INTRODUCTION TO SÚRAT AL-Baqarah, 2

As the Opening Súra sums up in seven beautiful verses the essence of the Qurán, so this Súra sums up in 286 verses the whole teaching of the Qurán. It is a closely reasoned argument.

Summary.—It begins (verses 1-29) by classifying men into three broad categories, depending on how they receive Allah’s message.

This leads to the story of the creation of man, the high destiny intended for him, his fall, and the hope held out to him (ii. 30-39).

Israel’s story is then told according to their own records and traditions—what privileges they received and how they abused them (ii. 40-86), thus illustrating again as by a parable the general story of man.

In particular, reference is made to Moses and Jesus and their struggles with an unruly people: how the people of the Book played false with their own lights and in their pride rejected Muḥammad, who came in the true line of Prophets (ii. 87-121).

They falsely laid claim to the virtues of Father Abraham: he was indeed a righteous Imam, but he was the progenitor of Ismā‘īl’s line (Arabs) as well as of Israel’s line, and he with Ismā‘īl built the Kā‘ba (the House of Allah in Makkah) and purified it, thus establishing a common religion, of which Islam is the universal exponent (ii. 122-141).

The Kā‘ba was now to be the centre of universal worship and the symbol of Islamic unity (ii. 142-167).

The Islamic Ummat (brotherhood) having thus been established with its definite centre and symbol, ordinances are laid down for the social life of the community, with the proviso (ii. 177) that righteousness does not consist in formalities, but in faith, kindness, prayer, charity, probity, and patience under suffering. The ordinances relate to food and drink, bequests, fasts, Jihād, wine and gambling, treatment of orphans and women, etc. (ii. 168-242).

Lest the subject of Jihād should be misunderstood, it is taken up again in the story of Saul, Goliath and David, in contrast to the story of Jesus (ii. 243-253).

And so the lesson is enforced that true virtue lies in practical deeds of manliness, kindness, and good faith (ii. 254-283), and Allah’s nature is called to mind in the sublime Ayat-ul-Kursi, the Verse of the Throne (ii. 255).

The Súra ends with an exhortation to Faith, Obedience, a sense of Personal

24-A. By the expression “Allah’s nature” it is meant: Allah’s attributes.
Responsibility, and Prayer (ii. 284-286).

This is the longest Sūra of the Qurān, and in it occurs the longest verse (ii. 282). The name of the Sūra is from the Parable of the Heifer in ii. 67-71, which illustrates the insufficiency of carping obedience. When faith is lost, people put off obedience with various excuses: even when at last they obey in the letter, they fail in the spirit, which means that they get fossilized, and their self-sufficiency prevents them from seeing that spiritually they are not alive but dead. For life is movement, activity, striving, fighting, against baser things. And this is the burden of the Sūra.

This is in the main an early Madinah Sūra.
Al-Baqarah, or the Heifer.

In the name of Allah, Most gracious,
Most Merciful.

1. A. L. M.\textsuperscript{25}

2. This is the Book;
In it is guidance sure, without
doubt.

To those who fear\textsuperscript{26} Allah;

3. Who believe in the Unseen,
Are steadfast in prayer,
And spend out of what we
Have provided for them;\textsuperscript{27}

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.\textsuperscript{28}

\textsuperscript{25} These are abbreviated letters, the \textit{Muqatta'\textsuperscript{a}t}, on which a general discussion will be found in Appendix I (to be printed at the end of this Sûra).

The particular letters, A.L.M., are found prefixed to this Sûra, and Sûras iii, xxix, xxx, xxxi and xxxii (six in all).

Much has been written about the meaning of these letters, but most of it is pure
conjecture.

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{Taqw\textsuperscript{a}}

and the verbs and nouns connected with the root, signify: (1) the fear
of Allah, 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 xlvii. 17; and lxxiv. 56, n. 5808.

\textsuperscript{27} All bounties proceed from Allah. They may be physical gifts, \textit{e.g.} food, clothing,
houses, gardens, wealth, etc. or intangible gifts, \textit{e.g.}, influence, power, birth and the
opportunities flowing from it, health, talents, etc. or spiritual gifts, \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{28} Righteousness comes from a secure faith, from sincere devotion to Allah, and
from unselfish service to Man.
5. They are on (true guidance),
From their Lord, and it is
These who will prosper. 29

6. As to those who reject Faith. 30
It is the same to them
Whether thou warn them
Or do not warn them;
They will not believe.

7. Allah hath set a seal 31
On their hearts and on their
hearing.
And on their eyes is a veil;
Great is the chastisement
They (incur). 32

SECTION 2.

8. Of the people there are some who say: 33
“We believe in Allah and the Last
day:”
But they do not (really) believe.

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, kafir, and derivative forms of the word, imply a deliberate rejection of Faith as opposed to a mistaken idea of Allah or faith, which is not inconsistent with an earnest desire to see the truth. Where there is such desire, the grace and mercy of Allah gives guidance. But that guidance is not efficacious when it is deliberately rejected. 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 Allah. 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 Allah.

