

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

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



<sup>(91)</sup> When it is said to them: “Believe in what Allah has sent down”<sup>118</sup>, they say: “We ‘only’ Believe in what has been sent down to us”. And they Deny what came after it<sup>119</sup> when it is, indeed, the truth confirming what is already with them. Say ‘to them’: “Why would you then kill the Prophets of Allah earlier, if you are ‘truly’ Believers?<sup>120</sup> <sup>(92)</sup> Indeed Moses came to you with clear evidences<sup>121</sup>, then you took ‘to worshipping’ the calf<sup>122</sup> after him<sup>123</sup>—you are indeed unjust. <sup>(93)</sup> ‘Remember’ When We took your pledge and raised the mountain above you: “Hold fast to what We have given you and be heedful!” They said: “We listen and we disobey”. The ‘love of the’ calf was made to seep into their hearts because of their Denial. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Vile it is what your Belief commands you to do, if you were truly Believers”.

<sup>(94)</sup> Say: “If the Last Abode<sup>124</sup> with Allah was yours exclusively of all the people<sup>125</sup>, then wish for death, if

وَأِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ءَامِنُوا بِمَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا نُوْمِنُ بِمَا أَنزَلَ عَلَيْنَا وَيَكْفُرُونَ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا مَعَهُمْ قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْبِيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾  
 \*وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُمُ الْعِجْلَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾  
 وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ الطُّورَ خُذُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَسْمِعُوا قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَشْرَبُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ بِكُفْرِهِمْ قُلْ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ مَا أَمَرَكُمْ بِهِ إِيْمَنُكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَالِصَةً مِّنْ دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَتُّوا الْمَوْتَ

118 The Qur’an.

119 What was revealed after the Torah.

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

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

122 C.f. 2: 51.

123 While he was a way.

124 *Al-Jannah* (Paradise).

125 Reference is made here to the false belief that only either the Jews or the Christians will enter Paradise, with each party claiming it theirs exclusively; 2: 111.

you were truly sincere”.<sup>126</sup> For sure they will not ever wish for it, for what their hands have sent forth<sup>126</sup>; Allah is fully aware of the evildoers.<sup>126</sup> You are sure to find them the keenest on a life<sup>127</sup> of all people, even more so than the Associators<sup>128</sup>. Each of them wishes he could live a thousand years; ‘but’ that ‘he lives such a long life’ will not budge him away from Punishment—Allah is All-Seeing of what they do.

<sup>129</sup> Say whoever is an enemy to Gabriel<sup>129</sup> then he brought it ‘the Qur’an’ down to your heart with Allah’s permission<sup>130</sup>; confirming what preceded it<sup>131</sup>, guidance and glad tidings to the Believers.

إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَلَنْ يَتَمَنَّوهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمْت أَيْدِيهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾  
وَلَتَجِدَنَّهُمْ أَحْرَصَ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاتِهِمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا يُوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُرَحِّزٍ لَهُ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ أَنْ يُعَمَّرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

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

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

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

129 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The Jews came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and they said: “Abū al-Qāsim, we will ask you about five things, if you tell us about them we will know that you are a Prophet and we will follow you.” After asking about four things` They said: “There only remains one matter, if you tell us about it, we will swear allegiance to you and that is: no Prophet was ever sent without him assigned an angel who brings him the news, who is yours? He (ﷺ) replied: “Gabriel, may peace be upon him.” They said: “Gabriel! He who comes with war, fighting and torment! He is our enemy! If you said Michael who comes with mercy, plantation and rain, we would have Believed in you.” “Allah then revealed this aya.”” (al-Tirmidhī: 2117, Imām Aḥmad: 2483)

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

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

﴿98﴾ Whoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, Messengers, Gabriel and Michael, then Allah is an enemy to the Deniers. ﴿99﴾ We have sent down to you clear Signs<sup>132</sup>, none rebuffs them except the rebellious. ﴿100﴾ Incredulous it is that whenever they make a pledge, a group of them cast it away—indeed most of them do not Believe. ﴿101﴾ When a Messenger from Allah<sup>133</sup> came confirming what was with them, a group of those who were given the Book threw the Book of Allah behind their backs as if they did not know ‘better’. ﴿102﴾ ‘Instead’ They followed what the devils used to recite during Solomon’s reign<sup>134</sup>. Solomon did not Deny<sup>135</sup> but the devils did, teaching people magic; and ‘they also followed’ what was brought down to the two angels, Hārūt and Mārūt, in Babylon. The two would not teach anyone ‘magic’ unless they say: “‘Be warned!’ We are but a test ‘of faith’, do not, then, Deny!” They learn from them that with which they cause divisions

مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ  
وَجِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾  
وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ  
بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَلْسِفُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ أَوْ كَلَّمَا عَاهَدُوا  
عَهْدًا نَبَذَهُ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا  
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ  
اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَذَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ  
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ  
ظُهُورِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ وَاتَّبَعُوا  
مَا تَتْلُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكٍ سُلَيْمَانَ وَمَا  
كَفَرُ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَا كَانِ الشَّيَاطِينُ كَافِرُوا  
يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ  
الْمَلَائِكَةِ بِبَابِ هَرُوتَ وَمَرُوتَ وَمَا يُعَلِّمَانِ  
مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّىٰ يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ فِتْنَةٌ فَلَا  
تَكْفُرْ فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ  
بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَآئِرِينَ  
بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ  
مَا يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ

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

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

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

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



between a man and his wife<sup>136</sup>; 'yet' they will not harm anyone with it unless Allah wills. They only learn that with which they harm themselves and of no use to them. They know that whoever buys this has no share in the Hereafter. Wretched it is what they sold themselves for, if only but they 'truly' knew. <sup>103</sup> Had they Believed and were Mindful, their reward from Allah would have been better 'for them', if only but they 'truly' knew.

<sup>104</sup> Believers! Do not say: “*Rā'inā*”, but say: “*Unẓurnā*”<sup>137</sup>, and listen<sup>138</sup>; the Deniers' is a painful Punishment. <sup>105</sup> The Deniers among the people of the Book and the Associators do not wish that any good comes down to you from your Lord; Allah specifically favours whomever He wills with His Mercy—Allah is the Owner of bountiful grace<sup>139</sup>.

أَشْتَرْتَهُ مَا لَمْ يَكُن فِي الْأَخْرَاقِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ وَوَلَيْسَ  
مَا شَرَوْا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾  
وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَمَثُوبَةٌ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ  
خَيْرٌ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُولُوا  
أَنْظُرْنَا وَأَسْمِعُوا لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابَ آلِيمٍ ﴿١٠٥﴾  
مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ  
وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ  
مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ  
يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٠٥﴾

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

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

<sup>138</sup> Believers are commanded to listen to the Prophet (ﷺ) with the pure intention of obedience. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah)

<sup>139</sup> C.f. 4: 113.



﴿106﴾ Whatever Sign<sup>140</sup> We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We replace it with one which is better or equal to it. Did you not know that Allah has power over everything? ﴿107﴾ Did you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the Heavens and Earth<sup>141</sup>, and that you have no ally or helper<sup>142</sup> beside Allah? ﴿108﴾ Or do you want to ask of your Messenger something similar to what Moses was asked before<sup>143</sup>; whoever replaces Belief with Denial, indeed has strayed from the right path. ﴿109﴾ Many among the people of the Book wish that they could turn you away from your Belief into Denial out of selfish envy after the truth has become clear to them. Forgive and overlook until Allah comes with His command<sup>144</sup>; indeed Allah has power over everything. ﴿110﴾ Keep up the Prayer and give out the prescribed alms. Whatever good you send forth for yourselves, you will find it with Allah<sup>145</sup>; indeed Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.

﴿١٠٦﴾ مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِّمَّهَا أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٠٨﴾ أَمْ تَرِيدُونَ أَنْ تَسْأَلُوا رَسُولَكُمْ كَمَا سَأَلَ مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١٠٩﴾ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّونَكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ فَاعْتَصِبُوا وَأَصْحَابُوا حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرٍ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَاقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١١﴾

140 Aya.

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

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

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

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

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

﴿111﴾ They said: “None will enter Paradise but those who are Jews or Christians”<sup>146</sup>. Those are their ‘vain’ wishes. Say to them: “Produce your proof if you are truthful!” ﴿112﴾ Nay! Whoever submits his face<sup>147</sup> to Allah and is a doer of good, he will have his reward with his Lord; they will have neither fear nor will they grieve. ﴿113﴾ The Jews said: “The Christians have no ground”<sup>148</sup>; the Christians said: “The Jews have no ground”; even though they read the Book<sup>149</sup>. The same was said by those who have no knowledge; Allah will judge between them concerning what they dispute over on the Day of Judgment.

﴿114﴾ Who is more unjust than one who prohibits mentioning Allah’s Name in places of worship dedicated to Him and who strives hard for their desolation?<sup>150</sup> These

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا  
أَوْ نَصْرِيًّا تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ  
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١١١﴾ بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهَهُ  
لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا  
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَقَالَتِ  
الْيَهُودُ لَيْسَتِ النَّصْرِيُّ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَقَالَتِ  
النَّصْرِيُّ لَيْسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ  
الْكِتَابَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ  
قَوْلِهِمْ فَاللَّهُ يَبْخُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا  
كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذَكَرَ  
فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَىٰ فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَٰئِكَ مَا كَانَ  
لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا الْخَافِينَ لَهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا

146 Each party claimed that Paradise is theirs exclusively and none will enter it besides themselves. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

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

148 That is their religion is baseless. Ibn Abī Ḥātim documents in his *tafsīr* that Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When the Christians of Najrān came to the Messenger of God (ﷺ), the rabbis came to them and they disputed in his presence. Rāfi‘ Ibn Ḥuraymilah said: “You have no ground whatsoever!” He Denied Jesus and the Evangel! A Najranian said: “You have no ground whatsoever!” He Denied both the Prophethood of Moses and the Torah!”

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

150 Al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr and Ibn ‘Āshūr are of the opinion that the ones who are meant by this are the pagans of Makkah who drove the Prophet (ﷺ) and his

were not to enter them 'places of worship' except in a state of fear<sup>151</sup>. Theirs in the worldly life is disgrace and theirs in the Hereafter a great Punishment. ﴿115﴾ To Allah belong the East and the West, wherever you turn, you will find Allah's Face—Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Knowing<sup>152</sup>. ﴿116﴾ They said: "Allah has taken to Himself a child"<sup>153</sup>. *Glory be to Him!*<sup>154</sup> Nay! But all that is in the Heavens and the Earth are His, they are all submitting to Him<sup>155</sup>. ﴿117﴾ 'He is' The 'Masterful'

خِزْيٌ وَأَلْهُمُّ فِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَاللَّهُ  
 الْمَشْرِقِيُّ وَالْمَغْرِبِيُّ فَأَيْتَمَّائُوا فَاسْمِعُوا وَجْهَ اللَّهِ  
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَسِعَ عَلَيْهِ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا  
 سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ بَل لَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ  
 كُلُّ لَّهُ رَقِيبٌ ﴿١١٧﴾ بَدِيعُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Companions from the Sanctuary and dedicated it to idol worshipping, thus the "desolation" of the place of worship (*masjid*). Some Qur'anic ayas (8: 34 and 48: 25) allude to the actions of the pagans regarding prohibiting Muslims from worshipping God in the same terms. Alternatively, al-Ṭabarī opines that the ones meant here are the Christians who aided the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar in his siege, takeover and destruction of Jerusalem and prevented the Believing Israelites from worship in the temple.

- 151 God decrees here that the just punishment of those who commit such a vile act is that they will only enter places of worship in a state of fear and trepidation that Divine justice will be exacted on them or that the Believers will seize them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 152 This is by way of consolation to the Believers who had been persecuted and prevented from performing their right of worship—that the whole world belongs to God and one can find Him wherever he turns.
- 153 This claim is made by the Jews when they said that Ezra was the son of God, the Christians when they said that Jesus was the son of God (c.f. 9: 30) and the Arab pagans who claimed that the angels were the daughters of God (c.f. 16: 57 and 43: 19) (Ibn Kathīr). The claim that God has a son - or an offspring - is rebuffed as a horribly macabre claim, recurrently in the Qur'an (c.f. 10-68-69, 4:171 and 25: 1-2) because a son is his father's alike and equal. Both of these qualities are not becoming of Almighty God, the Absolute Sovereign to whom no one is alike (c.f. 6: 100-101).
- 154 *Sunhānahu* (lit. *Glorified be Him!*) is used here as an emotionally charged interjection by way of highlighting how unbecoming what they claim of God is.
- 155 *Qāniṭūn*, translated here as "submitting", has the much wider meaning that all of God's creation, particularly those endowed with free will, are servants of His,



Originator of the Heavens and Earth, when He decrees something He says only: “Be!”<sup>156</sup> and it is. ﴿118﴾ Those who have no knowledge<sup>157</sup> also said: “If only Allah would talk to us or a Sign would come to us”. The same was said by those who came before them; their hearts are alike<sup>158</sup>. We have made the Signs clear to those who firmly Believe<sup>159</sup>. ﴿119﴾ We have sent you ‘Muhammad’ with the truth, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner; and you will not be asked about the company of Hellfire.<sup>160</sup>

وَإِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿١١٧﴾  
 وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا  
 اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ  
 مِن قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَبَهتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ  
 قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ  
 بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَا تُسْئَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ  
 الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٩﴾

over whom He has total control and that they are subjects to Divine canons and rules of existence (being ever needful, getting old and dying) whether they are willing to admit them or not (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

- 156 God’s Absolute Power is highlighted in that the realization of His Will and His Ability to create are carried out by this two-lettered command, *كُن* (*Be!*) (c.f. 3: 47 and 59, 19: 34-35, 36: 81-82). The Possessor of such power is of no need of procreation (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 157 These are Arab pagans, elsewhere called “the illiterates” (c.f. 3: 20). (Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)
- 158 The hearts of the Deniers of the Message are alike. The three examples of the acts of Denial, spelled out in ayas 114-119, i.e. persecuting Believers and denying them their right of worship, claiming that God has an offspring and toyingly asking their Prophets for proofs and miracles without seriously intending to Believe in them (for more of this c.f. 6: 124, 17: 90-93), are meant to show that Deniers, old and new, ignorant or have a revealed Book that should guide them to the truth, are one and the same because their drives and motives are similar (c.f. 51: 52-53).
- 159 If a person’s heart is smitten with the disease of Denial it shows through his/her actions irrespective of all other considerations. Yet the one who opens up to his/her heart to the truth will find ample evidence for it.
- 160 That is you Prophet will not be responsible for what becomes of them after you have delivered the Message to them (c.f. 3: 20-21). God is consoling Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and assuring him of the truthfulness of his Message in the face of the fierce war he and his followers were facing on all these fronts.



﴿120﴾ Neither the Jews nor the Christians will ever be pleased with you unless you follow their religion<sup>161</sup>; say: “It is Guidance from Allah that is the ‘true’ Guidance”. If you follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to you, there will not be a guardian or protector for you from Allah. ﴿121﴾ Those to whom We have given the Book recite it as it should be recited<sup>162</sup>; these Believe in it, however those who Deny it are the losers.

﴿122﴾ Children of Israel! Remember My Favour which I blessed you with and that I privileged you over all people<sup>163</sup>. ﴿123﴾ Be Mindful of a Day on which no soul will be of use to another<sup>164</sup>; neither ransom will be accepted from it<sup>165</sup> nor intercession of use to it<sup>166</sup>, and they ‘the Deniers’ will not be helped<sup>167</sup>.

وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنْ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ هُوَ الْهَدَىٰ وَلَئِنْ آتَيْتَهُمْ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٢٠﴾ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ ۗ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ ﴿١٢١﴾

يَبْنَئِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَذْكَرُوا نِعْمَتِي الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَأَلِيٍّ فَضَّلْتَكُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَأَنْقُوا يَوْمَ لَا تَجْزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا وَلَا يُقْبَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ وَلَا تَنْفَعُهَا شَفْعَةٌ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

161 Because every party sees itself as the sole possessor of the truth; thus they did not open up to the Truth and follow the Guidance of God.

162 The People of the Book are encouraged to follow their Books unquestioningly without Denying all or parts of them, particularly about what they say about the coming of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (c.f. 5: 68, 7: 157, 28: 52-53).

163 C.f. 5: 20, 44: 32.

164 C.f. 31: 33.

165 C.f. 3: 91, 5: 36, 6: 70 and 57: 15.

166 C.f. 26: 100-101, 74: 48. The rejection of intercession on the Day of Judgment only applies to the Deniers, yet it will be accepted on behalf of a Believer provided God grants it permission and is pleased with the person on behalf of whom it takes place (c.f. 53: 26; al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

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

﴿124﴾ ‘Mention Muhammad’<sup>168</sup> When Ibrāhīm ‘Abraham’ was tested by his Lord by certain words<sup>169</sup> which he fulfilled. He ‘The Lord’ said: “I will make you a leader<sup>170</sup> to humanity”. He ‘Ibrāhīm’ said: “And my posterity ‘too’?” He said: “My promise does not include the unjust”. ﴿125﴾ ‘Mention Muhammad’ And when We made the House<sup>171</sup> a repeatedly-visited, safe haven for people—and make Ibrāhīm’s standing-stone<sup>172</sup> a place for Prayer. We commanded Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘il ‘Ishmael’: “That you should purify<sup>173</sup> My House for those

﴿١٢٤﴾ وَإِذْ أٰتٰى اِبْرٰهٖمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمٰتٍ فَاَتَمَّهُنَّ قَالَ ؕ اِنِّىْ جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ اِمَامًا قَالَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِيْ الظَّالِمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَإِذْ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَنَابِتَ لِّلنَّاسِ وَاَمَّا وَاَتَّخِذُوْا مِنْ مَّقَامِ اِبْرٰهٖمَ مُصَلًّٰى وَعَهْدَنَا اِلَيْهِ اِبْرٰهٖمَ وَاَسْمَعِيْلَ اَنَّ طَهِّرَا بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّآئِفِيْنَ وَالْعَاكِفِيْنَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُوْدِ ﴿١٢٥﴾

168 Of a related nature to what has preceded, what comes next is the accurate account of the origin and reality of the Abrahamic creed and, by extension, so-called “Abrahamic religions”.

169 The Lord assigned some tasks and commandments for Abraham (ﷺ) to carry out, which he did dutifully without hesitation or delay (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Exemplary of which is the following commandment to Abraham and Ishmael to set the foundations of the Ka’bah and make ready the Holy Sanctuary in Bakkah (Makkah) for the worship of God.

170 God rewarded Abraham (ﷺ) for his devoutness by granting him the highest of all honours, making him an *Imām* (leader) to all humanity and an example to be flowed by those who seek the Pleasure of God.

171 The Holy Sanctuary in Makkah (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī); the centrepiece symbol of pristine Faith.

172 *Maqām Ibrāhīm* is the stone on which Abraham (ﷺ) stood while building the Ka’bah. The commandment here enjoins Believers to Pray at that place; it is an everlasting Sign and evidence to all people of the relatedness of the religion of Islam to Abraham’s creed, *islām*, the most pristine of all religions. Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) narrated in a lengthy Ḥadīth that the Prophet (ﷺ): “Headed to *maqām Ibrāhīm* and recited the aya: “...and make Ibrāhīm’s standing-stone a place for Prayer.” He (ﷺ) placed himself behind the *maqām* making it come between himself and the Ka’bah. ‘And then he Prayed two *rak’ahs*’ reading in the first: *qul huwa Allāh-u aḥad* (“Say: He is God, Unique.”) and in the second: *qul yā ayuha al-kāfirūn* (“Say: You Deniers!”)” (Muslim: 1218)

173 They were commanded to purify it from all sorts of impurities, physical and spiritual, such as idols, and to build it with a pure intention, devoting it wholly to God. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

who circumambulate, and those who keep retreat<sup>174</sup>, those who bow down and prostrate themselves ‘in Prayer’”. <sup>﴿126﴾</sup> ‘Mention Muhammad’ When Ibrāhīm said: “My Lord! Make this town<sup>175</sup> safe and provide its people with ‘all sorts of’ produce<sup>176</sup>, ‘especially’ those of whom who Believe in Allah and the Last day”. He ‘Allah’ said: “As for those of who Deny, I will make them enjoy a little<sup>177</sup> and then force them into the Punishment of Hellfire—miserable is their destination!” <sup>﴿127﴾</sup> ‘Mention Muhammad’ While Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl were raising the foundations of the House<sup>178</sup> ‘they prayed’: “Our Lord, accept ‘this’ from us; You are the All-Hearing the All-Knowing”<sup>179</sup>. <sup>﴿128﴾</sup> “Our Lord make us wholly

وَاذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ الشَّمْرَاتِ مَنْ ءَامَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمَتِّعُهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ  
إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَاذْ يَرْفَعُ  
إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا  
تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٧﴾ رَبَّنَا  
وَجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً

174 *Al-‘ākifīn* are those who dedicate part of their time to worship, shunning engagement in worldly affairs during this time.

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

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

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

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

179 They were chanting this supplication while building the Ka‘bah (c.f. al-Bukhārī: 3364).



submitting<sup>180</sup> to you and from our posterity a nation wholly submitted to you, show<sup>181</sup> us our rites<sup>182</sup> and accept our repentance; You are the All-Forgiving, Most Merciful”.  
 ﴿129﴾ “Our Lord send them<sup>183</sup> a Messenger<sup>184</sup> from among them to recite Your Signs<sup>185</sup> to them, teach them the Book<sup>186</sup> and Wisdom<sup>187</sup> and purify<sup>188</sup> them; You are the All-Prevailing the All-Wise”. ﴿130﴾  
 None would forsake the creed of Ibrāhīm<sup>189</sup> except one who fools himself. We have chosen him in the worldly life and in the Hereafter<sup>190</sup>

لَكَ وَأَرْنَا مَنَاسِكَكَ وَتُبَّ عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ  
 الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٩﴾ رَبَّنَا وَأَبْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتْلُو  
 عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ  
 وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَمَنْ  
 يَرْغَبْ عَن مِّلَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ إِلَّا مَن سَفِهَ نَفْسَهُ  
 وَلَقَدْ صُطِّفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدِّينِ وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ

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

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

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

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

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

185 Ayas of the Qur’an (lit. Signs).

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

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

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

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

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



he is one of the Righteous<sup>191</sup>. ﴿131﴾ 'Because' As soon as His Lord said to him: "submit!"<sup>192</sup> he said: "I submit to the Lord of all beings". ﴿132﴾ With this Ibrāhīm and Ya'qūb 'Jacob'<sup>193</sup> enjoined their sons: "My sons! Allah has chosen this religion for you, so die not without being devoutly submitted". ﴿133﴾ Or were you<sup>194</sup> present when death came upon Ya'qūb? When he said to his sons: "What will you worship after me?" They said: "We will worship your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers, Ibrāhīm, Ismā'īl<sup>195</sup> and Ishāq 'Isaac', a one 'and only' Lord; we have submitted to Him". ﴿134﴾ That nation passed away; it earned what it has earned and yours is what you earn. You will not be answerable to what they used to do<sup>196</sup>.

لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ  
 أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَوَصَّى بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ  
 بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبُ يٰبَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ لَكُمْ  
 الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾  
 أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ  
 إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ  
 إِلَهَكَ وَإِلَهَ آبَائِكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ  
 وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾  
 تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلكُمْ مَا  
 كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

191 *aş-Şāliḥūn* are God's Prophets and Messengers, who hold the highest ranks in Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

192 Unconditional submission and utter surrender to God's Will capture the essence of *al-ḥanaḥīyah*. This word (*islām*) was bequeathed to Abraham's posterity forever so that they might remain true to it (c.f. 43: 26-28).

193 Jacob, the forefather of the Israelites, also known as Israel, is the son of Isaac, Abraham's son. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

194 The direct addressees were the Jews of Madinah who Denied Prophet Muhammad's (ﷺ) Messengership. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Qurtubī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

195 Ishmael was actually Jacob's paternal uncle. They counted him among Jacobs "fathers" out of respect.

196 Although the People of the Book are reminded of the true faith of their patriarchs, they are also cautioned not to be boastful about it and do some soul searching by asking themselves the difficult question of how far removed they were from the essence of real surrender to God's Will (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

﴿135﴾ They said: “Become Jews or Christian, and you will be guided”. Say: “Nay, but ‘we follow’ the creed of Ibrāhīm, rightly oriented<sup>197</sup>, and he was not one of the Associators”.  
 ﴿136﴾ Say: “We Believe in Allah, and what came down to us, and what came down to Ibrāhīm, Ismā‘il, Ishāq ‘Isaac’, Ya‘qūb ‘Jacob’ and the Tribes<sup>198</sup>, and what Musā and ‘Īsā ‘Jesus’ were given, and what the Prophets were given from their Lord<sup>199</sup>. We do not distinguish between any of them<sup>200</sup> and we are ‘ever’ submitting<sup>201</sup> to Him”. ﴿137﴾  
 ‘So’ If they Believe in what you have Believed in, then they have become guided, but if they turn away then they are in an opposing league ‘to yours’. Allah will suffice you ‘for defence’ against them—He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَدُوا قُلْ بَلْ مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾  
 قُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَىٰ  
 إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ  
 وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِن  
 رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ  
 مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ فَإِنِ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ  
 فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا وَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقِ  
 فَسَبِّحْهُمْ كَمَا سَبَّحَ اللَّهُ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٧﴾

197 This is the translation of *ḥanīf*. *Ḥanafiyah* is the religion of Ibrāhīm. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness (c.f. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*; al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-Arīb*). Abraham, who is the example set for humanity for those who seek to find the right path of God (c.f. 2: 124), was neither a Jew nor a Christian (c.f. 3: 67).

198 *Al-Asbāt*, the Tribes, are the Prophets from among the twelve sons of Jacob, i.e. Yūsuf (Joseph) and his brothers, twelve men in all and their posterity, particularly the Prophets, who held on to their path. *Sibī* means grandson (al-Ḥafāhānī, *al-Mufradāt*), here they are taken to be branches of the same tree.

199 This is the ultimate declaration of the truth of the faith of Muslims—they Believe in the truthfulness of earlier Prophets and Messages in their pristine, uncorrupted formations without favouring one over the other.

200 The Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Prophets are half-brothers. Their mothers are different but their religion is the same”. (al-Bukhārī: 3211)

201 *Muslimūn* submitted to God alone, both internally and outwardly, totally devoted to His worship and subservient to His Will. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

﴿138﴾ This is the colour<sup>202</sup> of Allah; whose colouring is better than that of Allah? We are ‘ever’ worshipping Him. ﴿139﴾ Say ‘Muhammad’: “Do you argue with us regarding Allah, when He is our Lord and yours. Ours are our deeds and yours are your deeds<sup>203</sup>. We are ‘ever’ devoted to Him”. ﴿140﴾ Or do you ‘yet’ claim that Ibrāhīm, Ismā‘īl, Ishāq, Ya‘qūb and the Tribes were either Jews or Christians?<sup>204</sup> Say: “Are you more knowledgeable or Allah?”<sup>205</sup> No one is more unfair than him who suppresses a testimony that he has from Allah<sup>206</sup>. Allah is not unaware of what you commit”. ﴿141﴾ That nation passed away; it earned what it has earned and yours is what you earn. You will not be answerable to what they used to do”.

صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً  
وَمَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لِيُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ  
وَكَرِيمٌ ﴿١٣٨﴾ قُلْ أَتُحَاجُّونَنَا فِي اللَّهِ  
وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ وَلَنَا أَعْمَلُنَا  
وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَلُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ أَمْ تَقُولُونَ  
إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ  
وَأَلْسَابِطَ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى قُلْ  
إِنَّمَا أَتَى النَّبِيَّ وَالرَّسُولَ اللَّهُ مِنَ  
أَنْبَاءٍ مِمَّنْ كَرَّمَ شَهِدَةً عِنْدَهُ  
مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا  
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ  
لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَآخَرَةٌ مِمَّا كَسَبَتْ  
وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا هَذِهِمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا  
مَنْ يَتَّبِعُهُمْ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا مَنَ كَانُوا  
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤١﴾

202 *Ṣibghah* etymologically means the “colour” in which the servants of God are dyed. It is the religion of God, i.e. *islām*, the rightly-oriented religion of Abraham (ﷺ). It is called so because religious devoutness shows on the person as much as a dye of a cloth shows on it (c.f. al-Baghawī).

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

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

205 C.f. 3: 65-68.

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



﴿142﴾ The feeble-minded people<sup>207</sup> will say: “What turned them away from the direction of Prayer<sup>208</sup> they used to face?” Say: “To Allah belongs the East and the West<sup>209</sup>. He guides whom He wills to a straight path”<sup>210</sup>. ﴿143﴾ Thus We have made you a middle nation<sup>211</sup>, so that you may be witnesses over people and the Messenger be a witness over

\* سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّهُمْ عَن قِبَلِهِمُ الَّذِي كَانُوا عَلَيْهِمْ قُلْ لِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ

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

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

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

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

211 *Ummatan wasaṭan* (lit. a middle nation) means just and fair, taking a middle way path of moderation in life and not inclining towards any of the extremes that border on danger (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn 'Āshūr). Also see: 3: 110.



you<sup>212</sup>. We have made you face the direction of Prayer you used to, so that We may know he who follows the Messenger from he who turns back on his heels<sup>213</sup>. Indeed it<sup>214</sup> is heavy except for those who are guided by Allah. Allah was not to render your Belief<sup>215</sup> in vain; indeed Allah is Ever-Kind, Ever-Merciful to people. <sup>﴿144﴾</sup> We have certainly seen you turning your face 'anxiously' in the sky<sup>216</sup>. We shall turn you to a direction of Prayer that you shall be satisfied with. Turn then your face to the Sanctified Mosque<sup>217</sup>. Wherever you 'Believers' are, turn your faces towards it. Indeed those who have been given the Book know for sure that this is the truth from their Lord<sup>218</sup>—Allah is not unaware of what they do. <sup>﴿145﴾</sup> Surely if you

مَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَيَّ عَقْبَيْهِ ۖ وَإِن كَانَتْ لَكِ كِبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضِيعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ قَدْ نَرَى تَقَلُّبَ وَجْهِكَ فِي السَّمَاءِ فَلَنُوَلِّيَنَّكَ قِبْلَةً تَرْضَاهَا فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

212 One interpretation of this aya is that this moderate Believing nation, will bear witness on the Day of Judgment that the Prophets and Messengers of God delivered their Messages dutifully to their nations (c.f. Ibn Mājah: 4284, Imām Aḥmad: 11575). Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) will, in turn, bear witness that his nation has spoken the truth (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī, al-Sa'dī).

