

Surah 2. Al-Baqara

2.1 A.L.M. ²⁵

2.2 This is the Book; in it is guidance sure without doubt to those who fear Allah. ²⁶

²⁷ 2.3 Who believe in the Unseen are steadfast in prayer and spend out of what We have provided for them.

2.4 And who believe in the Revelation sent to thee and sent before thy time and (in their hearts) have the assurance of the Hereafter. ²⁸

2.5 They are on (true) guidance from their Lord and it is these who will prosper. ²⁹

2.6 As to those who reject Faith it is the same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them; they will not believe. ³⁰

2.7 Allah hath set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing and on their eyes is a veil; great is the penalty they (incur). ^{31 32}

2.8 Of the people there are some who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day" but they do not (really) believe. ³³

2.9 Fain would they deceive Allah and those who believe but they only deceive themselves and realize (it) not!

2.10 In their hearts is a disease; and Allah has increased their disease and grievous is the penalty they (incur) because they are false (to themselves). ³⁴

2.11 When it is said to them: "Make not mischief on the earth" they say: "Why we only want to make peace!"

2.12 Of a surety they are the ones who make mischief but they realize (it) not. ³⁵

2.13 When it is said to them: "Believe as the others believe" they say: "Shall we believe as the fools believe?" nay of a surety they are the fools but they do not know. ³⁶

2.14 When they meet those who believe they say: "We believe" but when they are alone with their evil ones they say: "We are really with you we (were) only jesting." ³⁷

2.15 Allah will throw back their mockery on them and give them rope in their trespasses; so they will wander like blind ones (to and fro).

2.16 These are they who have bartered guidance for error: but their traffic is profitless and they have lost true direction.

2.17 Their similitude is that of a man who kindled a fire; when it lighted all around him Allah took away their light and left them in utter darkness so they could not see. ³⁸

2.18 Deaf dumb and blind they will not return (to the path).

2.19 Or (another similitude) is that of a rain-laden cloud from the sky; in it are zones of darkness and thunder and lightning they press their fingers in their ears to keep out the stunning thunder-clap the while they are in terror of death. But Allah is ever round the rejecters of Faith! ³⁹

2.20 The lightning all but snatches away their sight; every time the light (helps) them they walk therein and when the darkness grows on them they stand still. And if Allah willed He could take away their faculty of hearing and seeing; for Allah hath power over all things.

2.21 O ye people! adore your Guardian-Lord who created you and those who came before you that ye may have the chance to learn righteousness. ⁴⁰

2.22 Who has made the earth your couch and the heaven your canopy; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith fruits for your sustenance; then set not up rivals unto Allah when ye know (the truth). ⁴¹

2.23 And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant then produce a Surah like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (if there are any) besides Allah if your (doubts) are true. ⁴²

2.24 But if ye cannot and of a surety ye cannot then fear the fire whose fuel is Men and Stones which is prepared for those who reject Faith. ⁴³

2.25 But give glad tidings to those who believe and work righteousness that their portion is Gardens beneath which rivers flow. Every time they are fed with fruits therefrom they say: "Why this is what we were fed with before" for they are given things in similitude; and they have therein companions (pure and holy); and they abide therein (for ever). ⁴⁴

2.26 Allah disdains not to use the similitude of things lowest as well as highest. Those who believe know that it is truth from their Lord; but those who reject Faith say: "What means Allah by this similitude?" By it He causes many to stray and many He leads into the right path but He causes not to stray except those who forsake (the path). ⁴⁵

2.27 Those who break Allah's Covenant after it is ratified and who sunder what Allah has ordered to be joined and do mischief on earth: These cause loss (only) to themselves.

2.28 How can ye reject the faith in Allah? Seeing that ye were without life and He gave you life; then will He cause you to die and will again bring you to life; and again to Him will ye return. ⁴⁶

2.29 It is He who hath created for you all things that are on earth; moreover His design comprehended the heavens for He gave order and perfection to the seven firmaments; and of all things he hath perfect knowledge.

2.30 Behold thy Lord said to the angels: "I will create a vicegerent on earth." They said "Wilt thou place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood? Whilst we do celebrate Thy praises and glorify Thy holy (name)?" He said: "I know what ye know not." ⁴⁷

2.31 And He taught Adam the nature of all things; then He placed them before the angels and said: "Tell Me the nature of these if ye are right." ⁴⁸

2.32 They said: "Glory to Thee of knowledge we have none save that Thou hast taught us: in truth it is Thou who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom."

2.33 He said: "O Adam! tell them their natures." When he had told them Allah said: "Did I not tell you that I know the secrets of heaven and earth and I know what ye reveal and what ye conceal?"

2.34 And behold We said to the angels: "Bow down to Adam"; and they bowed down not so Iblis he refused and was haughty he was of those who reject Faith. ⁴⁹

2.35 We said: "O Adam! dwell thou and thy wife in the garden and eat of the bountiful things therein as (where and when) ye will but approach not this tree or ye run into harm and transgression." ^{50 51}

2.36 Then did Satan make them slip from the (garden) and get them out of the state (of felicity) in which they had been. We said: "Get ye down all (ye people) with enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling place and your means of livelihood for a time." ^{52 53 54}

2.37 Then learnt Adam from his Lord words of inspiration and his Lord turned toward him; for He is Oft-Returning Most Merciful. ⁵⁵

2.38 We said: "Get ye down all from here; and if as is sure there comes to you guidance from Me" whosoever follows My guidance on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve. ⁵⁶

2.39 "But those who reject Faith and belie Our Signs they shall be Companions of the Fire; they shall abide therein." ⁵⁷

2.40 O children of Israel! call to mind the (special) favor which I bestowed upon you and fulfil your covenant with Me as I fulfil My covenant with you and fear none but Me. ⁵⁸

2.41 And believe in what I reveal confirming the revelation which is with you and be not the first to reject faith therein nor sell My Signs for a small price: and fear Me and Me alone. ⁵⁹

2.42 And cover not Truth with falsehood nor conceal the Truth when ye know (what it is).

2.43 And be steadfast in prayer; practice regular charity; and bow down your heads with those who bow down (in worship). ⁶⁰

2.44 Do ye enjoin right conduct on the people and forget (to practice it) yourselves and yet ye study the Scripture? Will ye not understand?

2.45 Nay seek (Allah's) help with patient perseverance and prayer: it is indeed hard except to those who bring a lowly spirit. ⁶¹

2.46 Who bear in mind the certainty that they are to meet their Lord and that they are to return to Him.

2.47 O children of Israel! call to mind the (special) favor which I bestowed upon You and that I preferred you to all others (for My message). ⁶²

2.48 Then guard yourselves against a day when one soul shall not avail another nor shall intercession be accepted for her nor shall compensation be taken from her nor shall anyone be helped (from outside). ⁶³

2.49 And remember We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh: they set you hard tasks and punishments slaughtered your sons and let your womenfolk live; therein was a tremendous trial from your Lord. ⁶⁴

2.50 And remember We divided the sea for you and saved you and drowned Pharaoh's people within your very sight. ⁶⁵

2.51 And remember We appointed forty nights for Moses and in his absence you took the calf (for worship) and ye did grievous wrong. ⁶⁶

2.52 Even then We did forgive you; there was a chance for you to be grateful. ⁶⁷

2.53 And remember We gave Moses the Scripture and the criterion (between right and wrong) there was a chance for you to be guided aright. ⁶⁸

2.54 And remember Moses said to his people: "O my people! Ye have indeed wronged yourselves by your worship of the calf so turn (in repentance) to your Maker and slay yourselves (the wrong-doers); that will be better for you in the sight of your Maker." Then He turned toward you (in forgiveness); for He is Oft-returning Most Merciful. ⁶⁹

2.55 And remember ye said: "O Moses! we shall never believe in thee until we see Allah manifestly" but ye were dazed with thunder and lightning even as ye looked on. ⁷⁰

2.56 Then We raised you up after your death; ye had the chance to be grateful.

2.57 And We gave You the shade of clouds and sent down to you manna and quails saying: "Eat of the good things We have provided for you"; (but they rebelled); to Us they did no harm but they harmed their own souls. ⁷¹

2.58 And remember We said: "Enter this town and eat of the plenty therein as ye wish; but enter the gate with humility in posture and in words and We shall forgive you your faults and increase (the portion of) those who do good." ⁷²

2.59 But the transgressors changed the word from that which had been given them; so We sent on the transgressors a plague from heaven for that they infringed (our command) repeatedly.

2.60 And remember Moses prayed for water for his people; We said: "Strike the rock with thy staff." Then gushed forth therefrom twelve springs. Each group knew its own place for water. So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by Allah and do no evil nor mischief on the (face of the) earth. ⁷³

2.61 And remember ye said: "O Moses! we cannot endure one kind of food (always); so beseech thy Lord for us to produce for us of what the earth groweth its pot-herbs and cucumbers its garlic lentils and onions." He said: "will ye exchange the better for the worse? Go ye down to any town and ye shall find what ye want!" They were covered with humiliation and misery; they drew on themselves the wrath of Allah. This because they went on rejecting the signs of Allah and slaying His messengers without just cause. This because They rebelled and went on transgressing. ^{74 75}

2.62 Those who believe (in the Qur'an) and those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures) and the Christians and the Sabians and who believe in Allah and the last day and work righteousness shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve. ^{76 77}

2.63 And remember We took your covenant and We raised above you (the towering height) of Mount (Sinai) (saying): "Hold firmly to what We have given you and bring (ever) to remembrance what is therein perchance ye may fear Allah." ⁷⁸

2.64 But ye turned back thereafter had it not been for the Grace and Mercy of Allah to you ye had surely been among the lost.

2.65 And well ye knew those amongst you who transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath; We said to them: "Be ye apes despised and rejected." ⁷⁹

2.66 So We made it an example to their own time and to their posterity and a lesson to those who fear Allah.

2.67 And remember Moses said to his people: "Allah commands that ye sacrifice a heifer." They said: "Makest thou a laughing-stock of us?" He said: "Allah save me from being an ignorant (fool)!" ⁸⁰

2.68 They said: "Beseech on our behalf thy Lord to make plain to us what (heifer) it is! He said: "He says: The heifer should be neither too old nor too young but of middling age; now do what ye are commanded!.

2.69 They said: "Beseech on our behalf thy Lord to make plain to us her color." He said: " He says a fawn-colored heifer pure and rich in tone the admiration of beholders!"

2.70 They said "Beseech on our behalf thy Lord to make plain to us what she is to us are all heifers alike; we wish indeed for guidance if Allah wills."

2.71 He said: "He says a heifer not trained to till the soil or water the fields; sound and without blemish." They said: "Now hast thou brought the truth." Then they offered her in sacrifice but not with good-will.

2.72 Remember ye slew a man and fell into a dispute among yourselves as to the crime but Allah was to bring forth what ye did hide. ⁸¹

2.73 So We said: "Strike the (body) with a piece of the (heifer)." Thus Allah bringeth the dead to life and showeth you His Signs perchance ye may understand.

2.74 Thenceforth were your hearts hardened; they became like a rock and even worse in hardness. For among rocks there are some from which rivers gush forth; others there are which when split asunder send forth water; and others which sink for fear of Allah. And Allah is not unmindful of what ye do. ⁸²

2.75 Can ye (O ye men of Faith) entertain the hope that they will believe in you? Seeing that a party of them heard the word of Allah and perverted it knowingly after they understood it.

2.76 Behold! when they meet the men of Faith they say: "We believe" but when they meet each other in private they say: "Shall you tell them what Allah hath revealed to you that they may engage you in argument about it before your Lord?" Do ye not understand (their aim)? ⁸³

2.77 Know they not that Allah knoweth what they conceal and what they reveal?

2.78 And there are among them illiterates who know not the Book but (see therein their own) desires and they do nothing but conjecture. ⁸⁴

2.79 Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say: "This is from Allah" to traffic with it for a miserable price! Woe to them for what their hands do write and for the gain they make thereby.

2.80 And they say: "The fire shall not touch us but for a few numbered days"; Say: "Have ye taken a promise from Allah for He never breaks His promise? Or is it that ye say of Allah what ye do not know?" ⁸⁵

2.81 Nay those who seek gain in Evil and are girt round by their sins they are Companions of the Fire therein shall they abide (for ever). ⁸⁶

2.82 But those who have faith and work righteousness they are Companions of the Garden therein shall they abide (for ever).

2.83 And remember We took a covenant from the children of Israel (to this effect): worship none but Allah; treat with kindness your parents and kindred and orphans and those in need; speak fair to the people; be steadfast in prayer; and practice regular charity. Then did ye turn back except a few among you and ye backslide (even now). ⁸⁷

2.84 And remember We took your Covenant (to this effect): shed no blood amongst you nor turn out your own people from your homes; and this ye solemnly ratified and to this ye can bear witness. ⁸⁸

2.85 After this it is ye the same people who slay among yourselves and banish a party of you from their homes; assist (their enemies) against them in guilt and rancor; and if they come to you as captives ye ransom them though it was not lawful for you to banish them. Then is it only a part of the Book that ye believe in and do ye reject the rest? But what is the reward for those among you who behave like this but disgrace in this life? and on the Day of Judgment they shall be consigned to the most grievous penalty. For Allah is not unmindful of what ye do. ⁸⁹

2.86 These are the people who buy the life of this world at the price of the Hereafter; their penalty shall not be lightened nor shall they be helped.

2.87 We gave Moses the Book and followed him up with a succession of Apostles; We gave Jesus the son of Mary clear (Signs) and strengthened him with the holy spirit. Is it that whenever there comes to you an Apostle with what ye yourselves desire not ye are puffed up with pride? Some ye called impostors and others ye slay! ^{89 90 91}

2.88 They say "Our hearts are the wrappings (which preserve Allah's word we need no more)." Nay Allah's curse is on them for their blasphemy; little is it they believe. ^{92 93}

2.89 And when there comes to them a Book from Allah confirming what is with them although from of old they had prayed for victory against those without faith when there comes to them that which they (should) have recognized they refused to believe in it; but the curse of Allah is on those without Faith. ⁹⁴

2.90 Miserable is the price for which they have sold their souls in that they deny (the revelation) which Allah has sent down in insolent envy that Allah of His Grace should send it to any of His servants He pleases; thus have they drawn on themselves wrath upon wrath. And humiliating is the punishment of those who reject Faith. ⁹⁵

2.91 When it is said to them: "believe in what Allah hath sent down" they say "We believe in what was sent down to us"; yet they reject all besides even if it be truth confirming what is with them. Say: "Why then have ye slain the prophets of Allah in times gone by if ye did indeed believe?" ⁹⁶

2.92 There came to you Moses with clear (Signs); yet ye worshipped the Calf (even) after that and ye did behave wrongfully.