32. The penalty here is the opposite of the prosperity referred to in ii. 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.
9. Fain would they deceive
    Allah and those who believe,
    But they only deceive themselves,
    And realize (it) not!

10. In their hearts is a disease;
    And Allah has increased their
disease.\(^{34}\)
    And grievous is the chastisement
    They (incur),
    Because they lied (to themselves).

11. When it is said to them:
    "Make not mischief on the earth."
    They say: "We are only ones
    That put things right."

12. Of a surety, they are the ones
    Who make mischief,
    But they realize (it) not.\(^{35}\)

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.\(^{36}\)

14. When they meet those who believe.\(^{37}\)

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\(^{34}\) The insincere man who thinks he can get the best of both worlds by compromising with good and evil only increases 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 Allah.

\(^{37}\) 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.
They say: “We believe;”
But when they are alone
With their evil ones.
They say: “We are really with you
We (were) only jesting.”

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).

16. These are they who have bartered
Guidance for error:
But their traffic is profitless,
And they have lost true direction.

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.

18. Deaf, dumb, and blind,
They will not return (to the path).

19. Or (another similitude)
Is that of a rain-laden cloud

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 =
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!

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.

SECTION 3.

21. O ye people!
Worship your Guardian Lord,
Who created you
And those who came before you
That ye may become righteous.40

= nearly blinds them. They are in mortal fear, but Allah 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 Allah!

40. For Taqwā see ii. 2 n. 26. I connect this dependent clause with “worship” 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 Allah. Who is your Creator and Guardian, your faith produces works of righteousness. It is a chance given you: will you take it? If you do, your whole nature will be transformed.
22. Who has made the earth your couch,
And the heavens 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).

23. And if ye are in doubt
As to what We have revealed From time to time to Our servant Then produce a Sûra Like thereunto;
And call your witnesses or helpers (If there are any) besides Allah, If ye are truthful.42

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

25. But give glad tidings To those who believe And work righteousness, That their portion is Gardens,

41. Further proofs of Allah’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 Allah. 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 it is from Allah? Here is a concrete test. The Teacher of Allah’s Truth has placed before you many Suras. Can you produce one like it? If there is any one besides Allah, 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. According to commentators the “Stones” mentioned in this verse refer to the idols which the polytheists worshipped. Thus, far from coming to the aid of their worshippers, the false gods would be a means of aggravating their torment.
5.2 A.25-26

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
Spouses purified^44;
And they abide therein (for ever).

26. Allah disdains not to use
The similitude of things,
Even of a gnat^45 as well as

^44. 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.

^45. The word gnat, a byword in the Arabic language for the weakest of creatures. In xxix. 41, which was revealed before this Sûra, 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 Allah 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 or 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 Allah’s Signs, and their Penalty is attributed to Allah. 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.

The mention of the Covenant (ii. 27) has a particular and a general signification. The particular one has reference to the Jewish tradition that a Covenant was entered into with “Father Abraham” that in return for Allah’s favours the seed of Abraham would serve Allah faithfully. But as a matter of fact a great part of Abraham’s progeny were in constant spiritual rebellion against Allah, as is testified by their own Prophets and Preachers and by Muhammad Al-Mustafâ. The general signification is that a similar Covenant is entered into by every creature of Allah: for Allah’s loving care, we at least owe him the fullest gratitude and willing obedience. The Sinner, before he darkens his own conscience, knows this, and yet he not only “forsakes the path” but resists the Grace of Allah which comes to save him. That is why his case becomes hopeless. But the loss is his own. He cannot spoil Allah’s design. The good man is glad to retrace his steps from any lapses of which he may have been guilty, and in his case Allah’s Message reclaims him with complete understanding.
Anything above it.
Those who believe know
That it is the 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).

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.

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.

29. It is He Who hath created for you
All things that are on earth;
Then He turned to the heaven

46. In the preceding verses Allah 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?
And made them into seven firmaments.
And of all things
He hath perfect knowledge.

SECTION 4.

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”\(^{47}\)

31. And He taught Adam the names\(^{48}\) Of all things; then He placed them

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47. It would seem that the angels, though holy and pure, and endued with power from Allah, 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 could 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 Allah’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 Allah’s nature, which gives and asks for love. In humility and true devotion to Allah, 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 names of things;” according to commentators means the inner nature and qualities of things, and things here would include feelings. The particular qualities or feelings which were outside the nature of angels were put by Allah into the nature of man. Man was thus able to love and understand love, and thus plan and initiate, as becomes the
Before the angels, and said: “Tell Me The names of these if ye are right.”

32. They said: “Glory to Thee: of knowledge We have none, save what Thou Hast taught us: in truth it is Thou Who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom.”

33. He said: “O Adam! tell them Their names.” When he had told them their names, 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?”