213 A true Believer will abide by the Prophet's commands without qualms.

214 The change of *qiblah*.

215 *Imān* (Belief) here means Prayer which was observed in obedience to the Messenger (ﷺ) by facing the first *qiblah* (c.f. Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī). Naturally, the Believers, although unquestioningly obeyed God's command, heavy as it was, were worried about the fate of their earlier Prayers. So God, the Ever-Kind, is assuring them here that these are safeguarded with Him.

216 The Prophet (ﷺ) was anxiously awaiting the command to change the *qiblah*. For that he used to look up at the sky expectantly. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī)

217 *Al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* of Makkah (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtubī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr).

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

bring to the people of the Book every Sign, they will not follow your direction of Prayer, neither will you follow their direction of Prayer. None of you will follow each other's direction of Prayer. Surely if you follow their whims after the knowledge that came to you, indeed then you are one of the wrongdoers. <sup>146</sup> Those to whom We have given the Book know it<sup>219</sup> as much as they know their own children—indeed a party of them suppresses the truth knowingly. <sup>147</sup> The truth is from your Lord, so be not one of the doubtful. <sup>148</sup> Each have their own direction to follow, then engage in a race for good deeds. Wherever you might be, Allah will bring<sup>220</sup> you all—indeed Allah has power over everything<sup>221</sup>. <sup>149</sup> Wherever you 'Muhammad' set out 'on a journey' from, turn your face towards the Sanctified Mosque; this certainly is the truth from your Lord—Allah is not unaware of what you do. <sup>150</sup> Wherever you set out from 'Muhammad' turn your face towards the Sanctified Mosque<sup>222</sup>; wherever you 'Believers' might

وَلَيْنَ آتَيْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ وَلَيْنَ آتَيْتَهُمْ آهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ وَلِكُلِّ وُجْهَةٍ هُوَ مُوَلِّئُهَا فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْحَيَاتِ آيِنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَحْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَمَنَّوْا نِعْمَتِي عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

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

220 Gather.

221 C.f. 5: 48.

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

be turn your faces towards it<sup>223</sup>, this in order that people would have no argument against you<sup>224</sup>, barring those who are unfair—fear them not but fear Me, so that I may perfect My Favour on you<sup>225</sup> and so that you may be guided<sup>226</sup>.

﴿151﴾ This 'favour' is like 'that of sending among you a Messenger<sup>227</sup> who recites Our Signs to you, purifies you, teaches you the Book and Wisdom<sup>228</sup>, and teaches you that which you did not know<sup>229</sup>.

﴿152﴾ Remember Me<sup>230</sup> and I shall remember You<sup>231</sup>; be grateful to Me and do not Deny Me.

﴿153﴾ You who Believe, seek help in

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ  
آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ  
وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾ فَأَذْكُرُونِي  
أَذْكُرْكُمْ وَأَشْكُرُوا لِي وَلَا تَكْفُرُونِ ﴿١٥٢﴾

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

224 One of the reasons for the chance of *qiblah* is that so the Jews would have no ground to argue against you for denouncing them while in reality Muslims follow their direction of Prayer. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

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

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

227 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). This is in response to the Prayer of Abraham (ع), c.f. 2: 129. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sa'dī)

228 The Book (*al-kitāb*) and Wisdom (*al-ḥikmah*) are the Qur'an and Sunnah respectively. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

229 News of that which they had no means of knowing, e.g.: the Unseen (*al-ghayb*), past and future events. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, Ibn 'Ashūr)

230 Believers are encouraged to engage in the great form of worship of remembrance (*dhkr*) by way of thanking God for these favours.

231 God laudably mentions and showers with favours those who remember and mention Him.



patience and Prayer—indeed Allah is with<sup>232</sup> the patient. ﴿154﴾ Say not about those who are killed in the path of Allah<sup>233</sup>: “dead”; nay, they are alive but you perceive it not<sup>234</sup>. ﴿155﴾ We shall test<sup>235</sup> you with some fear, hunger and dwindling financial resources, souls and crops—deliver good tidings to those who are patient. ﴿156﴾ Those who when struck by a calamity say: “Verily to Allah we belong and to Him we shall return”<sup>236</sup>. ﴿157﴾ On those are Prayers<sup>237</sup> from their Lord and Mercy—those are the truly guided.

﴿158﴾ Certainly *Ṣafā* and *Marwah*<sup>238</sup> are among the Symbols<sup>239</sup> of Allah— whoever proceeds for the House in

يَأْتِيهَا الذِّبْنَ ءَامِنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ  
وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ وَلَا تَقُولُوا  
لِمَنْ يُقْتَلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمُوتَ بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ وَلَئِنْ  
لَا تَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنَ الْخَوْفِ  
وَالْجُوعِ وَنَقْصٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْوَالِ وَالْأَنْفُسِ وَالثَّمَرَاتِ  
وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ  
قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ  
عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولَئِكَ  
هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

\* إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ  
الْبَيْتَ أَوْ اعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ

232 Here is evidence of God’s particular Companionship, *ma‘iyyah*, with the Believers; leading to His guidance and support.

233 *Fī sabīl Allāh* (lit. in the path of God) means by striking a path that is in accordance with God’s ordinances. Here are meant those who met their death on the battlefield in the cause of God.

234 C. f. 3: 169-171.

235 As much as there are rewards and favours for Belief, there are hardships and trials.

236 This *dhikr*, *innā li-Allāh wa innā ilayhi rāji‘ūn*, is a great one indeed (c.f. Muslim: 218).

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

238 The two small mounts in the Sanctified Mosque, between which people circulate when they perform during *Sa‘y* Hajj or ‘*umrah*.

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



pilgrimage or lesser pilgrimage<sup>240</sup>, there is no blame for him to circulate<sup>241</sup> between them—for whoever does good voluntarily, Allah is indeed Thankful and All-Knowing. ﴿159﴾ Indeed those who suppress what We brought down of clear Signs and Guidance, after We have expounded them in the Book—Allah Damns<sup>242</sup> them and they are damned by those who damn<sup>243</sup>; ﴿160﴾ except those who repent and undo the harm and explain ‘Allah’s revealed Signs and Guidance’—those I shall forgive them, for I am the Forgiver, the Most Merciful. ﴿161﴾ Those who Deny<sup>244</sup> and die Denying, on them is Allah’s, the angels’ and all humans’ damnation; ﴿162﴾ forever they last in it<sup>245</sup>—their Punishment will not be lightened neither will they have respite. ﴿163﴾ Your God is one God, indeed He is the Most Gracious the Most Merciful.

﴿164﴾ Verily in the creation of the Heavens and Earth; the alternation of night and day; the vessels that run in the sea ‘laden’ with what benefits people; the water that He causes to fall from the sky to enliven the earth

بِهِمَا وَمَنْ تَوَلَّعَ خَيْرًا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَاكِرٌ عَلَيْهِ ﴿١٥٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْتُمُونَ مَا أَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالْهُدَىٰ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّاهُ لِلنَّاسِ فِي الْكِتَابِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَلْعَنُهُمُ اللَّاعِنُونَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا وَأَصْلَحُوا وَبَيَّنَّوْا فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَنَا التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَرَاءُ أُولَٰئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٦١﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ وَاللَّهُ كَرِيمٌ إِلَهُ وَجِدٌ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٦٣﴾

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا

240 ‘Umrah.

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

242 Al-La‘n is casting and driving away from God’s Mercy. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Shinqīfī)

243 These are detailed in aya 161 below: the angels and all humans. (al-Shinqīfī)

244 Those who go on covering up the truth until they meet their death.

245 Damnation and the Fire.

with it after its death and disperses therein every moving creature; the dispensing of the winds; and the harnessed clouds between the sky and Earth are Signs<sup>246</sup> for the heedful. ﴿165﴾ There are people who take ‘for themselves’ rivals to Allah<sup>247</sup>, whom they love as much as they love Allah—‘but’ the Believers are stauncher in their love for Allah<sup>248</sup> ‘more than anything else’. Should the Transgressors ‘come to’ see ‘the day’ when they ‘actually’ see Punishment<sup>249</sup>—‘they would realize’ that all power belongs to Allah and that the Punishment of Allah is severe indeed. ﴿166﴾ Then those who were followed<sup>250</sup> shall disown those who followed, ‘when’ they saw the Punishment and all means<sup>251</sup> were cut off from them. ﴿167﴾ Those who followed shall say: “Should we have another round, we will disown them as they disowned us”<sup>252</sup>; thus Allah shows them their deeds as remorse ‘for them’—they shall not be let out from the Fire.

مِن كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرُونَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿١٦٦﴾ إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأُوا الْعَذَابَ وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ ﴿١٦٧﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا لَوْ أَنَّا كُنَّا نَدْرِكُهُمْ لَسَخَّطْنَا لَهُمْ عَمَلَنَا وَإِنَّا لَمَنَّاتٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾ كَذَلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَمَا هُمْ بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿١٧٠﴾

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

247 After living through and experiencing firsthand all these clear Signs, some people yet take on worshipping false deities besides God.

248 As compared to these idolaters’ love for their gods.

249 As a result of Divine Judgment after Resurrection.

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

251 Of salvation and deliverance (c.f. 6: 94). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

252 C.f. 6: 27-28 and 26: 91-102.

﴿168﴾ O people, eat of what is there in the Earth, lawful and good<sup>253</sup>, and do not follow the footsteps of Satan<sup>254</sup>, indeed he is an open enemy to you. ﴿169﴾ Indeed he only bids you to 'commit' what is wicked and sinful, and that you should say of Allah what you have no knowledge of<sup>255</sup>. ﴿170﴾ Should they be told: "Follow what Allah sent down"<sup>256</sup>, they would say: "Nay, we would only follow that which we found our fathers doing"<sup>257</sup>; 'Would they' Even if their fathers were mindless of everything, nor were they guided? ﴿171﴾ The similitude of those who Deny is that of one who howls at that which does not hear anything except the calling and yelling<sup>258</sup>—dumb, deaf, blind, they have no sense<sup>259</sup>. ﴿172﴾ O Believers, eat of the good things<sup>260</sup> which We provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if you indeed worship Him 'alone'.

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ كُلُّوْا مِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ اِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٦٨﴾ اِنَّمَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالسُّوْءِ وَالْفَحْشَآءِ وَاِنۡ تَقُوْلُوْا عَلٰى اِلٰهِنَا مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ وَاِنۡ قِيْلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوْا مَا اَنْزَلَ اِلٰهُكُمْ قَالُوْا بَلۡ نَتَّبِعُ مَا اَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِۤ اٰبَآءَنَاۗ اَوَلَوْ كٰنَ اٰبَآؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ شَيْۡئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَمَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِيْ يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ اِلَّا دُعَاۗءَ وَنِدَاۗءَ صُمٌّ بُكْمٌ عُمٰٓىۙ فَهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٧١﴾ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ وَاشْكُرُوْا لِلّٰهِ اِنۡ كُنْتُمْ اِيۡنَاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿١٧٢﴾

253 These are two conditions of the food that people are allowed to consume: lawful (unlawful foods will be explained shortly in aya 173) and beneficial, not harmful (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr).

254 Who makes people deem lawful or unlawful what is not (c.f. 6: 140-142).

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

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

257 C.f. 5: 103-104, 31: 20-21 and 37: 69-70.

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

259 Their senses are not tuned to Divine admonition.

260 Ṭayyibāt, healthy and wholesome (c.f. 5: 87-88 and 23: 51).



﴿173﴾ Indeed He 'Allah' made unlawful for you carrion, blood<sup>261</sup>, swine flesh, and what was intended 'as sacrifice' for others besides Allah; 'yet' whoever is forced 'by necessity' – neither transgressing<sup>262</sup> nor going to excess<sup>263</sup> – he is not guilty of sin—certainly Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿174﴾ Indeed those who suppress what Allah sent down in the Book and trade it off for a meagre price, these eat nothing but fire in their bellies; and on the Day of Resurrection Allah will not speak to them, nor will He purify<sup>264</sup> them—theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿175﴾ Those are the ones who traded off guidance for loss, and Punishment for Forgiveness—incredulous is their endurance in the Fire!<sup>265</sup> ﴿176﴾ That is because Allah sent down the Book with truth, and those who differ upon the Book are in extreme disagreement<sup>266</sup>.

إِنَّمَا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةَ وَالدَّمَ وَلَحْمَ الْخِزْيِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ بِهِ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ فَمَنْ أَضْطُرَّ غَيْرَ بَاغٍ وَلَا عَادٍ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٧٣﴾

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

261 What is unlawful is running blood but not the blood captured in vessels after slaughter, c.f. 6: 145. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

262 By eating any of these without being in a circumstance where one is hard pressed into it (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).

263 Even in pressing circumstances, eating more than what is absolutely necessary (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).

264 Absolve them of their sins.

265 God is mocking their ignorance of the severe Punishment that awaits them in the Hereafter—they will only experience the most excoriating pain and suffering (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah).

266 With the truth. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)



﴿177﴾ It is not sincere piety<sup>267</sup> that you should turn your faces towards the East and the West, but sincere piety 'is attained by' he who: Believes in Allah, the Last Day<sup>268</sup>, the angels, the Book and the Prophets; gives away money – dear to one's heart – to kinfolk, orphans, the destitute, the stranded<sup>269</sup>, beggars, and by way of 'freeing' necks<sup>270</sup>; keeps up the Prayer and gives out the prescribed alms<sup>271</sup>; those who fulfil their pledges, persevere in times of hardship and vicissitude, and during toughness<sup>272</sup>; these are the ones who are truthful, these are the ones who are truly Mindful.

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

267 The comparison here is made between nominal piety which is shallow and superficial as opposed to sincere, heart-earned piety which is deep and life defining. Here God gives examples of what constitutes sincere piety (*birr*) in His Eye, prominent among which are acts of the heart, which are a truer translation of the Belief that resides in the heart. Aya 177 also comes as a prelude paving the way to the laws (Divine *prescriptions* for the Believing community) that are introduced in ayas 178-209: retribution, distribution of inheritance, fasting, fighting, fair financial dealings and Hajj. All these laws are hard for a person or group of people whose piety is not genuine and unfeigned but not for those who have entered into the sphere of faith wholly and wholeheartedly (aya 209).

268 That comes after Resurrection.

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

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

271 That is *az-Zakāh*.

272 *Al-Ba'sā'* varyingly translated according to the stand the translator takes, as its meaning in this aya is not specified. Al-Shinqīṭī gives reference to aya 33:18, and thus he opines that it means heated or ardent fighting in battle here (c.f. also al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

﴿178﴾ O Believers, retribution<sup>273</sup> for the murdered is prescribed for you: the free for the free, the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. Whoever is pardoned by a brother<sup>274</sup> 'of the dead', let it<sup>275</sup> be sought with lenience, and given courteously. This is an alleviation and mercy from your Lord; whoever aggresses<sup>276</sup> after this 'settlement' will have a painful Punishment. ﴿179﴾ Verily there is a life<sup>277</sup> for you in retribution, o people of reason, so that you may be Mindful.

﴿180﴾ It is prescribed for you that when death approaches one of you, and that he would leave behind a good wealth, he should bequeath of it to his parents and relatives equitably<sup>278</sup>. This is an obligation on the Mindful. ﴿181﴾ Whoever alters it<sup>279</sup> after hearing it, then those who alter it will bear the burden of this sin. Indeed Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿182﴾ Whoever fears a swerving from the right path or sin on the part

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِصَاصُ فِي الْقَتْلِ الْحُرُّ بِالْحُرِّ وَالْعَبْدُ بِالْعَبْدِ وَالْأُنثَىٰ بِالْأُنثَىٰ فَمَنْ عُفِيَ لَهُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ شَيْءٌ فَأْتِيَ مَعَ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَدَّ إِلَيْهِ بِإِحْسَانٍ ذَلِكَ تَخْفِيفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ مِّنْ أَعْدَائِكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ عَدَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِي الْقِصَاصِ حَيَوةٌ يَا أُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٧٩﴾

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ إِنْ تَرَكَ خَيْرًا الْوَصِيَّةُ لِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٨٠﴾ فَمَنْ بَدَّلَهُ بَعْدَ مَا سَمِعَهُ فَإِنَّمَا إِثْمُهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ يُبَدِّلُونَهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨١﴾ فَمَنْ خَافَ مِنْ مَوْصٍ جَنَفًا أَوْ إِثْمًا فَأَصْلَحَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ﴿١٨٢﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٨٢﴾

273 *Qiyās*, translated here as retribution, is exacting justice on one who commits a crime in a manner equal to the crime committed. In the Qur'an it is associated with either manslaughter or causing damage to the body. The person who commits such a crime is punished in the same way as he did: killing or bodily damage as he did; an eye for an eye.

274 The living relative who takes charge of the victim' is affairs. Usually the brother.

275 The blood money. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyyah, al-Sa'dī)

276 By harming the murderer.

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

278 The distribution of inheritance should be fair and even.

279 The will of the deceased.

of the testator<sup>280</sup>, and he settles matters between them<sup>281</sup>, he will be committing no sin. Indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

﴿183﴾ O Believers, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed on those who came before you, so that you might be Mindful. ﴿184﴾ 'It lasts' For days numbered<sup>282</sup>; but whoever of you is ill or on a journey, 'should make up for the missed days by fasting' equally on other days. For those who can bear it<sup>283</sup>, they can compensate by providing for the needy; whoever does good voluntarily<sup>284</sup>, it is better for him, but fasting is better for you, if you only knew. ﴿185﴾ The month of Ramadan in which the Qur'an was sent down<sup>285</sup> as guidance for mankind,

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ  
كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن كَانَ  
مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ  
أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ  
طَعَامٌ مِّسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ  
لَّهُ وَإِن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ  
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ فِيهِ  
الْقُرْءَانُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّنَ الْهُدَى  
وَالْفُرْقَانِ فَمَن شَهِدَ مِنكُمُ الشَّهْرَ  
فَلْيَصُمْهُ وَمَن كَانَ مَرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ

280 Seeing that the testator is being intentionally or unintentionally unfair or inequitable by giving out to anyone who is not a legal inheritor more than a third of the inheritance (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).

281 The disputants by making just and fair adjustments to the will (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī).

282 The days of the month of Ramadan. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

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

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

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



‘containing’ clear indicators of guidance and a criterion ‘for distinguishing between right and wrong’. Whoever of you witnesses the month let him fast it; ‘but’ whoever of you is ailing or on a journey, ‘should make up for the missed days by fasting’ equally on other days—Allah seeks ease not hardship for you, so that you may complete the ‘prescribed’ number of days, and Glorify<sup>286</sup> Allah in thankfulness for His Guidance of you, so that you might be thankful. <sup>﴿186﴾</sup> Should My servants ask you about Me, I am<sup>287</sup> near. I answer the prayer of the one who prays. Let them ‘then’ respond to Me and Believe in Me so that they might be guided. <sup>﴿187﴾</sup> It is lawful for you to be intimate to your wives on nights of fasting; they are a cover ‘of modesty’ for you and you are a cover for them. Allah knows that you used to betray yourselves<sup>288</sup>, ‘yet’ He accepted your repentance and forgave you. Now you may lie down with them and seek what Allah wrote for you<sup>289</sup>. Eat and drink until the white thread of

فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمُ  
الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمُ الْعُسْرَ وَلِتُكْمَلُوا  
الْعِدَّةَ وَلِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمُ  
وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٨٦﴾ وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ  
عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ  
إِذَا دَعَانِ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا بِي  
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ أَجَلٌ لَّكُمْ آيَاتُ  
الْصِّيَامِ الزَّكَاةِ إِلَىٰ نَسَائِكُمْ هُنَّ لِبَاسٌ  
لَّكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لِهِنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ اللَّهُ أَتَكْفُرُونَ  
كُنْتُمْ تُخَافُونَ أَنفُسَكُمْ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمُ  
وَعَفَا عَنكُمْ ۖ فَالْتَمَنَ بَشِيرُوهُنَّ وَأَبْتَغُوا مَا  
كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ  
لَكُمُ الْخَيْطُ الْأَبْيَضُ مِنَ الْخَيْطِ الْأَسْوَدِ  
مِنَ الْفَجْرِ ثُمَّ أَتِمُّوا الصِّيَامَ إِلَىٰ اللَّيْلِ وَلَا  
تُبَشِّرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَلَيَكُنَّ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ تِلْكَ  
حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَقْرُبُوهَا ۚ كَذَلِكَ يبينُ اللَّهُ  
ءَايَاتِهِ لِّلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾

<sup>286</sup> Saying *takbīr* of Eid (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurtūi, Ibn Kathīr).

<sup>287</sup> God takes on the answer directly to His servants without a need for intercession. God’s nearness means that one needs not to raise his voice or ask for intercession for God to hear his prayers and answer them.

<sup>288</sup> “Betraying” themselves by flouting an earlier observance of theirs of not being intimate to their wives during the whole month of Ramadan (c.f. al-Bukhārī: 4508).

<sup>289</sup> Children. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)



dawn<sup>290</sup> can be discerned from the black thread 'of night'<sup>291</sup>; then you have to carry on fasting until night-time. Do not lie down with them while you confine yourselves<sup>292</sup> to mosques—these are the boundaries of Allah, steer away from them. Like so Allah explains His Signs to people, that they might be Mindful.

﴿188﴾ Do not devour each other's property unlawfully, nor offer them to the rulers<sup>293</sup>, so that you may eat up a portion of the property of others sinfully, knowingly. ﴿189﴾ They ask you about the crescents<sup>294</sup>; say: "They are indicators of timings for people and Pilgrimage". It is not sincere piety that you approach houses from the back<sup>295</sup>, but sincere piety is that who is Mindful. Approach the houses from their 'front' doors<sup>296</sup> and be Mindful of Allah, so that you may be successful.

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا أَمْوَالَكُمْ بَيْنَكُمْ بِالْبِطْلِ وَتُدُلُّوا  
بِهَا إِلَى الْكُفَّارِ لِيَأْكُلُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنْ أَمْوَالِ  
النَّاسِ بِالْإِثْمِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٨٨﴾ يَسْأَلُونَكَ  
عَنِ الْأَهْلِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ  
وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا  
وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مَنْ اتَّقَىٰ وَأَتَىٰ الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ  
أَبْوَابِهَا وَأَتَقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٨٩﴾

290 The light of dawn.

291 C.f. al-Bukhārī: 1954 and Muslim: 1100.

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

293 In bribery to those who rule in cases of litigation, judges. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

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

295 It was a habit of theirs, except for Quraysh, during the period before Islam to enter their houses from the back after donning the *ihrām* for 'umrah or Hajj thinking that this is an act of obedience. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

296 This is by way of inducing them to break up with groundless old habits, and embrace a whole new perspective regarding what a true relationship with God is supposed to be. A reminder of what sincere piety (*birr*) really is; not outwardly and contrived but in inwardly and sincere (c.f. 2: 177).

﴿190﴾ Fight in the path of Allah those who fight you and do not transgress<sup>297</sup>—surely Allah likes not the transgressors. ﴿191﴾ Kill them wherever you find them<sup>298</sup>, and drive them out from where they drove you out<sup>299</sup> – surely trial<sup>300</sup> is more grievous than killing. Do not fight them in the Sacred Mosque until they fight you in it, and if they fight you, kill them; this is the ‘just’ requital of the Deniers. ﴿192﴾ ‘But’ If they hold back, then Allah is surely All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿193﴾ Fight them until there is no trial<sup>301</sup>, and the religion becomes sincerely Allah’s own. If they hold back, only the wrongdoers shall be transgressed against. ﴿194﴾ The sanctified month<sup>302</sup> is by way of ‘replacement for’ the sanctified month<sup>303</sup>; ‘violation of’ what is

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ  
وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ ﴿١٩٠﴾  
وَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ حَيْثُ ثَقِفْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنْ حَيْثُ  
أَخْرَجُوكُمُ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَشَدُّ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا تَقَاتِلُوهُمْ  
عِنْدَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ حَتَّى يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِيهِ فَإِن قَاتَلُوكُمْ  
فَأَقْتُلُوهُمْ كَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٩١﴾ فَإِنِ أَنْتَ هُوَ  
فِإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٢﴾ وَقَاتِلُوهُمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ  
فِتْنَةً وَيَكُونَ الدِّينُ لِلَّهِ فَإِنِ أَنْتَ هُوَ فَلَا عُدْوَانَ  
إِلَّا عَلَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٩٣﴾ الشَّهْرُ الْحَرَامُ بِالشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ  
وَالْحُرُمَتُ قِصَاصٌ فَمَنِ اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ فَاعْتَدُوا  
عَلَيْهِ بِمِثْلِ مَا اعْتَدَى عَلَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا  
أَنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

297 Do not overlook the rulings set forth for fighting. Among these are not killing or harming women, children, the elderly and those who did not aid by any means in the fight against the Believers. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

298 The Deniers who raised arms against the Believers. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

299 The land from which they expelled you before, i.e. Makkah. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

300 *Fitnah* comes from the root *f-t-n* which means to test and try; the pagans of Makkah subjected Muslims to the harshest treatment and, at times, outright torture to drive them, and whoever might be tempted to join them, away from Islam.

301 Forcing Muslims out of their religion.

302 *Al-Ashhur al-Hurum*, lit. the sanctified months, in which it was agreed that no fighting is permissible, are four: al-Muḥarram, Rajab, Dhul Qi‘dah, Dhul Hijjah.

303 According to al-Sa‘dī this has two meanings. Firstly, if they fight you during a sanctified month then fight them back (c.f. also al-Wāhidī, *al-Wajīz*). Secondly, is that God rewarded His Prophet (ﷺ) for not fighting during the sanctified month of Dhul Qi‘dah on the sixth year of Hijrah when he wanted to perform ‘umrah only to be turned away by the pagans, by enabling him to perform it (in what is known as ‘*Umra al-Qadā*’) during the same month of the year that followed (c.f. al-Ṭabarī).

prohibited is repayable. Whoever transgresses against you, transgress against them as much as they did and be Mindful of Allah and know that Allah is with the Mindful. ﴿195﴾

Spend in the path of Allah<sup>304</sup>, do not throw yourselves into 'utter' ruin<sup>305</sup>, and perfect 'your deeds'—surely Allah likes those who perfect.

﴿196﴾ Fulfil Pilgrimage and minor pilgrimage<sup>306</sup> perfectly<sup>307</sup> for Allah, but if you are impeded<sup>308</sup> then 'slaughter' whatever offering is affordable<sup>309</sup>. Do not shave your heads<sup>310</sup> until the offerings reach their allotted location 'of slaughter'; 'yet' whoever of you is ill or suffers from his head<sup>311</sup>, let him compensate for it by fasting,

وَأَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُلْقُوا بِأَيْدِيكُمْ إِلَى  
التَّهْلُكَةِ وَأَحْسِنُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٩٥﴾

وَأَتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ فَإِنْ أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا  
أَسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ  
الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَرِيضًا أَوْ بِهِ أَذًى  
مِّن رَّأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِّن صِيَامٍ أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ  
فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ  
مِنَ الْهَدْيِ فَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامٌ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ فِي

304 Raise the necessary funds to prepare for such a just fighting cause (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

305 By not making the necessary preparations (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

306 'umrah.

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

308 Your journey was cut off by an enemy or an illness, or whatever forceful reason.

309 *Al-hadyy*, lit. sacrificial animals gifted to God. The term is limited to those animals intended for slaughter during Hajj or 'umrah. Otherwise, they are called *udhhiyah*, simply sacrifice.

310 Shaving the head is prohibited for the one who embarks upon Hajj or 'umrah. This is why it is used here to mean that: you shall not relieve yourselves of the prohibitions of these rites. That is until you sacrifice the *hadyy*. The place of slaughter is for the ones who were cut short would be the place where they reached, but for those who completed their rites it would be within the sanctified (*haram*) area of Makkah (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Shinqīṭī).

311 Those who are inflicted with head ailments, like a rash or lice that demand shaving the head or shortening the hair, are allowed to shave their heads, or shorten their hair while still in a state of *ihrām*, given that they make up for it by fasting three days, feeding six of the poor (each with half a *ṣā'*), or sacrificing a goat for the poor of the Sanctified Mosque (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī).



giving charity, or slaughtering 'for Allah'. If you feel secure<sup>312</sup>, then those who enjoy 'a repose'<sup>313</sup> from minor pilgrimage until Pilgrimage, 'they are to compensate by sacrificing' whatever offering affordable; 'but' whoever could not 'afford an offering', let him fast three days during Hajj and seven when you return<sup>314</sup>: these are ten complete. This 'ruling applies' to those whose family<sup>315</sup> do not reside around<sup>316</sup> the Sanctified Mosque— be Mindful of Allah and know that Allah's Punishment is severe. ﴿197﴾ Hajj is 'due during' known months<sup>317</sup> and whoever takes on himself to perform Hajj, let him hold back from intimate acts, sinning and quarrelling; whatever good you do Allah knows about it. Provide for yourselves<sup>318</sup>, indeed the best provision is Mindfulness, so be Mindful of Me, o people of reason.

الْحَجَّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ذَلِكَ  
لِمَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلَهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَانْفُوا  
اللَّهِ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٩٦﴾ الْحَجُّ  
أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ  
فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوفَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ  
وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَعْلَمَهُ اللَّهُ وَسَزُودُوا  
فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْزَادِ السَّقْوَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا يَأْتُوا  
الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٧﴾

312 If hindrances no longer exist.

313 A relaxation period extending from the time of performing 'umrah – during the months of Hajj – until the coming of the Hajj days, in which one enjoys what is forbidden for those in a state of *ihrām*.

314 To your homes.

315 That is, place of permanent residence.

316 These are either the ones who reside within the radius of the Sanctified Mosque at a distance in which Prayers are not shortened (*qasr*) (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī), or in particular only these who are residents of the sanctified area (*haram*) surrounding the Mosque (c.f. Ibn 'Uthaymīn).

317 These are Shawwal, Dhul Qi'dah, and first ten day of Dhul Hijjah.

318 The reason for the revelation of this aya is that as mentioned by Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه): "The people of Yemen used to come for Hajj without supplying themselves with stocks, saying: "We are the Reliars 'on God". But when they reached Makkah they used to solicit provisions from people." (al-Bukhārī: 1523)



﴿198﴾ You will not be sinning should you seek bounty<sup>319</sup> from your Lord, and as you press on 'returning' from 'Arafāt, mention Allah<sup>320</sup> at the Inviolable Symbol<sup>321</sup> and mention Him as He guided you; for indeed before it<sup>322</sup> you were truly astray. ﴿199﴾ Then set forth<sup>323</sup> from where people set forth, and seek Allah's forgiveness<sup>324</sup>—indeed He is the All-Pardoning, Most Merciful. ﴿200﴾ When you are done with your devotional rites mention Allah as much as you mention your fathers<sup>325</sup> and more passionately. Some people would say: "Our Lord give us in this worldly life", having no share in the Hereafter; ﴿201﴾ 'yet' some of them<sup>326</sup> say: "Our Lord, give us what is good in this worldly life and what is good in the Hereafter, and spare us the Punishment of the Fire"<sup>327</sup>.

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا  
مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَقَضْتُم مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ  
فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ  
وَأَذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَيْتُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
مِّن قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ الضَّالِّينَ ﴿١٩٨﴾ ثُمَّ أَفِيضُوا  
مِنْ حَيْثُ أَقَاضَ النَّاسُ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا  
اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٩٩﴾ فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ  
مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ كَذِكْرِكُمْ  
ءَابَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا فَمِنَ النَّاسِ  
مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا لَهُ  
فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَقُولُ  
رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ  
حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠١﴾

319 By trading. (Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*, al-Qurṭībī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

320 Engage in *dhikr*, prayers and Praying.

321 *Al-Mash'ar al-Ḥarām* is Muzdalifah. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa'dī)

322 God's guidance of you to the correct Abrahamic rites of Hajj. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

323 The addressees are the Quraysh clan who, known as *al-ḥums*, held back from going to 'Arafāt and remained in Muzdalifah. They thought they were in a station above the others, but after the advent of Islam, this command remedied the situation (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī).

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

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

326 These are the ones who are well-guided.

327 This supplication (*Rabbanā ātinā fī al-dunyā ḥasanah wa fī al-ākhirati ḥasanah wa qinā 'adhāb an-nār*) contains all that is good and desirable by humans, and

﴿202﴾ Those<sup>328</sup> are the ones who have a share of what they earned<sup>329</sup>, surely Allah is swift in reckoning<sup>330</sup>.

﴿203﴾ Mention Allah in 'these' numbered days<sup>331</sup>; whoever hastens 'departure' in two days<sup>332</sup> will not be sinning, and whoever stays behind<sup>333</sup> will not be sinning, for those who were Mindful<sup>334</sup>—be Mindful of Allah and know that you will be gathered unto Him.

﴿204﴾ Of people are those<sup>335</sup> whose talk about this worldly life<sup>336</sup> you are drawn to, calling Allah to bear witness to what is in his heart, while he is the bitterest of adversaries<sup>337</sup>.

أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ  
سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾ \* وَأَذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامِهِ  
مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا  
إِنَّه عَلَيْهِ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِنْه عَلَيْهِ لِمَنْ  
اتَّقَىٰ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ  
تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢٠٣﴾

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ  
الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ  
الَّذِي الْخَصَامُ ﴿٢٠٤﴾

this is why, as found in al-Bukhārī (6389) and Muslim (2690), it is the one that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray with most often.

328 The ones who supplicate with this prayer. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

329 The good deeds that they did.

330 Repayment. (Ibn ‘Uthaymīn)

331 People are encouraged to mention God in the form of *takbīr* abundantly during the days of *tashrīq*: 11, 12 and 13 of Dhū-l Ḥijjah (al-Qurṭubī notes that exegetes unanimously agree on this).

332 That is before the sun sets on the second day, 12 Dhul Ḥijjah. (al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, al-Sa‘dī)

333 To depart on the next day.

334 During their Hajj. (al-Ṭabarī)

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

336 With regards to worldly matters.

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

﴿205﴾ When he turns away 'from you' he sets about the land to sow corruption and devastate tillage and progeny<sup>338</sup>—surely Allah likes not corruption. ﴿206﴾ When it is said to him: "Be Mindful of Allah!" Sinful conceit gets the better of him—will Hellfire not be enough for him! Indeed it is the worst of beds. ﴿207﴾ 'While' Among people are those who sell themselves<sup>339</sup> seeking the Pleasure of Allah—indeed Allah is Most Kind to His servants.

﴿208﴾ O Believers, enter into Submission wholly<sup>340</sup> and do not follow the footsteps of Satan—indeed he is for you an open enemy. ﴿209﴾ Shall you slip<sup>341</sup> after what came to you, then know that Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿210﴾ Do they expect 'nothing' but that Allah comes to them in shadows of clouds along with the angels; 'lo!' the affair is settled and to Allah all affairs are returned<sup>342</sup>.

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّى سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ  
الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ ﴿٢٠٥﴾  
وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ بِالْإِتْمَانِ  
فَاحْسَبُهُمْ جَهَنَّمٌ وَّأَلَيْسَ الْأُمْتَادُ ﴿٢٠٦﴾  
وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ  
مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠٧﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَذْخُلُوا فِي السَّلَامِ  
كَأَفْهٍ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ  
لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾ فَإِن رَّكَلْتُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَا  
جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ  
حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٩﴾ هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَن يَأْتِيَهُمُ  
اللَّهُ فِي ظُلُمٍ مِّنَ الْعَمَامِرِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَقُضِيَ  
الْأَمْرُ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٢١٠﴾

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

339 Give away their lives.

340 Embrace Islam to the fullest, following all its commandments wholeheartedly (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn Kathīr). The word employed here is *silm* rather than *islām*. The meaning of *silm* is to make peace, submit and unrestrainedly surrender to the Will of God, which actually captures the underlying meaning of *islām* (c.f. Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*; al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*).

341 The imagery of losing one's footing and firm step, shows in a concrete way how it would look like to backslide from the right path while knowing it.

342 On the Day of Judgment God comes in the shadows of clouds to pass judgment on



﴿211﴾ Ask the Children of Israel how many a clear Sign We have given them! But those who exchange the bounty of Allah 'for Denial'<sup>343</sup> after it came to him, 'will come to know' that Allah is severe in Punishment. ﴿212﴾ The worldly life is prettified for the Deniers; they ridicule those who Believe; 'but' the Mindful are indeed above them on the Day of Judgment<sup>344</sup>—Allah showers with favours whom He wills without account<sup>345</sup>. ﴿213﴾ Mankind was one nation<sup>346</sup>, then Allah sent the Prophets bearing good tidings and cautioning, and He sent down with them the Book<sup>347</sup> with truth so to arbitrate between people in what they dispute over. It<sup>348</sup> was only disputed over by those to whom it was given after

سَلَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَرَّاءَاتِيَهُمْ مِنْ ءَايَةٍ بَيِّنَةٍ  
وَمَنْ يُبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ  
اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢١١﴾ زَيْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
أَحْيَوُهُ الدُّنْيَا وَيَسْحَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ  
اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ  
يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢١٢﴾ كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً  
فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ النَّبِيِّنَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ  
مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ فِي مَا  
اختلفُوا فِيهِ وَمَا اختلف فِيهِ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ  
مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغِيًّا لِيُبَيِّنَهُمْ فَهَدَى  
اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لِمَا اختلفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ  
بِإِذْنِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ  
مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾

His creation condemning those who slip away from the path that He has clearly shown through His Books and Messengers to Hellfire (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr).

343 C.f. 14: 28-29.

344 C.f. 83: 29-36.

345 The Mindful will be entered into Paradise; the greatest “favour” from God (c.f. 7: 49). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

346 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “The time between Adam and Noah is ten centuries. Throughout these, people were on the right path of God, but then they started disputing ‘over matters of faith’ God sent Prophets bearing glad tiding and cautioning.” (al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*: 2:546, c.f. also al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīfī)

347 Revealed Scriptures which contain truthful news and fair commands. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, al-Sa‘dī)

348 The truth as found in their respective Scriptures (c.f. Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī). Such is the plight of humans, especially those who lack true sincerity which leads to humbleness, the more knowledge they possess, the more haughty and disputatious they become.



the clear Signs came to them, out of contravention one against the other. But Allah leads the Believers to the truth, which they disputed over, with His Will—Allah guides those He wills to a straight path. ﴿214﴾ Or you think that you will enter Paradise without the example of those who came before<sup>349</sup> comes to pass you! They were touched by turmoil and affliction, and fiercely shaken<sup>350</sup>, until the Prophet<sup>351</sup> and those who Believed with him exclaim: “When is Allah’s victory?”—verily Allah’s victory is ever near.

﴿215﴾ They ask you ‘Muhammad’ what they should spend<sup>352</sup>; say: “Whatever good<sup>353</sup> you spend ‘is to be` on your parents, relatives, orphans, the needy, and the stranded”—whatever good you do Allah knows about it. ﴿216﴾ Fighting is prescribed for you, as much as you hate it; might you hate a thing which is good for you and might you love a thing which is evil for you—Allah knows and you do not know.

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تُدْخَلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ مَسَّتْهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلُّوا حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ مَتَى نَصُرُ اللَّهُ أَلاَ إِنَّا نَصُرُ اللَّهَ قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢١٤﴾

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالنَّسَبِ وَالسَّبِيلِ وَمَا تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١٥﴾ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهُ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ وَعَسَى أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١٦﴾

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

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

351 Any of the previous Prophets.

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

353 Money earned from lawful resources.

﴿217﴾ They<sup>354</sup> ask you about the sanctified month ‘whether there is’ fighting during it! Say: “Fighting in it is grave”; ‘but’ turning ‘people’ away from the path of Allah, Denying Him and ‘preventing access to’ the Sanctified Mosque, and driving its people away from it are graver before Allah—surely trial<sup>355</sup> is more grievous than killing. They will keep on fighting you until they turn you back from your religion, if they could. Whoever reneges on his religion and dies Denying, the deeds of these are nullified in this worldly life and in the Hereafter—these are the company of the Fire, forever they abide therein. ﴿218﴾ Those who Believe and those who migrated and fought in the cause of Allah; these are ‘rightly’ hopeful of Allah’s Mercy—Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿219﴾ They ask you about intoxicants and gambling; say: “There is a great sin in both, and ‘some’ benefits to people”, but their sin is greater than their benefit<sup>356</sup>. They ask you

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَالْفِتْنَةُ أَكْبَرُ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ وَلَا يَزَالُونَ يَقْتُلُونَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَن دِينِكُمْ إِنِ اسْتَطَعُوا وَمَن يَرْتَدِدْ مِنكُمْ عَن دِينِهِ فَيَمُتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَرْجُونَ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢١٨﴾ \*يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنْفَعٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَّفْعِهِمَا وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ قُلِ الْغَفْوَةُ ذَٰلِكَ بِسْمِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ أَلَايَاتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١٩﴾

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

355 These trials and tribulations (*fitnah*) that the Deniers subjected the Believers to are far graver than unknowingly killing a single Denier during a sanctified month (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, al-Sa’dī, Ibn ‘Ashūr).

356 “Benefits” are mentioned only way of preparing the then newly-formed Muslim community for the total prohibition of using intoxicants and gambling which was to come (c.f. 5: 90-91).

what they should spend<sup>357</sup>; say: “the surplus<sup>358</sup>”. Like so Allah makes clear to you the Signs so that you may contemplate, <sup>(220)</sup> this worldly life and the Hereafter. They ask you about orphans<sup>359</sup>; say: “Nurturing them is best<sup>360</sup>, and that you should intermix with them; they are your brothers”. Allah knows those who reform and those who corrupt<sup>361</sup>. Had He willed, He would have made it onerous<sup>362</sup> on you—surely Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise.

<sup>(221)</sup> Do not marry Associating females unless they Believe; indeed a Believing slave female is better than an Associator<sup>363</sup>, though you might like her. Do not marry ‘your women’ to Associators; indeed a Believing slave male is better than an Associator, though you might

فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْيَتَامَىٰ قُلْ  
إِصْلَاحٌ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِن تُخَاطَبُوا فِيهِمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا  
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ  
لَأَعْتَبَتْكُمْ إِنَّا اللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٠﴾

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَاتِ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنَ وَلَا امَةٌ  
مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وَلَا أَجْبَنَةٌ  
وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنُوا وَلَعَبْدٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ  
خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ وَلَا أَجَبَنٌ أَوْلِيَاكَ  
يَدْعُونَ إِلَى التَّارِكِ وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُوا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ

<sup>357</sup> In the cause of God.

<sup>358</sup> *Al-‘Afw* is what is more than necessary to sustain you. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Ashūr)

<sup>359</sup> That is looking after the affairs of the orphans, but mainly about how to deal with their money (c.f. 4: 10). So God willed that a Muslim’s duty towards the orphans who are in his own custody is, firstly, to have their best interest in mind, but knowing that not mixing their money with his to spend from is a difficult task (c.f. Abū Dā‘ūd: 2871, Imam Aḥmad: 3002) particularly as he pays for their living expenses from it, so God gave permission for this but with a forewarning that the guardian should be Mindful of Him in this regard.

<sup>360</sup> Taking care of the orphans’ inheritance and looking after them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī)

<sup>361</sup> Regarding the affairs of the orphans and their finances.

<sup>362</sup> By making taking care of the finances of the orphans particularly tough by not allowing their guardians intermix their money with that of the orphans. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

<sup>363</sup> The Arabic term is *mushrik* which means one who associates other deities with God in worship.



like him. These invite to Fire, and Allah invites to Paradise, and He makes His Signs clear to people so that they may remember. <sup>(222)</sup> They ask you about menstruation; say: “It is harm<sup>364</sup>”. So keep away from women during menstruation<sup>365</sup>, and do not approach them<sup>366</sup> until they become purified<sup>367</sup>. When they purify themselves<sup>368</sup> come to them from where Allah has instructed you<sup>369</sup>. Verily Allah likes those who repeatedly repent and those who purify themselves. <sup>(223)</sup> Your women are cultivating fields for you<sup>370</sup>, so come to your cultivating fields the way you want<sup>371</sup>, and send ‘something good’ ahead for yourselves<sup>372</sup>, and be Mindful of Allah and know that you will meet Him—and give glad tidings to the Believers.

وَالْمَعْفُورَةَ بِأَذْنِهِ وَيُؤْتِي السَّلَامَةَ لِلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ  
يَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٢٢﴾ وَبَسَّطْنَاكَ مِنَ الْمَحِيضِ  
قُلْ هُوَ أَدَى فَأَعْتَزِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ  
وَلَا تَقْرُبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهَرْنَ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ فَأْتُوهُنَّ  
مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ  
وَيُحِبُّ الْمُطَهِّرِينَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾ نِسَاءُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَكُمْ  
فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ أَنَّى شِئْتُمْ وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلْقَوُهُ وَيُبَشِّرِ  
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٢٣﴾

<sup>364</sup> This is a literal translation for the word used, *adhā*, though it could also mean: something which is hateful as it causes discomfort (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

<sup>365</sup> When asked by Muslims, who saw the Jews of Madinah avoid their women completely during menstruation, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Do everything except intercourse”. (Muslim: 302)

<sup>366</sup> Sexually in the vagina. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

<sup>367</sup> That is until their courses end. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

<sup>368</sup> By washing themselves up. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

<sup>369</sup> Have intercourse with them in the vagina in a state of purity. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

<sup>370</sup> In as much as you sow your seeds into their wombs in expectation of yield. (al-Ṭabarī al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

<sup>371</sup> In whatever position, given that intercourse takes place in the vagina. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīṭī)

<sup>372</sup> Do good deeds that will be of use to you in the Hereafter. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)



﴿224﴾ Do not make your oaths in the Name of Allah a hindrance from you doing good<sup>373</sup>, being Mindful and amending affairs between people—verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿225﴾ Allah will not hold you accountable for careless swearing 'by Him'<sup>374</sup>, but He will hold you accountable for what your hearts have earned<sup>375</sup>—Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing. ﴿226﴾ Those who vow against their women, there shall be a waiting period of four months<sup>376</sup>. But if they go back 'on their oath', then Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful. ﴿227﴾ But if they are resolved on divorce, then Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿228﴾ Divorced women must wait for three courses<sup>377</sup>. It is unlawful for them to conceal what Allah created in their wombs<sup>378</sup>, if

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا  
وَتَقْتُلُوا وَتَنكِحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ  
عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٤﴾ لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ  
وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبْتُمْ فَلُوْبِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ  
عَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٥﴾ لِلَّذِينَ يُؤْلُونَ مِنْ نِسَائِهِمْ تَرْتِيضٌ  
أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ فَإِنْ فَاءَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٦﴾  
وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾  
وَالْمُطَلَقَاتُ يَرْتَضْنَ بِالنَّفْسِ مِنْ ثَلَاثَةِ فُرُوعٍ وَلَا  
يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ  
إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَبُعُولَتُهُنَّ  
أَحَقُّ بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا وَلَهُنَّ  
مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ  
دَرَجَةٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٨﴾

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

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

375 That is, a person intentionally lies and yet swears by God that he was telling the truth. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīfī)

376 This is the act of *ilā'*; vowing not to have intercourse with one's wife with the purpose of punishing her. Four months is the maximum time limit allowed for this state of affairs to go on. Otherwise, the husband who took such a vow needs to either get things back to normal, in which case he does not need to make up for breaking his vow and is forgiven by God, or else consummate divorce and not go on hurting his wife (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī).

377 *Thalāthata qurū'* is either three menstrual cycles, or three clean intervals after menstruation, in order to make absolutely sure that no pregnancy has taken place, before a divorced woman can remarry. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, al-Shinqīfī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

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

'truly' they Believe in Allah and the Hereafter. Their husbands have more right to take them back if they 'truly' mean to mend matters<sup>379</sup>. For them 'women' is as much as there is 'expected' of them<sup>380</sup>, as per what is 'socially' agreed<sup>381</sup>; men have a degree above them<sup>382</sup>—verily Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿229﴾ Divorce is for two times<sup>383</sup>, either hold them in agreeably<sup>384</sup> or let 'them' go gracefully. It is unlawful to you 'men' to take back anything of what you gave them 'your wives'<sup>385</sup>, unless they 'husband and wife' fear not upholding Allah's boundaries<sup>386</sup>; but if you<sup>387</sup> fear that they would not uphold Allah's

الطَّلُقُ مَرَّتَيْنِ فَإِمْسَاكَ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ تَسْرِيحٌ  
بِإِحْسَانٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكَرَّانٍ تَأْخُذُوا مِمَّا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ  
شَيْئًا إِلَّا أَنْ يَخَافَا أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ  
خِفْتُمَا أَلَّا يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا  
فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهِ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ فَلَا تَعْتَدُوهَا  
وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٢٩﴾

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

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

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

382 Al-Shinqīṭī is of the opinion that this is explained by aya 4: 34.

383 A man is only allowed to divorce his wife and have her back two times. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, al-Shinqīṭī)

384 By being kind and nice, in accordance to the agreed social norms, to them when they are under your roofs.

385 Dowry and gifts.

386 Here *ḥudūd Allāh* (God's boundaries) means His commands regarding marital rights. A wife who seeks divorce due to the fact that she does not feel affectionate towards, or just hates, her husband thus, in turn, alienates him by not fulfilling his rights, may compensate him for it. In this way he is allowed to take the money in exchange for conceding to her demand of divorce (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa'adī, al-Shinqīṭī).

387 The ones who are brought to pass judgment on the case.

boundaries, she would not be sinning in 'choosing' whatever she redeems herself for<sup>388</sup>. These are the boundaries of Allah—whoever oversteps the boundaries of Allah is among the Transgressors. ﴿230﴾ But if he divorces her<sup>389</sup>, she becomes unlawful for him unless she marries another husband. If he<sup>390</sup> 'then' divorces her, they will not be sinning to go back 'to each other'<sup>391</sup>; should they know that they would uphold Allah's boundaries. These are the boundaries of Allah, which He makes clear to those who know. ﴿231﴾ If you divorce women 'revocably' and they complete their time<sup>392</sup>, either hold them in agreeably or let them go agreeably. Do not hold them in<sup>393</sup> by way of hurt to transgress 'against them'<sup>394</sup>; whoever does that will be doing himself injustice. Do not ridicule the Signs of Allah and remember the bounty of Allah and the Book and Wisdom that He sent down to you to caution you with, and know that Allah Knows everything.

فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ حَتَّىٰ تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا  
 غَيْرَهُ، فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا  
 إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ  
 يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٠﴾ وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ  
 فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ  
 سَرِّحُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضِرَارًا  
 لِيَعْتَدُوا وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ، وَلَا  
 تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوعًا وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ  
 عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ  
 يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ  
 شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣١﴾

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

389 For a third time. (al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

390 The other husband.

391 Going back to her earlier husband if the divorce from her other husband is sealed.

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

393 Deciding to keep the wife and not consummate divorce.

394 To harm them by prolonging their agonizing waiting period, holding them back from marrying other husbands or forcing them into seeking separation and, in the process, compensate the current husband financially for it. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī, al-Shinqīṭī)



﴿232﴾ If you divorce women 'revocably' and they complete their time, do not 'o guardians' forbid them to reunite with their husbands, should they agree between themselves in keeping with what is 'socially' acceptable. With this are admonished those who Believe in Allah and the Last Day; this is more dignified for you and purer—Allah Knows and you do not know.

﴿233﴾ Mothers<sup>395</sup> should nurse their infants for two complete years, 'this is' for those who wish to fulfil 'the complete term of' nursing. The one to whom the child was born<sup>396</sup>, has to provide for them and clothe them, in keeping with what is 'socially' acceptable; no soul should bear a burden that is beyond its capability. No mother should be made to suffer using her infant, nor should a father. The same is incumbent on the 'father's' heir<sup>397</sup>. Should they 'the father and mother' seek weaning 'the infant', in agreement and by consultation between them, there is no sin on them<sup>398</sup>. If you want to hire a wet nurse for your infants,

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبِأَعْنَ أَجَلِهِنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُوهُنَّ  
 أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَرْوَاحَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَضُوا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ  
 ذَلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
 الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَمْ آزْكَى لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ  
 وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٢﴾

\* وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ  
 لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ  
 رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ لَا تُكَلِّفُ نَفْسٌ  
 إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَا تَضَارُّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَالِدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ  
 لَهُ بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا  
 فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ  
 عَلَيْهِمَا وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْرِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا  
 جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ  
 وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٣﴾

395 The majority of the rightly-guided predecessors are of the opinion that "mothers" here means divorced mothers (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn 'Āshūr).

396 The father.

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

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



then there is no sin on you if you pay what you agree on, in keeping with what is socially acceptable—be Mindful of Allah, and know that Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.

<sup>(234)</sup> Those of you who pass away leaving behind wives, let them `the widows` remain waiting for four months and ten days. When they finish their term<sup>399</sup>, you are not to blame for what they `choose to` do with themselves, in keeping with what is acceptable<sup>400</sup>—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do.

<sup>(235)</sup> You will not be sinning should you allude to a marriage proposal to women<sup>401</sup>, or that you keep this to yourselves<sup>402</sup>. Allah knows that you will keep on thinking about them, but do not promise them secretly, unless you say what is acceptable<sup>403</sup>, and do not tie the knot of marriage during the waiting period, `but wait` until the term has elapsed. Know that Allah knows what you tell yourselves and be cautious of Him—know that Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing.

<sup>(236)</sup> You will not be sinning should you divorce women whom you

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَيَنَّ  
بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ  
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ  
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٤﴾ وَلَا  
جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خُطْبَةٍ  
الْإِسَاءِ أَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ عِلْمٌ لَللَّهِ أَنْتُمْ  
سَتَذَكُرُنَّهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ  
سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا وَلَا تَعْزُمُوا  
عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ  
وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ  
وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٥﴾ لَا جُنَاحَ  
عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ  
تَقْرَبُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً وَمَتَعُوهُنَّ عَلَى الْمَوْسِعِ  
قَدَرُهُ وَعَلَى الْمُقْتَرِ قَدَرُهُ مَتَعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ  
حَقًّا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾

<sup>399</sup> This waiting period is known as *iddah*. During these four months and ten days the widow is not to get married. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Saʿdī, al-Shinqīṭī)

<sup>400</sup> Both socially and Islamically acceptable.

<sup>401</sup> The widowed and irrevocably divorced.

<sup>402</sup> Having the intention.

<sup>403</sup> That is only an implication of marriage during the waiting period is acceptable but not a direct statement of a marriage intention.

did not touch 'yet` nor committed yourselves to by stating a sum 'of dowry`. Bestow on them, the well-off according to his means and the poor according to his means, in keeping with what is 'socially` acceptable<sup>404</sup>—this is a duty on the well-doers. <sup>﴿237﴾</sup> If you divorce them before touching them, but you committed yourselves to paying a sum 'of dowry` to them<sup>405</sup>, 'pay them` half of what you committed yourselves to, unless they 'the wives` waive 'the due sum` or in whose hand the marriage knot<sup>406</sup> is waives 'it`. That you should waive is closer to Mindfulness, and do not overlook kindness among yourselves—verily Allah is All-Seeing of what you do. <sup>﴿238﴾</sup> Observe the Prayers<sup>407</sup> – and 'especially`

وَأَنْ طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً فَرْصَةً فَمِصْفُ مَا فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوا الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ عِقْدُهُ الزَّكَاحُ وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَى وَلَا تَنْسُوا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٧﴾  
حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ﴿٢٣٨﴾

<sup>404</sup> As a means of consolation it is a duty on the husband who divorces a woman before marriage is consummated, by getting in bed with her or stating a certain sum of money as dowry, to give her a present which would, according to social norm, make it up for her. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, al-Shinqīfī)

<sup>405</sup> This is the ruling regarding the case of divorce that takes place before coupling has taken place between the divorcees, but in which the husband has already committed himself to paying a certain amount as dowry, thus showing his firm intention of marriage. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

<sup>406</sup> The wife’s representative.

<sup>407</sup> The five mandatory daily Prayers (*al-Slawāt al-khams*) (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr). Prayers are mentioned in the midst of marital affairs rulings, which are prone to be overlooked due to the hurtful and hard feelings they leave in their wake, to relate people to the Hereafter—the most constant reminder of which is Payer. Their observance of these rulings and not to “overlook kindness” among themselves is made surer by reminding them that they will be held accountable for their deeds in the Hereafter, which they should not be oblivious to. Prayer in another aya is a deterrent against overindulgence: “Verily Prayer admonishes against vileness and loathsome acts” (29: 45) (c.f. al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, al-Biqā‘ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*).

the middle Prayer<sup>408</sup> – and rise for Allah ‘consistently’ devoutly. ﴿239﴾ But if you become fearful<sup>409</sup>, then ‘perform Prayers whether you are’ on foot or mounted, yet when your fears ease, mention Allah as He taught you that which you had no knowledge of. ﴿240﴾ Those of you who pass away leaving behind wives, let them ‘state in a’ will for their wives a maintenance for a year without expelling them ‘from their homes’<sup>410</sup>, but if they leave ‘their homes’ you are not to blame for what they ‘choose to’ do with themselves, in keeping with what is acceptable—surely Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿241﴾ ‘Likewise’ for the divorced women a maintenance ‘is due’ in keeping with what is ‘socially’ agreed—this is a duty on the Mindful. ﴿242﴾ Like so, Allah explains to you His Signs<sup>411</sup> so that you might become aware ‘of them’.

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

408 The third, middle Prayer, namely, *ṣalāt al-‘Aṣr*. This aya shows how particularly meritorious this Prayer is. (al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*)

409 Of an imminent danger, enemies and the like, which will be cause enough for you not to perform Prayers in the given manner strictly (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

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

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



﴿243﴾ Have you not seen those who fled their homelands in their thousands in fear of death, whereupon Allah said to them: “Die!” Then He brought them back to life<sup>412</sup>. Indeed Allah is bountiful to people, but most of them are thankless. ﴿244﴾ Fight ‘then Believers’ in the path of Allah and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿245﴾ Would there be one who loans Allah a comely loan<sup>413</sup>, so that Allah would multiply it for him manifold—Allah tightens and loosens<sup>414</sup>, and unto Him you shall return.