2.93 And remember We took your Covenant and We raised above you (the towering height) of Mount (Sinai) (saying): "Hold firmly to what We have given you and hearken (to the Law)"; they said: "We hear and we disobey"; and they had to drink into their hearts (of the taint) of the calf because of their faithlessness. Say: "Vile indeed are the behests of your faith if ye have any faith!" ^{97 98 99}

2.94 Say: "If the last Home with Allah be for you specially and not for anyone else then seek ye for death if ye are sincere."

2.95 But they will never seek for death on account of the (sins) which their hands have sent on before them. And Allah is well acquainted with the wrong-doers. ¹⁰⁰

2.96 Thou wilt indeed find them of all people most greedy of life even more than the idolaters; each one of them wishes he could be given a life of a thousand years; but the grant of such life will not save him from (due) punishment for Allah sees well all that they do.

2.97 Say: Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel for he brings down the (revelation) to thy heart by Allah's will a confirmation of what went before and guidance and glad tidings for those who believe. ¹⁰¹

2.98 Whoever is an enemy to Allah and His angels and apostles to Gabriel and Michael Lo! Allah is an enemy to those who reject faith.

2.99 We have sent down to thee manifest signs (ayat); and none reject them but those who are perverse.

2.100 Is it not (the case) that every time they make a Covenant some party among them throw it aside? - Nay most of them are faithless.

2.101 And when came to them an Apostle from Allah confirming what was with them a party of the people of the Book threw away the Book of Allah behind their backs as if (it had been something) they did not know! ¹⁰²

2.102 They followed what the evil ones gave out (falsely) against the power of Solomon; the blasphemers were not Solomon but the evil ones teaching men magic and such things as came down at Babylon to the angels Harut and Marut. But neither of these taught anyone (such things) without saying: "We are only for trial so do not blaspheme." They learned from them the means to sow discord between man and wife. But they could not thus harm anyone except by Allah's permission. And they learned what harmed them not what profited them. And they knew that the buyers of (magic) would have no share in the happiness of the Hereafter. And vile was the price for which they did sell their souls if they but knew! ^{103 104 105}

2.103 If they had kept their faith and guarded themselves from evil far better had been the reward from their Lord if they but knew!

2.104 O ye of Faith! say not (to the Apostle) words of ambiguous import but words of respect; and hearken (to him); to those without faith is a grievous punishment. ¹⁰⁵

2.105 It is never the wish of those without faith among the people of the Book nor of the Pagans that anything good should come down to you from your Lord. But Allah will choose for His special Mercy whom He will for Allah is Lord of grace abounding.

2.106 None of Our revelations do We abrogate or cause to be forgotten but We substitute something better or similar; knowest thou not that Allah hath power over all things? ¹⁰⁷

2.107 Knowest thou not that to Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth! And besides Him ye have neither patron nor helper.

2.108 Would ye question your Apostle as Moses was questioned of old? But whoever changeth from faith to unbelief hath strayed without doubt from the even way. ^{108 109}

2.109 Quite a number of the people of the Book wish they could turn you (people) back to infidelity after ye have believed from selfish envy after the truth hath become manifest unto them; but forgive and overlook till Allah accomplish His purpose; for Allah hath power over all things. ^{110 111 112}

2.110 And be steadfast in prayer and regular in charity; and whatever good ye send forth for your souls before you ye shall find it with Allah; for Allah sees well all that ye do. ¹¹³

2.111 And they say: "None shall enter paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian." Those are their (vain) desires. Say: "Produce your proof if ye are truthful."

2.112 Nay whoever submits his whole self to Allah and is a doer of good he will get his reward with his Lord; on such shall be no fear nor shall they grieve. ^{114 115}

2.113 The Jews say: "The Christians have naught (to stand) upon"; and the Christians say: "The Jews have naught (to stand) upon." Yet they (profess to) study the (same) Book. Like unto their word is what those say who know not but Allah will judge between them in their quarrel on the Day of Judgment. ¹¹⁶

2.114 And who is more unjust than he who forbids that in places for the worship of Allah Allah's name should be celebrated? Whose zeal is (in fact) to ruin them? It was not fitting that such should themselves enter them except in fear. For them there is nothing but disgrace in this world and in the world to come an exceeding torment. ¹¹⁷

2.115 To Allah belong the East and the West; whithersoever ye turn there is the presence of Allah. For Allah is All-Pervading All-Knowing. ¹¹⁸

2.116 They say: "Allah hath begotten a son"; Glory be to Him. Nay to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth; everything renders worship to Him. ¹¹⁹

2.117 To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth; when He decreeth a matter He saith to it: "Be"; and it is. ¹²⁰

2.118 Say those without knowledge: "Why speaketh not Allah unto Us? Or why cometh not unto Us a sign?" So said the people before them words of similar import. Their hearts are alike. We have indeed made clear the signs unto any people who hold firmly to faith (in their hearts).

2.119 Verily We have sent thee in truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a warner. But of thee no question shall be asked of Companions of the blazing fire.

2.120 Never will the Jews or the Christians be satisfied with thee unless thou follow their form of religion. Say: "The guidance of Allah that is the (only) guidance." Wert thou to follow their desires after the knowledge which hath reached thee then wouldst thou find neither protector nor helper against Allah.

2.121 Those to whom We have sent the book study it as it should be studied; they are the ones that believe therein; those who reject faith therein the loss is their own.

2.122 O Children of Israel! call to mind the special favor which I bestowed upon you and that I preferred you to all others (for my message).

2.123 Then guard yourselves against a day when one soul shall not avail another nor shall compensation be accepted from her nor shall intercession profit her nor shall anyone be helped (from outside). ¹²²

2.124 And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with certain commands which he fulfilled; He said: "I will make thee an Imam to the nations." He pleaded: "And also (Imams) from my offspring!" He answered: "But my promise is not within the reach of evil-doers." ¹²³

2.125 Remember We made the house a place of assembly for men and a place of safety; and take ye the station of Abraham as a place of prayer; and We covenanted with Abraham and Isma`il that they should sanctify My House for those who compass it round or use it as a retreat or bow or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer). ^{125 126}

2.126 And remember Abraham said: "My Lord make this a City of Peace and feed its people with fruits such of them as believe in Allah and the Last Day." He said: "(Yea) and such as reject faith for a while will I grant them their pleasure but will soon drive them to the torment of fire an evil destination (indeed)!" ¹²⁷

- 2.127 And remember Abraham and Isma`il raised the foundations of the House (with this prayer): "Our Lord! accept (this service) from us for thou art the All-Hearing the All-Knowing.
- 2.128 "Our Lord! make of us Muslims bowing to Thy (Will) and of our progeny a people Muslim bowing to Thy (Will) and show us our places for the celebration of (due) rites; and turn unto us (in mercy); for Thou art the Oft-Returning Most-Merciful.
- 2.129 "Our Lord! send amongst them an Apostle of their own who shall rehearse Thy Signs to them and instruct them in Scripture and Wisdom and sanctify them; for Thou art the Exalted in Might the Wise." ¹²⁹
- 2.130 And who turns away from the religion of Abraham but such as debase their souls with folly? Him We chose and rendered pure in this world: and he will be in the Hereafter in the ranks of the righteous. ¹³⁰
- 2.131 Behold! his Lord said to him: "Bow (thy will to me)" He said: "I bow (my will) to the Lord and Cherisher of the universe."
- 2.132 And this was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons and so did Jacob; "O my sons! Allah hath chosen the faith for you; then die not except in the faith of Islam."
- 2.133 Were ye witnesses when death appeared before Jacob? Behold he said to his sons: "What will ye worship after me?" They said: "We shall worship thy Allah and the Allah of thy fathers of Abraham Isma`il and Isaac the one (true) Allah to Him we bow (in Islam)." ^{131 132}
- 2.134 That was a People that hath passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did and ye of what ye do! of their merits there is no question in your case! ¹³³
- 2.135 They say: "Become Jews or Christians if ye would be guided (to salvation)." Say thou: "Nay! (I would rather) the religion of Abraham the true and he joined not gods with Allah." ¹³⁴
- 2.136 Say ye: "We believe in Allah and the revelation given to us and to Abraham Isma`il Isaac Jacob and the Tribes and that given to Moses and Jesus and that given to (all) Prophets from their Lord we make no difference between one and another of them and we bow to Allah (in Islam)."
- 2.137 So if they believe as ye believe they are indeed on the right path; but if they turn back it is they who are in schism; but Allah will suffice thee as against them and He is the All-Hearing the All-Knowing. ¹³⁶
- 2.138 (Our religion is) the baptism of Allah; and who can baptize better than Allah? and it is He whom we worship. ¹³⁷
- 2.139 Say: Will ye dispute with us about Allah seeing that He is our Lord and your Lord; that we are responsible for our doings and ye for yours; and that we are sincere (in our faith) in Him?
- 2.140 Or do ye say that Abraham Isma`il Isaac Jacob and the Tribes were Jews or Christians? Say: Do ye know better than Allah? Ah! who is more unjust than those who conceal the testimony they have from Allah? But Allah is not unmindful of what ye do! ¹³⁸
- 2.141 That was a people that hath passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did and ye of what ye do! Of their merits there is no question in your case. ¹³⁹
- 2.142 The fools among the people will say: "What hath turned them from the Qiblah to which they were used?" Say: To Allah belong both East and West; He guideth whom He will to a Way that is straight. ^{140 141}
- 2.143 Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced that ye might be witnesses over the nations and the Apostle a witness over yourselves; and We appointed the Qiblah to which thou wast used only to test those who followed the Apostle from those who would turn on their heels (from the faith). Indeed it was (a change) momentous except to those guided by Allah. And never would Allah make your faith of no effect. For Allah is to all people most surely full of kindness Most Merciful. ^{142 143 144 145 146}
- 2.144 We see the turning of thy face (for guidance) to the heavens; now shall We turn thee to a Qiblah that shall please thee. Turn then thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; wherever ye are turn your faces in that direction. The people of the book know well that that is the truth from their Lord nor is Allah unmindful of what they do. ^{147 148 149}
- 2.145 Even if thou wert to bring to the people of the Book all the signs (together) they would not follow thy Qiblah; nor art thou going to follow their Qiblah; nor indeed will they follow each other's Qiblah. If thou after the knowledge hath reached thee wert to follow their (vain) desires then wert thou indeed (clearly) in the wrong. ¹⁵⁰
- 2.146 The people of the Book know this as they know their own sons; but some of them conceal the truth which they themselves know. ¹⁵¹
- 2.147 The truth is from thy Lord so be not at all in doubt. ¹⁵⁴

2.148 To each is a goal to which Allah turns him; then strive together (as in a race) toward all that is good. Wheresoever ye are Allah will bring you together. For Allah hath power over all things. ¹⁵³

2.149 From whencesoever thou startest forth turn thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; that is indeed the truth from thy Lord. And Allah is not unmindful of what ye do. ¹⁵⁴

2.150 So from whencesoever thou startest forth turn thy face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque; among wheresoever ye are turn your face thither that there be no ground of dispute against you among the people except those of them that are bent on wickedness; so fear them not but fear Me; and that I may complete My favors on you and ye may (consent to) be guided.

2.151 A similar (favor have ye already received) in that We have sent among you an Apostle of your own rehearsing to you Our signs and sanctifying you and instructing you in Scripture and wisdom and in new Knowledge. ¹⁵⁵

2.152 Then do ye remember Me; I will remember you. Be grateful to Me and reject not faith. ¹⁵⁶

2.153 O ye who believe! seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for Allah is with those who patiently persevere. ¹⁵⁷

2.154 And say not of those who are slain in the way of Allah: "They are dead." Nay they are living though ye perceive (it) not. ¹⁵⁸

2.155 Be sure We shall test you with something of fear and hunger some loss in goods or lives or the fruits (of your toil) but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere. ¹⁵⁹

2.156 Who say when afflicted with calamity: "To Allah we belong and to Him is our return."

2.157 They are those on whom (descend) blessings from Allah and Mercy and they are the ones that receive guidance.

2.158 Behold! Safa and Marwa are among the Symbols of Allah. So if those who visit the house in the season or at other times should compass them round it is no sin in them. And if anyone obeyeth his own impulse to good be sure that Allah is He Who recogniseth and knoweth. ^{160 161 162}

2.159 Those who conceal the clear (Signs) We have sent down and the guidance after We have made it clear for the people in the book on them shall be Allah's curse and the curse of those entitled to curse. ¹⁶³

2.160 Except those who repent and make amends and openly declare (the truth) to them I turn; for I am Oft-Returning Most Merciful.

2.161 Those who reject faith and die rejecting on them is Allah's curse and the curse of angels and of all mankind.

2.162 They will abide therein: Their penalty will not be lightened nor will respite be their (lot). ¹⁶⁴

2.163 And your Allah is one Allah; there is no god but He Most Gracious Most Merciful. ¹⁶⁵

2.164 Behold! In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of the night and the day; in the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind; in the rain which Allah sends down from the skies and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead; in the beasts of all kinds that He scatters through the earth; in the change of the winds and the clouds which they trail like their slaves between the sky and the earth; (here) indeed are signs for a people that are wise. ¹⁶⁶

2.165 Yet there are men who take (for worship) others besides Allah as equal (with Allah); they love them as they should love Allah. But those of faith are overflowing in their love for Allah. If only the unrighteous could see behold they would see the penalty that to Allah belongs all power and Allah will strongly enforce the penalty. ¹⁶⁷

2.166 Then would those who are followed clear themselves of those who follow (them); they would see the penalty and all relations between them would be cut off.

2.167 And those who followed would say: "If only we had one more chance we would clear ourselves of them as they have cleared themselves of us." Thus will Allah show them (the fruits of) their deeds as (nothing but) regrets nor will there be a way for them out of the fire. ¹⁶⁸

2.168 O ye people! eat of what is on earth lawful and good; and do not follow the footsteps of the evil one for he is to you an avowed enemy. ¹⁶⁹

2.169 For he commands you what is evil and shameful and that ye should say of Allah that of which ye have no knowledge.

2.170 When it is said to them: "Follow what Allah hath revealed" they say: "Nay! we shall follow the ways of our fathers." What! even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance?

2.171 The parable of those who reject faith is as if one were to shout like a goat-herd to things that listen to nothing but calls and cries; deaf dumb and blind they are void of wisdom. ^{170 171}

2.172 O ye who believe! eat of the good things that We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah if it is Him ye worship. ¹⁷²

2.173 He hath only forbidden you dead meat and blood and the flesh of swine and that on which any other name hath been invoked besides that of Allah but if one is forced by necessity without wilful disobedience nor transgressing due limits then is he guiltless. For Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful. ^{173 174}

2.174 Those who conceal Allah's revelations in the Book and purchase for them a miserable profit they swallow into themselves naught but fire; Allah will not address them on the Day of Resurrection nor purify them; grievous will be their penalty. ¹⁷⁵

2.175 They are the ones who buy error in place of guidance and torment in place of forgiveness. Ah! what boldness (they show) for the Fire!