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.

35. And We said: “O Adam! dwell And thy wife in the Garden;”

= 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 Allah 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 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-place.” 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.
36. Then did Satan\(^52\) make them slip From the (Garden), and get them out Of the state (of felicity) in which They had been. And We said: “Get ye down, all (ye people)\(^53\), With enmity between yourselves. On earth will be your dwelling place And your means of livelihood\(^54\)— For a time!”

37. Then learnt Adam from his Lord Certain words\(^55\) and his Lord Turned towards him; for He Is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

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. The word Iblis in the verse 34 above is derived from the root idea of desperateness or rebellion whereas “Satan” conveys the 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. 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.” The Arabic word used for “learn” here implies some effort on his part, to which Allah’s Grace responded.
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.

39. “But those who reject Faith And belie Our Signs, They shall be Companions of the Fire; They shall abide therein.”

SECTION 5.

40. O Children of Israel! call to mind The (special) favour which I bestowed Upon you, and fulfil your Covenant.

The Arabic word for “Repentance” (tauba) means “turning,” and the intensive word (tauwâb) for Allah’s forgiveness (“Oft-Returning” or “Ever-Returning”) is from the same root. For repentance, three things are necessary: the sinner must acknowledge his wrong; he must give it up; and he must resolve to eschew it for the future. Man’s nature is weak, and he may have to return again and again for mercy. So long as he does it sincerely. Allah is Oft-Returning. Most Merciful. For His grace helps out the sinner’s shortcomings.

56. Note the transition from the plural “We” at the beginning of the verse to the singular “Me” later in the same verse. Allah 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 51. etc.

In spite of Man’s fall, and in consequence of it, assurance of guidance is given. In case man follows the guidance he is free from any fear for the present or the future, and any grief or sorrow for the past. The soul thus freed grows nearer to Allah.

57. As their rejection of faith was deliberate and definite, so the consequences must be a punishment 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.
40. And believe in what I reveal,\textsuperscript{59} 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.

41. And cover not Truth With falsehood, nor conceal The Truth when ye know (what it is).

42. And be steadfast in prayer: Give Zakat, And bow down your heads\textsuperscript{60} With those who bow down (in worship).

43. Do ye enjoin right conduct On the people, and forget (To practise it) yourselves, And yet ye study the Scripture? Will ye not understand?

44. Nay, seek (Allah's) help With patient perseverance\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{59} You received 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? Allah's Signs are worth more than all your paltry considerations. And the standard of duty and righteousness is to be taken from Allah, and not from priests and customs.

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

\textsuperscript{61} The Arabic word \textit{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.
And prayer:
It is indeed hard, except
To those who are humble.

46. Who bear in mind the certainty
That they are to meet their Lord,
And that they are to return to Him.

SECTION 6.

47. O Children of Israel! call to mind
The (special) favour which I
bestowed
Upon you, and that I preferred
you
To all others.

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 any one be helped
(from outside).

49. And remember, We delivered you
From the people of Pharaoh: they
set you
Hard tasks and chastisement,
slaughtered

62. These words are recapitulated from ii. 40, which introduced a general account of Allah'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 words "إِنْذَكَرْنَا" 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.
Your sons and let your women-folk live;⁶⁴
Therein was a tremendous trial from your Lord.

50. And remember We divided The Sea for you and saved you And drowned Pharaoh's people Within your very sight.⁶⁵

51. And remember We appointed Forty nights for Moses,⁶⁶ And in his absence ye took The calf (for worship), And ye did grievous wrong.

52. Even then We did forgive you,⁶⁷ There was a chance for you To be grateful.

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 Allah to deliver his people, and Allah'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 Allah forgave them. This is the language of the Qur-ān. 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
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.

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 towards you (in forgiveness): For He is Oft-Returning, Most Merciful.

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. 54 below.

68. Allah's revelation, the expression of Allah's Will, is the true standard of right and wrong. It may be in a Book or in Allah'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. Al-Mustafa had both the Books 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 neighbour... and there fell of the people that day 3,000 men."

The word here translated Maker [Bari] has also in it a touch of the root-meaning of "liberator,"—an apt word as referring to the Israelites, who had just been liberated from bondage in Egypt.
55. And remember ye said: 70 “O Moses!
   We shall never believe in thee
   Until we see Allah manifestly,”
   Thereupon thunderbolt
   Seized you.

56. Then We raised you up
   After your death;
   Ye had the chance
   To be grateful.

57. And We gave you the shade of clouds
   And sent down to you
   Manna 71 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 selves

58. And remember We said:
   “Enter this town, 72 and eat

70. We have hitherto had instances from the Jewish traditional Taurât (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 Allah, 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 Allah was therefore death; but those who rejected faith were forgiven, and yet they were ungrateful.

71. Manna = Hebrew, Man-hu: Arabic Mā-huwa? = 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 War witnessed during the Great War of 1914-1918.