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

﴿٢٤٣﴾ \*الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٤٤﴾ وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٥﴾ مَن ذَا الَّذِي يُقرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا فَيضَعِفَهُ لَهُ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً وَاللَّهُ يَقْبِضُ وَيَبْضُطُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾

الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا إِلَى الْمَلَا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّ لَهُمْ أبعثْ لَنَا مَلِكًا نُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَتَبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا تُقَاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ أُخْرِجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا وَأَبْنَاءِنَا فَلَمَّا كَتَبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٤٦﴾

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

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

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



were expelled from our lands and 'bereft of' our children<sup>415</sup>?" When fighting was mandated upon them, they took to their heels, except a few—Allah is surely All-Knowing of the unjust. <sup>4247</sup> 'At that` Their Prophet said to them: "Allah has pointed out Ṭalūt<sup>416</sup> as a king for you". They said: "How come he becomes a king over us when we are more deserving of kingship than him; he 'even` has no vast wealth?" He said: "Allah has favoured him above you and made him deeply knowledgeable and physically imposing". Allah grants kingship to whomever He wills—verily Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. <sup>4248</sup> Their Prophet said to them: "The sign of his 'rightful` kingship is that the chest<sup>417</sup> comes to you and in it there is tranquillity from your Lord and remnant 'relics`<sup>418</sup> of what was left by the house of Moses and the house of Hārūn 'Aaron`, carried by angels. Surely this is 'enough as` a sign for you, that is if you are 'true` Believers". <sup>4249</sup> When Ṭalūt pulled ahead with the soldiers, he said to them: "Allah will test you

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدَ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ طَالُوتَ مَلِكًا قَالُوا أَنَّى يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ يُؤْتَ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ وَالْجِسْمِ وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٧﴾ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُم إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٤٨﴾ فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَن شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَن لَّمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اعْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرَبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُم مُّلْكُوا اللَّهَ كَرُمٌ مِّن فِتْنَةِ قَلِيلَةٍ

<sup>415</sup> Their women and children were taken captive by their enemies. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

<sup>416</sup> Believed to be the Biblical King Saul.

<sup>417</sup> *At-Tābūt* is said to be the Ark of the Covenant.

<sup>418</sup> These are believed to be Moses' (ﷺ) staff and some broken Tablets. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī)

with a river. Whoever drinks of it is not one of mine. But whoever does not taste it, is of mine, excepting one who scoops a handful". They drank 'their fill' of it but a few of them. When he crossed it, along with those who Believed with him, they said: "We have no power today against Jālūt<sup>419</sup> and his soldiers". 'But' Those who are sure that they will be meeting Allah said: "How many a time has a small company vanquished a multitudinous one with Allah's permission! Verily Allah is with the steadfast". <sup>(250)</sup> When they made themselves seen to Jālūt and his soldiers, they said: "Our Lord! Pour steadfastness on us, make firm our feet<sup>420</sup> and grant us victory over the unjust people". <sup>(251)</sup> They defeated them with Allah's permission; Dawūd 'David' killed Jālūt and Allah gave him kingship and Wisdom<sup>421</sup> and taught him of whatever He willed<sup>422</sup>. Had it not been for people pushing each other 'back and forth'<sup>423</sup>, the land would have gone to ruins. But Allah is

عَلَبَتْ فِتْنَةً كَثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ  
مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾ وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ  
وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا  
وَتَيَّبْتَ أقدامَنَا وَأَنْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥١﴾  
فَهَزَمُوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ  
جَالُوتَ وَءَاتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ  
وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ  
بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَٰكِن  
اللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٥١﴾

419 Believed to be the Biblical Goliath.

420 Make us stand firm.

421 Prophethood. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

422 All sorts of knowledge and how to make body armour (c.f. 21: 80). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

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

Favourable to all beings. ﴿252﴾ These are the Signs of Allah, We recite them for you with truth—indeed you are ‘one’ of the Messengers. ﴿253﴾ Those Messengers, We favoured some of them above others: among them are some to whom Allah spoke ‘directly’<sup>424</sup>; and some of them He raised degrees<sup>425</sup>. We granted Jesus, son of Mary, the clear ones<sup>426</sup>, and bolstered him with the Holy Spirit<sup>427</sup>. Had Allah willed, those who came after them<sup>428</sup> would not have fought among each other, after the clear ones<sup>429</sup> that came to them. But they differed; some of them Believed while some of them Denied. Had Allah willed, they would not have fought among each other, But Allah does what He wills.

﴿254﴾ You who Believe! Spend of what We provided for you before a Day comes, when there will not be trading, nor bonds or intercession<sup>430</sup>—indeed the Deniers are the unjust ones.

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ  
وَأِنَّكَ لِمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢٥٢﴾ تِلْكَ  
الرُّسُلُ فَضَلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِّنْهُمْ  
مَّن كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ  
وَأَنبَاْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ  
وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ  
اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ  
مِّنْ بَعْدَ مَا جَاءَتْهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِنْ  
أَخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِمْ مَّنْ ءَامَنَ وَمَنْهُمْ  
مَّنْ كَفَرَ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا أَقْتَلُوا  
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٢٥٣﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ  
مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا  
حُلَّةَ وَلَا شَفْعَةً ۗ وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٥٤﴾

424 God spoke directly to Moses (ﷺ) (c.f. 4: 164).

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

426 Miracles and the Evangel. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

427 Archangel Gabriel (ﷺ).

428 Succeeding generations.

429 God’s Signs: miracles and Divine Writs, which are cause enough for them all the Believe.

430 The Day of Judgment on which no money, connections, or power of persuasion would avail a wrongdoer; only Divine Justice prevails. C.f. 2:48 and 2:122.



﴿255﴾<sup>431</sup> Allah, there is no god but Him<sup>432</sup>, the Ever-Living<sup>433</sup>, the All-Sufficient<sup>434</sup>; neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him<sup>435</sup>; to Him belongs what is in the Heavens and Earth<sup>436</sup>. Who is it, that is 'so daring' to intercede with Him without His permission!<sup>437</sup> He knows what is there in front of them and what is there behind them<sup>438</sup>, but they know nothing of His Knowledge, except what He wills.

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ  
سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي  
الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ  
يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ  
بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ  
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ  
الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٥﴾

431 This aya is known as *Āyat al-Kursī*, lit. Aya of the Footstool. It is the single greatest aya in the Grand Qur'an. Ubayy ibn Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) narrated that The Prophet (ﷺ) once asked him: "Abū al-Mundhir, do you know which one of the ayas of the Book of Allah is the greatest?" .... I said: ﴿اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ﴾ (*Allah, there is no god but Him, the Ever-Living, the All-Sufficient*). He beat my chest and said: "By Allah, may knowledge be joyous to you Abū Al-Mundhir!" (Muslim: 810). It is considered thus because it details the Attributes and Divine Characteristics of the God Who is truly worthy of worship: unlimited with regards to knowledge (omniscience), power (omnipotence), and existence (omnipresence). Any god would have to fulfil all these criteria to be truly worthy of worship. Among the virtues of this aya is that whoever recites it before sleeping, no devil will come near him until he wakes up, and he will be safeguarded by God's guardianship (al-Bukhārī: 2311).

432 There is no god worthy of worship except Allah/God.

433 His Life is the perfect Life: it was not preceded by non-existence nor will it be followed by annihilation (c.f. 25: 58); and it entails all the characteristics of perfection. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

434 Self-sufficient; He is free from want of help or assistance. He is also in charge of the affairs of all others besides Him. Without Him, they will all go to ruins (c.f. 30: 25). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

435 Dozing off and falling asleep are but normal to all creation that are inherently frail, but they are unbecoming of God the Ever-Living Sustainer of the universe.

436 He is the Sole and Real Owner of the universe, thus none is worthy of worship except Him. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

437 Not like any sovereign with whom people, especially his inner circle close aides and kith and kin, dare to intercede with relying on his need of them, for God is free from need of help or assistance.

438 He is in full knowledge of the past, present and future of all His creations. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Atīyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)



**His Footstool<sup>439</sup> encompasses the Heavens and Earth, and He is not taxed by maintaining them<sup>440</sup> — He is the Most High, the Most Great.** <sup>4256</sup> There is no coercion in religion<sup>441</sup>; guidance has been set ‘clearly’ apart from error. Whoever renounces false idols<sup>442</sup> and Believes in Allah, has ‘indeed’ held tight to the surest of ties<sup>443</sup>; there is no undoing it—Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. <sup>4257</sup> Allah is the Ally of the Believers; He delivers them from darkness into light<sup>444</sup>.

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ  
فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ  
اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَالَ لَهَا  
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٦﴾ اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا  
يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ  
كَفَرُوا أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ  
مِنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ  
النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٥٧﴾

439 According to Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه), *al-Kursī* is “the Footstool”, where Allah’s Feet are put, without likening Him to any of His creation; “Nothing is like Him; He is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing” (42: 11). It is a separate creation to the ‘*Arsh*, the Throne, and is smaller in size. Al-Qurtubī commenting on *al-Kursī* says in his *tafsīr*: “Prophetic narrations bear evidence that *al-Kursī* is a great creation in front of the Throne and the Throne is greater than it.”

440 God Almighty’s power and capability are inexhaustible.

441 A great Islamic principle that no one is to be coerced to Believe, as both right and wrong have been clearly demarcated for those of good reason to see. The choice of which one to follow is left to the person, but the duty of the Believers is to make sure that people know what is right and what is wrong. Ibn ‘Ashūr (*Al-Tahrīr wa Al-Tanwīr*, 2: 499) opines that this aya immediately follows *Āyat al-Kursī* for a good reason. He has it that: “...all that the previous aya contains of the clear proofs of the Oneness and Greatness of the Creator, and the purgation of Godliness from all the impurities that other nations plagued it with, would surely lead those of good reason to accept this religion ‘Islam’ whose precepts are quite clear and dictates are upright, willingly without coercion or compulsion”.

442 *At-Ṭāghūt* is everything with regards to which people exceed proportionate limits be it worshipped, followed or obeyed. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī, al-Shinqīfī)

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

444 The one whose Ally is none but the Almighty God Himself, is helped, supported and guided by Him. He enables him to walk further and further on the surest road to certitude leaving behind the darkness of loss and breaking through the veils of doubts and vain desires (for which the original Qur’anic the intensive plural *zulūmāt* (lit. multiple darknesses) is applied). The light of Belief and certainty will become manifest to him, he will be given the empowering faculty

‘But` Those who Deny, the allies of whom are the false idols; they take them out of light into darkness<sup>445</sup>— these are the company of the Fire, therein they abide forever.

﴿258﴾<sup>446</sup> Have you not seen the one<sup>447</sup> who argued with Ibrāhīm about his Lord, ‘only but` that Allah gave him kingship<sup>448</sup>. When Ibrāhīm said: “My Lord is the One Who gives life and causes death”. He said: “I give life and cause death!”<sup>449</sup> Then Ibrāhīm said: “Then Allah brings the sun out from the East; bring it ‘you` out from the West!” The Denier was dumbstruck—surely Allah does not guide<sup>450</sup> the unjust ones.

الْمُرْتَدِّ إِلَى الَّذِي حَآجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ  
 آتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ إِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّي  
 الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أَحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ  
 قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالسَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ  
 فَأْتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ  
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٨﴾

of discernment, he will ever-elevate to the highest ranks of Belief, and his heart will see for real the truth of things (c.f. 47: 17). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Shinqīṭī)

<sup>445</sup> The greatest ally of the misguided is none other than Satan himself. He would throw them into the bottomless pit of loss, draw them step by step into Denial and misguidedness until the clouds of darkness thicken around them to the extent that they would be able to see nothing beyond, especially the light of Belief and its evident signs (c.f. 4: 116-121, 24: 39-40). (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī, Ibn ‘Āshūr)

<sup>446</sup> Ayas 258-260 give tangible examples of how God delivers the Believers from darkness into light (c.f. Ibn ‘Āshūr). Such examples fall very much in line with this sura’s main theme: to establish firm Belief.

<sup>447</sup> He is said to be the Biblical King Nimrod.

<sup>448</sup> Such is the nature of despots when gone unchallenged for extended periods of time, they become so megalomaniac that they think that they are God Himself. The Qur’an also speaks of Pharaoh who said to his people: “*I am your Lord, Most High*” (79: 24).

<sup>449</sup> Citing his power over people’s fates and lives (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

<sup>450</sup> God does not aid with His guidance those whose hearts are bent on Denial. Were they really in search of the truth, God would surely have lead them to the right path. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿259﴾<sup>451</sup> Or like the one who came upon a town deserted and gone to rack and ruin; he said 'wondering': "How will Allah restore this to life after its death!" Allah made him die for a hundred years then He brought him back. He 'Allah' said: "How much 'time' did you stay?" He said 'guessing': "A day or part of it!" He 'Allah' said: "Nay, but you stayed for a hundred years. Look then at your food and drink it has not become putrid. 'But' Look at your donkey – We will make you a Sign to people – see the bones how We splice them together and clothe them with flesh". When he was sure, he said: "I know 'for certain' that Allah is Able over everything". ﴿260﴾ 'Or' When Ibrāhīm said: "My Lord, show me how you bring the dead to life". He 'Allah' said: "Did you not Believe!" He said: "Beyond doubt! But that so that my heart will be reassured"<sup>452</sup>. 'To this he was

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ وَ قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتَ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ قَالَ بَل لَّبِثْتَ مِائَةَ عَامٍ فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ وَانظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لِحْمًا فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٥٩﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ ارْنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أُولَئِكَ تُؤْمِنُونَ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيُظْمِنَ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا ثُمَّ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٠﴾

451 The pervious episode was to prove God's Lordship (*Ulūhiyyah*) but this one and the next one will be to show God's ability to resurrect (*ba'th*) His creation and to further prove that God alone is "the One Who gives life and causes death". (Ibn 'Āshūr)

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



replied` “Take you then four birds, hold them to you (and cut them to pieces<sup>453</sup>), then, on every mountain, put a portion of them. Then call them and they will come hurrying to you. And know that Allah is All-Prevailing, All-Wise”.

﴿261﴾<sup>454</sup> The similitude of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah, is that of a grain ‘when planted, out of’ which sprouts seven ears; in every ear there are one hundred grains—Allah multiplies for whom He wishes<sup>455</sup>, Allah is All-Encompassing<sup>456</sup>, All-Knowing.

﴿262﴾ Those who ‘sincerely’ spend their wealth and do not thereafter mar what they spend with taunts and hurt<sup>457</sup>; theirs is their ‘great’ reward with their Lord—they will have neither fear nor will they grieve.

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
 كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ  
 سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةُ حَبَّةٍ وَاللَّهُ يُضَعِفُ لِمَنْ  
 يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦١﴾ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ  
 أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَعَبُونَ مَا  
 أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا أَذَى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
 وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٦٢﴾

<sup>453</sup> In accordance with Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī citing many scholars.

<sup>454</sup> Spending in the cause of God in the manner and decorum detailed below is one of the greatest signs that a person truly Believes in resurrection and the Hereafter. Had he not firmly Believed, he would not have spent his livelihood thus (c.f. al-Tawhīdī). Such a call to engaging in charity sums up the morale behind stories of resurrection and not living only for this world.

<sup>455</sup> This is due to the fact that spenders do not all have the same degree of sincerity, what they spend also differs in quality and usefulness and how much a charity is needed also determines its worth. (Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

<sup>456</sup> *Wāsi‘*, lit. Outspread; that is His Generosity is outspread and wide open and no one should think that such a plentiful reward is an exaggeration. (Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

<sup>457</sup> They give charity out willingly without constantly reminding people and badgering them about it and thus hurt them psychologically.



﴿263﴾ Kind words and forgiveness<sup>458</sup>, is better than a charity which is followed by hurt—Allah is Free of Need, All-Forbearing. ﴿264﴾ You who Believe, do not render your charity void with taunts and hurt, like the one who spends his wealth to show off to people, while Believing not in Allah and the Last Day. His similitude is of a smooth rock on which there is dust, when heavy downpour hits it, it is left bare<sup>459</sup>; they can hold in naught of what they have earned<sup>460</sup>—Allah does not guide those who Deny<sup>461</sup>. ﴿265﴾ And the similitude of those who spend their wealth seeking the Pleasure of Allah and believing firmly ‘in His reward’, is that of a garden on a mound<sup>462</sup> ‘when’ touched by a downpour, it gives its yield twofold; if no heavy rain falls on it, then a ‘mere’ drizzle ‘would suffice’—Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.

﴿قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتْبَعُهَا أذى﴾ وَاللَّهُ عَنِّي حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٣﴾ يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَبْطُلُوا صَدَقَتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ رِثَاءَ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَإِصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦٤﴾ وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَتَّبِعَتَا مَنَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَتَاتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضَعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلٌّ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٥﴾

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

459 Soilless and barren unable to grow plants.

460 Their insincere spending “in good faith”, with which they thought they earned reward, will be blown out into nothingness. They will have no harvest to reap in the Hereafter.

461 Due to their insincerity.

462 Gardens, farms and thickets which are on elevated ground are more fertile than lower ones due to the fact that their rich soil mostly remains intact because it does not get depleted and swept away by running water or streams; such gardens are also more exposed to the wind which results in easier pollination and are much more exposed to the sun, the source of light. This is the analogy God draws of the charity of the sincere. No matter how much it is, it grows and prospers. (Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

﴿266﴾<sup>463</sup> Would one of you wish to have a garden of palm trees and grapevines, through which rivers flow; in it he has all sorts of crops. He gets hit by old age while having 'only but' feeble descendants<sup>464</sup>, then it 'the garden' gets struck by a whirlwind in which there is fire, and it gets burned up. Thus Allah expounds the Signs for you so that you might contemplate. ﴿267﴾ You who Believe, spend out of the best of what you have earned and what We brought out of earth for you<sup>465</sup>; and do not aim for the worthless of it to spend 'in charity', while you 'yourselves' would not take it unless 'disdainfully' with closed eyes—know that Allah is Free of Need, All-Praiseworthy. ﴿268﴾ Satan promises<sup>466</sup> you poverty, and incites

أَيُّودُ أَحَدِكُمْ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ نَّجِيلٍ  
وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا  
مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ  
ذُرِّيَّةٌ ضِعْفًا فَأَصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ  
فَأَحْرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ  
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا  
أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا  
لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ  
تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغِصُوا فِيهِ  
وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَنِّي حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢٦٧﴾ الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ  
الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ  
مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦٨﴾

<sup>463</sup> Here is a third parable demonstrating the three states of givers: the Deniers, the sincere Believers, and the ones who Believe, yet they follow their charity by taunting and hurt the feelings of the receiver, thus rendering their charity “void” (2: 246) (c.f. Ibn ‘Āshūr). They give out in charity and gain tremendous reward for it but it gets hit by the devastating whirlwind of tormenting the needy and burns all down to dust. When it is time to reap the harvest of the wealth spent in “good” deeds, a time when it is most needed, that the owner being too old and infirm and his dependents are very young and helpless, just like this imaginary garden, it gets swept away overnight and they will be left with nothing but sorrow. On the Day of Judgment they come to their Lord having earned nothing for their charity (c.f. Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

<sup>464</sup> His dependents are in much need of this garden of their father’s and, being weak and helpless, cannot restore it to its former glory, especially that their father is old and infirm. Desperate indeed is their state!

<sup>465</sup> Crops and minerals (gold, silver and the like). (Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

<sup>466</sup> Intimidates people with poverty if they spend their money in charity. (Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

you to immorality<sup>467</sup>. And Allah promises you forgiveness by Him and abundance—verily Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing. <sup>469</sup> He ‘Allah’ gives wisdom<sup>468</sup> to whoever He wishes; whoever is given wisdom, has been endowed with plentiful goodness—none will contemplate except those of good reason.<sup>470</sup> Whatever ‘charity’ you spend or vow<sup>469</sup> you make, Allah knows about it—the wrongdoers have no aides<sup>470</sup>. <sup>471</sup> Should you make your charity public, all well and good it is ‘indeed’, but that should you conceal it and give it to the poor is better for you<sup>471</sup> and ‘Allah’ will atone some of your sins ‘for it’—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do.

يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَن يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٦٩﴾ وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّن نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ مِّن نَّذْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُهُ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِّنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿٢٧٠﴾ إِن بُدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ ۗ وَإِن تُحْفَوْهَا وتَوَنَّوْهَا الْفُقَرَاءُ فَهِيَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَيَكْفُرْ عَنْكُمْ مِّن سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٧١﴾

<sup>467</sup> *Al-fahshā'* signifies all bad and immoral deeds. Ibn al-Qayyim says: “Exegetes unanimously agree that *al-fahshā'* here means *miserliness*” (*Tariq al-Hijratayn*, p. 375).

<sup>468</sup> Spending in the cause of God, seeing the rewards that are in store for these who engage in such charitable acts, is practical wisdom. (Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

<sup>469</sup> *Nadhr* is vowing to make obligatory for oneself that which is not, usually in return for a Godly favour. For example feeding a number of destitutes for getting married.

<sup>470</sup> Those who withhold from giving out what is due, fulfilling their vows, or that their spending and vows are in contradiction to what pleases God, will not be spared God’s Punishment. (Al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

<sup>471</sup> Observing secrecy while giving out voluntary, non-prescribed charity, in particular (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah), to the poor is better than making it public because it saves the receiver’s face in a dignified way and is closer to sincerity on the part of the giver (c.f. Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī). Among the seven categories of people who will be sheltered under the Shade of God’s Throne, on the Day of Judgment, when there will be no other shade except it, is: “... a man who gives out a charity making it secret, so much so that his left hand would not know how much ‘or what’ his right hand spent.” (al-Bukhārī: 1423, Muslim: 1031)



﴿272﴾<sup>472</sup> It is not ‘incumbent’ for you ‘Prophet’ to guide them<sup>473</sup>, but Allah guides whoever He wills. Whatever good you spend is for your ‘own’ selves. You ‘should not’ spend except seeking Allah’s Face<sup>474</sup>. Whatever good you spend will be paid back fully to you, and you will not be wronged<sup>475</sup>.

\* لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَٰكِنَّ اللَّهَ  
يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ  
فَلَا نُنْفِسُكُمْ وَمَا تَنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا لَأَبْغَاءَ  
وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفَّ  
إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تظَلُمُونَ ﴿٢٧٢﴾

472 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) explains this aya as such: “He ‘The Prophet (ﷺ)’ used to command us not to give out charity except to Muslims until this aya was revealed. After it, he commanded us to give charity to whoever asks for it, no matter what religion they follow” (Ibn Abī Hātim). He further explains that the reason behind the revelation of this aya was that Muslims were of two minds about giving out charity to their Denying relatives and when they asked the Prophet (ﷺ), he gave them permission and this aya was revealed (al-Bazzār: 5042, al-Ṭabarānī: 12403, al-Wāḍi‘ī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ al-Musnad*: 630). Asmā’ bint Abī Bakr (رضي الله عنها), was visited by her Denying mother, during a truce with Quraysh. She sought the Prophet’s permission to give out a charity to her mother and he allowed her (al-Bukhārī: 5979, Muslim: 1003). Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “A man said: ‘I shall give out a charity this night!’ He went out with it and put it in the hand of a prostitute. When the morning came people started talking ‘wondrously’ saying: ‘A charity was given to a prostitute!’ The man said: ‘Thank you God, a prostitute! I shall give out a charity!’ He went out with it and put it in the hand of a rich man. When the morning came people started talking ‘wondrously’ saying: ‘A charity was given to a rich man!’ The man said: ‘Thank you God, a rich man! I shall give out a charity!’ He went out with it and put it in the hand of a burglar. When the morning came people started talking ‘wondrously’ saying: ‘A charity was given to a burglar!’ The man said: ‘Thank you God, a prostitute, a rich man and a burglar!’ Then he was approached and it was said to him: ‘As for your charity, it has been accepted; the prostitute might use it to give up her profession, the rich man might reflect and take to giving out of his wealth and the burglar might give up his thieving.’” (Muslim: 1022). The morale of the aya is to encourage Believers to spend out in charity sincerely and in good faith, seeking only God’s pleasure no matter who the receiver of that charity is.

473 The Prophet’s mission was indeed to guide people to the right path of God. Guidance here does not denote that of directing people to or showing them the right path (*hidāyat al-irshād*), but that of making them actually follow that path (*hidāyat tawfiq*). This kind of guidance is left to God alone. (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa‘dī).

474 You are the ones who will actually benefit from it, first and foremost, should you be truly sincere and seeking only God’s Pleasure and aiming to enter Paradise to actually see God’s Most Beautiful Face, which is the greatest Bounty ever. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

475 Neither cheated nor defrauded and you will be rewarded for it precisely. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)



﴿273﴾ 'Give out' To the poor who are wholly wrapped up in the path of Allah<sup>476</sup>; 'as' they cannot move about the land. The ignorant thinks them well-off because of their reticence<sup>477</sup>; you will know them by their signs—they do not beg of people importunately. Whatever good you spend, Allah is All-Knowing of it. ﴿274﴾ Those who spend their wealth 'in charity' by day and night, secretly and openly, theirs will be their reward from their Lord, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve<sup>478</sup>.

﴿275﴾ 'While' Those who devour usury<sup>479</sup> will only rise up in a way similar to that who is touched by the devil<sup>480</sup>. That for saying:

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَحْصَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ  
لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمُ  
الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ  
بِسِيمَاهُمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِحْفَافًا وَمَا  
تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٧٣﴾  
الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ  
سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٤﴾

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا  
كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَتَحَبَّطُهُ الشَّجَلُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ  
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ

476 Although honest charity can be given to anyone, but the most deserving of which are the Believers who are poor as a result of them dedicating themselves to the worship of God and are as a result held back from earning their living (al-Rāzī, al-Biqā'ī, *Nadhm al-Durar*). Some great exegetes are of the opinion that these are the ones who are caught up fighting in the cause of God and thus cannot be left to engage in other worldly matters (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ṭarīq al-Hijratayn*, p. 377, al-Sa'dī)

477 Holding back from begging.

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

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

480 The image given here, that of a person possessed by the devil staggering while standing and walking unsteadily as they get resurrected for the Day of Judgment,

“Trade and usury are the same”; Allah has made trade lawful, and He made usury unlawful. Whoever gets a warning from His Lord and detests<sup>481</sup>, for him what is gone is gone, and Allah will decide His case<sup>482</sup>. Whoever backtracks<sup>483</sup>, these are the company of the Fire, therein they abide forever<sup>484</sup>. ﴿276﴾ Allah extirpates usury<sup>485</sup> and fosters<sup>486</sup> charities—Allah likes not every tenacious Denier, ‘wonted’ committer of sins. ﴿277﴾ Those who Believe, do good deeds, keep up the Prayer, give out the prescribed alms, theirs will be ‘justly’ their reward from their Lord, they will have neither fear nor will they grieve<sup>487</sup>.

اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ  
مِّن رَّبِّهِ فَاتَّهَىٰ فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَىٰ  
اللَّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ  
فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٧٦﴾ يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُرِي  
الصَّادِقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٧٦﴾  
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا  
الصَّلَاةَ وَءَاتَوُا الرِّكَوٰةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ  
رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٧﴾

is meant to drive people away from such a transaction out of repulsion. It is also a just requital because it mimics the state of insatiable lust for money that possessed them in life making them declare lawful what is not, thus twisting the laws ordained by God (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī).

481 Halts dealing in such a transaction.

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

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

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

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

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

487 C.f. 2: 274 above.

﴿278﴾ You who Believe, be Mindful of Allah and relinquish what is left of ‘outstanding’ usury<sup>488</sup>, if you are ‘really’ Believers. ﴿279﴾ But if you do not do so, then be warned of a war by Allah and His Messenger. But if you give ‘usury’ up, ‘duly’ yours is your principal ‘capital’—you will not do wrong nor will you be wronged<sup>489</sup>. ﴿280﴾ But if he ‘the indebted’ is ‘financially’ constrained, then ‘grant him’ a deferral until a time of ease ‘for him’. But that you shall remit ‘the debt as’ charity is better for you, if only but you knew<sup>490</sup>. ﴿281﴾ Be Mindful of a Day on which you shall be returned to Allah and every soul shall be paid in full what it earned—they will not be wronged.

﴿282﴾<sup>491</sup> You who Believe, when you enter into a debt ‘agreement’ for a specified term, then write it down; and let a scribe, write it down between you even-handedly. Let

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧٨﴾ فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِن تُبْتِغُوا فَكَلِمَةٌ رُّبُوسٍ ءَامَوَا لَكُمْ لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تَظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾ وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرٍ فَظَنَّهٗ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ وَأَن تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨٠﴾ وَأَتَقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَىٰ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهَمًّا لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدَيْنٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ وَلْيَكْتُب بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْبَ كَاتِبٌ أَن يَكْتُبَ

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

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

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

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



no scribe refuse writing as Allah has taught him<sup>492</sup>; let him write and let the one who owes the right<sup>493</sup> dictate; and let him be Mindful of Allah, his Lord, and not hold in any of it<sup>494</sup>. But if the one who owes the right is incompetent<sup>495</sup>, weak<sup>496</sup>, or cannot dictate<sup>497</sup>, then let his agent<sup>498</sup> dictate fairly. Call in to witness 'the agreement' two of your men-folk; but if not two men then 'be it' one man and two women whom you approve of as witnesses; perchance one of them 'women' slips up, the other would remind her. Let no witnesses refuse when asked 'to bear witness'. Do not be weary of writing it<sup>499</sup> down, be it small or large, marking its specified term. This<sup>500</sup> is fairer before Allah, surer for upholding testimony<sup>501</sup>, and more likely to eliminate doubtfulness; unless that it is an

كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ وَلْيُمْلِلِ الَّذِي  
عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا بِيحْسَ  
مِنْهُ شَيْئًا فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا  
أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمْلََّ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ  
وَالْيَهُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِدَيْنِ مِنْ  
رِجَالِكُمْ فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ  
وَأَمْرَاتَانِ مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ  
إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى وَلَا  
يَأْتِ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا وَلَا تَسْمَعُوا أَنْ  
تَكْتُمُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ آجَلِهِ ذَٰلِكُمْ  
أَفْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا  
تَرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا  
بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُمُوهَا  
وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ  
وَلَا شَهِدٌ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ فَسُوقٌ

492 Being learned is a great favour from God.

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

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

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

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

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

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

499 The agreement.

500 Writing debts down.

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

immediate trade ‘transaction’ that you run among yourselves; then you will not be guilty of sin that you do not write it down, yet bring in those who bear witness when you engage in trade; let no harm come to ‘or be caused by’ either scribe or witness, should you do this, then this is transgression on your part; be Mindful of Allah; Allah teaches you—Allah is All-Knowing of everything. ﴿283﴾ If you are on a journey, and you could not find a scribe, then pledges<sup>502</sup> ‘should be’ handed in; ‘but’ if you trust each other<sup>503</sup>, let the one who is trusted fulfil his trust and Be Mindful of Allah, his Lord. Do not withhold testimony<sup>504</sup>; whoever withholds it, then his heart is sinful—Allah is All-Knowing of what you do.