2.176 (Their doom is) because Allah sent down the Book in truth but those who seek causes of dispute in the Book are in a schism far (from the purpose). ¹⁷⁶

2.177 It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces toward East or West; but it is righteousness to believe in Allah and the Last Day and the Angels and the Book and the Messengers; to spend of your substance out of love for Him for your kin for orphans for the needy for the wayfarer for those who ask and for the ransom of slaves; to be steadfast in prayer and practice regular charity; to fulfil the contracts which ye have made; and to be firm and patient in pain (or suffering) and adversity and throughout all periods of panic. Such are the people of truth the Allah-fearing. ^{177 178 179 180 181}

2.178 O ye who believe! the law of equality is prescribed to you in cases of murder; the free for the free the slave for the slave the woman for the woman. But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain then grant any reasonable demand and compensate him with handsome gratitude; this is a concession and a Mercy from your Lord. After this whoever exceeds the limits shall be in grave penalty. ^{182 183 184 185}

2.179 In the law of equality there is (saving of) life to you O ye men of understanding! that ye may restrain yourselves.

2.180 It is prescribed when death approaches any of you if he leave any goods that he make a bequest to parents and next of kin according to reasonable usage; this is due from the Allah-fearing. ¹⁸⁶

2.181 If anyone changes the bequest after hearing it the guilt shall be on those who make the change. For Allah hears and knows all things.

2.182 But if anyone fears partiality or wrong-doing on the part of the testator and makes peace between (the parties concerned) there is no wrong in him; for Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful. ¹⁸⁷

2.183 O ye who believe! fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you that ye may (learn) self-restraint. ¹⁸⁸

2.184 (Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill or on a journey the prescribed number (should be made up) from days later. For those who can do it (with hardship) is a ransom the feeding of one that is indigent. But he that will give more of his own free will it is better for him and it is better for you that ye fast if ye only knew. ^{189 190 191}

2.185 Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an as a guide to mankind also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So everyone of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting but if anyone is ill or on a journey the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. Allah intends every facility for you He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful. ^{192 193}

2.186 When my servants ask thee concerning Me I am indeed close (to them); I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calleth on Me; let them also with a will listen to My call and believe in Me; that they may walk in the right way. ¹⁹⁴

2.187 Permitted to you on the night of the fasts is the approach to your wives. They are your garments. And ye are their garments. Allah knoweth what ye used to do secretly among yourselves; but He turned to you and forgave you; so now associate with them and seek what Allah hath ordained for you and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread; then complete your fast till the night appears; but do not associate with your wives while ye are in retreat in the mosques. Those are

limits (set by) Allah; approach not nigh thereto. Thus doth Allah make clear His signs to men that they may learn self-restraint. ^{195 196 197 198 199 200}

2.188 And do not eat up your property among yourselves for vanities nor use it as bait for the judges with intent that ye may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of (other) people's property. ²⁰¹

2.189 They ask thee concerning the new moons. Say: they are but signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men and for pilgrimage. It is no virtue if ye enter your houses from the back; it is virtue if ye fear Allah. Enter houses through the proper doors and fear Allah that ye may prosper. ^{202 203}

2.190 Fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you but do not transgress limits; for Allah loveth not transgressors. ²⁰⁴

2.191 And slay them wherever ye catch them and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith. ^{205 206}

2.192 But if they cease Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful.

2.193 And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression and there prevail justice and faith in Allah; but if they cease let there be no hostility except to those who practice oppression. ^{207 208}

2.194 The prohibited month for the prohibited month and so for all things prohibited there is the law of equality. If then anyone transgresses the prohibition against you transgress ye likewise against him. But fear Allah and know that Allah is with those who restrain themselves. ^{209 210}

2.195 And spend of your substance in the cause of Allah and make not your own hands contribute to your destruction but do good; for Allah loveth those who do good. ²¹¹

2.196 And complete the Hajj or `Umra in the service of Allah. But if ye are prevented (from completing it) send an offering for sacrifice such as ye may find and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches the place of sacrifice. And if any of you is ill or has an ailment in his scalp (necessitating shaving) (he should) in compensation either fast or feed the poor or offer sacrifice; and when ye are in peaceful conditions (again) if anyone wishes to continue the `Umra on to the Hajj he must make an offering such as he can afford it he should fast three days during the Hajj and seven days on his return making ten days in all. This is for those whose household is not in (the precincts of) the Sacred Mosque. And fear Allah and know that Allah is strict in punishment. ^{212 213 214 215 216}

2.197 For Hajj are the months well known. If anyone undertakes that duty therein let there be no obscenity nor wickedness nor wrangling in the Hajj. And whatever good ye do (be sure) Allah knoweth it. And take a provision (with you) for the journey but the best of provisions is right conduct. So fear Me O ye that are wise! ^{217 218}

2.198 It is no crime in you if ye seek of the bounty of your Lord (during Pilgrimage). Then when ye pour down from (Mount) Arafat celebrate the praises of Allah at the Sacred Monument and celebrate His praises as He has directed you even though before this ye went astray. ^{219 220 221}

2.199 Then pass on at a quick pace from the place whence it is usual for the multitude so to do and ask for Allah's forgiveness. For Allah is Oft Forgiving Most Merciful. ²²²

2.200 So when ye have accomplished your holy rites celebrate the praises of Allah as ye used to celebrate the praises of your fathers yea with far more heart and soul. There are men who say: "Our Lord! give us (thy bounties) in this world!" but they will have no portion in the hereafter. ^{223 224}

2.201 And there are men who say: "Our Lord! give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter and defend us from the torment on the fire!"

2.202 To these will be allotted what they have earned and Allah is quick in account. ²²⁵

2.203 Celebrate the praises of Allah during the Appointed Days but if anyone hastens to leave in two days there is no blame on him and if anyone stays on there is no blame on him if his aim is to do right. Then fear Allah and know that ye will surely be gathered unto Him. ²²⁶

2.204 There is the type of man whose speech about this world's life may dazzle thee and he calls Allah to witness about what is in his heart; yet is he the most contentious of enemies. ²²⁷

2.205 When he turns his back his aim everywhere is to spread mischief through the earth and destroy crops and cattle. But Allah loveth not mischief.

2.206 When it is said to him "Fear Allah" he is led by arrogance to (more) crime. Enough for him is Hell; an evil bed indeed (to lie on)! ²²⁸

2.207 And there is the type of man who gives his life to earn the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is full of kindness to (His) devotees. ²²⁹

2.208 O ye who believe! enter into Islam whole-heartedly; and follow not the footsteps of the Evil One; for he is to you an avowed enemy.

2.209 If ye backslide after the clear (signs) have come to you then know that Allah is Exalted in Power Wise. ²³⁰

2.210 Will they wait until Allah comes to them in canopies of clouds with angels (in His train) and the question is (thus) settled? But to Allah do all questions go back (for decision). ²³¹

2.211 Ask the Children of Israel how many Clear (Signs) We have sent them. But if anyone after Allah's favor has come to him substitutes (something else) Allah is strict in punishment. ^{232 233}

2.212 The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith and they scoff at those who believe. But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection; for Allah bestows His abundance without measures on whom He will. ²³⁴

2.213 Mankind was one single nation and Allah sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings; and with them He sent the Book in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed; but the People of the Book after the clear Signs came to them did not differ among themselves except through selfish contumacy. Allah by His Grace guided the believers to the truth concerning that wherein they differed. For Allah guides whom He will to a path that is straight.

2.214 Or do ye think that ye shall enter the Garden (of Bliss) without such (trials) as came to those who passed away before you? They encountered suffering and adversity and were so shaken in spirit that even the Apostle and those of faith who were with him cried: "When (will come) the help of Allah?" Ah! verily the help of Allah is (always) near!

2.215 They ask thee what they should spend (in charity). Say: Whatever ye spend that is good is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers. And whatever ye do that is good Allah knoweth it well. ²³⁵

2.216 Fighting is prescribed for you and ye dislike it. But it is possible that ye dislike a thing which is good for you and that ye love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah knoweth and ye know not. ²³⁶

2.217 They ask thee concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month. Say: "Fighting therein is a grave (offence); but graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah to deny Him to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque and drive out its members. Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter. Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can. And if any of you turn back from their faith and die in unbelief their works will bear no fruit in this life and in the Hereafter; they will be Companions of the Fire and will abide therein. ^{237 238 239}

2.218 Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the path of Allah they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah; and Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful.

2.219 They ask thee concerning wine and gambling. Say: "In them is great sin and some profit for men; but the sin is greater than the profit." They ask thee how much they are to spend; say: "What is beyond your needs." Thus doth Allah make clear to you His Signs: in order that ye may consider. ^{240 241 242}

2.220 (Their bearings) on this life and the Hereafter. They ask thee concerning orphans. Say: "The best thing to do is what is for their good; if ye mix their affairs with yours they are your brethren; but Allah knows the man who means mischief from the man who means good. And if Allah had wished He could have put you into difficulties: He is indeed Exalted in Power Wise." ²⁴³

2.221 Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters) until they believe; a slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman even though she allure you. Nor marry (your girls) to unbelievers until they believe: a man slave who believes is better than an unbeliever even though he allure you. Unbelievers do (but) beckon you to the fire. But Allah beckons by His grace to the Garden (of Bliss) and forgiveness and makes His Signs clear to mankind: that they may celebrate His praise. ²⁴⁶

2.222 They ask thee concerning women's courses. Say: They are a hurt and a pollution; so keep away from women in their courses and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves ye may approach them in any manner time or place ordained for you by Allah. For Allah loves those who turn to Him constantly and He loves those who keep themselves pure and clean. ^{247 248}

2.223 Your wives are as a tilth unto you; so approach your tilth when or how ye will. But do some good act for your souls beforehand; and fear Allah and know that ye are to meet Him (in the Hereafter) and give (these) good tidings to those who believe. ^{249 250}

2.224 And make not Allah's (name) an excuse in your oaths against doing good or acting rightly or making peace between persons; for Allah is one who heareth and knoweth all things. ²⁵¹

2.225 Allah will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths but for the intention in your hearts; and He is Oft-Forgiving Most Forbearing. ²⁵²

2.226 For those who take an oath for abstention from their wives a waiting for four months is ordained; if then they return Allah is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful.

2.227 But if their intention is firm for divorce Allah heareth and knoweth all things. ²⁵³

2.228 Divorced women shall wait concerning themselves for three monthly periods nor is it lawful for them to hide what Allah hath created in their wombs if they have faith in Allah and the Last Day. And their husbands have the better right to take them back in that period if they wish for reconciliation. And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them according to what is equitable; but men have a degree (of advantage) over them and Allah is Exalted in Power Wise. ^{254 255}

2.229 A divorce is only permissible twice: after that the parties should either hold together on equitable terms or separate with kindness. It is not lawful for you (men) to take back any of your gifts (from your wives) except when both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah. If ye (judges) do indeed fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah there is no blame on either of them if she give something for her freedom. These are the limits ordained by Allah; so do not transgress them. If any do transgress the limits ordained by Allah such persons wrong (themselves as well as others). ^{256 257 258 259}

2.230 So if a husband divorces his wife (irrevocably) he cannot after that remarry her until after she has married another husband and he has divorced her. In that case there is no blame on either of them if they reunite provided they feel that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah. Such are the limits ordained by Allah which He makes plain to those who understand. ²⁶⁰

2.231 When ye divorce women and they fulfil the term of their (`Iddat) either take them back on equitable terms or set them free on equitable terms; but do not take them back to injure them or to take undue advantage; if anyone does that He wrongs his own soul. Do not treat Allah's Signs as a jest but solemnly rehearse Allah's favors on you and the fact that He sent down to you the Book and Wisdom for your instruction. And fear Allah and know that Allah is well acquainted with all things. ^{261 262 263 264}

2.232 When ye divorce women and they fulfil the term of their (`Iddat) do not prevent them from marrying their (former) husbands if they mutually agree on equitable terms. This instruction is for all amongst you who believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is (the course making for) most virtue and purity amongst you and Allah knows and ye know not. ²⁶⁵

2.233 The mothers shall give suck to their offspring for two whole years if the father desires to complete the term. But he shall bear the cost of their food and clothing on equitable terms. No soul shall have a burden laid on it greater than it can bear. No mother shall be treated unfairly on account of her child nor father on account of his child. An heir shall be chargeable in the same way if they both decide on weaning by mutual consent and after due consultation there is no blame on them. If ye decide on a foster-mother for your offspring there is no blame on you provided ye pay (the mother) what ye offered on equitable terms. But fear Allah and know that Allah sees well what ye do. ²⁶⁶

2.234 If any of you die and leave widows behind they shall wait concerning themselves four months and ten days: when they have fulfilled their term there is no blame on you if they dispose of themselves in a just and reasonable manner. And Allah is well acquainted with what ye do. ²⁶⁷

2.235 There is no blame on you if ye make an offer of betrothal or hold it in your hearts. Allah knows that ye cherish them in your hearts: but do not make a secret contract with them except in terms honorable nor resolve on the tie of marriage till the term prescribed is fulfilled. And know that Allah knoweth what is in your hearts and take heed of Him; and know that Allah is Oft Forgiving Most Forbearing. ²⁶⁸

2.236 There is no blame on you if ye divorce women before consummation or the fixation of their dower; but bestow on them (a suitable gift) the wealthy according to his means and the poor according to his means; a gift of a reasonable amount is due from those who wish to do the right thing.