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 sacrifices 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 =
SECTION 7.

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.

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.

= a pass-word. In the Arabic text it is “Hittatum” 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 Allah’s sight, and our conduct should be exemplary according to Allah’s word: otherwise our arrogance will draw its own punishment.

These verses 58-59. may be compared with vii. 161-162. There are two verbal differences. Here (ii. 58) we have “enter the town” and in vii. 161 we have “dwell in this town.” Again in ii. 59 here we have “infringed (Our command),” and in vii. 162, we have “transgressed.” The verbal differences make no difference to the sense.

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. xiii. and xiv.). The twelve tribes were derived from the sons of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel (soldier of Allah) after he had wrestled, says Jewish tradition, with Allah (Genesis xxxii. 28). Israel had twelve sons (Gen. xxxv. 22-26), including Levi and Joseph. The descendants of these...
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,74
And ye shall find what ye want!”

= 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 (Num. 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 Allah acting through His Prophet Moses. Cf. also vii. 160.

The gushing of twelve springs from a rock evidently refers to a local tradition well known to Jews and Arabs in Al-Muṣṭafā’s time. Near Horeb close to Mount Sinai, where the Law was given to Moses, is a huge mass of red granite, twelve feet high and about fifty feet in circumference, where European travellers (e.g., Breydenbach in the 15th Century after Christ) saw abundant springs of water twelve in number (see Sale’s notes on this passage). It existed in Al-Muṣṭafā’s time and may still exist to the present day, for anything we know to the contrary. The Jewish tradition would be based on Exod. xvii. 6: “Thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it that the people may drink.”

The story is used as a parable, as is clear from the latter part of the verse. In the desolation and among the rocks of this life people grumble. But they will not be left starving or thirsty of spiritual life. Allah’s Messenger can provide abundant spiritual sustenance even from such unpromising things as the hard rocks of life. And all the nations can be grouped round it, each different, yet each in perfect order and discipline. We are to use with gratitude all spiritual food and drink provided by Allah, and He sometimes provides from unexpected places. We must restrain ourselves from mischief, pride, and every kind of evil, for our higher life is based on our probation on this very earth.

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 Tanwín expressing indefiniteness may mean “any Egypt”, i.e., any country as fertile as Egypt. There is here a subtle reminiscence as well =
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.

SECTION 8.

62. Those who believe (in the Qur'an) and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures) 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 Allah. 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 Arabs. They were scattered all over the earth, and have been a wandering people ever since, because they rejected faith, slew Allah's messengers, and went on transgressing.

The slaying of the Prophets begin with the murder of Abel, who was in the ancestry of Israel. The elder sons of Jacob attempted the murder of Joseph when they dropped him into the well, and if he was afterwards rescued by strangers, their blood-guilt was none the less. In later history they attempted to slay Jesus, in as much as they got the Roman Governor to crucify one in his likeness, and they attempted to take the life of Al-Mustafā.

But the moral goes wider than the Children of Israel. It applies to all nations and all individuals. If they are stiff-necked, if they set a greater value on perishable goods than on freedom and eternal salvation, if they break the law of Allah and resist His grace, their portion must be humiliation and misery in the spiritual world and probably even on this earth if a long view is taken.
And the Christians and the Sabians,76
Any 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.77

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 Subbā). They are also called Sabians and Nasoraeans, or Mandaeans, or Christians of St. John. They claim to be Gnostics, or 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 Yārdu (Jordan) for any river. They live in peace and harmony among their Muslim neighbours. They resemble the Sābi-ūn mentioned in the Qur-ān, but are not probably identical with them.

The pseudo-Sabians of Harrān, who attracted the attention of Khalīfa Māmūn-al Rashīd in 830 A.D. by their long hair and peculiar dress probably adopted the name as it was mentioned in the Qur-ān, in order to claim the privileges of the People of the Book. They were Syrian Star-worshippers with Hellenistic tendencies, like the Jews contemporary with Jesus.

There was another people called the Sabæans, who played an important part in the history of early Arabia, and are known through their inscriptions in an alphabet allied to the Phoenician and the Babylonian. They had a flourishing kingdom in the Yemen tract in South Arabia about 800-700 B.C., though their origin may have been in North Arabia. They worshipped the planets and stars (Moon, Sun, Venus). Probably the Queen of Sheba is connected with them. They succumbed to Abyssinia about 350 A.D. and to Persia about 579 A.D. Their capital was near Ṣan‘ā. They had beautiful stone buildings, in which the pointed arch is noticeable. Cf. v. 69 and n. 779. (See E.B. on Sabæans.)

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 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 Allah. The attitude of Islam is entirely different. Islam existed before the preaching of Muhammad on this earth: the Qur-ān expressly calls Abraham a Muslim (iii. 67). Its teaching (submission to Allah’s will) has been and will be the teaching of Religion for all time and for all peoples.
63. And remember We took
Your Covenant
And We raised above you
The Mount (Sinai)\(^{78}\)
(Saying): “Hold firmly
To what We have given you
And bring (ever) to remembrance
What is therein:
Perchance ye may fear Allah.”