﴿284﴾ To Allah belongs all that is in the Heavens and Earth. Should you reveal what lurks within your souls<sup>505</sup> or hide it, Allah will hold you accountable for it<sup>506</sup>; He then

يَكْفُرُ وَأَتُوا اللَّهَ وَيَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ  
يَكْفُرُ شَيْءٌ عَلَيْهِ ﴿٢٨٣﴾ \* وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَى  
سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهْنَ مَقْبُوضَةً  
فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِنَ  
أَمْنَتَهُ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا  
الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثِمٌ قَلْبُهُ  
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٤﴾

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبَدُّوا  
مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبْكُمْ  
بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ

502 A deposit of personal property as security for the debt which is liable to forfeiture in the event of default failure (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī).

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

504 In the case that the indebted fails to honour his word and denies the debt, anyone who witnessed the deal has to come forward and say the truth.

505 The thoughts that go on in one’s mind.

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

absolves whom He wishes and Punishes whom He wishes—surely Allah is Able over everything. <sup>507</sup> **The Messenger Believes in what was sent down to him by His Lord as do the Believers; they all Believe in Allah, His angels, Books, Messengers – “We make no distinction between His Messengers” ‘they say’ – and they say: “We listen and we obey. Your forgiveness, our Lord ‘we beseech’; to you is ‘our’ return”. <sup>286</sup> Allah would not charge a soul with that which it cannot bear; to it belongs what it earned and against it is held what it has committed. ‘We pray to you’ “Our Lord, do not charge**

وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٨٥﴾ ءَامَنَ الرَّسُولُ  
بِمَا أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۖ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلُّ  
ءَامَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ  
لَا نَفَرًا بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ ۗ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا  
وَأَطَعْنَا ۗ غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨٦﴾  
لَا يُكْفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا أَلَّا وَسِعَتْهَا ۗ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ  
وَعَلَيْهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِن  
تَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا  
إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ  
قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحْمِلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ  
وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا ۗ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا  
فَاَنْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٨٦﴾

<sup>507</sup> About the virtue of these two last ayas of *al-Baqarah*, Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “While Gabriel was sitting with the Prophet (ﷺ), he heard a creaking sound from above, lifted his head and said: “This is a Heavenly door. It has been opened today and never ever has it been opened before”. Then an angel descended to Earth through it. He ‘Gabriel’ said: “This is an angel who has descended to Earth and never ever has he descended before”. The angel greeted them and said: “I bring you glad tidings of two lights that you are given and never have they been given to any Prophet before you: *Fātiḥat al-Kitāb* ‘The Opening of the Book’ and the endings of *al-Baqarah*. You shall never recite a letter of any of them without your prayer being answered.” (Muslim: 806). Also ‘Uqbah Ibn ‘Āmir (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Whoever recites the last two ayas of *Al-Baqarah*, they will suffice him ‘as a shield from the evil’.” (al-Bukhārī: 5008). Abdullah Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated: “When the Messenger of Allah was ascended to heaven on the nocturnal journey, he was made to reach the Lote Tree of Extremity (*Sidrat al-Muntahā*) .... The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was given three things: the five obligatory Prayers, the endings of *al-Baqarah* and whoever does not Associate anything with Allah of his nation will be absolved from even the thrusters ‘major sins that thrust people in Hellfire’.” (Muslim: 173) As a whole these two ayas constitute a declaration of unshakable Faith. the kind of faith Islam natures as evident in *al-Baqarah*.



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





سُورَةُ آلِ عِمْرَانَ

*Āl 'Imrān*  
(The Family of 'Imrān)





## Āl ‘Imrān (The Family of ‘Imrān)

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

**Merit:** the meritorious status of this sura is at par with that of *al-Baqarah*. In fact they, both are known as *al-Zahrāwān* (lit. The Two Luminous Suras), will, along with the rest of the Qur’an, come to intercede on behalf of the one who claims them as his own on the Day of Judgment; yet they are set apart from the other suras of the Qur’an. An-Nawwās Ibn Sam‘ān (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The Qur’an, along with the people who used to adhere to its commandments, will be brought on the Day of Judgment, with *al-Baqarah* and *Āl ‘Imrān* at the front... as if they were two dark clouds, or shades between them is light, or two huge flocks of birds, keeping closely together arguing on behalf of he who owns them.” (Muslim: 804).

**Theme:** the main theme of this sura is that it further nurtures the Believing spirit, brings it to maturity, and encourages holding fast to the teachings and dictates of Islam, by proving with Signs and evidences the Oneness of Allah coupled with a refutation of the doubts cast on it and other Islamic precepts.

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

The overall milieu in which *al-Baqarah* is set carries over here and is expounded with further illustrations and more details. In the same vein, it takes the early Madinan period as background against which it plays out its themes and characters: the People of the Book, the Deniers, the Battles of Badr and Uḥūd, building the desired Muslim character and introducing new laws for the community. Moreover, it is useful to realize that the reason for the revelation of a number of passages of *Āl-‘Imrān* is to refute and rebut the arguments of the learned Arabian Christians, better known as the Christians of Najrān, who came to Madinah to debate with the Prophet (ﷺ) regarding matters related to Faith. The Jews of Madinah are also addressed at length.

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

الرَّحْمَٰنُ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ﴿١﴾ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنجِيلَ ﴿٢﴾ مِنْ قَبْلُ هَدَىٰ لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو نِقْمَةٍ ﴿٤﴾

- 1 These disjointed letters are meant as a challenge to those who argue with the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers regarding the truthfulness of the Message, as they highlight the inimitable nature of the Qur'an (c.f. 2: 1).
- 2 C.f. 2: 255. The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah's Greatest Name is in these two ayas: "Your God is one God. There is no god but him—ar-Raḥmān (the Most Beneficent), ar-Raḥīm (the Most Merciful)" (2: 163) and: "The beginning of *Āl 'Imrān*: "*Alif, Lām, Mīm. Allah, there is no god but Him, al-Ḥayy (the Ever-Living), al-Qayyūm (the All-Sufficient)*." (al-Tirmidhī: 3478)
- 3 The Qur'an.
- 4 The difference between *nazzla* "sent down" which is mentioned with regards to the Book of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and *anzala*, also translated here as "sent down", which is said with regards to the Torah and the Evangel, is that the first one (*nazzala*) signifies that the action took place in installments over a long period of time and the second one (*anzala*) happened once and as a whole (c.f. al-Ṭabarī)
- 5 *Al-Injīl* (Evangel; Gospel) is the Arabic name for the Book that was given to Jesus (ﷺ). It is mentioned in the Qur'an as one of the Scriptures which were revealed by God; the others being: *Ṣuḥuf* (Scrolls) of Abraham and Moses (87: 19), *al-Zabūr* (possibly the Psalms (4: 163, 17:55)) that was given to Prophet David, *al-Tawrāt* (the Torah), and the Qur'an itself, alternatively referred to as *al-Kitāb*, the Book. *Al-Injīl*, in Islam, is not to be identified with the extant biblical "New Testament"; rather it is believed, as told in the Qur'an, to have been revealed to Prophet Jesus (ﷺ) as a whole (c.f. 5: 46). It is also believed to have either been lost or corrupted beyond recognition. Needless to say that the same goes for the Torah, to a great extent.
- 6 Ibn Taymiyyah says: "The word *al-furqān* signifies that which separates truth from falsehood. To illustrate, take as example the Signs with which the Prophets were sent: Moses' serpent, white hand and the splitting of the sea, etc. By extension, the Qur'an is a *furqān* because it is a great Sign of the Prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ). It is also a *furqān* in that it sets apart truth from falsehood, as mentioned in: "*Glorified is He Who sent al-Furqān (the Distinguisher/Qur'an) to His servant*" (25:1). This is why a number of scholars opine that *al-furqān* here 'aya 3:4' is the Qur'an itself. The word *al-furqān* further means God's victory to His Prophets and Believing servants and the vanquishing of their enemy, because, with this support, God separates His

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

‘<sup>5</sup> Indeed nothing, neither in Earth nor in the Heavens, is hidden from Allah. ‘<sup>6</sup> He is the One Who forms you in ‘your mothers’` wombs as He wills—there is no god but Him, the All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ‘<sup>7</sup> He is the One Who sent down the Book to you ‘Muhammad’; among its Signs<sup>9</sup> are those which are impregnable<sup>10</sup> – these are the foundation of the Book<sup>11</sup> – and others which are equivocal<sup>12</sup>. Those in whose hearts is deviance

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي  
السَّمَاءِ ﴿٥﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ  
كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦﴾  
هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ  
مُّحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ  
فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَبَهَ  
مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ  
تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ

allies from His enemies: “...the day of *fuṣṣān* (the battle of Uḥud) when the two parties met...” (8:41)” (Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā*, 27:227). Al-Zamakhsharī (1:336), al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī (*al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, 3:22-23) and al-Qāsimī (2: 255) also opine that *al-fuṣṣān* is another epithet of the Qur’an used here to further highlight its high standing. The Qur’an is referred to as *al-Fuṣṣān* in this instance to set the scene for the confrontation that would be unfolded in this sura (c.f. the “Key” in the introduction of this sura), and to underline the prevalence of Belief over Denial, which are set widely apart in and by the Qur’an.

7 Revelations.

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

9 Ayas, Qur’anic verses.

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

11 *Umm al-Kitāb*, lit. the mother of the Book, i.e. the great majority of the ayas of the Qur’an on which a true understanding of it is built. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

12 *Mutashābihāt*, lit. similar, are some Qur’anic ayas the meaning of which is unclear to some or most people. The interpretation of these is known by referring to the ayas which are impregnable, *muḥkamāt*. Yet, as said in the aya, there remain some of these whose meaning is only known by Allah.



follow the equivocal 'portions' of it, seeking 'to cause' quandary and aim for 'manipulating' its interpretation—none knows its 'true' interpretation except Allah<sup>13</sup>. Those who are firm in knowledge<sup>14</sup> say: “We Believe in it; all of it comes from our Lord”—none will contemplate 'this' except the people of sound reason. <sup>8</sup> 'Those of firm knowledge pray: “Our Lord, do not cause our hearts to swerve<sup>15</sup> after You have guided us and grant us a mercy from Your own—You are indeed the Munificent Giver; <sup>9</sup> our Lord, You will surely gather 'all' people on a Day<sup>16</sup> in which there is no doubt—verily Allah does not break His appointment”.

<sup>10</sup> Those who Deny, nothing – neither their wealth nor their children – will spare them from Allah— those are fuel for the Fire.

ءَامَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾ رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿٨﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٩﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ نُغْفِرَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ وَقُودُ النَّارِ ﴿١٠﴾

- 13 Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) says: “The Qur'an has four aspects (*awjuh*): *tafsir* (exegesis), which the learned know; *al-'arabiyyah* (the language) which the 'well-versed' Arabs understand; *halāl* and *ḥarām* (permitted and forbidden things), of which no one is allowed to be ignorant; and *al-ta'wil* (interpretation), which only God knows.” (Muqātil, *Tafsir Muqātil Ibn Sulaymān*, 1:27)
- 14 People of true knowledge are lauded here with the worthy epithet of “*al-rāsikhūna fī al-'ilm*”, the well-grounded in knowledge. Unlike others, they know enough and are so humble to say: “God knows best!”.
- 15 Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) said that: “The Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray most by saying: “O He Who changes hearts, make my heart firm in Your religion” (*yā Muqallib al-qulūb, thabbit qalbī 'alā dīnika*). When she asked him about the reason behind this, he (ﷺ) replied to her by saying: “Umm Salamah, know that every human's heart is between two Fingers of Allah's. Whoever He wills, He makes steadfast, and Whoever He wills He causes to deviate.” (al-Tirmidhī: 3522)
- 16 The Day of Judgment.



‘Just’ like the habitual ways of the people of Pharaoh and those who came before them<sup>17</sup>; they Denied our Signs and Allah seized them ‘in Punishment’ for their sins—indeed Allah is severe in Punishment.

Say to the Deniers: “You shall be overpowered<sup>18</sup> and herded to Hellfire—indeed it is the worst of beds. <sup>13</sup> There is a Sign<sup>19</sup> for you in two parties who met ‘in battle’: one fights in the cause of Allah, ‘while’ the other is Denying. They ‘the Believers’ saw them ‘the Deniers’ twice their number before their own eyes. Allah supports with His victory whoever He wills—indeed in this there is insight to the people of reason<sup>20</sup>.

كَذَّابٍ ءَالَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ  
كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَآخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ  
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١١﴾

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَعَابٌ وَهُمْ فِي مَا يَكْفُرُونَ  
جَاهِلُونَ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ أَكْثَرُ لَكُمْ  
ءَايَةً فِي فَتْنِ الْتَقَاتِ فِتْنَةٌ تَقْتُلُ فِي  
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأُخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهَا  
مِثْلَ يَوْمِ الرَّآئِىِ الَّذِي يَوْمَى الْعَمَلُونَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصَرِهِ  
مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿١٣﴾

17 These are cited here as an example of how the laws and canons of God in making the days of victory and defeat take turns between the Believers and the Deniers; a fact mentioned later in aya 137. The example of the Pharaoh, the mightiest of all Deniers who fought against the frailest of the Believers, the people of Moses, is very becoming indeed in heartening the early Believing community of Madinah, who, by worldly measures, were always the weaker side in their early days’ confrontations. The next aya gives them the good news of a Godly promise of victory.

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

19 The battle of Badr is evidence enough of God’s fulfilment of His promise to defeat the Deniers at the Believers’ hands.

20 The Believers were made to realize prior to locking swords with the Deniers that the latter’s rank and file were actually double their number and, by purely worldly standards, this meant that the party lesser in number would eventually be defeated. Yet Divine Wisdom made them see this with their own eyes only to further strengthen their Faith, make them totally depend on God for assistance and know for sure that victory comes only from God. (Ibn Kathīr)

﴿14﴾ Prettified for mankind are objects of desire<sup>21</sup>: women, children, hoards upon hoards of gold and silver, fine<sup>22</sup> steeds, cattle and ploughing grounds; these are the pleasures of this worldly life, but with Allah lies the best of returns. ﴿15﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "Shall I tell you what is better than this? For the Mindful with their Lord are Gardens under which rivers flow, in which they eternally abide; for them in these are purified spouses, and Pleasure<sup>23</sup> from Allah—Allah is All-Seeing of 'His' servants. ﴿16﴾ They are the ones who say: "Our Lord, indeed we have Believed! Forgive us our sins, and spare us the torment of Hellfire". ﴿17﴾ 'They are' The forbearing, the truthful, the utterly devout, the 'charitably' spending, and the 'persistently' asking for forgiveness in the late-night hours<sup>24</sup>.

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ  
وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ  
وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ  
وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ  
عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَبَآئِ ﴿١٤﴾ قُلْ أُوْنِبْتُكُمْ  
بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذَلِكَ لِّلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ  
جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ  
فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ  
وَإِلَّا بُصِيرُ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ  
رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَمْنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَفِنَا  
عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾ الصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالْمُتَّقِينَ  
وَالْمُتَّقَاتِ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ ﴿١٧﴾

- 21 It is human nature to desire such things which are alluring. Yet the next two ayas explain that true Faith requires resisting worldly temptations, making them come second to seeking God's Pleasure, and devoting oneself to God. For all this the reward is eternal joy and bliss.
- 22 *Musawwamah*, marked by their beauty.
- 23 Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Allah Almighty will call the people of Paradise: "O people of Paradise!" They would reply: "All pleasure is Yours our Lord, yes!" He says: "Are you satisfied?" They reply: "Why wouldn't we be when You gave us what You did not give any other of your creation!" He says: "I shall give you 'yet' better than that!" They reply: "Lord! What is better than that?" He says: "I bestow My Pleasure upon you and I shall never be Displeased with you again." (al-Bukhārī: 6549, Muslim: 2829)
- 24 Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "Our Lord, glory be His, descends every night to the lowest Heaven, when only the last third of it remains,

﴿18﴾ Allah bears witness that there is no god but Him<sup>25</sup>; the angels and the people of knowledge 'bear witness to that too and that` He is the upholder of justice. There is no god but Him, the All-Prevailing the All-Wise.

شَهِدَ اللهُ اَنْهُ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ  
وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا اِلَهَ اِلَّا  
هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾

﴿19﴾ The religion with Allah is *Islam*<sup>26</sup>. The ones who were given the Book only differed after 'true' knowledge came to them, out of transgression among themselves. Whoever Denies Allah's Signs, then Allah is swift in reckoning. ﴿20﴾ If they argue with you 'Muhammad', say: "I have devoutly submitted my face<sup>27</sup> to Allah along with those who follow me". Say to those who were given the Book and the illiterates<sup>28</sup>: "Do you devoutly submit?" If they devoutly submit then they are guided, but if they turn away, then you are tasked with nothing more than delivering 'the Message' and Allah is indeed All-Seeing of 'His' servants.

اِنَّ الدِّيْنَ عِنْدَ اللهِ الْاِسْلَامُ وَمَا اختلفَ  
الَّذِيْنَ اوتُوْا الْكِتٰبَ اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمْ  
الْعِلْمُ بَعِيًا بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ يَكْفُرْ  
اِلٰهِ فَاِنَّ اللهَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩﴾ فَاِنْ حَآجُّوْكَ  
فَقُلْ اَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلّٰهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ وَقُلْ  
لِلَّذِيْنَ اوتُوْا الْكِتٰبَ وَالْاُمِّيِّنَ ؕ اَسْلَمْتُمْ  
فَاِنْ اَسْلَمُوْا فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا وَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّمَا  
عَلَيْكَ الْبَلٰغُ وَاللّٰهُ بِصِيْرٍ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠﴾

and He says: "Would there be one who supplicates to Me so that I may answer him? Would there be one who asks of Me so that I may give him? Would there be one who seeks My forgiveness so that I may forgive him?" (al-Bukhārī: 1145, Muslim: 758)

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

26 C.f. 3:85. Ibn Taymiyyah (*Jāmi' al-Masā'il*, 6:220) says: "Islam is surrender to Allah alone. It conveys two meanings: yielding and surrender; and devoting one's surrender to Allah alone."

27 The "face" is used metonymically to mean one's whole self. It is chosen to represent the whole here because it is the most dignified part of the human body.

28 *Al-Ummiyyūn*, the Arab idolaters, who had neither a guiding Book nor grasp of reading and writing. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 101)



﴿21﴾ Those who Deny Allah's Signs, kill the Prophets unjustifiably<sup>29</sup> and kill those people who enjoin justice; give them tidings<sup>30</sup> of a painful Punishment. ﴿22﴾ These are the ones whose deeds in this worldly life and in the Hereafter will come to nothing—they will have no helpers. ﴿23﴾ Have you 'Muhammad' not seen these who were given a portion of the Book<sup>31</sup>, when called to the Book of Allah for judgment among them, a party of them turn their backs 'to it' unheeding. ﴿24﴾ This is for their saying: "The Fire will only touch us for a few days"—what they used to fabricate in their religion<sup>32</sup> has deceived them. ﴿25﴾ How 'would their state be' when We gather them on a Day<sup>33</sup> in which there is no doubt; every soul shall be requited what it earned in full, and they shall not be wronged.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ  
الَّذِينَ بَغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ  
بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢١﴾  
أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا  
وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ أَمْ تَرَ  
إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُدْعَوْنَ  
إِلَى كِتَابِ اللَّهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ  
مِّنْهُمْ وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا  
لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارَ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ  
وَعَرَّهْمُ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾  
فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جُمِعْتَهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَوُفِّيَتْ  
كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

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

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

31 Reference here is being made to the Torah.

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

33 The Day of Judgment.

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

<sup>28</sup> No Believers shall take the Deniers as allies<sup>35</sup> rather than the Believers. Whoever does this, he has nothing to do with Allah<sup>36</sup>; except when you seek refuge from them<sup>37</sup>. Allah warns you ‘to beware’ of Himself—to Allah shall be the ‘final’ return.

قُلْ اَللّٰهُمَّ مَلِكَ الْمَلِكِ تُوْنِي الْمَلِكَ مِنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمَلِكَ مَمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذَلُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ اِنَّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ تُوْلِيْجُ اَيْلٍ فِي الْنَّهَارِ وَتُوْلِيْجُ الْنَّهَارَ فِي الْاَيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

لَا يَتَّخِذُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ فِيْ شَيْءٍ اِلَّا اَنْ تَتَّقُوْا مِنْهُمْ تُقَدًّا وَيُحَدِّثْكُمْ اَللّٰهُ نَفْسَهٗٓ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٢٨﴾

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

35 *Yattakhidh awliyā’*, take as helpers and aides whom are held dear, cherished and supported. Deniers are not to be taken as *awliyā’* over and above the Believers (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shawkānī, al-Sa’dī). Commenting on his translation of 4:139, Muhammad Asad has this to say: “However, the term ... *awliyā’*... does not indicate, in this context, merely political alliances. More than anything else, it obviously alludes to a “moral alliance” with the deniers of the truth: that is to say, to an adoption of their way of life in preference to the way of life of the believers, in the hope of being “honoured”, or accepted as equals, by the former. Since an imitation of the way of life of confirmed unbelievers must obviously conflict with the moral principles demanded by true Faith, it unavoidably leads to a gradual abandonment of those principles.”

36 God disowns those who do such a thing.

37 Fearing infliction of harm by the Deniers, Muslims are given license here to placate the Deniers with their tongues, yet their hearts are to remain firm in Faith. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī, al-Sa’dī)

﴿29﴾ Should you hide what lurks in your chests<sup>38</sup> or reveal it, Allah knows it and He knows what is in the Heavens and Earth—indeed Allah is Able over everything. ﴿30﴾ On the Day in which every soul shall find all the good that it did 'made' available 'for it'; 'but' every foul 'deed' that it has committed, it wishes it would be at a great distance from it; Allah warns you 'to beware' of Himself—Allah is Most-Compassionate to 'His' servants.

﴿31﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "If you 'really' love Allah then follow me<sup>39</sup> and Allah shall Love you and forgive your sins—Allah is Most-Forgiving, Most Merciful". ﴿32﴾ Say: "Obey Allah and the Messenger, but if they take to their heels, then Allah likes not the Deniers".

﴿33﴾ Allah chose 'for honour' Adam, Noah, the House of Ibrāhīm and the Family of 'Imrān over 'and above' all people<sup>40</sup>.

قُلْ اِنْ تُحْفُوا مَا فِي صُدُوْرِكُمْ اَوْ تُبْدُوْهُ  
يَعْلَمُهٗ اللّٰهُ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي  
الْاَرْضِ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قٰدِرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ يَوْمَ نَجِدُ  
كُلَّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحَضَّرًا وَمَا  
عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوْءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ اَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهٗ  
اَمَدًا بَعِيْدًا وَيَحْذَرُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسَهٗ وَاللّٰهُ  
رَءُوْفٌ بِالْعٰبِدِ ﴿٣٠﴾

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحِبُّكُمْ  
اللّٰهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ  
رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿٣١﴾ قُلْ اَطِيعُوا اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُوْلَ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا  
فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾

\* اِنَّ اللّٰهَ اصْطَفٰٓى اٰدَمَ وَاٰنُوْحًا وَاٰلَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ  
وَاٰلَ عِمْرٰنَ عَلٰى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾

38 The truth that your hearts hide with regards to your relationship with the Deniers. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

39 The true sign of one's love for Allah is to follow Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and adhere to his teachings and Sunnah.

40 Here God mentions those whom He honours as they show people the way to His love (*al-Manār*, 3: 237): Adam whom He created with His own Hands, blew his soul into him, made the Angels prostrate themselves to him, taught him the names of everything, and made him father of humanity; Prophet Noah (ﷺ) whom He honoured by making him the first bearer of His Message to humanity and made his posterity remain where all other bloodlines vanished; Prophet Abraham (ﷺ), the beloved of God, and his descendants among whom is a great number of Prophets, including Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ); the Family of 'Imrān: 'Imrān and his wife, their daughter Mary and her son Jesus (ﷺ), who is one of the greatest Prophets of humanity. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)



﴿34﴾ A line of descent, they take after each other—Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿35﴾ ‘Mention’ When the woman<sup>41</sup> of ‘Imrān said: “My Lord, I have vowed what is in my belly<sup>42</sup> entirely ‘dedicated’ for You<sup>43</sup>, so accept ‘it’ from me. You are the All-Hearing, All-Knowing<sup>44</sup>”. ﴿36﴾ When she delivered her<sup>45</sup>, she said: “My Lord, I have delivered her a female – Allah knew best what she delivered – and a male is not like a female<sup>46</sup>. I name her Maryam ‘Mary’ and I ask for her and her posterity refuge with You from the outcast<sup>47</sup> Satan<sup>48</sup>. ﴿37﴾ Then her Lord accepted her cherishingly, made her blossom handsomely, and entrusted her to ‘the charge of’ Zakariyyā ‘Zachariah’<sup>49</sup>. Whenever Zakariyyā entered the sanctum upon her, he found her provided for. He said:

ذُرِّيَّةَ بَعْضِهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾  
 إِذْ قَالَتْ أُمْرَاتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا  
 فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ  
 الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا  
 أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ  
 وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيدُهَا بِنكِ وَدُرِّيَّتَهَا  
 مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ  
 حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا  
 كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ  
 عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَمْرِؤُا أَنَّىٰ لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ  
 هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ  
 بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

41 His wife.

42 Womb.

43 The carried child is to be dedicated to the worship of Allah and spending an entire life tending places of worship. (al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr)

44 Of the truthfulness of my intentions.

45 The baby girl.

46 She said this apologetically because she wished more for a male baby child rather than a female one because males in her culture were better suited for the purpose she intended, to viz. looking after a temple. But God had His plans for the female baby.

47 *Ar-Rajīm*, lit. one who is ejected. Satan is named so because he was thrown out of Paradise.

48 God answered her prayers. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Every newborn child is touched by the devil and they start off by wailing because of this touch, except Maryam and her son.” (al-Bukhārī: 3231, Muslim: 2366)

49 C.f. 44. That Zachariah, the great servant of God, was made Mary’s guardian and mentor is one of the signs that God accepted her mother’s pledge to Him. (Ibn ‘Āshūr)

“Maryam, where did you get this from?” She said: “It is from Allah. Indeed Allah provides for whomever He wishes without account”.

<sup>38</sup> There ‘and then` Zakariyyā prayed to his Lord: “My Lord grant me a righteous posterity, You are All-Hearing of prayers”.

<sup>39</sup> The angels called him while he was Praying in the sanctum that: “Allah gives you the good news of Yaḥyā<sup>50</sup>, a Believer in a Word from Allah<sup>51</sup>, a master, ‘utterly` chaste<sup>52</sup> and a Prophet among the virtuous ‘Prophets’”. <sup>40</sup> He ‘Zakariyyā` said: “My Lord how can I have a boy when old age has overcome me and my wife is barren?” He<sup>53</sup> said: “Thus Allah does what He wills”. <sup>41</sup> He ‘Zakariyyā` said: “My Lord, make me a sign ‘for this’”. He said: “Your sign is that you would not talk to people except using gestures—mention your Lord abundantly and glorify ‘Him`<sup>54</sup> late and early ‘in the day’”.

هَذَاكَ دَعَاكَ يَا رَبِّهِ وَقَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ  
لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾  
فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ  
أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ  
اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾  
قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ  
وَأَمْرَاتِي عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا  
يَشَاءُ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آيَتُكَ  
أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمْرًا وَتَذَكَّرَ  
رَبِّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَبِّحْ بِالْعُشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَرِ ﴿٤١﴾

50 As a son.

51 The “word of Allah” is Jesus who was conceived by God’s word and command. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

52 *Ḥaṣūr*, lit. withholder, living ascetically and abstaining from sins and staying aloof from the desires of the flesh. (Ibn ‘Aṭīyyah)

53 It is not specified who this reply came from. But it is perceivable that God communicated with him through the conduit of an angel. It is also worth noticing here that Zachariah did not address the angel or ask him for anything but he, being fully cognizant that God is ever near and answering of prayers, directed his prayers to God not the intermediary.

54 *Sabbiḥ*, lit. glorify ‘your Lord’, is to extol, exalt and venerate God. He was commanded to dedicate himself to God at all times.

﴿42﴾ 'Mention' When the angels said: "Maryam, Allah picked you, purified<sup>55</sup> you and favoured you over the women of the world". ﴿43﴾ "Maryam, devote yourself to your Lord, prostrate and bow down along with those who bow down 'in Prayer'"<sup>56</sup>. ﴿44﴾ These are accounts of the unknown<sup>57</sup>, We reveal them to you. You were not with them when they threw their pens<sup>58</sup> as to who would take charge of Maryam. You were not with them when they disputed.