2.237 And if ye divorce them before consummation but after the fixation of a dower for them then the half of the dower (is due to them) unless they remit it. Or (the man's half) is remitted by him in whose hands is the marriage tie; and the remission (of the man's half) is the nearest to righteousness. And do not forget liberality between yourselves. For Allah sees well all that ye do. ^{269 270}

2.238 Guard strictly your (habit of) prayers especially the middle prayer and stand before Allah in a devout (frame of mind). ²⁷¹

2.239 If ye fear (an enemy) pray on foot or riding (as may be most convenient) but when ye are in security celebrate Allah's praises in the manner He has taught you which ye knew not (before). ²⁷²

2.240 Those of you who die and leave widows should bequeath for their widows a year's maintenance and residence; but if they leave (the residence) there is no blame on you for what they do with themselves provided it is reasonable and Allah is Exalted in Power Wise. ²⁷³

2.241 For divorced women maintenance (should be provided) on a reasonable (scale). This is a duty on the righteous.

2.242 Thus doth Allah make clear His Signs to you: in order that ye may understand.

2.243 Didst thou not turn thy vision to those who abandoned their homes though they were thousands (in number) for fear of death? Allah said to them: "Die." Then He restored them to life. For Allah is full of bounty to mankind but most of them are ungrateful. ²⁷⁴

2.244 Then fight in the cause of Allah and know that Allah heareth and knoweth all things. ²⁷⁵

2.245 Who is he that will loan to Allah a beautiful loan which Allah will double unto his credit and multiply many times? It is Allah that giveth (you) want or plenty and to Him shall be your return. ²⁷⁶

2.246 Hast thou not turned thy vision to the chiefs of the children of Israel after (the time of) Moses? They said to a Prophet (that was) among them: "Appoint for us a king that we may fight in the cause of Allah." He said: "Is it not possible if ye were commanded to fight that ye will not fight?" They said: "How could we refuse to fight in the cause of Allah seeing that we were turned out of our homes and our families?" But when they were commanded to fight they turned back except a small band among them. But Allah has full knowledge of those who do wrong. ^{277 278 279}

2.247 Their Prophet said to them: "Allah hath appointed Talut as king over you." They say: "How can he exercise authority over us when we are better fitted than he to exercise authority and he is not even gifted with wealth in abundance?" He said: "Allah hath chosen him above you and hath gifted him abundantly with knowledge and bodily prowess; Allah granteth His authority to whom He pleaseth. Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things." ²⁸⁰

2.248 And (further) their Prophet said to them: "A sign of his authority is that there shall come to you the Ark of the Covenant with (an assurance) therein of security from your Lord and the relics left by the family of Moses and the family of Aaron carried by angels. In this is a Symbol for you if ye indeed have faith." ²⁸¹
^{282 283}

2.249 When Talut set forth with the armies he said: "Allah will test you at the stream; if any drinks of its water he goes not with my army; only those who taste not of it go with me; a mere sip out of the hand is excused." But they all drank of it except a few. When they crossed the river he and the faithful ones with him they said: "This day we cannot cope with Goliath and his forces." But those who were convinced that they must meet Allah said: "How oft by Allah's will hath a small force vanquished a big one? Allah is with those who steadfastly persevere." ^{284 285}

2.250 When they advanced to meet Goliath and his forces they prayed: "Our Lord! pour out constancy on us and make our steps firm; help us against those that reject faith."

2.251 By Allah's will they routed them: and David slew Goliath; and Allah gave him power and wisdom and taught him whatever (else) He willed. And did not Allah check one set of people by means of another the earth would indeed be full of mischief but Allah is full of bounty to all the worlds. ^{286 287 283}

2.252 These are the signs of Allah; We rehearse them to thee in truth: verily thou art one of the apostles.

2.253 Those apostles We endowed with gifts some above others: to one of them Allah spoke; others He raised to degrees (of honor); to Jesus the son of Mary We gave clear (Signs) and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. If Allah had so willed succeeding generations would not have fought among each other after clear (Signs) had come to them but they (chose) to wrangle some believing and others rejecting. If Allah had so willed they would not have fought each other; but Allah fulfilleth His plan. ^{289 290 291 292 293}

2.254 O ye who believe! spend out of (the bounties) We have provided for you before the day comes when no bargaining (will avail) nor friendship nor intercession. Those who reject faith they are the wrong-doers. ^{294 295}

2.255 Allah! there is no Allah but He the living the Self-subsisting Eternal. No slumber can seize him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is there can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to his creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of his knowledge except as He willeth. His throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. For He is the Most High the Supreme (in glory). ^{296 297 298 259}

2.256 Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth stands out clear from error; whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things. ^{300 301}

2.257 Allah is the Protector of those who have faith: from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith the patrons are the Evil Ones: from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness. They will be companions of the fire to dwell therein (for ever).

2.258 Hast thou not turned thy vision to one who disputed with Abraham about his Lord because Allah had granted him power? Abraham said: "My Lord is He Who Giveth life and death." He said: "I give life and death." Said Abraham: "but it is Allah that causeth the sun to rise from the East do thou then cause him to rise from the West." Thus was he confounded who (in arrogance) rejected faith. Nor doth Allah give guidance to a people unjust. ^{302 303}

2.259 Or (take) the similitude of one who passed by a hamlet all in ruins to its roofs. He said: "Oh! how shall Allah bring it (ever) to life after (this) its death?" But Allah caused him to die for a hundred years then raised him up (again). He said: "How long didst thou tarry (thus)?" He said: "(perhaps) a day or part of a day." He said: "Nay thou hast tarried thus a hundred years; but look at thy food and thy drink; they show no signs of age; and look at thy donkey: and that We may make of thee a Sign unto the people look further at the bones how We bring them together and clothe them with flesh! When this was shown clearly to him he said: "I know that Allah hath power over all things." ^{304 305}

2.260 Behold! Abraham said: "My Lord! show me how thou givest life to the dead. He said: "Dost thou not then believe?" He said: "Yea! but to satisfy my own understanding." He said: "Take four birds; tame them to turn to thee; put a portion of them on every hill and call to them; they will come to thee (flying) with speed. Then know that Allah is Exalted in Power Wise." ^{306 307 308}

2.261 The parable of those who spend their substance in the way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it groweth seven ears and each ear hath a hundred grains. Allah giveth manifold increase to whom He pleaseth; and Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things.

2.262 Those who spend their substance in the cause of Allah and follow not up their gifts with reminders of their generosity or with injury for them their reward is with their Lord; on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.

2.263 Kind words and the covering of faults are better than charity followed by injury. Allah is free of all wants and he is Most Forbearing. ³⁰⁹

2.264 O ye who believe! cancel not your charity by reminders of your generosity or by injury like those who spend their substance to be seen of men but believe neither in Allah nor in the last day. They are in Parable like a hard barren rock on which is a little soil; on it falls heavy rain which leaves it (just) a bare stone. They will be able to do nothing with aught they have earned. And Allah guideth not those who reject faith. ³¹⁰

2.265 And the likeness of those who spend their substance seeking to please Allah and to strengthen their souls is as a garden high and fertile: heavy rain falls on it but makes it yield a double increase of harvest and if it receives not heavy rain light moisture sufficeth it. Allah seeth well whatever ye do. ³¹¹

2.266 Does any of you wish that he should have a garden with date-palms and vines and streams flowing underneath and all kinds of fruit while he is stricken with old age and his children are not strong (enough to look after themselves) that it should be caught in a whirlwind with fire therein and be burnt up? Thus doth Allah make clear to you (His) signs; that ye may consider. ^{312 313}

2.267 O ye who believe! give of the good things which ye have (honorably) earned and of the fruits of the earth which We have produced for you and do not even aim at getting anything which is bad in order that out of it ye may give away something when ye yourselves would not receive it except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is free of all wants and worthy of all praise. ^{314 315 316 317}

2.268 The Evil One threatens you with poverty and bids you to conduct unseemly. Allah promiseth you His forgiveness and bounties and Allah careth for all and He knoweth all things. ³¹⁸

2.269 He granteth wisdom to whom He pleaseth; and he to whom wisdom is granted receiveth indeed a benefit overflowing; but none will grasp the message but men of understanding.

2.270 And whatever ye spend in charity or devotion be sure Allah knows it all. But the wrong-doers have no helpers.

2.271 If ye disclose (acts of) charity even so it is well but if ye conceal them and make them reach those (really) in need that is best for you: it will remove from you some of your (stains of) evil. And Allah is well acquainted with what ye do. ³¹⁹

2.272 It is not required of thee (O Apostles) to set them on the right path but Allah sets on the right path whom He pleaseth. Whatever of good ye give benefits your own souls and ye shall only do so seeking the "Face" of Allah. Whatever good ye give, shall be rendered back to you and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly. ^{320 321}

2.273 (Charity is) for those in need who in Allah's cause are restricted (from travel) and cannot move about in the land seeking (for trade or work). The ignorant man thinks because of their modesty that they are free from want. Thou shalt know them by their (unfailing) mark: they beg not importunately from all and sundry. And whatever of good ye give be assured Allah knoweth it well. ³²²

2.274 Those who (in charity) spend of their goods by night and by day in secret and in public have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve. ³²³

2.275 Those who devour usury will not stand except as stands one whom the Evil One by his touch hath driven to madness. That is because they say: "Trade is like usury but Allah hath permitted trade and forbidden usury. Those who after receiving direction from their Lord desist shall be pardoned for the past; their case is for Allah (to judge); but those who repeat (the offence) are companions of the fire: they will abide therein (for ever). ^{324 325 326}

2.276 Allah will deprive usury of all blessing but will give increase for deeds of charity: for He loveth not creatures ungrateful and wicked.

2.277 Those who believe and do deeds of righteousness and establish regular prayers and regular charity will have their reward with their Lord: on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve. ³²⁷

2.278 O ye who believe! fear Allah and give up what remains of your demand for usury if ye are indeed believers.

2.279 If ye do it not take notice of war from Allah and his Apostle: but if ye turn back ye shall have your capital sums; deal not unjustly and ye shall not be dealt with unjustly. ³²⁸

2.280 If the debtor is in a difficulty grant him time till it is easy for him to repay. But if ye remit if by way of charity that is best for you if ye only knew.

2.281 And fear the day when ye shall be brought back to Allah. Then shall every soul be paid what it earned and none shall be dealt with unjustly.

2.282 O ye who believe! when ye deal with each other in transactions involving future obligations in a fixed period of time reduce them to writing. Let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties: let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah has taught him so let him write. Let him who incurs the liability dictate but let him fear his Lord Allah and not diminish aught of what he owes. If the party liable is mentally deficient or weak or unable himself to dictate let his guardian dictate faithfully. And get two witnesses out of your own men and if there are not two men then a man and two women such as ye choose for witnesses so that if one of them errs the other can remind her. The witnesses should not refuse when they are called on (for evidence). Disdain not to reduce to writing (your contract) for a future period whether it be small or big: it is juster in the sight of Allah more suitable as evidence and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves; but if it be a transaction which ye carry out on the spot among yourselves there is no blame on you if ye reduce it not to writing. But take witnesses whenever ye make a commercial contract; and let neither scribe nor witness suffer harm. If ye do (such harm) it would be wickedness in you. So fear Allah; for it is Allah that teaches you. And Allah is well acquainted with all things. ^{329 330 331 332 333}

2.283 If ye are on a journey and cannot find a scribe a pledge with possession (may serve the purpose). And if one of you deposits a thing on trust with another let the trustee (faithfully) discharge his trust and let him fear his Lord. Conceal not evidence; for whoever conceals it his heart is tainted with sin. And Allah knoweth all that ye do. ^{334 335 336}

2.284 To Allah belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth. Whether ye show what is in your minds or conceal it Allah calleth you to account for it. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth and punisheth whom He pleaseth. For Allah hath power over all things.

2.285 The Apostle believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah His angels His books and His Apostles "We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His Apostles." And they say: "We hear and we obey; (We seek) Thy forgiveness Our Lord and to Thee is the end of all journeys." 337 338 339

2.286 On no soul doth Allah place a burden greater than it can bear. It gets every good that it earns and it suffers every ill that it earns. (Pray): "Our Lord! condemn us not if we forget or fall into error; our Lord! Lay not on us a burden like that which Thou didst lay on those before us; Our Lord! lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear. Blot out our sins and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. Thou art our Protector; help us against those who stand against faith." 340 341 342

Author Comments

25 - These are abbreviated letters, the Muqattaat, on which a general discussion will be found in Appendix I (to be printed at the end of this Sura).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

36 - This is another phase of the hypocrite and the cynic. "Faith" he says, "is good enough to fools." But

his cynicism may be the greatest folly in the eyes of God.

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

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

39 - A wonderfully graphic and powerful simile applying to those who reject Faith. In their self-sufficiency they are undisturbed normally. But what happens when a great storm breaks over them? They cover their ears against thunder-claps and the lightning nearly blinds them. They are in mortal fear, but God encompasses them around - even them, for He at all times encompasses all. He gives them rope. In the intervals of deafening noise and blinding flashes, there are moments of steady light and these creatures take advantage of them, but again they are plunged into darkness. Perhaps they curse; perhaps they think that the few moments of effective light are due to their own intelligence! How much wiser would they be if they humbled themselves and sought the light of God!

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

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

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

43 - If by your own efforts you cannot match the spiritual light, and yet contumaciously reject spiritual Faith, then there will be a fire in your souls, the Punishment that burns up all your cherished idols. Perhaps you will at least fear this penalty, which your self-loving souls can understand. This fire consumes both the worshippers of the False and the Idols which they falsely worship. Can this bring them to their senses? Its power is not only over the feeling, palpitating heart of man (heart in a spiritual sense, as it persists long after the physical heart), but he cannot escape from it even if he imagines himself reduced to inertness like sticks or stones; for it is all-devouring.

44 - This is the antithesis to the last verse. If fire is the symbol of Punishment, the Garden is the symbol of felicity. And what can be more delightful than a Garden where you observe from a picturesque height a beautiful landscape round you, - rivers flowing with crystal water, and fruit trees of which the choicest fruit is before you. The fruit of goodness is goodness, similar, but choicer in every degree of ascent. You think it is the same, but it is because of your past experiences and associations of memory. Then there is companionship. If sex is suggested, its physical associations are at once negated by the addition of the word Mutahharatun "pure and holy." The Arabic epithet is in the intensive form, and must be translated by two adjectives denoting purity in the highest degree. The Companionship is that of souls and applies to both sexes in the physical world of men and women. And this felicity is not a mere passing phase but will abide beyond the realms of Time.

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

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

47 - It would seem that the angels, though holy and pure, and endued with power from God, yet represented only one side of Creation. We may imagine them without passion or emotion, of which the highest flower is love. If man was to be endued with emotions, those emotions would lead him to the highest and drag him to the lowest. The power of will or choosing would have to go with them, in order that man might steer his own bark. This power of will (when used aright) gave him to some extent a mastery over his own fortunes and over nature, thus bringing him nearer to the God-like nature which has supreme mastery and will. We may suppose the angels had no independent wills of their own; their perfection in other ways reflected God's perfection but could not raise them to the dignity of vicegerency. The perfect vicegerent is he who has the power of initiative himself, but whose independent action always reflects perfectly the will of his Principal. The distinction is expressed by Shakespeare (Sonnet 94) in those fine lines: "They are the lords and owners of their faces. Others but stewards of their excellence." The angels in their one-sidedness saw only the mischief consequent on the misuse of the emotional nature by man; perhaps they also, being without emotions, did not understand the whole of God's nature, which gives and asks for love. In humility and true devotion to God, they remonstrate; we must not imagine the least tinge of jealousy, as they are without emotion. This mystery of love being above them, they are told that they do not know and they acknowledge (in ii. 32 below) not their fault (for there is no question of fault) but their imperfection of knowledge. At the same time, the matter is brought home to them when the actual capacities of man are shown to them (ii. 31, 33).