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.

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.”\(^{79}\)

66. So We made it an example
To their own time
And to their posterity,
And a lesson
To those who fear Allah.

67. And remember Moses said
To his people: “Allah commands

78. The Mountain of Sinai (Tūr-u-Sinīn), 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 Māsā). 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.

79. The punishment for breach of the Sabbath under the Mosaic law was death.
“Every one that defileth 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.
That ye sacrifice a heifer."  
They said: "Makest thou  
A laughing-stock of us?"
He said: "Allah save me  
From being an ignorant (fool)!

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!"

69. They said: "Beseech on our behalf  
Thy Lord to make plain to us  
Her colour." He said: "He says:  
A fawn-coloured heifer,  
Pure and rich in tone,  
The admiration of beholders!"

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."

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;  
er 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).
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,
   And they scarcely did it.

SECTION 9.

72. Remember ye slew a man\(^{81}\)
   And fell into a dispute
   Among yourselves as to the crime:
   But Allah was to bring forth
   What ye did hide.

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.

74. Thenceforth were your hearts
   Hardened: they became
   Like a rock and even worse
   In hardness. For among rocks

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.
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

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.

76. Behold! when they meet 83
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)?

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 Allah 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.

83. The immediate argument applies to the Jews of Madinah, 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 Madinah ever entertained the hope that the Jews in their city would as a body welcome Muhammad Al-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...
77. Know they not that Allah
Knoweth what they conceal
And what they reveal?

78. And there are among them\(^8^4\)
Illiterates, who know not the Book,
But (see therein their own) desires,
And they do nothing but conjecture.

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.

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= Jews as, “their brethren”; and there is no question that there was not another Prophet “like unto Moses” until Muḥammad 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 Muḥammad.

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 wherever they can find it,—even as far afield as China, as Muḥammad 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 Allah. 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.
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?”

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).

82. But those who have faith and work righteousness, They are Companions of the Garden: Therein shall they abide (For ever).

SECTION 10.

83. And remember We took a Covenant from the Children of Israel:

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 Allah 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 =
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 Give Zakat,
Then did ye turn back,
Except a few among you,
And ye backslide (even now).

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 were witness.

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 transgression;
And if they come to you
As captives, ye ransom them,
= 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 Madinah by the new-
born Muslim Commonwealth under its Guide and teacher Muhammad. This Covenant is
given in Ibn Hishâm's Sirat-ur-Rasûl. It was entered into in the second year of the Hijra,
and was treacherously broken by the Jews almost immediately afterwards.

89. They fought and slew each other and not only banished those who were
obnoxious to them but intrigued with their enemies. If by any 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.
86. These are the people who buy
The life of this world at the price
Of the Hereafter: their chastisement
Shall not be lightened
Nor shall they be helped.

SECTION II.

87. We gave Moses the Book
And followed him up
With a succession of Messengers;
We gave Jesus the son of Mary
Clear (Signs) and strengthened him
With the holy spirit. Is it
That whenever there comes to you
A Messenger with what ye
Yourselves desire not, ye are
Puffed up with pride?–

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 stage a discussion of the Quranic teaching on these questions. See iii.
62 n. 401.
Some ye called impostors,
And others ye slay!  

88. They say, “Our hearts
Are the wrappings\(^2\) (which
preserve
Allah’s Word: we need no more)”
Nay, Allah’s curse is on them
For their blasphemy.  
Little is it they believe.

91. Notice the sudden transition from the past tense in “some ye called impostors” 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 Allah’s Prophets, 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 Prophet. 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 refer to the actual conditions before Muhammad in Madinah 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 Allah 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 \(Qalifa\) here to be the plural of \(Qalifa\) 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 Allah’s goodness, to be ungrateful, (2) to reject Faith, deny His revelation, (3) to blaspheme, to ascribe some limitation or attribute to Allah 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.
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 refuse to believe in it but the curse of Allah is on those without faith.

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 chastisement of those who reject faith.

91. When it is said to them, "Believe in what Allah...

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 Allah.

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 Allah, 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 Allah's choice? Allah is the Creator and Cherisher of all races and all worlds.
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?”

92. There came to you Moses With clear (Signs); yet Ye worshipped the Calf (Even) after that, and ye Did behave wrongfully.

93. And remember We took Your Covenant and We raised Above you the mount (Sinai): (Saying): “Hold firmly To what We have given you, And hearken (to the Law)” They said: “We hear, And we disobey”. And their hearts

96. Even the race argument is often a 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. [The word *ışrihā* which occurs in the verse seems to suggest, as the noted Tābi’ī Qatādah is reported to have said, that their hearts were saturated with the love for the calf. See Ibn Kathīr, Commentary on the verse ii. 93.
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 judgment-seat of Allah 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."
SECTION 12.