﴿45﴾ When the angels said: "Maryam, Allah gives you the good news of a word from Him<sup>59</sup>; his name is the Messiah, 'Isā, son of Maryam; honourable in the worldly life and the Hereafter, and among those drawn near<sup>60</sup>". ﴿46﴾ "He talks to people while in the cradle<sup>61</sup>, and as

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾  
 يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَأَسْجُدِي وَأَرْكَعِي  
 مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ  
 إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَقُولُونَ أَفَلَمْ نَمُهِمْ  
 أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ  
 إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ  
 بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ  
 وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمَقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾  
 وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ  
 الصَّاغِرِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾

- 55 That God made her purity inherent to her and known to her immediate community was for the good reason to preempt any aspersions that would be cast on her when the time came for her delivery of Jesus. (*Al-Manār*)
- 56 In return for the honouring her over all other women, Mary is told to devote herself to God. (*al-Sa' dī*)
- 57 *Al-Ghayb*, lit. the unseen, what is beyond the reach of perception. Such stories, in the manner and details told here, were not known to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Community. This is a Sign from God signifying that Muhammad (ﷺ) came up with nothing out of his own without God inspiring him so; the accounts of Mary and her mother, Zachariah, John and Jesus given here are different from the narratives prevalent at the time. (*al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidī, Ibn Kathīr*)
- 58 *Yulqūna aqlāmahum*, lit. to throw their pens. It was a habit of theirs at the time to draw lots by casting reeds, which are sharpened and used as pens.
- 59 Jesus was not conceived by natural human ways of procreation but, like Adam, through God's commanding word: Be! Thus he is called "the word of God". (*Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī*)
- 60 *Al-Muqarrabin*, lit. the drawn near, are the select few who are close to God.
- 61 He was made able to talk in the very early suckling age as a Sign to Mary's people (c.f. 19: 29-33).



a grown man<sup>62</sup>; and he is one of the righteous”. <sup>47</sup> She said: “My Lord, how can I have a child<sup>63</sup>, while no human ‘has ever’ touched<sup>64</sup> me?” He<sup>65</sup> said: “Thus Allah creates what He wills. When He decrees a matter, He says: “Be!” and it is”. <sup>48</sup> “He ‘Allah’ teaches him the book<sup>66</sup>, wisdom<sup>67</sup>, the Torah and the Evangel”. <sup>49</sup> “A Messenger to the Children of Israel ‘announcing to them’ that: “I have come to you with a Sign<sup>68</sup> from your Lord that: I form for you the shape of a bird from clay and blow ‘my breath’ into it and it becomes a ‘living’ bird with Allah’s permission; I cure the born blind, the leper and bring the dead to life with Allah’s permission; I tell you of what you eat and what you store in your homes<sup>69</sup>—indeed

قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ  
 قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا  
 فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ  
 وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَرَسُولًا  
 إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ  
 مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ  
 الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ  
 وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُنحَى الْمَوْتَى  
 بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدَّخِرُونَ  
 فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِن فِي ذَلِكَ لآيَةً لَكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ  
 مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

62 After attaining Messengership to call them to God.

63 *Walad* is child irrespective of gender. Al-Biqā'ī (*Naẓm al-Durar*, 4: 400) explains that Mary, unlike Zachariah who said: “*ghulam*-boy”, said so incredulously because, understandably, she was of mind that conceiving a child without a meeting between a man and a woman was simply unthinkable.

64 Mary only managed to allude, quite euphemistically, to sex. This is a concrete example of her exemplary upbringing—“handsome blossoming”.

65 The angel who was used as a conduit of communication between God and Mary.

66 How to read and write. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

67 Made wise and discerning.

68 The following miraculous, supernatural acts are Signs of his truthfulness. “Sign” is used here as a generic noun in the singular form although the *Signs* told here are more than one.

69 Even this seemingly simple act defies human capacity and is an indicator of a person’s extraordinary capability. It could have been meant to address a wider audience who might just show up and ask for a “casual” sign, and after getting it they would be more perceptive to the Message.

in these ‘miracles’ is a Sign for you if only you were Believers”<sup>70</sup>. <sup>50</sup> “And I confirm what came before me of the Torah, and that I shall make lawful to you some of what was forbidden for you. I came to you with a Sign from your Lord, so be Mindful of Allah and obey me”. <sup>51</sup> “Allah is verily my Lord and yours, so worship Him—this is a straight path<sup>70</sup>”.

<sup>52</sup> When ‘Īsā sensed<sup>71</sup> their<sup>72</sup> ‘ardent’ Denial, he said: “Who are my helpers ‘in the way’ to Allah?”<sup>73</sup> The disciples<sup>74</sup> said: “We are the helpers of ‘the way of’ Allah. We Believe in Allah. And bear witness that we are devoutly surrendered<sup>75</sup> ‘to Him’”. <sup>53</sup> “Our Lord, we have Believed in what you have brought down<sup>76</sup> and we have followed the Messenger, so write us down among the witnesses<sup>77</sup>”.

وَمُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَدَّيْنَا مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ  
وَلِأُحِلَّ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِبَيِّنَاتٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ  
وَأَطِيعُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ  
هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ۝۵۱

فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَىٰ مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ  
مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ  
أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّ  
مُسْلِمُونَ ۝۵۲ رَبَّنَا إِنَّمَا أَنْزَلْتِ  
الرُّسُولَ فَآكُتُبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ۝۵۳

70 He charted out the way to God’s Pleasure clearly to them.

71 *Aḥassa*, translated literally here means: realized. (al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p. 52)

72 The Deniers among Children of Israel.

73 Those who are willing to help him carry out the mission.

74 *Al-Ḥawāriyyūn* (sig. *hawārī*) are Jesus’ closest companions. The term was later applied to all those who are close followers to Prophets. It is said that they were called so, among other things, because they used to “*yuḥawwirūna*” (to whiten) robes and other garments, i.e. to bleach whites through washing as a sign of their purity. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, p.464)

75 *Muslimūn*, lit. Muslims.

76 The Evangel.

77 Those who testify to the truthfulness of the Messages coming from God.

﴿54﴾ They plotted and Allah planned—Allah is verily the best of planners<sup>78</sup>.

﴿55﴾ When Allah said: “‘Isā, I shall bring your term ‘on Earth’ to an end, elevate you to Me<sup>79</sup>, purify you from those who Denied<sup>80</sup> and make those who follow you ‘prevail’ over those who Deny until the Day of Judgment<sup>81</sup>. Then your ‘humans’ return will be to Me and I shall judge between you over that which you used to differ”. ﴿56﴾ “Those who Denied<sup>82</sup>, I shall Punish them severely in this worldly life, and in the Hereafter, they shall have no helpers”. ﴿57﴾ “Those who Believed, and did good deeds, He<sup>83</sup> shall pay them their rewards in full—Allah likes not the wrongdoers”. ﴿58﴾ This<sup>84</sup> ‘is what’ We recite to you as Signs and ‘a testimony to the truthfulness’ of the Wise Reminder<sup>85</sup>.

وَمَكَرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرَ الْمَاكِرِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾  
 إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ لِيَعْقُوبَ إِنِّي مُتَوَفِّيكَ وَرَافِعُكَ إِلَيَّ  
 وَمُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَجَاعِلُ الَّذِينَ  
 اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَى يَوْمِ  
 الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ  
 فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ  
 كَفَرُوا فَأَعَذُّهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فِي الدُّنْيَا  
 وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ  
 ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ  
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ ذَلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ  
 مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٥٨﴾

78 The Deniers among the Children of Israel schemed to kill Jesus (ﷺ) but God had other plans: He made them unable to seize Jesus but seized a look-alike of his without realizing it (c.f. 4: 157-159). (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr)

79 He was raised, both body and soul, to the Heavens. (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū’ al-Fatāwā*, 4: 323, Ibn ‘Uthaymīn)

80 Save you from the evil of the Deniers. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāsiṭī, Ibn Kathīr)

81 This is a promise from God that true Believers who follow the Message and the path of the Prophets shall always have the upper hand. It is also a glad tiding from God to Jesus (ﷺ) as people of high aspirations care not only for what is immediate to them but also for generations to come. (al-Biqā’ī, *Naẓm al-Durar*, 4: 421)

82 The ones who refused to accept the Message of Jesus.

83 Notice the pronoun shift in this instance. The shift between the first and third person pronouns is meant to signify loftiness and authority. (al-Samīn al-Ḥalabī, *al-Durr al-Maṣūn*, 3: 216)

84 These stories of old were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to prove to people, particularly those who argue with him with regards to these matters, the truthfulness of his Message and the Qur’an.

85 *Al-Dhikr al-Ḥakīm*, lit. the sagacious mention, is the Qur’an.



﴿59﴾ Indeed the example of 'Isā with Allah is like that of Adam; He created him from dust and said: "Be!" and he was". ﴿60﴾ 'This is' The truth 'coming' from your Lord, so be not one of the doubters. ﴿61﴾ Whoever argues with you regarding him<sup>86</sup> after the knowledge that came to you, say 'to them': "Come along and let us call our children and yours, our women and yours and ourselves and yours and then pray earnestly that Allah brings down His Damnation upon the liars". ﴿62﴾ This is indeed the true narration; there is no god but Allah—indeed Allah is the All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿63﴾ But if they take to their heels, then Allah knows well the corrupters.

﴿64﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "People of the Book<sup>87</sup>, come to a common word<sup>88</sup> between us, that we: will not worship anything besides Allah; do not Associate anything with Him<sup>89</sup>; do not take each other as Lords besides Allah<sup>90</sup>. If they take to their heels, then say 'Believers': "Bear you witness that we are devoutly surrendered<sup>91</sup> 'to Him'".

إِنِّ مَثَلُ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ  
خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥٩﴾  
الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُنَ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾  
فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ  
فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا  
وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ  
فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكٰذِبِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ إِنَّ هٰذَا  
لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ وَمَا مِنْ إِلٰهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَإِنَّا  
لِللَّهِ لَهَوَ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّا  
لِللَّهِ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَىٰ كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ  
بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ  
بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِن  
دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا  
مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

86 Jesus (ﷺ).

87 The Jews and the Christians.

88 *Kalimatīn sawā'*, a standard, equal footing, mutually agreed upon word, i.e. the unadulterated Monotheistic declaration of Faith: "There is no god but God". Here all three parties, Muslims, Jews and Christians, are asked to jointly declare it while "truly" Believing it. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāsiṭī, Ibn Kathīr)

89 Hold them as gods besides God.

90 Who are worshipped besides God.

91 *Muslimūn*, lit. Muslims. The ones who totally surrender and devote themselves to God are the true Believers. True Belief is based on the foundation of worshipping

﴿65﴾ “People of the Book, why do you argue regarding Ibrāhīm<sup>92</sup>, while ‘both’ the Torah and the Evangel were only sent down ‘long’ after him?<sup>93</sup> Do you have no reason?” ﴿66﴾ “Here you are; you have argued about that of which you have knowledge, ‘but’ why would you argue about that of which you have no knowledge<sup>94</sup>? Allah knows and you do not know”. ﴿67﴾ Ibrāhīm was neither a Jew nor was he a Christian, but he was rightly oriented<sup>95</sup>, devoutly surrendered<sup>96</sup> and was not among the Associators. ﴿68﴾ Indeed those who can claim Ibrāhīm most are those who ‘truly’ followed him, ‘as well as’ this Prophet and the Believers<sup>97</sup>—Allah is the Ally of the Believers.

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَحْجُونَ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَا  
 أَنْزَلْنَا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَفَلَا  
 تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ هَآءَنتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ حَاجَجْتُمْ فِيمَا  
 لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ تُحَاجُّونَ فِيمَا لَيْسَ  
 لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَاللَّهُ بِعَمَلِكُمْ وَانْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾  
 مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَٰكِن  
 كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾  
 إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا  
 الَّذِي وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

God alone without claiming false deities besides Him, and following the example of the Prophet (ﷺ). Note that Muslims, just like Jesus’ disciples before, were required to declare to the Deniers that they are “devoutly surrendered/ submitted” to God—they do not put their desires, whims, status, wealth or families before God’s worship: “Say: “If your parents, children, brothers, spouses, clans, hard earned money, a trade for which you fear damage, and homes that you adore are favoured to you over Allah, His Messenger, and striving in His cause, then lie in waiting until Allah brings His Command to pass—Allah guides not the transgressors” (Q 9: 24).

- 92 Both the Jews and the Christians claimed Abraham as their own. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 93 That is after Abraham’s time. All their arguments about Abraham were based on apocryphal stories and not solid, authentic accounts.
- 94 Regarding Abraham’s true Faith. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurtubī)
- 95 *Ḥanīf*, is a very rich term but basically it means a pristine Believer. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness.
- 96 *Musliman*, lit. Muslim. The theme of true Belief (*Islam*) is carried on here.
- 97 Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Believing community around him, have more right to Abraham than any other nation, because they are the ones who truly follow his path unwaveringly. A true follower of the religion of Abraham is a truthful Monotheist; he worships God alone without the slightest form of Association (polytheism).

﴿69﴾ A faction of the People of the Book would love to mislead you—but they only mislead themselves without realizing it. ﴿70﴾ “People of the Book, why do you Deny Allah’s Signs, while you bear witness ‘to their truth’?” ﴿71﴾ “People of the Book, why do you confuse truth with falsehood, and suppress the truth knowingly?”<sup>99</sup>

﴿72﴾ A faction of the People of the Book ‘connivingly’ said: “Believe in what was sent down to the Believers early in the day, and then Deny it at the end of it<sup>100</sup>. So that they ‘Believers’ may retract”<sup>101</sup>. ﴿73﴾ “And confide only in those who follow your religion<sup>102</sup> –Say ‘Muhammad’: “‘True’ Guidance is surely the guidance of Allah”<sup>103</sup>—

وَدَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يُضِلُّوكُمْ  
وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾  
يَتَّهَلَّأُ الْكُتُبِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ  
وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ يَتَّهَلَّأُ الْكُتُبِ لِمَ  
تَلْبِسُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ  
تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

وَقَالَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ءَامِنُوا بِالَّذِي  
أُنزِلَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَجَهَ النَّهَارِ وَكُفِرُوا  
ءَاخِرَهُ، لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَلَا تَوَمَّنُوا إِلَّا  
لِمَنْ تَبِعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ

98 Here they are reproached for publicly Denying the truth with which Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) came to them, while they have it written in their Books, but they hide it from people.

99 In ayas 64, 65, 66, 70 and 71 those who were given the Scripture are enticingly called by the honorific epithet, “People of the Book”, and gently implored to listen to reason.

100 At a later time in the day.

101 This is a privileged glimpse given to the Prophet (ﷺ) by God into the ways and wiles of his protagonists. In order to sow the seed of doubt in the minds of the Believers, they hatched the plot of claiming to embrace Faith after giving the matter some thought, only to disclaim it as untrue shortly afterwards, seemingly as a result of much consideration and insider knowledge. They hoped that this would cause some Believers to waver on the ground that they would see these so-called knowledgeable people abandon the religion in such a way. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’dī)

102 They took a pledge to reveal their secrets and the truth of what their Books really say only to those who follow their way and religion.

103 This is the reply to the detractors of the Believers: guidance is in the Hand of God, whatever you do will be to no avail if He does not wish it to happen (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr). This parenthetical interjection is meant to emphasize that their mischievous efforts and devious plans will be thwarted prematurely, even before they have a chance to bring them into action (al-Alūsī).



lest that anyone would be given the like of what you were given, or that they should use it as an argument against you in front of your Lord”<sup>104</sup>. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Grace<sup>105</sup> is in the Hand of Allah, He bestows it unto whomever He wills—Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing”. ﴿74﴾ He singles out for His Mercy whomever He wills—great is Allah’s Grace!

﴿75﴾ Of the People of the Book are those whom if you entrust with hoards ‘of wealth’<sup>106</sup> they would restore it back to you, and ‘there are however’ of them others whom if entrust with a ‘single’ dinar they would not restore it back to you unless you run after them ‘for it’. This ‘they do’ because they say: “We will not be held accountable for what we do to the illiterates<sup>107</sup>”. They ascribe ‘such’ fabrications to Allah willingly! ﴿76﴾ Nay but ‘better are’ those who honour their pledge and are Mindful—Allah loves the Mindful.

أَنْ يُؤْتَىٰ أَحَدٌ مِّثْلَ مَا أُوتِيْتُمْ أَوْ يُحَاجُّكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ قُلْ إِنْ الْفَضْلُ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

\* وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنُوا بِقِنطَارٍ يُدْرَوْهُ إِيَّاكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنُوا بِدِينَارٍ لَا يُؤَدُّوهُ إِيَّاكَ إِلَّا مَا دَمَّتْ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ۗ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكِبْرَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ كُلٌّ مِنْ أَوَّلِ بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَآتَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

<sup>104</sup> They fear that people, if taught what their Books really say, would be on an equal footing with them in terms of knowledge, so they hid it, fearing either to lose this advantageous privilege or that it would be used in argument against them. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

<sup>105</sup> Guidance to Belief and the straight path. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

<sup>106</sup> *Qinṭār*, is a huge amount of money, the exact measure of which is subject to debate. (al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, 1: 88; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, 1: 28).

<sup>107</sup> *Al-Ummiyyūn*, the Arabs, who had no grasp of reading and writing. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur‘ān*, p. 101)

﴿77﴾ Those who trade off Allah's pledge and their oaths<sup>108</sup> for a pittance, will have nothing to claim in the Hereafter and Allah will not talk to them; neither will He look at them nor purify them<sup>109</sup>—theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿78﴾ A party of them twist their tongues with the Book<sup>110</sup> so that you may think it 'part' of the Book; it is not 'part' of the Book! And they say: "It is from Allah!" But it is not from Allah! They ascribe such fabrications to Allah advertently! ﴿79﴾ It is not 'possible' for a human, who is given the Book, 'sound' judgment and Prophethood, to then say to people: "Be my servants instead of Allah"<sup>111</sup>. But 'he would say': "Be godly, because of the Book you teach and because of your 'diligent' study 'of it'". ﴿80﴾ He would not bid you to take the angels and the Prophets as Lords<sup>112</sup>. Would he order you into Denial after you have become devoutly submitted 'Believers'?

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ  
ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ  
وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ  
وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَإِنَّ  
مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلُؤُونَ أَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالْكِتَابِ  
لِيَتَحَسَّبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ  
وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ  
اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكَذِبَ وَهُمْ  
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ  
الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ  
كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا  
رَبَّادِينَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ أَلْكِتَابِ  
وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ  
أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا أَيَأْمُرُكُمْ  
بِالْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

108 This pledge and oath is explained in aya 81 below; that is, to Believe in the Prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ) and support him. Yet the ruling applies to all those who break their binding oaths to gain what is not rightly theirs (*al-Manār*).

109 Absolve their sins.

110 The Book meant here is the Torah. "Twist their tongues with the Book", means they distort it by either muddling the pronunciation of its words or manipulating and misinterpreting its meaning. (*al-Ṭabarī*, *al-Sa' dī*)

111 Al-Bayhaqī in *al-Dalā'il* (quoted in *al-Tafsīr al-Saḥīḥ*, 2:43) documents that Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Abū Rāfi' al-Qaraghī said: "When the learned Jews and Christians came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and he called them to Islam, they replied: "Do you Muhammad want us to worship you just like the Christians worship Jesus, son of Mary?".... The Prophet (ﷺ) said: "I seek refuge by Allah that I shall call to the worship of any other besides Him. This is not what He sent me for!"

112 Worshipped besides God.

﴿81﴾ 'Mention` When Allah took the oath of 'all` the Prophets<sup>113</sup>: "For the Book and wisdom I granted you, when a Messenger<sup>114</sup> comes to you confirming what you have, you should Believe in him and support him". 'Allah` Said: "Do you affirm and take My solemn pledge for it?" They 'the Prophets` said: "We approve". He 'Allah` said: "Then bear witness<sup>115</sup> and I bear witness with you 'to this'"

﴿82﴾ Whoever takes to his heels after this 'solemn pledge`, then these are the transgressors.

﴿83﴾ Would they seek other than the religion of Allah while to Him devoutly submitted whoever

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَتَضَعُنَّ رُءُوسَكُمْ لِمَا آفَرَّشْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَأَفَرَّشْنَا قَالَ فَأَشْهَدُوا وَإِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

أَفْغَيْرَ دِينٍ اللَّهُ يَبْغُوتُ وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ

113 Ibn 'Aṭīyah (1: 463) says: "It is possible that this oath was taken at the time when the offspring of Adam were taken out of his back as breaths 'c.f. Q 7: 172', or taken from each Prophet at the time of his mission".

114 Al-Wāhidī, al-Qurtubī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Taymiyyah (*al-Zuhd wa al-Wara' wa al-'Ibādah*, p. 157) are of the opinion that this Messenger is Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Alternatively, but less plausibly, because unlike Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) most Prophets were sent for a specific nation and only for a specified period of time, it could mean that each and every Prophet was made to take a solemn oath, and in turn bid his followers, to Believe in and support any Prophet that comes with the like of what they have. The theme carries on from the earlier ayas that the People of the Book, although were fully aware of the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), because he was specifically mentioned in their books, hid the truth for ulterior motives fearing to lose their privileged status. The Qur'an brings the case to a close as follows: "Those who follow the illiterate 'gentile' Prophet whom they find written in the Torah and the Evangel; he calls them to what is virtuous and warns them against vile deeds, makes lawful to them good things and forbids for them what is impure, and relieves them from their burdens and shackles. Those who Believe in him, bolster and support him and follow the Light that came with him, these are the Successful" (7: 157).

115 This pledge is to be honoured not only by the Prophets but, by extension, by their followers too. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, al-Sa'dī).



is in Earth and the Heavens willingly and unwillingly—and to Him they shall return? <sup>84</sup> Say 'Muhammad<sup>116</sup>: “We Believe in Allah; what was sent down to us; what was sent down to Ibrāhīm 'Abraham', Ismā'il 'Ishmael', Ishāq 'Isaac', Ya'qūb 'Jacob' and the Tribes<sup>117</sup>; and what was given to Mūsā 'Moses', 'Īsā 'Jesus' and the Prophets from their Lord, we make no distinction between them and to Him we are devoutly submitted”.

<sup>85</sup> Whoever seeks a religion other than Islam<sup>118</sup>, it will not be accepted from him and in the Hereafter he is one of losers.

<sup>86</sup> How would Allah guide those who Denied after their Belief? They had borne witness that the Messenger<sup>119</sup> is true and clear evidences had come to them—Allah does not guide the unjust.

يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ ءَاٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَمَا اُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا  
 وَمَا اُنزِلَ عَلٰى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَاِسْحٰقَ  
 وَيَعْقُوْبَ وَاَلْاَسْبَاطِ وَمَا اُوْتِيَ مُوسٰى وَعِيسٰى  
 وَالنَّبِيُّوْنَ مِنْ رَبِّهْمْ لَا نَفَرِقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ  
 مِنْهَمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهٗ مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَمَنْ يَّبْتَغِ غَيْرَ  
 الْاِسْلَامِ دِيْنًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ  
 مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾

كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللّٰهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوْاۤ اَبَدًا  
 اِيْمٰنِيْمٌ وَّشٰهَدُوْاۤ اَنَّ الرّٰسُوْلَ حَقٌّ وَّجَآءَهُمُ  
 الْبَيِّنٰتُ وَاَللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾

116 The main addressee is Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) but his followers are included by default hence the plural form of the verbs in the dictated declaration.

117 *Al-Asbāt*, are the Prophets of the different clans of the Children of Israel who are the offspring of the twelve sons of Jacob, aka. Israel. (Ibn Kathīr)

118 “Islam” here, which may very well carry traces of its linguistic meaning, surrender/ submission, is the religion of Muhammad (ﷺ). It is the final, most perfect Message that came from God: “*Today* ‘the day of ‘Arafāt’ I have finalized your religion for you, perfected My Favour on you and I approve Islam as a religion for you” (5:3). The next aya, 3: 86, in which the to-be-followed “Messenger” is evoked again, further underlines this. Al-Biqā‘ī (*Nazm al-Durar*, 475) says: “... *islām* ‘the lexical item and its derivatives’ is mentioned repeatedly here ‘in these thematically related ayas’ because it falls within the bounds of the solemn pledge that was taken for the to-be-followed Messenger ‘who was always to come’—he is to be followed with total surrender ‘unconditionally’”.

119 Muhammad (ﷺ), the epithet “Messenger” reverberates the one mentioned in aya 81 above.

﴿87﴾ The requital of those is that the damnation of Allah, the angels and all humans is on them.<sup>120</sup> ﴿88﴾ Forever they reside therein 'Hellfire'; their torment will not be lightened nor will they be given respite. ﴿89﴾ Except those who repent<sup>121</sup> afterwards and make amends, then Allah is certainly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.<sup>122</sup>

﴿90﴾ Those who Denied after their Belief and then increased in Denial, their repentance will not be accepted<sup>123</sup>—those are the misguided. ﴿91﴾ Those who Deny and die as Deniers, 'as much as' Earth's fill of gold will not be accepted from them<sup>124</sup>, even if they were

أُولَئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُمْ أَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ  
وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ خَالِدِينَ  
فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ  
يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ  
وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ثُمَّ أَزْدَادُوا  
كُفْرًا لَنْ نَقْبَلَ تَوْبَهُمْ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ  
الضَّالُّونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ  
كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ مِلْءُ  
الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ أُفْتَدِيَ بِهِ أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ

120 This severe requital is meant to further underline the significance of Islam, the accepted religion in God's Sight, on the one hand, and the gravity of renouncing it, on the other. (al-Rāzī).

121 *At-Tawbah*, lit. repentance, is not only to feel regret for something one has done, but also to acknowledge the sinfulness of one's past action or conduct by showing sincere remorse and undertaking to reform in the future. It comprises both feeling sorry for one's sins and committing to not to fall into them again.

122 The reason for the revelation of ayas 86-89 is that according to Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه): "A man of the Anṣār professed Islam then he renounced it and became a Denier again. Then he felt sorry and sent to his folks to ask the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) if he could revert to Islam. They came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and said: "So-and-so has repented and he asks if he could come back to Islam". Then the ayas: "How will Allah guide those who Denied after their Belief?" until: "All-Forgiving, Most Merciful", were revealed. He was sent after and became Muslim again". (An-Nasā'ī (4068), Aḥmad (2218), Ibn Ḥibbān (4477), al-Ḥākim (8092)).

123 Those who renounce Islam and, by time, grow stauncher in Denial until the hour of death befalls them, their extemporaneous, at-the-spur-of-the-moment repentance will not be accepted (c.f. 4: 17-18). Had it been earlier and more sincere, it could have been accepted (al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Shinqīṭī). Ibn Taymiyyah says that this is the opinion of the majority of scholars (*Majmū' al-Fatāwā*, 1: 202).

124 C.f. 5:36 and 57:15. Anas Ibn Mālik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "On the Day of Judgment, Almighty Allah poses a question to the one who is being tormented

to ransom themselves with it— for those is a painful Punishment and they will have no helpers. <sup>92</sup> You 'Believers` will not gain 'the reward of` sincere piety<sup>125</sup> until you spend out of that which you love. Whatever you spend, Allah knows about it very well.

عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ لَنْ تَنَالُوا  
الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا  
مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٩٢﴾

<sup>93</sup> All food was lawful for the Children of Israel except what Israel 'Jacob` made unlawful for himself<sup>126</sup>

\* كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لَبِئْسَ إِسْرَائِيلَ  
إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ

the least among the denizens of Hellfire: “If you possess all that the Earth holds, would you ransom yourself with it?” He says: “Yes!” Then Allah says: “I wanted from you much less than that—that you do not Associate any other ‘in worship` with Me, but you were bent on Associating with Me!” (al-Bukhārī: 6557, Muslim: 2805)

<sup>125</sup> *Al-birr* is sincere piety which leads to great bounty, God’s Grace and Paradise. Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “Adhere to truthfulness ‘*ay-sidq*’ for it leads to sincere piety ‘*al-birr*’, and sincere piety leads to Paradise.” (al-Bukhārī: 6094, Muslim: 2607). *Al-Tafsīr al-Muyassar*, based on the opinion of the great Qur’an exegetes: Ibn Mas‘ūd, Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Aṭā’, Mujāhid, ‘Amr Ibn Maymūn and As-Suddī, actually has it that *al-birr* is Paradise itself in this instance. But al-Qurṭibī says that the rationalization of this opinion is that it means: “You will not attain *the reward of* sincere piety until....” By contrast to the fate of the Deniers whose good deeds in this world, whatever these might be, and notional offerings in the Hereafter will be to no avail to them, Believers are encouraged to choose for spending the best of theirs in order to be admitted into God’s great Grace of Paradise. Sincere piety and its reward, Paradise, is only attained when one prevails over one’s self, loves God more than anything else and is willing to sacrifice everything in His cause.

<sup>126</sup> After establishing Islam as the religion to be followed, the argumentation with the People of the Book carries on here. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that: “A group of Jews came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said to him: “Abū al-Qāsim, tell us about a few things none but a real Prophet knows about.” Among the questions they asked was: “What food did Israel make unlawful for himself before the Torah was revealed?” He replied: “I ask you by Allah who sent down the Torah to Moses, do you not know that Israel got very ill and his illness dragged on for a long time then he vowed that he would make unlawful for himself the drink and food he loved most should Allah cure him? The best food for him was camel meat and the drink he loved most was camel milk.” They said: “By Allah you are correct!”” (Imām Aḥmad: 2471; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*: 13012)



before the Torah was sent down. Say 'Muhammad': "Bring the Torah and recite it if you were truthful!"<sup>127</sup> <sup>(94)</sup> Whoever fabricates lies against Allah after this, then those are the Unjust. <sup>(95)</sup> Say 'Muhammad': "Allah has stated the truth! Hence follow the creed of Ibrāhīm<sup>128</sup>, who was rightly oriented<sup>129</sup> and he was not among the Associators.

تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةَ فُلْ فَأْتُوا بِالتَّوْرَةِ فَآتُوهَا إِنْ  
كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَمَنْ أَفْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ  
الْكَذِبَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ  
الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾ فُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ  
إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

- 127 Sa'dī comments: "This is in answer to the Jews who claimed that abrogation is not lawful, so they Denied the Messengership of Jesus and Muhammad (ﷺ) on this basis, because they came with laws and doctrines different from those found in the Torah. So it is only fair to use their own Scripture in argument against them; the ruling that all types of food were lawful for the Children of Israel except what he made unlawful to himself to which his children followed suit, that is before the Torah was sent down to Moses. But when the Torah was sent down, it made unlawful to them other types of food besides those made unlawful earlier by Israel. 'Thus the ruling that all food was lawful to them was abrogated by the Torah itself.' Then Allah commanded his Messenger (ﷺ) to ask them to bring the Torah and recite it if they persist in denying." (C.f. also al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Ighāthat al-Lahfān*, 2:321). In his translation of this aya Muhammad Asad has the following annotation: "This is a reference to the unwarranted Jewish belief that the Mosaic food restrictions were an eternal law decreed by God. As against this claim, the Qur'an stresses that no food restrictions had been imposed before the time of Moses and, secondly, that the restrictions arising from the Mosaic Law were imposed on the children of Israel alone. To claim that they represent an eternal divine law is described here as "inventing lies about God"". This is further proof to the Children of Israel that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who utters nothing out of desire and is inspired by God Himself, was truthful and confirmed what was in their Book. So the onus of Believing in him lays on them as he was also at the end of the road that their forefather, Abraham (c.f. 2: 133), whom they claim as their own and profess to follow his doctrine, had lain.
- 128 The creed of Ibrāhīm, *millata Ibrāhīm*, is the most primordial precursor to Islam, the religion with which Muhammad (ﷺ) was sent. The Qur'an states this in various places: 2: 35, 4: 125, 6: 161 and 16: 123.
- 129 *Hanīf* is a pristine Believer. The basic semantic meaning of the root *h-n-f* is inclination towards uprightness and eschewing crookedness.

‘96’ The first House ‘of worship’<sup>130</sup> laid down for mankind is the one in Bakkah<sup>131</sup>, blessed and ‘a beacon of’ guidance<sup>132</sup> for all beings. ‘97’ In it ‘the House’ there are clear Signs: Ibrāhīm’s climbing-stone<sup>133</sup>, and whoever enters it becomes safe<sup>134</sup>.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا  
وَهُدًىٰ لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٦﴾ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مِّمَّا  
أُنزِلَ فِيهِ ۗ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى  
النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا  
وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

- 130 Allusion here is made to the Jews’ objection to the change of the direction of Prayer from Jerusalem to Makkah (c.f. 2: 142). Muhammad Asad has this footnote: “The mention, in this context, of the Temple in Mecca - that is, the Ka’bah - arises from the fact that it is the direction of prayer (*qiblah*) stipulated in the Qur’an. Since the prototype of the Ka’bah was built by Abraham and Ishmael (see 2:125 ff.) - and is, therefore, much older than the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem - its establishment as the *qiblah* of the followers of the Qur’an does not only not imply any break with the Abrahamic tradition (on which, ultimately, the whole Bible rests), but, on the contrary, re-establishes direct contact with that Patriarch”.
- 131 Another name of Makkah. Arab lexicographers rationalized this naming relying on the rules of the Arabic language (c.f. among others al-Farāhīdī’s *al-Ayn*, al-Azharī’s *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*, Ibn Fāris’s *Maqāyīs al-Lughah*). Archaeologists have it that it is an ancient name of Makkah (Barbara Ann Kipfer (2000) *Encyclopaedic dictionary of archaeology*. Springer, p. 342). Unlike in 48:24 where the then, and still, current name of the city, Makkah, was used, the ancient name of the city, Bakkah, is, in a sense, used here to drive home the message of the antiquity of the House and by extension the Islamic Monotheistic Message itself, which takes after the Abrahamic creed in its pristine state.
- 132 Of this, is that people direct themselves towards it in Payer and head for it for ‘*umrah* and Hajj. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr)
- 133 *Maqām Ibrāhīm* is the stone on which Abraham (ﷺ) stood while building the Ka’bah. It is an everlasting Sign and evidenc to all people of the relationship of Islam to Abraham’s creed.
- 134 C.f. 29: 67, 106: 3-4. Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that on the day of the liberation of Makkah the Prophet (ﷺ) declared: “This town was sanctified by Allah when He created the Heavens and Earth and for this it is sanctified until the Day of Judgment. It was not ever allowed for anyone before me to fight in it. Fighting ‘in it’ was only allowed for me for part of a day. ‘I repeat’ It is sanctified for its sanctification by Allah until the Day of Judgment. Its thorn ‘branches’ shall not be torn down ‘for fodder’, its game ‘prey’ shall not be scared off, lost belongings in it should not be forfeited unless announced and its saplings shall not be cut down.” (al-Bukhārī: 1834, Muslim: 3189). These minor acts are categorically stated as forbidden, what then to say of something as grave as touching a human soul with harm in the Sanctuary.

Pilgrimage to the House is 'a duty' owed to Allah by all people— 'especially' those who have the means to undertake it. But those who Deny<sup>135</sup>, 'should know that' Allah is in no need of the creation.

﴿98﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "People of the Book, why do you Deny Allah's Signs, 'while you know that' Allah is witness to all that you do?" ﴿99﴾ Say 'Muhammad': "People of the Book, why do you turn away those who have Believed from the path of Allah<sup>136</sup>, seeking to make it crooked while you are witnesses?<sup>137</sup> Allah is never unaware of what you do!

﴿100﴾ You who Believe, if you obey a party of those who were given the Book, they will turn you back into Deniers after you have Believed. ﴿101﴾ 'But' How 'is it possible that' you will Deny while the Signs<sup>138</sup> of Allah are recited to you and 'while' His Messenger is in your midst? Whoever holds tight to Allah<sup>139</sup>, then he is guided to a straight path.

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ  
وَاللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ  
الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَن  
ءَامَنَ تَبِعُونَهَا عَوَجًا وَأَنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءُ وَمَا اللَّهُ  
بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا فَرِيقًا مِّن  
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ  
كُفْرِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ  
ءَايَاتُ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ وَمَن يَعْتَصِم بِاللَّهِ  
فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾

135 That Hajj is obligatory.

136 C.f. 3: 72.

137 They are chastised for cooking up schemes to deviate people from the straight path while fully aware and secretly bear witness to the truth which is mentioned in their Books. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

138 Qur'anic ayas.

139 By holding tight to the surest of ties (*al-'urwatu al-wuthqā*) mentioned in 2: 256, i.e. Islam. Holding tight to *al-'urwatu al-wuthqā* is the surest way of deliverance even long after the Prophet's (ﷺ) demise. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet said: "I leave behind me two things. You will not go astray as long as you adhere to them: the Book of Allah and my Sunnah. They will not separate until they come to the Basin 'in the Hereafter'" (Imām Mālik: 32).



﴿102﴾ You who Believe, be Mindful of Allah as He should be heeded and die not without being devoutly submitted<sup>140</sup>. ﴿103﴾ Hold tightly to the rope of Allah<sup>141</sup> all together, do not get splintered and remember Allah's favour on you when you were enemies and He made your hearts join then you became brothers by His grace; you were on the brink of a pit of Fire and He saved you from it<sup>142</sup>—thus Allah makes clear His Signs so that you might be guided. ﴿104﴾ Let there be among you a legion calling for goodness; enjoining virtue and advising against what is unacceptable—those are the successful<sup>143</sup>. ﴿105﴾ Be not like those who became riven apart and fell into disagreement after clear evidences came to them—for those is a great Punishment. ﴿106﴾ On the Day<sup>144</sup> when some faces are illumined and others are darkened<sup>145</sup>; as for

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ فُلُوكُمْ فَاصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى سَفَا حُفْرَةٍ مِنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَلَسَكُمْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَسْوَدَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكْفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾

140 *Muslimūn*, as Muslims.

141 A symbol of the straight path (c.f. 6: 153) that leads to deliverance, Islam (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī). Zayd Ibn Arqam (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ): "I'll leave with you behind me two grave matters. The first is the Book of Almighty Allah. It is the rope of Allah; whoever follows it is guided and whoever does not has gone astray...." (Muslim: 2408)

142 After the Battle of Ḥunayn the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed his Anṣār Companions by saying: "Have I not found you: lost and Allah guided by me? Destitute and Allah made you well-to-do by me? Divided and Allah united you by me?" (Muslim: 1061)

143 "The successful", *al-muflīḥūn*, are those who succeed in attaining what they wish for; to be guided by God, and avoiding the evil of what they fear.

144 The Day of Judgment.

145 C.f. 10: 26-27, 75: 22-24 and 80: 40.

those whose faces become dark 'it is said': "Did you Deny after you became Believers? Taste then the Punishment of your Denial". <sup>107</sup> As for those whose faces become illumined, they will be 'admitted' in Allah's Mercy<sup>146</sup>, forever they reside therein. <sup>108</sup> Those are the Signs of Allah, We truthfully recite them to you 'Muhammad'; Allah wants not that injustice 'befall' any of the creation. <sup>109</sup> To Allah belongs all what is in the Heavens and Earth, and to Allah all affairs shall be returned.

<sup>110</sup> You<sup>147</sup> are indeed the best nation the world has seen<sup>148</sup>: you enjoin virtue, advise against what is unacceptable and Believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book Believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are 'some' Believers, but most of them are Transgressors. <sup>111</sup> They will not harm you except by hurting you 'verbally' and if they fight you, they will take to their heels 'in flight'; then they would not be helped.<sup>149</sup> <sup>112</sup> Stamped on them is indignity wherever they are found. They are only spared 'this'

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَبْيَضَتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَمَنْ فِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿١٠٩﴾

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ ءَامَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ مِّنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ لَنْ يَضُرُّكُمْ ءِلاَ اذَى وَإِنْ يَفْتُلُوكُمْ يُولُوكُمْ اذْذَبَارُتُمْ لَا يُضِرُّونَ ﴿١١١﴾ ضَرَبْتَ عَلَيْهِمُ اذْذَلَّةَ اذْذَبَارُتُمْ مَا تُفْقِفُوا ءِلاَ يَحْبِلُ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلِ مِّنَ النَّاسِ وَبَءَاءَ وَبِعَضْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَضَرَبْتَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةَ ذَلكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِتَابَتِ اللَّهُ وَيَقْتُلُونَ اذْذَلَّةَ اذْذَبَارُتُمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّ ذَلكَ يَمَّا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

<sup>146</sup> Paradise. (Ibn 'Uthaymīn)

<sup>147</sup> The nation of Muhammad (ﷺ).

<sup>148</sup> *Ukhrijat lil-nās*, lit. brought forth to mankind.

<sup>149</sup> This fact is mentioned here in lieu of their transgression, with which the previous aya ended. (al-Tawhīdī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

by a rope from Allah and a rope from people<sup>150</sup>. They have incurred Allah's Wrath, and indignity<sup>151</sup> was stamped on them; this is for their Denial in Allah's Signs and killing the Prophets unjustifiably; this is for their rebelling and aggression<sup>152</sup>.

﴿113﴾ They are not 'all' alike<sup>153</sup>, there are among the People of the Book a legion, upright, reciting the Signs<sup>154</sup> of Allah throughout the night<sup>155</sup> and they prostrate 'in Prayer'<sup>156</sup>. ﴿114﴾ They Believe in Allah and the Last Day, enjoin virtue and advise against what is unacceptable and rush forth to do good—those are among the Righteous. ﴿115﴾ Whatever good they do they will not be denied it—Allah knows best the Mindful.

﴿113﴾ لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾  
يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾  
وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ يُكْفَرُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

- 150 That is by means of a pact of peace and/or defence given following the laws of God, or by the authority of people.
- 151 Whereas they might be spared from humiliation by others through a certain deal, indignity, which springs from within as it is engrained in the person's consciousness, is not intermittent.
- 152 This fate was imposed on them by God, in part, in fulfilment of the Divine promise to Punish them severely, found in 3:21.
- 153 Reference is made here to those of the People of the Book who sincerely Believed in the Messengership of Muhammad (ﷺ), followed him and devoutly adhered to the dictates of his religion. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)
- 154 Qur'anic ayas.
- 155 Reciting the Qur'an at night is a sign of their devoutness, because at night one's heart becomes more sincere and undivided as one retreats to the deepest of the recesses of one's own home veiled away from the eyes of others. (al-Nawawī, *al-Tibyān fī Ādāb Ḥamalāt al-Qur'ān*, p. 63)
- 156 That is, they perform Prayers. Although prostration is only part of Prayer, it is used synecdochally. It is singled out because it is the part of Prayer that most demonstrates devotion and humility. Indeed it is a becoming symbol of devout submission, Islam.



﴿116﴾ Indeed neither the Deniers' wealth nor their children will avail them against Allah—those are the company of the Fire, therein they abide forever. ﴿117﴾ The example of what they spend 'charitably' in this worldly life, is that of a howling 'gusty' wind which hits the crop of 'certain' people who wronged themselves and it decimates it 'all'—Allah did not wrong them but they wronged themselves.

﴿118﴾ You who Believe, do not take as 'intimate' confidants<sup>157</sup> anyone who is not of your own: they will stop at nothing to cause you destruction; they wish you hardship; hatred reeks from their mouths<sup>158</sup> but what their breasts conceal is 'much' greater. We have explained the signs<sup>159</sup> clearly for you, if only you are perceptive<sup>160</sup>. ﴿119﴾ Here you are, you love them but they do not love you; you Believe in the whole Book<sup>161</sup>; 'but' when they meet you they say:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ  
وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ  
النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ  
فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ رِيحٍ فِيهَا  
صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ  
فَأَهْلَكَتْهُمْ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَٰكِنِ أَنفُسُهُمْ  
يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بِطَانَةً مِّنْ  
دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأُولُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُوًا مَا عَنِتُّمْ  
قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي  
صُدُورُهُمْ ءَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِن  
كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ هَٰئَانَتُمْ ءَوْلَاءَ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ  
وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهِ وَإِذَا  
لِقَوْمِكُمْ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَصَوْا عَٰلِيكُمْ  
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنَ الْعَيْطِ قُلْ مَوْتُوا بِعَيْظِكُمْ إِن  
اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١١٩﴾

157 *Biṭānah* is ever used to denote someone's, especially an important person's, inner circle, who not only know all the insider information and secrets but also influence that person's opinion and are, at times, delegated some of the authority. Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "There is not a Prophet sent or a ruler installed by Allah without him having two inner circles: *biṭānah* (an inner circle) bidding and encouraging him to virtue and *biṭānah* bidding and encouraging him to evil. Whoever is spared is only saved by Allah's grace." (al-Bukhārī: 7198)

158 No matter how hard they try to keep their true feelings secret, their tongues, slips or otherwise, would belie them.

159 The signs that lay bare the truth of these people and reveal what they hide.

160 Muslims are encouraged to be perceptive to the till-tale signs that, more often than not, reveal the reality of matters (c.f. 2: 273) (al-Rāzī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

161 All Divinely-revealed Books. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'īdī)

“We Believe!” yet when they are alone they bite their fingertips out of rage at you. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Die of your rage”<sup>162</sup>; Allah knows what lurks in the chests! ﴿120﴾ Should a good thing come your way, they become saddened by it, and it elates them if a calamity befalls you. But if you forbear and are Mindful you will not be harmed in the least by their guile—Allah encompasses<sup>163</sup> what they do.

﴿121﴾ ‘Recall Muhammad’ when you set off from your household at dawn, appointing the Believers their fighting positions—Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. ﴿122﴾ Then two groups of your own were about to falter<sup>164</sup>, ‘but’ Allah, their Ally ‘made them remain firm’—in Allah let the Believers put their trust.<sup>165</sup>

﴿123﴾ Indeed Allah made you ‘emerge’ victorious in Badr<sup>166</sup> when you were scorned<sup>167</sup>—be Mindful of

اِنَّ تَمَسَّكُمْ حَسَنَةٌ تَسُوْهُمْ وَاِنْ تُصِبْكُمْ  
سَيِّئَةٌ يَّفْرَحُوْا بِهَا وَاِنْ تُضِرُّوْا لَا يَضُرُّوْكُمْ  
كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْْءًا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُوْنَ مُحِيْطٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾

وَإِذْ غَدَوْتَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ  
لِلْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢١﴾ إِذْ هَمَّتْ  
طَآئِفَتَانِ مِنْكَ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا وَعَلَى  
اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾

وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَاَنْتُمْ اَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ  
عَلَّامٌ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾

162 This Arabic expression has the same emotional charge as saying in English: “Choke with rage!”

163 God knows all about their stratagems. He has a record of it and they will be held accountable for it. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa’dī)

164 *Tafshal*, lit. fail; lose footing; these are the clans Banū Salimah and Banū al-Ḥārith.

165 After mentioning that holding one’s ground patiently and being Mindful of Allah is a means of victory over the enemies in the previous aya, God tacitly reminds the Believers of the reason for their setback in the battle of Uḥud, when the archers became impatient and left the positions that were appointed for them by the Prophet (ﷺ). (al-Ṭabarī)

166 Now the telling turns to the great battle of Badr to cite as example how Mindfulness and holding one’s ground (aya 125) wins battles.

167 *Adhillah*, they were the weaker party, derided because they were lesser in number and armament than their enemy.

Allah so that you may be thankful. ﴿124﴾ Then you 'Muhammad' said to the Believers: "Would it not suffice you that Allah should reinforce you with three thousand angels sent down 'from the sky'?" ﴿125﴾ Indeed 'this would suffice'! Yet if you hold out and are Mindful, and should they 'your enemies' hasten to charge 'in full force' against you, Allah will reinforce you with five thousand angels, clearly marked. ﴿126﴾ Allah wanted this to be nothing more than good news to you so that your hearts become comforted, but 'truly' victory is to be found nowhere but with Allah, the All-Prevailing, All-Wise. ﴿127﴾ 'This was so' To fell a flank<sup>168</sup> of those who Deny and to smite<sup>169</sup> them, so that they would draw back crestfallen. ﴿128﴾ You 'Muhammad' have no control to mention over this matter; might He relent towards them or Punish them 'as' they are indeed Unjust. ﴿129﴾ 'Indeed' To Allah belongs all that is in the Heavens and Earth, He forgives whoever He wills and Punishes whoever He wills—indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُمَدِّدَ  
رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُزِيلِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾  
بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ  
هَذَا يُمَدِّدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلافٍ مِنَ  
الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ  
لَكُمْ وَلِتَطْمَئِنَّ قُلُوبُكُم بِهِ ۗ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا  
مِن عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۗ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٢٦﴾ لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا  
مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْبِتَهُمْ فَيَنْقَلِبُوا  
خَآئِبِينَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ  
يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٢٨﴾  
وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ يَغْفِرُ  
لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ  
رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٩﴾

168 An imagery which means to strike down a number of them.

169 *Yakbita* is a very strongly emotive word; to smite, to depress. Indeed the whole aya uses words which are highly marked, standing out from other likely alternatives in Arabic. Any attempt at an equivalent rendition in English will inevitably fall short of what is ideally desired.



﴿130﴾ You who Believe, do not devour usury multiplied many times over<sup>170</sup> and be Mindful of Allah, so that you may be successful.<sup>171</sup> ﴿131﴾ Beware of the Fire that was prepared for the Deniers; ﴿132﴾ obey Allah and the Messenger so that you may be given mercy; ﴿133﴾ and rush forth to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden as wide as the Heavens and Earth prepared for the Mindful.

﴿134﴾ Those who spend at times of prosperity and adversity<sup>172</sup>, restrain 'their' anger<sup>173</sup> and pardon 'other' people—Allah loves good doers; ﴿135﴾ the ones who upon committing a 'gravely' vile deed or doing themselves an injustice<sup>174</sup>, they remember Allah and implore

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لَا تَاْكُلُوْا الرِّبٰوَا۟  
اَضْعَافًا مُّضَاعَفَةً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تُقْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِيْ أُعِدَّتْ  
لِلْكَافِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَاَطِيعُوا اللّٰهَ وَالرَّسُوْلَ لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ \* وَسَارِعُوْا اِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ  
رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ  
اُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

الَّذِيْنَ يُنْفِقُوْنَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَظِيْمِيْنَ  
الْعَظِيْمِ وَالْعَافِيْنَ عَنِ النَّاسِ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ  
الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَا فَعَلُوْا فَحِشَةً  
اَوْ ظَلَمُوْا اَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللّٰهَ فَاَسْتَغْفَرُوْا  
لِذُنُوْبِهِمْ وَمَنْ يَّغْفِرِ الذُّنُوْبَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَلَمْ  
يُصِرُّوْا عَلٰى مَا فَعَلُوْا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

170 Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr mention in their commentaries the manner in which usurious financial transactions got to be multiplied times over. That is when the date of settlement arrives the lender would give the debtor the choice to either make an immediate payment or to delay the date of payment with an increase in the amount due. In such a way, due to some debtors' lack of resources, delays used to be granted many times over and thus the original amount of the loan gets blown out of proportion.

171 The issue of the socially abhorred, detrimental financial transaction, namely usury, is taken up here again (c.f. *al-Baqarah* ayas 275-278 which talk about usury at great length and in the severest of terms) to further underline the sound foundations on which God intended to build the newly formed Believing community—both *al-Baqarah* and *Āl 'Imrān* are early Madinan suras. Here it is mentioned to drive home the message that prevailing over one's greed, among other things listed here (ayas 130-136), is a means to victory, thus subtly hinting at the greediness of the archers who left their positions to get their share of the spoils of war in the battle of Uḥud (c.f. *al-Manār*). To be really Mindful, and as a result victorious, is to pay heed to these commandments (c.f. *al-Sa'dī*).

172 At times of abundance and scarcity.

173 The image here is of "swallowing one's anger", *kazm al-ghayz*.

174 By committing less grievous sins.

'Him` for forgiveness for their sins – and who else would forgive sins besides Allah<sup>175</sup> –; they do not persist in committing what they do knowingly<sup>176</sup>. <sup>﴿136﴾</sup> For those the reward is forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens under which rivers flow; forever they abide therein—great indeed is the reward of workers.

<sup>﴿137﴾</sup> The laws<sup>177</sup> have come to pass before you, so walk the land and behold the end of the Disbelievers. <sup>﴿138﴾</sup> This is a clarification<sup>178</sup> to people, a guidance and an admonishment to the Mindful. <sup>﴿139﴾</sup> 'So' Do not feel helpless and sorrowful while indeed yours is the upper hand<sup>179</sup> if you are 'truly` Believers.

أُولَئِكَ جَزَاءُ هُمْ مَعْفَرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّتْ  
تَجْرِي مِّن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَعَمَّ  
أَجْرُ الْعَمَلِينَ ﴿١٣٦﴾

قَدْ حَلَّتْ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَيَسِيرُوا فِي  
الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ ﴿١٣٧﴾  
هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِّلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ  
لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ  
الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

175 Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “There is not a Muslim who commits a sin, then performs ablution, Prays two *rak'ahs* and asks Allah for forgiveness without Allah forgiving him”. “Then He read the following two ayas: “...the ones who when they commit a 'gravely` vile deed or do themselves an injustice...” (3:135), and: “Whoever commits a misdeed or does himself an injustice, then he asks Allah for forgiveness, he will find Allah all-Forgiving, Most-Merciful” (4: 110). (Abū Dāwūd: 1521, al-Tirmidhī: 406, Ibn Mājah: 1395)

176 They realize that: what they did is sinful, they are liable to Punishment if they do not mend their ways because repentance is mandatory on them, and that God accepts repentance. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn 'Aṭīyah, Ibn Kathīr)

177 The Divine laws and canons which stipulate that victory and defeat take turns and are ever interchanged between Believers and Deniers. Among these canons is that the reins would be slackened for the Deniers to further lure them into the trap of their annihilation and the deliverance of the Believers after putting them to the test. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

178 The Qur'an, of which the preceding ayas are part. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Ashūr).

179 *Al-A'lawn*, the ones who are superior.

﴿140﴾ If a wound<sup>180</sup> touches you, indeed an equal wound has touched the clan<sup>181</sup>. Those are the days<sup>182</sup> We rotate them between people so that Allah would take the measure of those who 'truly' Believe<sup>183</sup> and choose martyrs<sup>184</sup> from among you—Allah does not love the unjust. ﴿141﴾ And 'so that' Allah may purge the Believers and wipe out the Deniers.<sup>185</sup>

﴿142﴾ Or you thought that you would enter Paradise without Allah making known those who fought 'in His cause' and those who are steadfast. ﴿143﴾ You 'Believers' were wishing for death before you met it; there you saw it with your own eyes!<sup>186</sup> ﴿144﴾ Muhammad is no more than a Messenger who comes in a

إِنْ يَمَسُّكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ قَرْحٌ مِّثْلُهُ ۗ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نَدَاؤُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾  
وَلِيُمَجِّصَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَيُمَحِّقَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾  
وَلَقَدْ كُنتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَلَا يَأْتِيَنَّ أُمَّاتٍ أَوْ قُتِلَ أُنْقَابَتْكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ

180 Suffered a blow, in the battle of Uḥud.

181 *Al-Qawm*, the other side who tasted bitter defeat during the battle of Badr.

182 This is the nature of time.

183 *Liya'lama Allāh*, lit. "so that Allah may know". A literal translation will cut against the grain of the correct Muslim Belief that Allah is omniscient. According to scholars, it is in this instance 'ilm *zuhūr* or 'ilm *shahādah*; the kind of knowledge that enables one to bear witness confidently. This does not only entail that the witness knows things for a fact but also that enough conclusive evidence to the case is found and known.

184 Thus God grants the lofty status of martyrdom 'shahādah' to some of His servants.

185 God here consoles the Believers for their setback in the battle of Uḥud and tells them the Wisdom behind it, only after the reasons behind it were spelled out in the previous ayas along with the remedy. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Ashūr)

186 This is a reminder to the Believers, who missed the battle of Badr, of their talk about wishing to meet the enemy and get struck down by them when they saw the great status the martyrs of the battle of Badr attained. It is somehow said reprovingly to highlight that, while the battle of Uḥud is being alluded to here, solid intentions and steadfastness not mere fancy talk are what actually win battles. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)



line of Messengers<sup>187</sup>, should he die or be killed, would you 'then' turn on your heels?<sup>188</sup> Whoever turns his heels, he would not scathe Allah in the least. Allah will reward the thankful<sup>189</sup>. ﴿145﴾ No soul will die without Allah's permission, 'theirs is` a preordained precise timing<sup>190</sup>. Whoever wants the reward of the worldly life, We will give him from it; and whoever wants the reward of the Hereafter, We will give him from it; We will reward the Thankful.

﴿146﴾ 'Like` Many a Prophet with whom a great many of the godly fought, they did not lose heart at what befell them in the cause of Allah, neither did they weaken nor cower down<sup>191</sup>—Allah loves the steadfast. ﴿147﴾ Their only say was that: “Our Lord, absolve us of our sins and our `reckless` excesses, make firm our feet<sup>192</sup> and grant us victory over the unjust people”<sup>193</sup>.

وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَن يَصَرَ اللَّهُ شَيْئًا  
وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ  
لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كَتَبْنَا  
مُؤَجَّلًا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا  
وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَسَنَجْزِي  
الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

وَكَايُنَ مِنْ نَبِيِّ قَتَلَ مَعَهُ رِيُونَ كَثِيرًا  
فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا  
ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾  
وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا  
وَأَسْرِفْنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا وَتَبَّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَأَنْصُرْنَا  
عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

187 Messengers are nothing more than human. The laws of nature apply to them too.

188 This smacks the faltering position that some among the Muslims, lurking in the ranks of whom was a number of hypocrites, took when it was rumoured at one time during the battle of Uḥud that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) met his death.

189 Those who realize God's bounties on them and show practical thankfulness in striving in His cause. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

190 This fact is stated by way of encouraging the Believers to fight in the cause of Allah.

191 Submit to their enemy.

192 Make us stand firm.

193 This prayer is very similar to that of the godly soldiers who fought with Saul against Goliath (c.f. 2: 250). True Believers, although realizing the difficulty of the circumstance they are put in, summon their courage to face up to the situation relying on God and praying to Him to make them stand firm.

﴿148﴾ Allah gave them the reward of the worldly life and the most fine<sup>194</sup> reward of the Hereafter—Allah loves good doers.

﴿149﴾ You who Believe, if you obey the Deniers<sup>195</sup>, they would surely 'cause you to' turn on your heels and you would revert as losers. ﴿150﴾ Nay but Allah is your Ally—He is the best of helpers. ﴿151﴾ We will cast fright in the hearts of the Deniers for Associating with Allah that for which He made no authority<sup>196</sup>. Their resort is Fire; dire indeed is the domicile of the Wrongdoers. ﴿152﴾ Allah was true to His promise when you put them to death<sup>197</sup> with His permission, until you wavered, quarrelled over the matter and disobeyed, 'only' after 'Allah' showed you what you love<sup>198</sup>. Among you are those who seek this worldly life and among you are those who seek the Hereafter<sup>199</sup>.

فَقَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ تَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ  
الْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

يَتَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ  
كَفَرُوا يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ  
فَتَنقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ بَلِ اللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ  
وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ  
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا  
بِاللَّهِ مَا لَهُ يَنْزِيلٌ بِهِ سُلْطَانٌ وَمَا لَهُمْ  
الْبِتَارُ وَيُنْسُ مَنَوى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾  
وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ  
تَحْسَبُونَهُم بِإِذْنِهِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ  
وَتَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِمَّا بَعَدَ مَا  
أُرِيكُمْ مَا تُحِبُّونَ مِنْكُمْ مَن يُرِيدُ  
الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَن يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ نَمَّ  
صَرَفَكُم عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ وَلَقَدْ  
عَفَا عَنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾

194 Winning God's Pleasure and eternal bless in the Heavenly abode of Paradise. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī)

195 When the Prophet (ﷺ) was rumoured dead, some Believers, as mayhem spread in their ranks understandably in search of assuagement, lent their ears to the Denying hypocrites who volunteered "consultation".