48 - The literal words in Arabic throughout this passage are: "The names of things" which commentators take to mean the inner nature and qualities of things, and things here would include feelings. The whole passage is charged with mystic meaning. The particular qualities or feelings which were outside the nature of angels were put by God into the nature of man. Man was thus able to love and understand love, and thus plan and initiate, as becomes the office of vicegerent. The angels acknowledged this. These things they could only know from the outside, but they had faith, or belief in the Unseen. And they knew that God saw all - what others see, what others do not see, what others may even wish to conceal. Man has many qualities which are latent or which he may wish to suppress or conceal, to his own detriment.

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

50 - Was the Garden of Eden a place on this earth? Obviously not. For, in verse 36 below, it was after the Fall that the sentence was pronounced: "On earth will be your dwelling." Before the Fall, we must suppose Man to be on another plane altogether - of felicity, innocence, trust, a spiritual existence, with the negation of enmity, want of faith, and all evil. Perhaps Time and Space also did not exist, and the Garden is allegorical as well as the tree. The forbidden tree was not the tree of knowledge for man was given in that perfect state fuller knowledge than he has now (ii. 31); it was the tree of Evil, which he was forbidden not only to eat of, but even to approach.

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

52 - "Iblis" in ii. 34 is apparently the Power of Evil, with the root idea of desperateness of rebellion. "Satan" in this verse is the Power of Evil, with the root idea of perversity or enmity. Note the appropriateness of the term on each occasion. Also, "slipping" from the Garden denotes the idea of Evil gradually tempting man from a higher to a lower state.

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

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

55 - As "names" in verse 31 above is used for the "nature of things", so "words" here mean "inspiration"

"spiritual knowledge". The Arabic word used for "learn" here implies some effort on his part to which God's Grace responded.

56 - Note the transition from the plural "We" at the beginning of the verse to the singular "Me" later in the same verse God speaks of Himself usually in the first person plural "We" it is the plural of respect and honour and is used in human language in Royal proclamations and decrees. But where a special personal relationship is expressed the singular, "I" or "Me" is used Cf. xxvi. 52, etc.

57 - But if the soul, in spite of the Oft-Returning Mercy of God, rejects the higher light and goes on sinning against that light, the inevitable consequence must be the spiritual Fire. It is not merely a fortuitous incident. As his rejection was deliberate and definite, so the consequences must be of an abiding character.

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

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

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

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

murmuring or rebellion, but saved from mere passivity or listlessness, by the element of constancy or steadfastness.

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

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

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

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

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

67 - Moses prayed for his people, and God forgave them. This is the language of the Qur-an. The Old Testament version is rougher: "The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people": Exod. xxxii. 14. The Muslim position has always been that the Jewish (and Christian) scriptures as they stand cannot be traced direct to Moses or Jesus, but are later compilations. Modern scholarship and Higher Criticism has left no doubt on the subject. But the stories in these traditional books may be used in an appeal to those who use them: only they should be spiritualized, as they are here, and especially in ii. 5 below.

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

69 - Moses's speech may be construed literally, as translated, in which case it reproduces Exod. xxxii 27-28 but in a much softened form, for the Old Testament says: "Go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor... and there fell of the people that day 3,000 men." A more spiritualized version would be that the order for slaying was given by way of trial, but was withdrawn, for God turned to them in forgiveness. A still more spiritualized way of construing it would be to take "anfusakum" as meaning "souls" not "selves". Then the sense of Moses's speech (abbreviated) would be: "By the worship of the calf you have wronged your own souls; repent: mortify (=slay) your souls now: it will be better in the sight of God."

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

71 - Manna=Hebrew, Manhu: Arabic Mahuwa? - What is it? In Exod. xvi. 14 it is described as "a small round thing as small as the hoar frost on the ground." It usually rotted if left over till next day; it melted in the hot sun; the amount necessary for each man was about an Omer, a Hebrew measure of capacity equal to about 2½ quarts. This is the Hebrew account, probably distorted by traditional exaggeration. The

actual Manna found to this day in the Sinai region is a gummy saccharine secretion found on a species of Tamarisk. It is produced by the puncture of a species of insect like the cochineal, just as lac is produced by the puncture of the lac insect on certain trees in India. As to quails, large flights of them are driven by winds in the Eastern Mediterranean in certain seasons of the year, as was witnessed during the Great War of 1914-1918 by many Indian officers who campaigned between Egypt and Palestine.

72 - This probably refers to Shittim. It was the "town of acacias," just east of the Jordan, where the Israelites were guilty of debauchery and the worship of and sacrifice to false gods (Num. xxv. 1-2, also 8-9); a terrible punishment ensued, including the plague of which 24,000 died. The word which the transgressors changed may have been a pass-word. In the Arabic text it is "Hittatun" which implies humility and a prayer of forgiveness, a fitting emblem to distinguish them from their enemies. From this particular incident a more general lesson may be drawn; in the hour of triumph we are to behave humbly as in God's sight, and our conduct should be exemplary according to God's word; otherwise our arrogance will draw its own punishment.

73 - Here we have a reference to the tribal organization of the Jews, which played a great part in their forty years' march through the Arabian deserts (Num. i. and ii.) and their subsequent settlement in the land of Canaan (Josh. xxii. and xiv.). The twelve tribes were derived from the sons of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (soldier of God) after he had wrestled, says Jewish tradition, with God (Genesis xxxii. 28). Israel had twelve sons (Gen. xxxv. 22-26), including Levi and Joseph. The descendants of these twelve sons were the "Children of Israel." Levi's family got the priesthood and the care of the Tabernacle; they were exempted from military duties for which the census was taken (Nu. i. 47-53), and therefore from the distribution of Land in Canaan (Josh. xiv. 3); they were distributed among all the Tribes, and were really a privileged caste and not numbered among the Tribes; Moses and Aaron belonged to the house of Levi. On the other hand Joseph, on account of the high position to which he rose in Egypt as the Pharaoh's minister, was the progenitor of two tribes, one in the name of each of his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh. Thus there were twelve Tribes in all, as Levi was cut out and Joseph represented two tribes. Their having fixed stations and watering places in camp and fixed territorial areas later in the Promised Land prevented confusion and mutual jealousies and is pointed to as an evidence of the Providence of God acting through His prophet Moses. Cf. also vii. 160.

74 - The declension of the word Misr in the Arabic text here shows that it is treated as a common noun meaning any town, but this is not conclusive, and the reference may be to the Egypt of Pharaoh. The Tanwin expressing indefiniteness may mean "any Egypt", i.e., any country as fertile as Egypt. There is here a subtle reminiscence as well as a severe reproach. The rebellious children of Israel murmured at the sameness of the food they got in the desert. They were evidently hankering after the delicacies of the Egypt which they had left, although they should have known that the only thing certain for them in Egypt was their bondage and harsh treatment. Moses's reproach to them was twofold: (1) Such variety of foods you can get in any town; would you, for their sake, sell your freedom? Is not freedom better than delicate food? (2) In front is the rich Promised Land, which you are reluctant to march to; behind is Egypt, the land of bondage. Which is better? Would you exchange the better for the worse?

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

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

77 - CF. ii. 38, where the same phrase occurs. And it recurs again and again afterwards. The point of the verse is that Islam does not teach an exclusive doctrine, and is not meant exclusively for one people. The Jews claimed this for themselves, and the Christians in their own origin were a sect of the Jews. Even the modern organized Christian churches, though they have been, consciously or unconsciously, influenced by the Time-spirit, including the historical fact of Islam, yet cling to the idea of Vicarious Atonement, which means that all who do not believe in it or who lived previously to the death of Christ are at a disadvantage spiritually before the Throne of God. The attitude of Islam is entirely different. Islam existed before the preaching of Muhammad on this earth: the Qur-an expressly calls Abraham a Muslim (iii. 67). Its teaching (submission to God's will) has been and will be the teaching of Religion for all time and for all peoples.

78 - The Mountain of Sinai (Tur-u-Sinin) a prominent mountain in the Arabian desert, in the peninsula between the two arms of the Red Sea. Here the Ten Commandments and the Law were given to Moses. Hence it is now called the Mountain of Moses (Jabal Musa). The Israelites encamped at the foot of it for nearly a year. The Covenant was taken from them under many portents (Exod. xix. 5,8,16,18), which are described in Jewish tradition in great detail. Under thunder and lightning the mountain must indeed have appeared an awe-inspiring sight above to the Camp at its foot. And the people solemnly entered into the Covenant: all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

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

163-166. Or should we translate in both these passages. "Be as apes", instead of "Be apes"? This is the suggestion of Maulvi Muhammad Ali on this passage, on the authority of Mujabid and Ibn Jarir Tabari. The punishment would be, not for the breach of the Sabbath in itself, but for their contumacious defiance of the Law.

80 - This story or parable of the heifer in ii. 67-71 should be read with the parable of the dead man brought to life in ii. 72-73. The stories were accepted in Jewish traditions, which are themselves based on certain sacrificial directions in the Old Testament. The heifer story of Jewish tradition is based on Num. xix. 1-10, in which Moses and Aaron ordered the Israelites to sacrifice a red heifer without spot or blemish; her body was to be burnt and the ashes were to be kept for the purification of the congregation from sin. The parable of the dead man we shall refer to later. The lesson of the heifer parable is plain. Moses announced the sacrifice to the Israelites, and they treated it as a jest. When Moses continued solemnly to ask for the sacrifice, they put him off on one pretext and another, asking a number of questions which they could have answered themselves if they had listened to Moses's directions. Their questions were carping criticisms rather than the result of a desire for information. It was a mere thin pretence that they were genuinely seeking for guidance. When at last they were driven into a corner, they made the sacrifice, but the will was wanting, which would have made the sacrifice efficacious for purification from sin. The real reason for their prevarications was their guilty conscience, as we see in the parable of the dead man (ii. 72-73).

81 - In Deut. xxi. 1-9 it is ordained that if the body of a slain man be found in a field and the slayer is not known, a heifer shall be beheaded, and the elders of the city next to the slain man's domicile shall wash their hands over the heifer and say that they neither did the deed nor saw it done, thus clearing themselves from the blood-guilt. The Jewish story based on this was that in a certain case of this kind, every one tried to clear himself of guilt and lay the blame at the door of others. In the first place they tried to prevaricate and prevent a heifer being slain as in the last parable. When she was slain, Allah by a miracle disclosed the really guilty person. A portion of the sacrificed heifer was ordered to be placed on the corpse, which came to life and disclosed the whole story of the crime. The lesson of this parable is that men may try to hide their crimes individually or collectively, but Allah will bring them to light in unexpected ways. Applying this further to Jewish national history, the argument is developed in the following verses that the Children of Israel played fast and loose with their own rites and traditions, but they could not thus evade the consequences of their own sin.

82 - The sinner's heart gets harder and harder. It is even harder than rocks, of which a beautiful poetical allegory is placed before us. In nature we think there is nothing harder than rocks. But there are rocks that weep voluntarily, like repentant hearts that come to God of their own accord; such are the rocks from which rivers and springs flow spontaneously, sometimes in small trickles, sometimes in big volumes. Then there are rocks which have to be split or dug into or blown up with dynamite, and underneath we find abundant waters, as in wells beneath rocky soil. Such are the hearts of a less degree of fineness, which yet melt into tears when some great blow or calamity calls the mind to higher things. And lastly, there are the rocks which slip or sink by geological pressure or in an earthquake, and send forth large spouts of water, as happened, for example, in the Bihar earthquake of 1934; such sinking or quaking may be poetically ascribed to fear. So there are hearts which will come to God by no higher motive than fear, but yet fear will melt them into tears of repentance. But the hardened sinner is worse than all these. His case

is worse than that of rocks, for nothing will melt him.

83 - The immediate argument applies to the Jews of Medina, but the more general argument applies to the people of Faith and the people without Faith, as we shall see below. If the Muslims of Medina ever entertained the hope that the Jews in their city would as a body welcome Muhammad Mustafa as the Prophet prophesied in their own books, they were mistaken. In Deut. xviii. 18, they read: "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee." (i.e., like unto Moses) which was interpreted by some of their doctors as referring to Muhammad, and they came into Islam. The Arabs are a kindred branch of the Semitic family, and are correctly described in relation to the Jews as "their brethren"; and there is no question that there was not another Prophet "like unto Moses" until Muhammad came; in fact the postscript of Deuteronomy, which was written many centuries after Moses, says: "There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." But the Jews as a body were jealous of Muhammad, and played a double part. When the Muslim community began to grow stronger they pretended to be of them, but really tried to keep back any knowledge of their own Scriptures from them, lest they should be beaten by their own arguments. The more general interpretation holds good in all ages. Faith and Unfaith are pitted against each other. Faith has to struggle against power, position, organization, and privilege. When it gains ground, Unfaith comes forward insincerely and claims fellowship. But in its own mind it is jealous of the armoury of science and knowledge which Faith brings into the service of Allah. But Allah knows all, and if the people of Faith will only seek knowledge sincerely whereever they can find it,-even as far afield as China, as Muhammad said, they can defeat Unfaith on its own ground. [Even though the directive that Muslims should derive knowledge regardless of its location is an acceptable proposition from the Islamic viewpoint, the tradition to which the author refers here is not authentic].

84 - The argument of i. 76 is continued. The Jews wanted to keep back knowledge, but what knowledge had they? Many of them, even if they could read, were no better than illiterates, for they knew not their own true Scriptures, but read into them what they wanted, or at best their own conjectures. They palmed off their own writings for the Message of God. Perhaps it brought them profit for the time being; but it was a miserable profit if they "gained the whole world and lost their own souls" (Matt. xvi. 26). "Writing with their own hands" means inventing books themselves, which had no divine authority. The general argument is similar. Unfaith erects its own false gods. It attributes things to causes which only exist in its own imagination. Sometimes it even indulges in actual dishonest traffic in the ignorance of the multitude. It may pay for a time, but the bubble always bursts.

85 - The Jews in their arrogance might say: Whatever the terror of Hell may be for other people, our sins will be forgiven, because we are the children of Abraham; at worst, we shall suffer a short definite punishment and then be restored to the "bosom of Abraham". This bubble is pricked here. Read this verse with ii. 81-82. The general application is also clear. If Unfaith claims some special prerogative, such as race, "civilization," political power, historical experience, and so on, these will not avail in Allah's sight. His promise is sure, but His promise is for those who seek Allah in Faith, and show it in their conduct.

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

87 - So far from the Covenant being of the kind you suggest in ii. 80, the real Covenant is about the moral law, which is set out in ii. 83. This moral law is universal and if you break it, no privileges will lighten your punishment or help you in any way (ii. 86). "Speak fair to the people" not only means outward courtesy from the leaders to the meanest among the people, but the protection of the people from being exploited, deceived, defrauded, or doped with things to lull their intelligence.