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.—

98. Whoever is an enemy to Allah And His angels and prophets, To Gabriel and Michael,— Lo! Allah is an enemy to those Who reject Faith.

99. We have sent down to thee Manifest Signs (āyāt); And none reject them But those who are perverse.

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.

101. And when there came to them A Messenger from Allah, Confirming what was with them, A party of the People of the Book

101. A party of the Jews in the time of Muhammad ridiculed the Muslim belief that Gabriel brought down revelations to Muhammad Al-Mustafā. Michael was called in their books "the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people": (Daniel, xii. 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, Prophets and Allah Himself; and such unbelief could not win the love of Allah. 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. Muḥammad 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-ān were in themselves reasonable and clear.
102. I think that by “the Book of Allah” 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 Allah. 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 Allah, 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 no arts of evil. It was the powers of evil that pretended to force the laws of nature and the will of Allah; such a pretence is plainly blasphemy.

104. Hārūt and Mārūt lived in Babylon, a very ancient seat of science, especially the science of astronomy. The period may be supposed to anywhere about the time when the ancient Eastern Monarchies were strong and enlightened: probably even earlier, as Mārū-tu or Madruk was a deified hero afterwards worshipped as a god of magic in Babylon. Being good men, Hārūt and Mārūt of course dabbled in nothing evil, and their hands were certainly clean of fraud. But knowledge and the arts, if learned by evil men, can be applied to evil uses. The evil ones, besides their fraudulent magic, also learnt a little of this true science and applied it to evil uses. Hārūt and Mārūt did not withhold knowledge, yet never taught anyone without plainly warning them of the trial and temptation of knowledge in the hands of evil men. Being men of insight, they also saw the blasphemy that might rise to the lips of the evil ones puffed up with science and warned them against it. Knowledge is indeed a trial or temptation: if we are warned, we know its dangers: if Allah has endowed us with free will, we must be free to choose between the benefit and the danger.

Among the Jewish traditions in the Midrash (Jewish Tafsirs) was a story of two angels who asked Allah’s permission to come down to earth but succumbed to temptation, and were hung up by their feet at Babylon for punishment. Such stories about sinning angels who were cast down to punishment were believed in by the early Christians also. (See the Second Epistle of Peter, ii. 4, and the Epistle of Jude, verse 6).
But neither of these taught anyone (Such things) without saying:
"We are only for trial; So do not blaspheme."
They learned from them\textsuperscript{105}
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. If they had kept their Faith And guarded themselves from evil, Far better had been The reward from Allah If they but knew!

\textsuperscript{105} What the evil ones learnt from Hārūt and Mārūt (see last note) they turned to evil. When mixed with fraud and deception, it appeared as charms and spells and love potions. They did nothing but cause discord between the sexes. But of course their power was limited to the extent to which Allah 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, as is shown in the allegory of Goethe's \textit{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.
SECTION 13

104. O ye of Faith!
Say not (to the Prophet)
Ra'înâ, but say, ‘Unzurnâ’
And hearken (to him):
To those without Faith
Is a grievous punishment.

105. It is never the wish
Of those without Faith
Among the People of the Book
Nor of the polytheists.
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.

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?

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106. The word disapproved is Ra’înâ, which as used by the Muslims meant, “Please look at us, attend to us.” But it was ridiculed by enemies by a little twist to suggest some insulting meaning. So an unambiguous word “Unzurnâ,” with the same meaning is suggested. The general lesson is that we must guard ourselves against the cynical trick of using words which sound complimentary to the ear but have a hidden barb in them. Not only must we be plain and honest in our words. We must respectfully hearken to the words of a Teacher whom we have addressed. Thoughtless people use vain words or put foolish questions, and straightaway turn their minds to something else.

107. The word which I have translated by the word “revelations” is Āyāt. See n. 15. It is not only used for verses of the Qur-ān, but in a general sense for Allah’s revelations, as in ii. 39 and for other Signs of Allah 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 ‘Ād (xxvi. 128). What is the meaning here? If we take it in a general sense, it means that Allah’s Message from age to age is always =
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.

108. Would ye question
Your Messenger as Moses Was questioned of old?
But whoever changeth
From Faith to Unbelief,
Hath strayed without doubt
From the even way.

109. Quite a number of the People Of the Book wish they could Turn you (people) back To infidelity after ye have believed.
After the Truth hath become

—it 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 Ayät 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 clear (and of established meaning), and others are not entirely clear, and it is mischievous to treat the verses that are not entirely clear and to 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.

There may be express abrogation, or there may be “causing or permitting to forget.” How many good and wise institutions gradually become obsolete by afflux of time? Then there is the gradual process of disuse or forgetting in evolution. This does not mean that eternal principles change. It is only a sign of Allah’s infinite Power that His creation should take so many forms and shapes not only in the material world but in the world of man’s thought and expression.