196 The idols they worshiped besides God without having a plausible reason to justify their deification.

197 The Qur'anic lexical item *tahussūnahum* is unique indeed. It is in a sense semantically related to "sensing" in that when one is killed, he loses his sense of perception (c.f. al-Shinqīṭī).

198 Victory after the flight of the Deniers from the battle ground. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).

199 The first party are the archers who left their positions to collect the spoils, while the latter are those who remained in their posts. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāhidi, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa' dī).

Then He turned you away from them<sup>200</sup> to test you. ' But now ` He forgave you—Allah is bountiful to the Believers.<sup>201</sup> ﴿153﴾ When you took flight, heeding no one while the Messenger was calling you 'back to battle` from behind you. Then He rewarded you 'a greater` distress on top of 'your` distress, so that you may not grieve for what you missed or what befell you—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do.<sup>202</sup> ﴿154﴾ Then He descended on you after distress comforting sleepiness engulfing a group of you<sup>203</sup>, and

﴿١٥٣﴾ إِذْ تَصْعَدُونَ وَلَا تَأْتُونَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ وَالرُّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أُخْرَاكُمْ فَأَتَيْتَكُمُ غَمًّا بَعِيرًا لَكَيْلًا تَخْزَنُوا عَلَى مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمَنَةً نُّعَاسًا يَغْشَى طَآئِفَةً مِّنكُمْ وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَل لَّنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِن شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنفُسِهِم مَّا

200 When their hearts turned away from obeying the Messenger (ﷺ), they were made to forget about their enemy and take due guard against them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, al-Sa'ādī, Ibn 'Ashūr).

201 This is a synopsis of the events of the battle of Uḥud succinctly put: 1) God fulfilled His promise of victory to the Believers and made them run down and kill their enemy; 2) when they saw that their desired goal, victory, was accomplished some the archers lost conviction upon seeing that the spoils of war were being collected; 3) they disputed with their leader who was of the opinion that they remained put as they were bade by the Prophet (ﷺ) (4) when they left their positions, their enemies, who were lying low in hiding, bore down on them; 5) a commotion ensued and they fled. The rest of the account carries on in the next aya.

202 Believers were greatly distressed at losing ground in battle and taking flight in the face of their enemy, but a greater concern that made them forget this one was in store for them; at this very difficult juncture news of the rumoured death of the Prophet (ﷺ), whom they loved more than anything in this world, hit them. They soon forgot the loot they missed out on and the defeat that was inflicted on them. Thus God soothed and comforted them (c.f. al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa'ādī). This is a prime example of post trauma group therapy, which was rounded off by the soothing feeling of sleepiness as in the next aya. It is human nature to brood over one's woes and easily forget about the many blessings that they are couched in. They only appreciate their blessings when they lose them.

203 The real Believers.



another group<sup>204</sup> of you were 'very' concerned about themselves, they think of Allah that which is not true; the thoughts of ignorance<sup>205</sup>. They say: "Do we have a say in this affair?" Say: 'Muhammad': "The whole affair belongs to Allah"<sup>206</sup>. They hide in their hearts what they do not reveal to you. They say: "Had we had a say in this, we would not have been killed here". Say: "Had you been in your homes, those who were decreed to be killed would have made their way to their mowing down 'places'. 'You were lead to come` So that Allah would test what lurks in your chests and put what is in your hearts to trial—Allah is Knowledgeable of what the hearts hold. ﴿155﴾ Those who fled on the day when the two hosts met `did so because` Satan has entrapped them owing to some sins 'they committed`, but Allah forgave them—Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing.

لَا يُبَدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْاَمْرِ  
 شَيْءٌ مَا قَاتَلْنَا هَهُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بِيوتِكُمْ  
 لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ اِلَىٰ مَضَاجِعِهِمْ  
 وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللّٰهُ مَا فِي صُدُوْرِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ  
 مَا فِي قُلُوْبِكُمْ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿١٥٤﴾  
 اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ  
 اِنَّمَا اَسْتَرَلَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوْا  
 وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾

204 The hypocrites (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī) who were so consumed by their thoughts about the state they found themselves in the middle of which when they really did not want anything to do with it in the first place. They were too tense and anxious to feel such a comforting, subtle feeling as sleepiness. Their hearts were not pure enough to receive the blessing.

205 *Al-Jāhiliyyah*, the age of ignorance; the life the Arab pagans lead before the advent of Islam in which their perceptions about God were, to say the least, muddled. Here, seeing the Believers take the blows, they thought that God would not come to their help: "Nay but you thought that the Prophet and Believers would never go back to their homes, and that 'thought' was to take hold of your hearts; you caught the evil thought—indeed you are people laid to waste" (48:12).

206 The infinitely Wise God Almighty disposes of matters as He wills.

﴿156﴾ You who Believe, do not be like those who Denied and said to their brothers<sup>207</sup> when they<sup>208</sup> set about travelling 'in trade' or on a raid<sup>209</sup>: "Had they been with us, they would not have died or gotten killed"<sup>210</sup>. Thus Allah makes their hearts remorse-stricken; Allah 'alone' gives life and causes death—Allah is All-Seeing of what you do. ﴿157﴾ If you are killed in the cause of Allah or 'yet' died, 'be sure that' forgiveness from Allah and mercy are better than what they hoard.<sup>211</sup> ﴿158﴾ Whether you die or get killed certainly to Allah you shall be rallied<sup>212</sup>.

﴿159﴾ By Allah's Mercy you 'Muhammad' relented<sup>213</sup> to them. Had you been harsh and hard-hearted<sup>214</sup>, they would have disbanded from around you. Pardon them and pray for forgiveness for them and seek their counsel in affairs<sup>215</sup>. If

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا  
وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ كَانُوا  
غُزًى لَوْ كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا وَمَا قُتِلُوا  
لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ  
يُخَيِّئُ وَيُمَيِّتُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾ وَلَئِن  
قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مُتُّمْ لَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ  
اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَلَئِن مُّتُّمْ  
أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

فِيمَا رَحِمَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ إِنَّتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا  
غَیْظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ  
عَنَّهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا  
عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾

207 Their brethren with whom they find a certain bond.

208 The latter.

209 *Ghuzzan* is plural of *ghāzī*, the one who sets out on a fighting foray. (Ibn Qutaybah, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 114, al-Sijjistānī, *Gharīb al-Qur'ān*, p. 354)

210 Here God makes the Believers privy to this devilishly inspired soliloquy of lament and deep regret of the Deniers/hypocrites at the misfortune that hit their so-called brothers. Inconsolable indeed without God is the life they lead! A Believer should know for certain that, all matters including life and death, are in the Hands of God alone.

211 The reward with God for those who dedicate themselves to His cause is, by far, better than any worldly gain.

212 For Reckoning.

213 In the wake of the battle of the Uḥud, the Prophet (ﷺ) was, by God's grace, made to show leniency to the Believers who disobeyed his commands.

214 *Ghalīz al-qalb*, lit. thick-hearted.

215 The principle of *shurā*, consultation/deliberation, is a cornerstone of the Islamic community. One of the greatest traits of the Believing community is that: "...their affairs are deliberated among them...." (42: 38).

you are resolved then put your trust in Allah<sup>216</sup>—Allah loves those who put their trust in Him. <sup>﴿160﴾</sup> If Allah helps you, then there is no one to defeat you; if He forsakes you, who would then help you thereafter? In Allah let the Believers do put their trust.

<sup>﴿161﴾</sup> No Prophet ever misappropriates<sup>217</sup>, whoever misappropriates 'something' comes with that which he misappropriated on the Day of Judgment<sup>218</sup>; then every soul shall be requited what it earned—they shall not be wronged. <sup>﴿162﴾</sup> Would the one who pursues Allah's Pleasure be like the one who is blighted with Displeasure from Allah; his is Hellfire as a resort—dire indeed is the destination.

إِنْ يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَغُلَّ وَمَنْ يَغُلَّ يَأْتِ بِمَا غَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾ أَفَمَنْ أَتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَاهُ جَهَنَّمُ فَيَسَّ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾

216 The final decision, after deliberations, is left to the leader of the community.

217 *Yaghull* is to stealthily seize possession of something, the spoils of war in particular in this instance, illegally. Exegetes differed upon the reason for the revelation of this aya. One opinion by the great exegetes, al-Kalbī and Muqātil, found in Al-Baghawī's *tafsīr*, puts it relevantly in context. They have it that the aya was revealed with regards to: "the spoils of the battle of Uḥud. When the archers left their positions to seize some of the loot, they thought: "We fear that the Prophet would say: "Whatever one takes is his", and he may not divide the loot 'among his Companions' like he did in the battle of Badr". They then abandoned their positions and got their hands busy with the loot. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to them: "Did I not command you not to leave your positions until I said so?" They replied: "We left the rest of our brothers stationed in their positions!" He (ﷺ) said: "No! But you thought that we would seize possession of it and not give you your share!" Thus this aya was revealed".

218 Abū Ḥumayd al-Sā'idī (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: "By Allah none of you wrongfully appropriates part of it 'collected mandatory alms' without him meeting Allah on the Day of Judgment carrying it. And I shall know everyone of you who meets Allah carrying a camel grunting, a cow lowing or a goat bleating...." (al-Bukhārī: 6979, Muslim: 1832). Al-Qurṭubī (4: 256) comments: "He comes carrying it 'illegally appropriated effects' on his back and neck, tormented by its weight, horrified by its atrocious sound, and berated by making his dishonesty known to all people...."



﴿163﴾ They 'both parties' are of 'varying' degrees before Allah<sup>219</sup>—Allah is All-Seeing of what they do. ﴿164﴾ Allah has favoured the Believers when He sent among them a Messenger of their kind<sup>220</sup>; He recites His Signs<sup>221</sup> to them, purifies them, and teaches them the Book and Wisdom<sup>222</sup>—indeed they were utterly lost before.

﴿165﴾ Would you whenever a calamity befalls you<sup>223</sup> – when you have inflicted twice as much of it<sup>224</sup> – say: “Where does this come from?”<sup>225</sup> Say 'Muhammad': “You brought this upon yourselves?” Indeed Allah is Able over everything. ﴿166﴾ What befell you on the day when the two hosts met was with Allah's permission, so that He makes known the 'real' Believers,

هُم دَرَجَاتٌ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بِصِيرٍ بِمَا  
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ  
بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ  
آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ  
وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ  
مُتَّبِعِينَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

أَوْلَمَّا أَصَابَتْكُمْ مُصِيبَةٌ قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مِثْلَهَا  
قُلْتُمْ أَنَّى هَذَا قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ  
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ  
يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾

- 219 Neither all those who seek God's Pleasure nor are those who deserved His Displeasure are of one and the same grade; some are better than others while others are worse than others. Any certain grade is won by a person's deeds whether good or bad. (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 220 That is a human being as much as they are, where there is a human connection and mutual understanding at all levels of familiarity (c.f. Ibn Taymiyyah, *Tafsīr Āyāt Ashkalat*, 1: 226-227, Ibn Kathīr). God could have sent them an angel as Messenger but the nature of that creation would have come in the way of communication and the safe delivery of the Message (c.f. 17: 95).
- 221 Ayas.
- 222 The Qur'an and the Sunnah.
- 223 Seventy Muslims were killed in the setback in the battle of Uḥud. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 224 That is when they routed their enemy in the battle of Badr killing seventy men and taking prisoners another seventy. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)
- 225 They incredulously posed the question of the reason behind this setback. Then their answer came.

﴿167﴾ and those who pretend<sup>226</sup>. It was said to them: “Come and fight in the cause of Allah, or ‘at least’ push back<sup>227</sup>”. They said: “Had we any knowledge of a fighting, we would have followed you”<sup>228</sup>. They were on that day closer to Denial than Belief. They say with their mouths what is not in their hearts—Allah knows best what they hide. ﴿168﴾ Those who remained behind and said to their brothers: “Had they obeyed us, they would not have been killed”. Say ‘Muhammad’: “Ward off death from yourselves, if you are speaking the truth!”

﴿169﴾ Do not think that those who got killed in the cause of Allah<sup>229</sup> are dead. Nay but they are alive with their Lord ‘being handsomely’ provided for<sup>230</sup>.

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا  
 فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ اذْعَبُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالَ  
 لَا تَتَّبِعْنَا هُمْ لِلْكَفْرِ بِوَمَدِّ اقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ  
 لِلْإِيمَانِ يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ  
 وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا  
 لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قُتِلُوا قُلْ  
 فَادْرَأُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ  
 صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا  
 بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾

226 Al-ladhīna nāfaqū, the hypocrites lurking within the Believing community.

227 Defend yourselves.

228 That is their lame excuse was that in their mind they did not think that the Believers would actually engage the Deniers in battle. They claimed that they saw battle as a remote possibility. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa’adī)

229 Martyrs.

230 Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “When your brothers were struck down in the battle of Badr, Allah placed their souls in the ‘abdominal’ cavities of green fowls, they drink from the rivers of Paradise, eat from its fruits and come back at the end of the day to repose in chandeliers hung in the Shadow of the ‘Majestic’ Throne. For all of this, they ‘the martyred Believers’ said: “Who would tell our brothers about us; that we are in Paradise being handsomely provided for so that they may not give up fighting in the cause of Allah or cower in war?” Allah Almighty said: “I will tell them on your behalf”. Then He revealed: “Do not think that those who got killed in the cause of Allah are dead. Nay but they are alive with their Lord ‘being handsomely’ provided for”. (Abū Dāwūd: 2520, Imām Aḥmad: 2388; another version is found in Muslim: 1887)

﴿170﴾ Delighted with what Allah gave them from His grace and are cheerful 'in anticipation' for those who did not yet join them; that behind them they<sup>231</sup> will have no fear nor will they feel sorrowful; ﴿171﴾ they are cheerfully anticipant of Bounty and Grace from Allah and that Allah casts aside not the reward of the Believers.

﴿172﴾ Those who responded to 'the call of' Allah and the Messenger after they have been deeply wounded<sup>232</sup>; of whom these who do well and are Mindful, theirs is a great reward. ﴿173﴾ Those who 'when' people said to them: "People have regrouped for you, so fear them"<sup>233</sup>, their Belief 'only' grew firmer and they said: "Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers"<sup>234</sup>. ﴿174﴾ They returned with grace and bounty from Allah<sup>235</sup>, touched not by harm; they followed Allah's Pleasure<sup>236</sup> — Allah is of a great bounty.

فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ  
بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا  
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ \* يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ  
بِنِعْمَةِ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلِ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا  
يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ  
الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرٌ  
عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٢﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ  
قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا  
وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٣﴾  
فَأَنْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَمْ يَمَسَّ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ  
وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾

231 The latter.

232 Those of the Believers who did the Prophet's (ﷺ) bidding and chased after the retreating Makkan army until they reached the outpost of Ḥamrā' al-Asad, at the outskirts of Madinah, although they were deeply wounded and bruised in the battle of Uḥud. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī)

233 The army of the Deniers, under the leadership of Abū Sufyān, were reported to be bracing themselves for a rebound. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)

234 This pronouncement is one of the greatest forms of *dhikr* at times of hardship. Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "*Ḥasbunā Allāh wa ni'ma al-Wakīl* (Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers), was said by Ibrāhīm (رضي الله عنه) when he was thrown in the fire and was said by Muhammad (ﷺ) when it was said: "People have regrouped for you, so fear them", their Belief 'only' grew firmer and they said: "Allah suffices us, He is the best of Keepers"." (al-Bukhārī: 4563).

235 Their obedience to God and His Messenger (ﷺ) and pursuit of their enemy won them great rewards upon their return.

236 They did what leads to the Pleasure of God and won it. (Al-Ṭabarī)



﴿175﴾ It is indeed Satan sowing fear of his allies<sup>237</sup>. Do not fear them but fear Me, if you are 'true' Believers.

﴿176﴾ Let not 'Muhammad` those who rush forth towards Denial grieve you<sup>238</sup>; they would not harm Allah in the least. Allah wants not a share for them in the Hereafter and theirs is a great Punishment. ﴿177﴾ Those who exchanged Belief for Denial would not harm Allah in the least and theirs is a painful Punishment. ﴿178﴾ Let not those who Deny think that the rein We give them<sup>239</sup> is better for them. We only give them allowance so that they would accumulate sins; theirs is a humiliating Punishment.

﴿179﴾ Allah would not have left the Believers as you were, until He sorted out the bad from the good<sup>240</sup>. Allah would have not revealed the Unseen to you, but He chooses from His Messengers whoever He wishes<sup>241</sup>, so Believe in Allah and

إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ  
وَخَافُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾

وَلَا يَحْزَنكَ الَّذِينَ يَسْلُبُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ أَنَّهُمْ  
لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ  
حِطًّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾  
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اسْتَرَوْا الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا  
اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٧﴾ وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ  
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمِّلِي لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّأَنفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا  
نُمِّلِي لَهُمْ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِثْمًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ ﴿١٧٨﴾

مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ  
حَتَّىٰ يَمَيِّزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ  
لِيُظِلَّكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِيٰ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ  
مَنْ يَشَاءُ فَمَا تُلَاقُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَإِنْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَتَتَّقُوا  
فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٩﴾

237 The allies of the Devil are the warring Deniers. Satan intimidates Believers by them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'adī)

238 The adversity that overcame the Believers showed the real mettle of the hypocrites, who found the time opportune to lay bare their true colours. This is in stark contrast to the stance of the real Believers who did not loiter in responding to the Prophets' (ﷺ) bidding.

239 The fact that God does not quicken their punishment and seize them for their misdeeds (c.f. ayas 196-197 below).

240 In its formative days, the early Believing community was not as clearly differentiated as one might think; hypocrites were living in its midst pretending they were Believers and lying low wishing for the worst to come upon the real Believers. In order to separate the wheat from the chaff, God decreed the calamity that befell the Believers in the Battle of Uḥud; so the hypocrites would be told apart (c.f. al-Rāzī).

241 God chooses from among His Messengers those whom He entrusts with some knowledge of the Unseen (*al-ghayb*). In this instance, He told Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) who the hypocrites really were so that he may be on guard against them. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāḥidī, *al-Wajīz*)

His Messengers. If you Believe and are Mindful then yours is a great reward. ﴿180﴾ Let not those who are miserly<sup>242</sup> with what Allah has 'bountifully' bestowed on them from His grace think that this is better for them. Nay, but it is evil for them; they will be collared 'around their necks' what they withheld on the Day of Judgment. For Allah is the inheritance of the Heavens and Earth—Allah is Knowledgeable of what you do.

﴿181﴾ Allah heard the saying of those who said<sup>243</sup>: "Allah is poor and we are rich"<sup>244</sup>. We will record what they said and their killing of the Prophets unjustifiably<sup>245</sup>, and We will say: "Taste you the torment of burning!" ﴿182﴾ That 'torment' is because of what your hands sent forth<sup>246</sup>—Allah certainly does not deal 'with His' servants unfairly. ﴿183﴾ Those who said: "Allah took our pledge not to Believe in any Messenger unless he gives us a sacrificial offering

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَّهُمْ سَيُطَوَّفُونَ مَا بَخَلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاتُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٨٠﴾

لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٨١﴾ ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتِ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَامٍ لِلْعَمِيدِ ﴿١٨٢﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِهْدُ إِلَيْنَا أَلَّا نُؤْمِنَ لِرَسُولٍ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَنَا بِقُرْبَانٍ تَأْكُلُهُ النَّارُ قُلْ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِنْ قَبْلِ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالَّذِي قُلْتُمْ فَلَمَّ قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٨٣﴾

<sup>242</sup> Believers are encouraged to spend out of their wealth as much as they are encouraged to put their own lives on the line in the cause of God.

<sup>243</sup> Now that the lessons from the setback in the battle of Uḥud have all been thrashed out, argumentation with the Jews of Madinah picks up here once more.

<sup>244</sup> Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī reports that when the Jews of Madinah heard the previous ayas, which encourage Believers to spend in the cause of God, said: "If He 'God' asks people to spend in His cause to achieve His goals, then He must be a wretched pauper!" (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Qurtubī, al-Rāzī)

<sup>245</sup> C.f. aya 21.

<sup>246</sup> What they committed.

'to be` consumed by fire”<sup>247</sup>. Say 'Muhammad': “Many a Messenger before me came to you<sup>248</sup> with clear evidences, and with what you 'just` said. Why did you kill them if only you are truthful? <sup>﴿184﴾</sup> If they call you a liar, then many a Messenger before you were called liars; 'even though` they came 'to them` with clear evidences, the 'Scared` Writs and the Luminous Book<sup>249</sup>.

﴿185﴾ Every soul shall taste death<sup>250</sup> and you will be paid your rewards in full on the Day of Judgment; whoever is dragged away<sup>251</sup> from

فَإِنْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ  
جَاءُوا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ﴿١٨٤﴾

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّوْنَ  
أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَن زُحِرَ عَنِ  
النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ

247 Muhammad Asad has the following comment in his translation: “... in other words, unless he conforms to Mosaic Law, which prescribes burnt offerings as an essential part of divine services. Although this aspect of the Law had been left in abeyance ever since the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, the Jews of post-Talmudic times were convinced that the Messiah promised to them would restore the Mosaic rites in their entirety; and so they refused to accept as a prophet anyone who did not conform to the Law of the Torah in every detail.”

248 To your ancestors.

249 The Sacred Writs *Al-Zubur* (lit. books, sing. *zabūr*) and *al-Kitāb al-Munīr* (the Luminous Book) refer to the Heavenly revealed Books.

250 Although the mention of this fact here can be construed as a way of alleviating the suffering and hurt the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Believers find at their enemies' hands and tongues (al-Ṭabarī), in Ibn 'Āshūr's considered opinion it is further meant to sooth the pain that the Believer's found at losing their brothers in battle, on the one hand, and to furthermore refute the narrative of the hypocrites who said that their brothers would not have been killed had they not come out of their homes for battle, on the other.

251 The scene being painted here is graphic indeed. The word *zuḥẓiḥa* embodies its meaning within its own phonic makeup; drawing its form and throwing its shadow in the process. Hellfire as found here possesses a gravitational power, dragging to it whoever and whatever gets near. Any person who is caught within its radius is in need of someone to drag him (*yu-zahẓiḥ-uḥu*) little by little in order to set him free from its energy sapping pull. Whoever is to be dragged away from its radius, freed from the tentacles of its gravity and admitted to Paradise then he has made it. This is a powerful depiction of a scene in which helplessness strongly tugging away, pulling to one side and dragging away is brought to life in full colour.



Hellfire and entered into Paradise, then he is a winner—life is nothing but an illusory enjoyment. <sup>186</sup> You shall be tested in your wealth and yourselves<sup>252</sup> and you will hear much that is hurtful from those who were given the Book before you and the Associators<sup>253</sup>, but if you remain steadfast and are Mindful, then that is real fortitude.

<sup>187</sup> 'Mention' When Allah took the pledge of those who were given the Book that you should make it plain to people rather than suppress it<sup>254</sup>; they tossed it behind their backs and traded it off for a pittance—miserable indeed what they buy. <sup>188</sup> Do not think that those who delight in their actions<sup>255</sup> and are pleased with unwarranted praise<sup>256</sup>, are at a 'great' distance from Punishment—theirs is a painful Punishment. <sup>189</sup> To Allah belongs the ownership of the Heavens and Earth—Allah is Able over everything.

الَّذِينَ إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْعُرُورِ ﴿١٨٥﴾ \* لَتَجِبَلُونَ  
فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ  
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ  
أَشْرَكُوا أَذَىٰ كَثِيرًا وَلَئِنْ تَصَبَرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا  
فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨٦﴾

وإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ  
لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْفُمُونَهُ فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ  
وَأَشْرَتُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا فَبُيِّنَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾  
لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا آتَوْا وَيُجِبُونَ أَنَّ  
يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبْهُمْ  
بِعَمَلِهِمْ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨٨﴾  
وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ  
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٨٩﴾

<sup>252</sup> C.f. 2:155.

<sup>253</sup> The Arab pagans.

<sup>254</sup> The Divine Book.

<sup>255</sup> Full of conceit over their evildoing.

<sup>256</sup> Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrates that the reason for the revelation of this aya was that: "Some hypocrites at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) would stay behind when he used to set out on forays, and they were pleased with this. Upon him coming back, they would forge excuses and swear to them. They even loved to be praised for what they did not do 'i.e. being Believers and part of the Prophet's (ﷺ) army'. Thus this aya was revealed." (al-Bukhārī: 4567, Muslim: 2777)

﴿190﴾ Indeed there are in the creation of the Heavens and Earth and the alternation of night and day Signs<sup>257</sup> for people of reason. ﴿191﴾ Those who mention Allah 'while' standing, sitting and 'lying' on their sides, and ponder over the creation of the Heavens and Earth 'declaring': "Our Lord, You did not create 'all of' this in vain. Glorified be You, shield us from the torment of Fire; ﴿192﴾ Our Lord, disgraced indeed is the one You commit to Hellfire; there are no helpers for the evildoers; ﴿193﴾ Our Lord, we heard a caller<sup>258</sup>, summoning to Belief, saying: "Believe in your Lord!" and we Believed, so our Lord forgive us our sins and expunge our misdeeds, and bring our lives to termination 'joining us' with the Righteous; ﴿194﴾ Our Lord, bestow on us what You promised us through your Messengers and do not disgrace us on the Day of Judgment—indeed You never break Your promise".

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْلَافِ  
الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٩٠﴾  
الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَفُعُودًا وَعَلَى  
جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ  
وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ  
فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩١﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ  
فَقَدْ أَخْرَبْتَهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ﴿١٩٢﴾  
رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُبَادِي لِلإِيمَانِ أَن  
ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا  
وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَقَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٣﴾  
رَبَّنَا وَإِنَّا مَّا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَى رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا  
يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿١٩٤﴾

257 These are so-called cosmic Signs (*āyāt kawniyyah*). They, along with the Qur'anic Signs (*āyāt Qur'āniyyah*), work together to prove to the Believer the truth of the Message and thus strengthen his Faith. Believers are encouraged to think both these Signs over and use their reason when considering them (*al-Manār*). Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) narrated: "I slept once over at 'my aunt' Maymūnah's 'the Prophet's wife' home, while the Prophet was there, in order to see how he Prays at night. He (ﷺ) talked with his wife for a while and then slept. When there remained only the last third of the night, or a part of it, he woke and sat up, looked at the sky and recited: "Indeed there are in the creation of the Heavens and Earth and the alternation of night and day Signs for people of reason". He then performed ablution, rinsed his mouth with *siwāk* and Prayed eleven *rak'ahs*. When Bilāl called for Prayer, he (ﷺ) performed two *rak'ahs*, went out and lead people in the Fajr Prayer." (al-Bukhārī: 7452)

258 Muhammad (ﷺ). (Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa'dī, Ibn 'Āshūr)

﴿195﴾ Their Lord responded to them that: “I shall never render useless the deeds of any doer of you, male or female; you are each other’s other part<sup>259</sup>. Those who emigrated, were expelled from their lands, persecuted in My cause, fought and got killed, I shall expunge their misdeeds and admit them into Gardens under which rivers flow”; a reward from Allah—indeed with Allah is the best of rewards.

﴿196﴾ Do not be deceived by the revelling<sup>260</sup> of those who Deny in the land; ﴿197﴾ ‘this is but` a passing enjoyment, then their resort is Hellfire—ghastly indeed is this bed! ﴿198﴾ But those who are Mindful of their Lord, theirs are Gardens under which rivers flow, eternally they abide therein; a domicile coming from Allah—what is with Allah is best for the Righteous. ﴿199﴾ Indeed there are among the People of the Book those who Believe in Allah, what has been sent down to you<sup>261</sup> and what had been sent down to them, humbling themselves before Allah and do not trade off the Signs of Allah for a pittance; for those is their reward with their Lord—Allah is swift in reckoning.

فَأَسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ مِّنْ بَعْضٍ ۗ فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُودُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾

لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١٩٦﴾ مَتَّعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَأْوَاهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٩٧﴾ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِّلْآبِرَارِ ﴿١٩٨﴾ وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَشِيعَةً لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩٩﴾

259 Both men and women are born of each other and are looked at equally. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sa‘dī)

260 The fact that the Deniers living unchecked, enjoying complete freedom of movement and all that life has to offer (c.f. aya 178 above).

261 The Qur’an. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr)



﴿200﴾ You who Believe, be forbearing<sup>262</sup>, remain firm<sup>263</sup>, guard your lands<sup>264</sup> and be Mindful of Allah so that you may be successful<sup>265</sup>.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اَصْبِرُوْا وَصَابِرُوْا  
وَرٰبِطُوْا وَاَتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿۲۰۰﴾



262 Be patient in the face of the trials and tribulations of life. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī)

263 When you face your enemy in battle. (al-Ṭabarī, al-Sa‘dī)

264 *Rābiṭū* from *ribāṭ*, i.e. the fact of “tying up” one’s steed of war at outposts to protect the borders from enemy attacks. (al-Ṭabarī, Ibn ‘Aṭīyah, Ibn ‘Āshūr, al-Sa‘dī)

265 This aya sums up the keys for being victorious which are repeated throughout *Āl 'Imrān*. In answer to the prayer of the Believers to God to make them prevail over the Deniers found at the very end of *al-Baqarah* (C.f. “Key” in the introduction to this sura).



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Completed by  
the Grace of God





# THE LUMINOUS QUR'AN

## التَّحْمِيلُ إِلَى الْفَرَسِ

تَرْجَمَةُ مَعَانِي سُورَةِ الْفَاتِحَةِ  
مَعَ سُورَتَيْ الْبَقَرَةِ وَالْأَعْمُرَانِ  
إِلَى اللُّغَةِ الْإِنْطِيزِيَّةِ

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- Each sura is preceded by a brief introduction, which is indispensable for anyone who wants to unlock some of the meaning potential of the sura.
- Every care was taken to make each aya rendition read as a composite whole, i.e. understood independently of its notes.
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