88 - Verse 83 referred to the universal moral law. This verse 84 refers to its application under a special Covenant entered into with the Jews of Medina by the new-born Muslim Commonwealth under its Guide and teacher Muhammad. This Covenant is given in Ibn Hisham's Sivat-ur-Rasul, and comments on it will be found in Ameer Ali's Spirit of Islam (London 1922), pp. 57-61. It was entered into in the second year of the Hijra, and was treacherously broken by the Jews almost immediately afterwards.

89 - I understand "ransom them" here to mean "take ransom for them" though most of the Commentators take it to mean "give ransom for them". Mustafa had made a Pact which, if it had been faithfully observed by all parties, would have brought a reign of law and order for Medina. But some of the treacherous Jews never intended to observe its terms. They fought and slew each other and not only banished those who were obnoxious to them but intrigued with their enemies. If by chance they came back into their hands as captives, they demanded ransom for them to return to their homes although they had no right to banish them at all. If we understand by "ransom them" pay "ransom for them to release them from the hands of their enemies," it would mean that they did this pious act for show, although they were themselves the authors of their unlawful banishment. I think the former makes better sense.

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

91 - Notice the sudden transition from the past tense in "some ye called imposters" to the present tense in "others ye slay." There is a double significance. First, reviewing the long course of Jewish history, we have come to the time of Jesus; they have often given the lie to God's Apostles, and even now they are trying to slay Jesus. Secondly, extending the review of that history to the time of Muhammad, they are even now trying to take the life of that holy Apostle. This would be literally true at the time the words were promulgated to the people. And this transition leads on naturally to the next verse, which refers to the actual conditions before Muhammad in Medina in the second year of the Hijra. Sections 11/13 (ii. 87-121) refer to the People of the Book generally, Jews and Christians. Even where Moses and the Law of Sinai are referred to, those traditions are common to both Jews and Christians. The argument is about the people who ought to have learnt from previous Revelations and welcomed Muhammad's teaching, and yet they both took up an attitude of arrogant rejection.

92 - The Jews in their arrogance claimed that all wisdom and all knowledge of God were enclosed in their hearts. But there were more things in heaven and earth than were dreamt of in their philosophy. Their claim was not only arrogance but blasphemy. In reality they were men without Faith. (I take Gulfan here to be the plural of Gilafun the wrapping or cover of a book, in which the book is preserved.) As usual, there is a much wider meaning. How many people at all times and among all nations close their hearts to any extension of knowledge or spiritual influence because of some little fragment which they have got and which they think is the whole of Allah's Truth? Such an attitude shows really want of faith and is a blasphemous limitation of Allah's unlimited spiritual gifts to His creatures. [According to another view, the verse refers to the Jewish claim that a covering had been placed over their hearts which prevented them from grasping the message of the Prophet (peace be on him). See Ibn Kathir's commentary on the verse. See also verse iv. 155.]

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

94 - The Jews, who pretended to be so superior to the people without Faith - the Gentiles - should have been the first to recognize the new Truth - or the Truth renewed - which it was Muhammad's mission to

bring because it was so similar in form and language to what they had already received. But they had more arrogance than faith. It is this want of faith that brings on the curse, i.e., deprives us (if we adopt such an attitude) of the blessings of God. Again the lesson applies to a much wider circle than the Jews. We are all apt, in our perverseness, to reject an appeal from our brother even more summarily than one from an outsider. If we have a glimmering of the truth, we are apt to make ourselves impervious to further truth, and thus lose the benefit of Allah's Grace.

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

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

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

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

99 - After the Commandments and the Law had been given at Mount Sinai, and the people had solemnly given their Covenant, Moses went up to the Mount, and in his absence, the people made the golden calf. When Moses returned, his anger waxed hot. "He took the Calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." (Exod. xxxii. 20). This incident is interpreted in the Qur'an allegorically. The Calf is the symbol of disobedience, rebellion, want of faith. It was like a taint of poison. Their punishment was to swallow the taint of poison which they had themselves produced. They swallowed it not into their stomachs, but into their hearts, their very being. They had to mortify and humble themselves in the sight of God, as was shown in another allegory based on the Jewish narrative (see ii. 54 and note, above).

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

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

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

103 - This is a continuation of the argument in ii. 101. The People of the Book, instead of sticking to the plain Books of Revelations, and seeking to do the will of God ran after all sorts of occult knowledge, most of which was false and evil. Many wonderful tales of occult power attributed the power of Solomon to magic. But Solomon dealt in not arts of evil. It was the powers of evil that pretended to force the laws of nature and the will of God; such a pretense is plainly blasphemy.

104 - This verse has been interpreted variously. Who were Harut and Marut? What did they teach? Why

did they teach it? The view which commends itself to me is that of the Tafsir Haqqani following Baidhawi and the Tafsir Kabir. The word "angels" as applied to Harut and Marut is figurative. It means "good men, of knowledge, science (or wisdom) and power." In modern language the word "angel" is applied to a good and beautiful woman. The earlier tradition made angels masculine, and applied to them the attributes which I have mentioned, along with the attribute of beauty, which was implied in goodness, knowledge, wisdom, and power.

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

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107 - The word which I have translated by the word "revelations" is Ayat. See C.41 and n. 15. It is not only used for verses of the Qur-an, but in a general sense for God's revelations, as in ii. 39 and for other Signs of God in history or nature, or miracles, as in ii. 61. It has even been used for human signs and tokens of wonder, as, for example, monuments or landmarks built by the ancient people of Ad (xxvi. 128). What is the meaning here? If we take it in a general sense, it means that God's Message from age to age is always the same, but that its form may differ according to the needs and exigencies of the time. That form was different as given to Moses and then to Jesus and then to Muhammad. Some commentators apply it also to the Ayat of the Qur-an. There is nothing derogatory in this if we believe in progressive revelation. In iii. 7 we are told distinctly about the Qur-an, that some of its verses are basic or fundamental, and others are allegorical, and it is mischievous to treat the allegorical verses and follow them (literally). On the other hand, it is absurd to treat such a verse as ii. 115 as if it were abrogated by ii. 144 about the Qibla. We turn to the Qibla, but we do not believe that God is only in one place. He is everywhere. See second note to ii. 144.

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

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

110 - These words are used in the Qur-an, with a meaning akin to "forgive" but each with a different shade of meaning. Afa (here translated "forgive") means to forget, to obliterate from one's mind. Safaha (here translated "overlook") means to turn away from, to ignore, to treat a matter as if it did not affect one. Gafara (which does not occur in this verse) means to cover up something as God does to our sins with His grace; this word is particularly appropriate in God's attribute of Gaffar, the One who forgives again and again.

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

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

113 - Cf. ii. 95 n.

114 - The word translated "self" is Wajh, a comprehensive Arabic word. It means (1) literally "face" but it may imply (2) countenance or favour, as in xcii. 20; (3) honour, glory, Presence as applied to God, as in ii.

115 and perhaps also in lv. 27; (4) cause, sake ("for the sake of") as in lxxvi 8; (5) the first part, the beginning as in iii. 71; (6) nature, inner being, essence, self, as in v. 111, xxviii 88, and perhaps also in lv. 27. Here I understand meaning 6; the face expresses the personality or the whole inner self of man.

115 - This phrase comes in aptly in its own context many times. In this Sura it occurs in 11, 38, 62, 112, 262, 274, and 277. It serves the same purpose as a refrain in a very well-arranged song, or a motif in Wagner's powerful music.

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

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

118 - The word translated "Presence" is Wajh, literally "face." - See note to ii. 112 above.

119 - It is a derogation from the glory of God - in fact it is blasphemy - to say that God begets sons, like a man or an animal. The Christian doctrine is here emphatically repudiated. If words have any meaning, it would mean an attribution of God of a material nature, and of the lower animal functions of sex. In a spiritual sense, we are all children of God. And all Creation celebrates His glory. Verse 117 should be read with this to complete the argument.

120 - The previous verse told us that everything in heaven and earth celebrates the glory of God. Lest anyone should think that the heavens and the earth were themselves primeval and eternal, we are now told that they themselves are creatures of God's will and design. Cf vi. 102, where the word bada'a is used as here for the creation of the heavens and the earth, and khalafa is used for the creation of all things.

Bada'a goes back to the very primal beginning, as far as we can conceive it. The materialists might say that primeval matter was eternal; other things, i.e., the forms and shapes as we see them now, were called into being at some time or other, and will perish. When they perish, they dissolve into primeval matter again, which stands as the base of all existence. We go further back. We say that if we postulate such primeval matter, it owes its origin itself to God Who is the final basis of existence, the Cause of all Causes. If this is conceded, we proceed to argue that the process of Creation is not then completed. "All things in the heavens and on the earth" are created by gradual processes. In "things" we include abstract as well as material things. We see the abstract things and ideas actually growing before us. But that also is God's creation, to which we can apply the word *khalaaqa*, for in it is involved the idea of measuring, fitting it into a scheme of other things. Cf. *liv.* 49; also *xxv.* 59. Here comes in what we know as the process of evolution. On the other hand, the "amr" (=Command, Direction, Design) is a single thing, unrelated to Time, "like the twinkling of an eye" (*liv.* 50). Another word to note in this connection is *ja'ala* "making" which seems to imply new shapes and forms, new dispositions, as the making of the Signs of the Zodiac in the heavens, or the setting out of the sun and moon for light, or the establishment of the succession of day and night (*xxv* 61-62). A further process with regard to the soul is described in the word *sawwa*, bringing it to perfection (*xc.* 7) but this we shall discuss in its place. *Fatara* (*xlii.* 11) implies, like *bada'a*, the creating of a thing out of nothing and after no preexisting similitude, but perhaps *fatara* implies the creation of primeval matter to which further processes have to be applied later, as when one prepares dough but leaves the leavening to be done after. *Badaa* (without the 'ain), *xxx.* 27, implies beginning the process of creation; this is made further clear in *xxxii.* 7 where the beginning of the creation of pristine man from clay refers to his physical body, leaving the further processes of reproduction and the breathing in of the soul to be described in subsequent verses. Lastly, *baraa* is creation implying liberation from pre-existing matter or circumstance, e.g. man's body from clay (*lix.* 24) or a calamity from previously existing circumstances (*lvii.* 22). See also *vi.* 94, n. 916; *vi.* 98, n. 923; *lix.* 24, nn. 5405-6.

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

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

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

violence. (3) It was a place of prayer; even today there is a Station of Abraham within the enclosure where Abraham was supposed to have prayed. (4) It must be held pure and sacred for all purposes.

126 - Four rites are here enumerated, which have now acquired a technical meaning. (1) Compassing the sacred territory, or going round the Ka'ba: Tawaf. There are special guides who take pilgrims and visitors round. (2) Retiring to the place as a spiritual retreat, for contemplation and prayer: Itikat. (3) The posture of bending the back in prayer: Ruku. (4) The posture of prostrating oneself on the ground in prayer: Sujud. The protection of the holy territory is for all, but special cleanliness and purity is required for the sake of the devotees who undertake these rites.

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

128 - The territory of Mecca is barren and rocky, compared with, say Taif, a city 70-75 miles east of Mecca. A prayer for the prosperity of Mecca therefore includes a prayer for the good things of material life. This is the literal meaning. But note that the opposition in this verse is between the fruits of the Garden for the righteous and the torments of the Fire for the evil ones - a spiritual allegory of great force and aptness.

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

130 - Istafa: chose; chose because of purity; chose and purified. It is the same root from which Mustafa is derived, one of the titles of Muhammad.

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

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

133 - I have made a free paraphrase of what would read literally: "Ye shall not be asked about what they used to do." On the Day of Judgment each soul would have to answer for its own deeds: it cannot claim merit from others, nor be answerable for the crimes or sins of others. Here the argument is: if the Jews or Christians claim the merits of Father Abraham and the Patriarchs or of Jesus, we cannot follow them. Because there were righteous men in the past, it cannot help us unless we are ourselves righteous. The doctrine of personal responsibility is a cardinal feature of Islam.

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

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

137 - Sibgat: baptism: the root-meaning implies a dye or colour; apparently the Arab Christians mixed a dye or colour in the baptismal water, signifying that the baptized person got a new colour in life. We do not believe that it is necessary to be baptized to be saved. Our higher baptism is the "Baptism" of God, by which we take on a colour (symbolically) of God, and absorb His goodness in us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

145 - The Qibla of Jerusalem might itself have seemed strange to the Arabs, and the change from it to the Ka'ba might have seemed strange after they had become used to the other. In reality one direction or another, or east or west, in itself did no matter, as God is in all places, and is independent of Time and Place. What mattered was the sense of discipline, on which Islam lays so much stress: which of us is willing to follow the directions of the chosen Apostle of God? Mere quibbles about non-essential matters are tested by this.

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

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

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

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

150 - See n. 147 to ii. 144 above. The Jews and Christians had a glimmering of the Qibla idea, but in their attitude of self-sufficiency they were not likely to welcome the Qibla idea as perfected in Islam. Nor is Islam, after the fuller knowledge which it has received, likely to revert to the uncertain, imperfect, and varying ideas of orientation held previously.

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

153 - The question is how we are to construe the pronoun huwa in the original. The alternative translation would be: "To each is a goal to which he turns." The simile of life being a race in which we all zealously run forward to the one goal, viz., the goal of good, may be applied individually and nationally. This supplies another argument of the Ka'ba Qibla, viz., the unity of goal, with diversity of races, traditions and temperaments.

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

and argument; and secondly for the Muslim people, on the same ground, as a matter of discipline. There is another little harmony in the matter of the repetitions. Note that the race and starting point argument begins at ii. 149 and is rounded off in the latter part of ii. 150. The latter argument includes the former, and is more widely worded: "wheresoever ye are": which in the Arabic expression would imply three things; in whatever circumstances ye are, or at whatever time ye are, or in whatever place ye are. I have spoken before of a sort of musical harmony in verbal repetitions: here there is a sort of pictorial harmony, as of a larger circle symmetrically including a smaller concentric circle.