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 sawâa 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.
Manifest unto them:  
But forgive and overlook,\textsuperscript{110}  
Till Allah brings about  
His command;\textsuperscript{111} for Allah  
Hath power over all things.\textsuperscript{112}

And be steadfast in prayer  
And give Zakat:  
And whatever good  
Ye send forth for your souls\textsuperscript{113}  
Before you, ye shall find it  
With Allah: for Allah sees  
Well all that ye do.

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.”

Nay,—whoever submits  
His whole self\textsuperscript{114} to Allah

\textsuperscript{110} Three words are used in the Qur-\'an, with a meaning akin to “forgive”, but each with a different shade of meaning. \textit{Af\textordmasculine{}f} (here translated “forgive”) means to forget, to obliterate from one’s mind. \textit{Safah\textordmasculine{}} (here translated “overlook”) means to turn away from, to ignore, to treat a matter as if it did not affect one. \textit{Gaffara} (which does not occur in this verse) means to cover up something as Allah does to our sins with His grace; this word is particularly appropriate in Allah’s attribute to \textit{Gaff\textordmasculine{}}r, the One who forgives again and again.

\textsuperscript{111} The word \textit{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.

\textsuperscript{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 fulfilment of Allah’s design, for Allah’s power is unlimited. Here we are told to be patient and forgiving against envy and injustice; this too may be fulfilling Allah’s purpose, for His power is infinite.

\textsuperscript{113} Cf. ii 95 n. 100.

\textsuperscript{114} The word translated “self” is \textit{Wajh}, a comprehensive Arabic word.
And is a doer of good,--
He will get his reward
With his Lord;
On such shall be no fear,
Nor shall they grieve.\textsuperscript{115}

SECTION 14.

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;\textsuperscript{116}

But Allah will judge
Between them in their quarrel
On the Day of Judgment.

114. And who is more unjust
Than he who forbids\textsuperscript{117}
That in places for the worship
Of Allah, His name should be

\textsuperscript{115} This phrase comes in aptly in its own context many times. In this Sûra it occurs in ii. 38, 62, 112, 262, 274 and 277.

\textsuperscript{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.

\textsuperscript{117} There were actually Pagans in Makkah 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 Allah. With what face could they exclude the Muslims, who wanted to worship the true Allah 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.

This verse, taken in a general sense, establishes the principle of freedom of worship in a public mosque or place dedicated to the worship of Allah. This is recognized in Muslim law.
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.

115. To Allah belong the East
And the West: whithersoever
Ye turn, there is Allah's Face.\textsuperscript{118}
For Allah is All-Embracing,
All-Knowing.

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.\textsuperscript{119}

117. The Originator
Of the heavens and the earth:\textsuperscript{120}
When He decreeth a matter,
He saith to it: "Be,
And it is.

\textsuperscript{118} That is, you will face Allah whichever direction you turn your face. See note to ii. 112 above.

\textsuperscript{119} It is a derogation from the glory of Allah—in fact it is blasphemy—to say that Allah 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 to Allah of a material nature, and of the lower animal functions of sex.

\textsuperscript{120} The previous verse told us that everything in heaven and earth celebrates the glory of Allah. 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 Allah’s will and design. Cf. vi. 102, where the word \textit{bada’a} is used as here for the creation of the heavens and the earth, and \textit{khalaqa} is used for the creation of all things. \textit{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, \textit{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 =
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).

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 the Companions
Of the Blazing Fire.

120. Never will the Jews
Or the Christians be satisfied
With thee unless thou follow
Their form of religion. Say:

= itself to Allah. 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 Allah's creation, to which we can apply the word *khalaqa*, for in it is involved the idea of measuring, fitting it into a scheme of other things. Cf. liv. 49; also xxv. 59. 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 *sawwd*, bringing it to perfection (xci. 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 pre-existing similitude, but perhaps *fataara* 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, *bara'aa* 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.
“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.

121. Those to whom We have given
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.

SECTION 15.

122. O Children of Israel! call to mind
The special favour which I bestowed
Upon you, and that I preferred you
To all others.

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)

124. And remember that Abraham
Was tried by his Lord

121-122. 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.
With certain Commands,\textsuperscript{123}
Which he fulfilled:
He said: “I will make thee
An Imam\textsuperscript{124} to the people.
He pleaded: “And also
(Imams) from my offspring!”
He answered: “But My Promise
Is not within the reach
Of evil-doers.”

125. Remember We made the House\textsuperscript{125}
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

\textsuperscript{123}Kalimat: literally “words”: here used in the sense of Allah’s Will or Decree or Purpose. This verse may be taken to be the sum of the verses following. In everything Abraham fulfilled Allah’s wish: he purified Allah’s house: he built the sacred refuge of the Ka’ba; he submitted his will to Allah’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 Allah, Allah’s promise did not reach the people who proved themselves false.