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

156 - The word "remember" is too pale a word for zikr, which has now acquired a large number of associations in our religious literature, especially Sufi literature. In its verbal signification it implies: to remember; to praise by frequently mentioning; to rehearse; to celebrate or commemorate; to make much of; to cherish the memory of as a precious possession. In Sufi devotions zikr represents both a solemn ritual and a spiritual state of mind or heart, in which the devotee seeks to realise the presence of God. Thus there is zikr of the mind and zikr of the heart. For beginners the one may lead to the other, but in many cases the two may be simultaneous. There is a subtler distinction, between the zikr that is open, and the zikr that is secret, corresponding to the two doors of the heart, the fleshly and the spiritual. In English some account (very imperfect) of zikr will be found in Hughe's Dictionary of Islam, covering over 14 columns.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

167 - Everything around and within us points to unity of purpose and design, - points to God. Yet there are foolish persons (unrighteous - those who deliberately use the choice given them to go wrong). They think something else is equal to God. Perhaps they even do lip service to God. If only the unrighteous could see the consequences, they would see the terrible Penalty, and that all Power is in God's hands, not in that of any one else. Who are these others who are used as fetishes by the misguided? It may be: (1) creatures of their own imagination, or of their faculties misused; the idea lying behind Idols is akin to this, for no intelligent idol-worshipper owns to worshipping stocks and stones; or (2) good leaders whose names have been misused out of perversity to erect them to a position of equality with God; or (3) Powers of evil that deliberately mislead. When it comes to the inevitable consequences of blasphemy and the rejection of

God, the eyes of all are opened and these false and artificial relations dissolve. The idea which was created into a fetish disowns its follower, i.e. is seen to have no reasonable basis in the life of the follower, and the follower is forced to renounce it as false. The good ones would take an unholy delight in exposing the facts. The Reality is now irresistible but alas! at what cost?

168 - Our deeds are irrevocable and we must pass through the Fire of repentance and regrets.

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

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

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

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

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

174 - For prohibited foods, cf. also Q. v. 4-5; vi. 121, 138-146; etc. The teachers of Fiqh (Religious Law) work out the details with great elaboration. My purpose is to present general principles, not technical details. Carrion or dead meat and blood as articles of food would obviously cause disgust to any refined person. So would swine's flesh where the swine live on offal. Where swine are fed artificially on clean food, the objections remain: (1) that they are filthy animals in other respects, and the flesh of filthy animals taken as food affects the eater; (2) that swine's flesh has more fat than muscle-building material; and (3) that it is more liable to disease than other kinds of meat; e.g., trichinosis, characterised by hair-like worms in the muscular tissue. As to food dedicated to idols or false gods, it is obviously unseemly for the Children of Unity to partake of it.

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

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

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

178 - Faith is not merely a matter of words. We must realise the presence and goodness of God. When we do so, the scales fall from our eyes: all the falsities and fleeting nature of the Present cease to enslave us,

for we see the Last Day as if it were today. We also see God's working in His world and in us; His Powers (angels), His Messengers and His Message are no longer remote from us, but come within our experience.

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

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

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

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

183 - The jurists have carefully laid down that the law of qisas refers to murder only. Qisas is not

applicable to manslaughter, due to a mistake or an accident. There, there would be no capital punishment.

184 - The brother: the term is perfectly general; all men are brothers in Islam. In this, and in all questions of inheritance, females have similar rights to males, and therefore the masculine gender imports both sexes. Here we are considering the rights of the heirs in the light of the larger brotherhood. In ii. 178-79 we have the rights of the heirs to life (as it were): in ii. 180-82 we proceed to the heirs to property.

185 - The demand should be such as can be met by the party concerned, i.e., within his means, and reasonable according to justice and good conscience. For example, a demand could not be made affecting the honour of a woman or a man. The whole penalty can be remitted if the aggrieved party agrees, out of brotherly love. In meeting that demand the culprit or his friends should equally be generous and recognise the good-will of the other side. There should be no subterfuges, no bribes, no unseemly by-play: otherwise the whole intention of mercy and peace is lost.

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

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

188 - As it was prescribed: this does not mean that the Muslim fast is like the other fasts previously observed, in the number of days, in the time or manner of the fast, or in other incidents; it only means that

the principle of self-denial by fasting is not a new one.

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

190 - Illness and journey must not be interpreted in an elastic sense: they must be such as to cause real pain or suffering if the fast were observed. For journeys, a minimum standard of three marches is prescribed by some Commentators: others make it more precise by naming a distance of 16 farsakhs, equivalent to 48 miles. A journey of 8 or 9 miles on foot is more tiring than a similar one by bullock cart. There are various degrees of fatigue in riding a given distance on horseback or by camel or in a comfortable train or by motor car or by steamer, aeroplane, or airship. In my opinion the standard must depend on the means of locomotion and on the relative resources of the traveller. It is better to determine it in each case according to circumstances.

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

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

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

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

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

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

197 - Those in touch with Nature know the beautiful effects of early dawn. First appear thin white indefinable streaks of light in the east; then a dark zone supervenes; followed by a beautiful pinkish white zone clearly defined from the dark. This is the true dawn; after that the fast begins.

198 - Till the night appears: From the actual practice of the Holy Apostle, this is rightly interpreted to mean: "Till sunset."

199 - Retreat to the Mosques by night after the fast is broken is specially recommended towards the end of Ramadham, so that all carnal temptations may be avoided.

200 - I construe these limits as applying to the whole of the regulations about fasts.

201 - Besides the three primal physical needs of man, which are apt to make him greedy, there is a fourth greed in society, the greed of wealth and property. The purpose of fasts is not completed until this fourth greed is also restrained. Ordinarily honest men are content if they refrain from robbery, theft, or embezzlement. Two more subtle forms of the greed are mentioned here. One is where one uses one's

own property for corrupting others - judges or those in authority - so as to obtain some material gain even under the cover and protection of the law. The words translated "other people's property" may also mean "public property". A still more subtle form is where we use our own property or property under our own control - "among yourselves" in the Text - for vain or frivolous uses. Under the Islamic standard this is also greed. Property carries with it its own responsibilities. If we fail to understand or fulfil them, we have not learnt the full lesson of self-denial by fasts.

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

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

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

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

206 - Suppress faith: in the narrower as well as the larger sense. If they want forcibly to prevent you from

exercising your sacred rites, they have declared war on your religion, and it would be cowardice to ignore the challenge or to fail in rooting out the tyranny.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

215 - For residents in Mecca the question does not arise. They are there every day, and there is no question of umra for them.

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

217 - The months well known: the months of Shawwal, Zul-qa'da, and Zul-hijja (up to the 10th or the 13th) are set apart for the rites of Hajj. That is to say, the first rites may begin as early as the beginning of

Shawwal, with a definite approach to Mecca, but the chief rites are concentrated on the first ten days of Zul-hijja, and specially on the 8th, 9th and 10th of that month, when the concourse of pilgrims reaches its height. The chief rites may be briefly enumerated: (1) the wearing of the pilgrim garment (ihram) from certain points definitely fixed on all the roads to Mecca; after this the pilgrimage prohibitions come into operation and the pilgrim is dedicated to worship and prayer and the denial of vanities: (2) the going round the Ka'ba seven times (tawaf), typifying activity, with the kissing of the little Black Stone built into the wall, the symbol of concentration in the love of God; (3) After a short prayer at the Station of Abraham (Q. ii. 125), the pilgrim goes to the hills Safa and Marwa (Q. ii. 158), the symbols of patience and perseverance; (4) the great Sermon (Khutba) on the 7th of Zul-hijja, when the whole assembly listens to an exposition of the meaning of Hajj; (5) the visit on the eighth, of the whole body of pilgrims to the Valley of Mina (about six miles north of Mecca), where the pilgrims halt and stay the night, proceeding on the ninth to the plain and hill of Arafat, about five miles further north, which commemorates the reunion of Adam and Eve after their wanderings, and is also called the Mount of Mercy; (6) the tenth day, the Id Day, the day of Sacrifice, when the sacrifice is offered in the Valley of Mina, and the symbolic ceremony of casting seven stones at the Evil One is performed on the first occasion; it is continued on subsequent days; both rites are connected with the story of Abraham; this is the Id-ul-Adhha; note that the ceremony is symbolically connected with the rejection of evil in thought, word, and deed. This closes the Pilgrimage, but a stay of two or three days after this is recommended, and this is called Tashriq.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

235 - Three questions arise in charity: (1) What shall we give? (2) to whom shall we give? and (3) how shall we give? The answer is here. Give anything that is good, useful, helpful, valuable. It may be property or money; it may be a helping hand; it may be advice; it may be a kind word; "whatever ye do that is good" is charity. On the other hand, if you throw away what is useless, there is no charity in it. Or if you give something with a harmful intent, e.g., a sword to a madman, or a drug or sweets or even money to someone whom you want to entrap or corrupt, it is no charity but a gift of damnation. To whom should you give? It may be tempting to earn the world's praise by a gift that will be talked about, but are you meeting the needs of those who have the first claim on you? If you are not, you are like a person who defrauds creditors: it is no charity. Every gift is judged by its unselfish character: the degree of need or claim is a factor which you should consider; if you disregard it, there is something selfish behind it. How should it be given? As in the sight of God; thus shuts out all pretence, show, and insincerity.

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

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

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

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

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

241 - Gambling: maisir: literally, a means of getting something too easily, getting a profit without working for it; hence gambling. That is the principle on which gambling is prohibited. The form most familiar to the Arabs was gambling by casting lots by means of arrows, on the principle of a lottery: the arrows were marked, and served the same purpose as a modern lottery ticket. Something e.g., the carcase of a slaughtered animal, was divided into unequal parts. The marked arrows were drawn from a bag. Some were blank and those who drew them got nothing. Others indicated prizes, which were big or small. Whether you got a big share or a small share, or nothing, depended on pure luck, unless that was fraud also on the part of some persons concerned. The principle on which the objection is based is: that, even if there is no fraud, you gain what you have not earned, or lose on a mere chance. Dice and wagering are rightly held to be within the definition of gambling. But insurance is not gambling, when conducted on business principles. Here the basis for calculation is statistics on a large scale, from which mere chance is eliminated. The insurers themselves pay premia in proportion to risks, exactly and statistically calculated.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

act of charity.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

268 - A definite contract of remarriage for the woman during her period of 'Iddat of widowhood is forbidden as obviously unseemly, as also any secrecy in such matters. It would bind the woman at a time when she is not fitted to exercise her fullest judgment. But circumstances may arise when an offer (open for future consideration but not immediately decided) may be to her interests, and this is permissible. In mystic interpretation the cherishing of love in one's heart without outward show or reward is the true test of sincerity and devotion.

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

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

271 - The Middle Prayer: *Salutul-wusta*: may be translated "the best or the most excellent prayer." Authorities differ as to the exact meaning of this phrase. The weight of authorities seems to be in favour of interpreting this as the 'Asr prayer in the middle of the afternoon. This is apt to be most neglected, and yet this is the most necessary, to remind us of God in the midst of our worldly affairs. There is special Sura, entitled 'Asr, of which the mystic meaning is appropriately dealt with under that Sura.

272 - Verses 238-39 are parenthetical, introducing the subject of prayer in danger. This is more fully dealt with in iv. 101-03.

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

274 - We now return to the subject of Jihad, which we left at n. 214-216. We are to be under no illusion about it. If we are not prepared to fight for our faith, with our lives and all our resources, both our lives and

our resources will be wiped out by our enemies. As to life, God gave it, and a coward is not likely to save it. It has happened again and again in history that men who tamely submitted to be driven from their homes although they were more numerous than their enemies had the sentence of death pronounced on them for their cowardice, and they deserved it. But God gives further and further chances in His mercy. This is a lesson to every generation. The Commentators differ as to the exact episode referred to, but the wording is perfectly general, and so is the lesson to be learnt from it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

281 - Ark of the Covenant: Tabut: a chest of acacia wood covered and lined with pure gold, about 6ft x 3ft x 3ft. See Exod xxv. 10-22. It was to contain the "testimony of God", or the Ten Commandments engraved on stone, with relics of Moses and Aaron. Its Gold lid was to be the "Mercy Seat" with two cherubims of beaten gold, with wings outstretched. This was a sacred possession to Israel. It was lost to the enemy in the early part of Samuel's ministry; see n. 278 to ii. 246; when it came back, it remained in a village for twenty years and was apparently taken to the capital when kingship was instituted. It thus became a symbol of unity and authority.

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

283 - Carried by angels: these words refer to the Tabut or Ark, the cherubims with outstretched wings on the lid may well be supposed to carry the security or peace which the Ark symbolised.

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

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

286 - Note how the whole story is compressed into a few words as regards narration, but its spiritual lessons are dwelt upon from many points of view. The Old Testament is mainly interested in the narrative, which is full of detail, but says little about the universal truths of which every true story is a parable. The Qur-an assumes the story, but tells the parable.

287 - David was not only a shepherd, a warrior, a king, a wise man, and a prophet, but was also endowed with the gifts of poetry and music. His Psalms (sabar) are still extant.

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

290 - Moses: see note above.

291 - There is a two-fold sense: they were raised to high posts of honour, and they rose by degrees. I take the reference to be to David.

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

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

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

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

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

297 - After we realise that His life is absolute Life. His Being is absolute Being, while others are contingent and evanescent, our ideas of heaven and earth vanish like shadows. What is behind that shadow is He. Such reality as our heavens and our earth possess is a reflection of His absolute Reality. The pantheist

places the wrong accent when he says that everything is He. The truth is better expressed when we say that everything is His. How then can any creatures stand before Him as of right, and claim to intercede for a fellow-creature? In the first place both are His, and He cares as much for one as for the other. In the second place, they are both dependent on His will and command. But He in His Wisdom and Plan may grade his creatures and give one superiority over another. Then by His will and permission such a one may intercede or help according to the laws and duties laid on him. God's knowledge is absolute, and is not conditioned by Time or Space. To us, His creatures, these conditions always apply. His knowledge and our knowledge are therefore in different categories, and our knowledge only gets some reflection of Reality when it accords with His Will and Plan.

298 - Throne; seat, power, knowledge, symbol of authority. In our thoughts we exhaust everything when we say "the heavens and the earth". Well, then in everything is the working of God's power, and will, and authority. Everything of course includes spiritual things as well as things of sense. Cf. Wordsworth's fine outburst in "Tintern Abbey": "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, And the round ocean and the living air, And in the blue sky, and in the mind of man: A motion and a spirit that impels all thinking things, all objects of all thought, And rolls through all things."

300 - Compulsion is incompatible with religion; because 1) religion depends upon faith and will, and these would be meaningless if induced by force; 2) Truth and Error have been so clearly shown up by the mercy of God that there should be no doubt in the minds of any persons of goodwill as to the fundamentals of faith; 3) God's protection is continuous and His Plan is always to lead us from the depths of darkness into the clearest light.

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

302 - The three verses 258-260 have been the subject of much controversy as to the exact meaning to be attached to the incidents and the precise persons alluded to, whose names are not mentioned. M.M.A's learned notes give some indication of the points at issue. In such matters, where the Qur-an has given no names and the Holy Apostle has himself given no indication, it seems to me useless to speculate, and still worse to put forward positive opinions. In questions of learning, speculations are often interesting. But it seems to me that the meaning of the Qur-an is so wide and universal that we are in danger of missing the real and eternal meaning if we go on disputing about minor points. All three incidents are such as may happen again and again in any prophet's lifetime, and be seen in impersonal vision at any time. Here they are connected with Mustafa's vision as shown by the opening words of verse 258.

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

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

305 - A man is in despair when he sees the destruction of a whole people, city, or civilization. But God can cause resurrection, as He has done many times in history, and as He will do at the final Resurrection. Time is nothing before God. The doubter thinks that he has been dead or "tarried thus" a day or less when the period has been a century. On the other hand, the food and drink which he left behind is intact, and as fresh as it was when he left it. But the donkey is not only dead, but nothing but bones is left of it. And before the man's eyes, the bones are reunited, clothed with flesh and blood, and restored to life. Moral: (1) Time is nothing to God; (2) It affects different things in different ways; (3) The keys of life and death are in God's hands; (4) Man's power is nothing; his faith should be in God.

306 - Verse 258, we saw, illustrated by God's power over Life and Death, contrasted with man's vain boasts or imaginings. Verse 259 illustrated how Time is immaterial to God's working; things, individuals and nations are subject to laws of life and death, which are under God's complete control, however much we may be misled by appearances. Now in Verse 200 we are shown the power of wisdom and love: if man can tame birds so that they know him and fly to him, how much more will God's creatures obey His call at the Resurrection?

307 - Abraham had complete faith in God's power, but he wanted, with God's permission, to give an

explanation of that faith to his own heart and mind. Where I have translated "satisfy my own understanding", the literal translation would be "satisfy my own heart".

308 - A portion of them: Juz-an. The received Commentators understand this to mean that the birds were to be cut up and pieces of them were to be put on the hills. The cutting up or killing is not mentioned, but they say that it is implied by an ellipsis, as the question is how God gives life to the dead. Of the modern Muslim Commentators, M.P. is non-committal, but H.G.S. and M.M.A. understand that the birds were not killed, but that a "portion" here means a unit, single birds were placed on the hills, and they flew to the one who tamed them. This last view commends itself to me, as the cutting up of the birds to pieces is nowhere mentioned, unless we understand the word for "Taming" in an unusual and almost impossible sense.

309 - A very high standard is set for charity. (1) It must be in the way of God. (2) It must expect no reward in this world. (3) It must not be followed by references or reminders to the act of charity. (4) Still less should any annoyance or injury be caused to the recipient; e.g. by boasting that the giver relieved the person in the hour of need. Indeed, the kindness and the spirit which turns a blind eye to other people's faults or short-comings is the essence of charity: these things are better than charity if charity is spoilt by tricks that do harm. At the same time, while no reward is to be expected, there is abundant reward from God - material, moral, and spiritual - according to His own good pleasure and plan. If we spend in the way of God, it is not as if God was in need of our charity. On the contrary our short-comings are so great that we require His utmost forbearance before any good that we can do can merit His praise or reward. Our motives are so mixed that our best may really be very poor if judged by a very strict standard.

310 - False charity, "to be seen of men", is really no charity. It is worse, for it betokens a disbelief in God and the Hereafter. "God seeth well whatever ye do" (ii. 265). It is compared to a hard barren rock on which by chance has fallen a little soil. Good rain, which renders fertile soil more fruitful, washes away the little soil which this rock had, and exposes its nakedness. What good can hypocrites derive even from the little wealth they may have amassed?

311 - True charity is like a field with good soil on a high situation. It catches good showers of rain, the moisture penetrates the soil, and yet its elevated situation keeps it well-drained, and healthy favorable conditions increase its output enormously. But supposing even that the rain is not abundant, it catches dew and makes the most of any little moisture it can get, and that is sufficient for it. So a man of true charity is spiritually healthy; he is best suited to attract the bounties of God, which he does not hoard selfishly but circulates freely. In lean times he still produces good works, and is content with what he has. He looks to God's pleasure and the strengthening of his own soul.

312 - The truly spiritual nature of charity having been explained in three parables (ii. 261, 264, 265) a fourth parable is now added, explaining its bearing on the whole of our life. Suppose we had a beautiful garden well-watered and fertile, with delightful views of streams, and a haven of rest for mind and body; suppose old age were creeping in on us, and our children were either too young to look after themselves or too feeble in health; how should we feel if a sudden whirlwind came with lightning or fire in its train, and burnt it up; thus blasting the whole of our hopes for the present and for the future, and destroying the result of all our labor and savings in the past? Well, this life of ours is a probation. We may work hard, we may save, we may have good luck. We may make ourselves a goodly pleasure, and have ample means of support for ourselves and our children. A great whirlwind charged with lightning and fire comes and burns up the whole show. We are too old to begin again: our children are too young or feeble to help us to repair the mischief. Our chance is lost, because we did not provide against such a contingency. The whirlwind is the "wrath to come"; the provision against it is a life of true charity and righteousness, which is the only source of true and lasting happiness in this world and the next. Without it we are subject to all the vicissitudes of this uncertain life. We may even spoil our so-called "charity" by insisting on the obligation which others owe to us or by doing some harm, because our motives are not pure.

313 - Not strong (enough): dhu'afa-u: literally weak, decrepit, infirm, possibly referring to both health and will or character.

314 - According to the English proverb "Charity covers a multitude of sins". Such a sentiment is strongly disapproved in Islam. Charity has value only if (1) something good and valuable is given, (2) which has been honorably earned or acquired by the giver, or (3) which is produced in nature and can be referred to as a bounty of God. (1) May include such things as are of use and value to others though they may be of less use to us or superfluous to us on account of our having acquired something more suitable for our station in life; for example, discarded clothes, or an old horse or a used motor car; but if the horse is vicious, or the car engine so far gone that it is dangerous to use, then the gift is worse than useless; it is positively harmful and the giver is a wrong-doer. (2) Applies to fraudulent company-promoters, who earn great credit by giving away charity in some of their ill-gotten gains, or to robbers (even if they call themselves by high-sounding names) who "rob peter to pay Paul". Islam will have nothing to do with tainted property. Its economic code requires that every gain should be honest and honorable. Even "charity" would not cover or destroy the taint. (3) Lays down a test in cases of a doubtful gain. Can we refer to it as a gift of God? Obviously the produce of honest labour or agriculture can be so referred to. In modern commerce and speculation there is much of quite the contrary character, and charity will not cover the taint. Some kind of art, skill, or talent are God-given: it is the highest kind of charity to teach them or share their product. Others are the contrary: they are bad or tainted. In the same way some professions or services may be tainted, if these tend to do moral harm.

315 - The preceding note tries to indicate some of the things which are bad or tainted. We should not even think of acquiring them for ourselves, soothing our conscience by the salve that we shall practice charity out of them.

316 - Closed eyes imply disgust or connivance because of some feature which we would not openly acknowledge.

317 - To dedicate tainted things to God is a dishonor to God, Who is independent of all wants, and Who is worthy of all honor and praise.

318 - Good and evil draw us opposite ways and by opposite motives, and the contrast is well marked out in charity. When we think of doing some real act of kindness or charity, we are assailed with doubts and fear of impoverishment; but Evil supports any tendency to selfishness, greed, or even to extravagant expenditure for show, or self-indulgence, or unseemly appetites. On the other hand, God draws us on to all that is kind and good, for that way lies the forgiveness of our sins, and greater real prosperity and satisfaction. No kind or generous act ever ruined anyone. It is false generosity that is sometimes shown as leading to ruin. As God knows all our motives and cares for all, and has everything in His power, it is obvious which course a wise man will choose. But wisdom is rare, and it is only wisdom that can appreciate true well-being and distinguish it from the false appearance of well-being.

319 - It is better to seek no publicity in charity. But if it is known there is no harm. If it is for public purposes, it must necessarily be known, and a pedantic show of concealment may itself be a fault. The harm of publicity lies in motives of ostentation. We can better reach the really deserving poor by quietly seeking for them. The spiritual benefit enures to our own souls, provided our motives are pure, and we are really seeking the good pleasure of God.

320 - In connection with charity this means that we must relieve those really in need, whether they are good or bad, on the right path or not, Muslims or otherwise. It is not for us to judge in these matters. God will give light according to His wisdom. Incidentally it adds a further meaning to the command, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (ii 256). For compulsion may not only be by force, but by economic necessity. In matters of religion we must not even compel by a bribe of charity. The chief motive in charity should be God's pleasure and our own spiritual good. This was addressed in the first instance to Mustafa in Medina, but it is of universal application.

321 - See note to ii 112. Wajh means literally: face, countenance; hence, favour, glory, Self, Presence.

322 - Indiscriminate acts of so-called charity are condemned as they may do more harm than good (see ii 262). The real beneficiaries of charity are here indicated. They must be in want. And the want must be due to some honorable cause. For example, they may be doing some unpaid service, such as teaching, or acquiring knowledge or skill, or be in exile for their faith, or in other ways be prevented from seeking employment or doing strenuous work. "God's cause" must not be narrowly interpreted. All sincere and real service to humanity comes within the definition. Such men do not beg from door to door. It is the duty of those who are well-to-do, or of the Public Purse, to find them out.

323 - We recapitulate the beauty of charity (i.e. unselfish giving of one's self or one's goods) before we come to its opposite, i.e. the selfish grasping greed of usury against those in need or distress. Charity instead of impoverishing you will enrich you; you will have more happiness and less fear. Contrast it with what follows, - the degradation of the grasping usurer.

324 - Usury is condemned and prohibited in the strongest possible terms. There can be no question about the prohibition. When we come to the definition of Usury there is room for difference of opinion. Hadhrat 'Umar, according to Ibn Kathir, felt some difficulty in the matter, as the Apostle left this world before the details of the question were settled. This was one of the three questions on which he wished he had more light from the Prophet. Our 'Ulama, ancient and modern, have worked out a great body of literature on Usury, based mainly on economic conditions as they existed at the rise of Islam.

325 - An apt simile: whereas legitimate trade or industry increases the prosperity and stability of men and nations, a dependence on Usury would merely encourage a race of idlers, cruel blood-suckers, and worthless fellows who do not know their own good and are therefore akin to madmen.

326 - Owing to the fact that interest occupies a central position in modern economic life, and specially since interest is the very life blood of the existing financial institutions, a number of Muslims have been inclined to interpret it in a manner which is radically different from the understanding of Muslim scholars throughout the last fourteen centuries and is also sharply in conflict with the categorical statements of the Prophet (peace be on him). According to Islamic teachings any excess on the capital is riba (interest). Islam accepts no distinction, in so far as prohibition is concerned, between reasonable and exorbitant rates of interest, and thus what came to be regarded as the difference between usury and interest; nor between returns on bonus for consumption and those for production purposes and so on.

327 - The contrast between charity and unlawful grasping of wealth began at ii. 274, where this phrase occurs as a theme. Here the theme finishes with the same phrase. The following four verses refer to further concessions on behalf of debtors, as creditors are asked to (a) give up even claims arising out of the past on account of usury, and (b) give time for payment of capital if necessary, or (c) to write off the debt altogether as an act of charity.

328 - This is not war for opinions, but an ultimatum of war for the liberation of debtors unjustly dealt with and oppressed.

329 - The first part of the verse deals with transactions involving future payment or future consideration, and the second part with transactions in which payment and delivery are made on the spot. Examples of the former are if goods are bought now and payment is promised at a fixed time and place in the future, or if cash is paid now and delivery is contracted for at a fixed time and place in the future. In such cases a written document is recommended, but it is held that the words later on in this verse, that it is "juster . . . more suitable as evidence, and more convenient to prevent doubts", etc. imply that it is not obligatory in law. Examples of the latter kind - cash payment and delivery on the spot - require no evidence in writing, but apparently oral witnesses to such transactions are recommended.

330 - The scribe in such matters assumes a fiduciary capacity: he should therefore remember to act as in the presence of God, with full justice to both parties. The art of writing he should look upon as a gift from God, and he should use it as in His service. In an illiterate population the scribe's position is still more responsible.

331 - Possibly the person "mentally deficient, or weak, or unable to dictate", may also be incapable of making a valid contract, and the whole duty would be on his guardian, who again must act in perfect good faith, not only protecting but vigilantly promoting the interests of his ward.

332 - It is desirable that the men (or women) who are chosen as witness should be from the circle to which the parties belong, as they would best be able to understand the transaction, and be most easily available if their evidence is required in future.

333 - Commercial morality is here taught on the highest plane and yet in the most practical manner, both as regards the bargains to be made, the evidence to be provided, the doubts to be avoided, and the duties and rights of scribes and witnesses. Probity even in worldly matters is to be, not a mere matter of convenience or policy, but a matter of conscience and religious duty. Even our every-day transactions are to be carried out as in the presence of God.

334 - A pledge or security stands on its own independent footing, though it is a very convenient form of closing the bargain where the parties cannot trust each other, and cannot get a written agreement with proper witnesses.

335 - The law of Deposit implies great trust in the Depositary on the part of the Depositor. The Depositary becomes a trustee, and the doctrine of Trust can be further developed on that basis. The trustee's duty is to guard the interests of the person on whose behalf he holds the trust and to render back the property and accounts when required according to the terms of the trust. This duty again is linked to the sanction of Religion, which requires a higher standard than Law.

336 - It sometimes happens that if some inconvenient piece of evidence is destroyed or concealed, we gain a great advantage materially. We are warned not to yield to such a temptation. The concealment of evidence has a serious effect on our own moral and spiritual life, for it taints the very source of higher life, as typified by the heart. The heart is also the seat of our secrets. We are told that the sin will reach our most secret being, though the sin may not be visible or open to the world. Further, the heart is in the seat of our affections, and false dealing taints all our affections.

337 - This Sura started with the question of Faith (ii 3-4), showed us various aspects of Faith and the denial of Faith, gave us ordinances for the new People of Islam as a community, and now rounds off the argument again with a confession of Faith and of its practical manifestation in conduct ("we hear and we obey"), and closes on a note of humility, so that we may confess our sins, ask for forgiveness, and pray for God's help and guidance.

338 - Cf ii 136 and ii 253, n. 289. It is not for us to make any distinction between one and another of God's apostles: we must honor them all equally, though we know that God in His wisdom sent them with different kinds of mission and gave them different degrees of rank.

339 - When our faith and conduct are sincere, we realize how far from perfection we are, and we humbly pray to God for the forgiveness of our sins. We feel that God imposes no burden on us that we cannot bear, and with this realization in our hearts and in the confession of our lips, we go to Him and ask for His help and guidance.

340 - Cf. ii. 233. In that verse the burden was in terms of material wealth: here it is in terms of spiritual duty. Assured by God that He will accept from each soul just such duty as it has the ability to offer, we pray further on for the fulfilment of that promise.

341 - We must not be arrogant, and think that because God has granted us His favor and mercy we have no need to exert ourselves, or that we are ourselves superior to those before us. On the contrary, knowing how much they failed, we pray that our burdens should be lightened, and we confess our realization that we have all the greater need for God's mercy and forgiveness. And so we end the whole argument of the Sura with a prayer for God's help, not in our own selfish ends, but in our resolve to uphold God's truth against all Unbelief.

342 - See note to ii. 1.

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