\textsuperscript{124}Imam: the primary sense is that of being foremost: hence it may mean: (1) leader in religion; (2) leader in congregational prayer; (3) model, pattern, example; (4) a book of guidance and instructions (xi. 17); (5) a book of evidence or record (xxxvi 12). Here, meanings 1 and 3 arc implied. In ix. 12 the word is applied to leaders of Unbelief or Blasphemy.

\textsuperscript{125}The Ka’ba, the House of Allah. 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 all 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. Makkah was recognized by Arab custom as inviolable for the pursuit of revenge or violence. (3) It was a place of prayer: even to-day there is a Station of Abraham. (4) It must be held pure and sacred for all purposes.

Though the verse as a whole is expressed in the First Person Plural, the House is called “My House,” to emphasize the personal relation of Allah, the One True God, to it, and repudiate the Polytheism which defiled it before it was purified again by Muhammd.
126. Four rites are here enumerated, which have now acquired a technical meaning. (1) Going round the Ka'ab: *Tawd*. (2) Retiring to the place as a spiritual retreat, for contemplation and prayer: *I'tikiif*. (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 Makkah 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), Makkah became the “New Jerusalem”—or rather the old and original “City of Peace” restored and made universal.

128. The territory of Makkah is barren and rocky, compared with, say, Taif, a city to the east of Makkah. A prayer for the prosperity of Makkah therefore includes a prayer for the good things of material life.
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-Relenting Most Merciful.

129. “Our Lord! send amongst them A Messenger of their own, Who shall rehearse Thy Signs To them and instruct them In Scripture and Wisdom, And purify them: For Thou art the Exalted in Might The Wise.”

130. And who turns away From the religion of Abraham But such as debase their souls With folly? Him We chose

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 Makkah 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 Isma’il 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 devoutman, he offers and dedicates the work to Allah 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 Isma’il and his younger son Isaac. With prophetic vision he foresees that there will be corruption and backsliding in both branches of his family: Makkah 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 Allah’s mercy, addressing Him as the Oft-Relenting. Most Merciful. And finally he foresees in Makkah a Prophet teaching the people as one “of their own” and in their own beautiful Arabic language: he asks for a blessing on Muḥammad’s ministry, appealing to the Power and Wisdom of Allah.

130. *Iṣṭafā*: chose; chose because of purity; chose and purified. It is the same root from which *Al-Muṣtafā* is derived, one of the titles of Muḥammad.
And rendered pure in this world:  
And he will be in the Hereafter  
In the ranks of the Righteous.

131. Behold! his Lord said  
To him: Submit (thy will to Me):“  
He said: “I submit (my will)  
To the Lord and Cherisher  
Of the Universe.”

132. And Abraham enjoined  
Upon his sons  
And so did Jacob;  
“Oh my sons! Allah hath chosen  
The Faith for you; then die not  
Except in the state of submission  
(to Me).

133. Were ye witnesses\(^{131}\)  
When Death appeared before  
Jacob?  
Behold, he said to his sons:  
“What will ye worship after me?”  
They said: “We shall worship  
Thy God and the God of thy  
fathers,\(^{132}\)  
Of Abraham, Ismā’īl, and Isaac,—  
The One (True) God;  
To Him do we submit.”

134. That was a People that hath  
Passed away. They shall reap  
The fruit of what they did,  
And ye of what ye do!

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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 Allah, the One True and Universal God. The death-bed scene is described in Jewish tradition.

132. “Fathers” means ancestors, and includes uncles, grand-uncles, as well as direct ascendants.
Ye shall not be asked
About what they did. 133

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, 134
And he joined not gods with Allah.”

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 submit to Allah. 135

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

133. 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. Ḥanīf: 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.

The Jews, though taught Unity, went after false gods, and the Christians invented
the Trinity or borrowed it from Paganism. We go back to the pure, Ḥanīf doctrine of
Abraham, to live and die in faith in the One True God.

135. Here we have the Creed of Islam: to believe in (1) the One Universal God,
(2) the Message to us through Muhammad and the Signs (āyāt) as interpreted on the basis
of personal responsibility, (3) the Message delivered by other Teachers in the past. These
are mentioned in three groups: (1) Abraham, Isma‘il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes: of
these Abraham had apparently a Book (Ixxxvii. 19) and the others followed his tradition:
(2) Moses and Jesus, who each left a scripture: these scriptures are still extant, though =
136. We are thus in the true line of those who follow the one and indivisible Message of the One Allah, wherever delivered. If others narrow it or corrupt it, it is they who have left the faith and created a division or schism. But Allah 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. Şibgat: the root-meaning implies a dye or colour.

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 Allah's teaching is one in all ages.
They have from Allah?
But Allah is not unmindful
Of what ye do!

141. That was a people that hath
Passed away. They shall reap
The fruit of what they did,
And ye of what ye do!
Ye shall not be asked!
About what they did. 139

SECTION 17.

142. The Fools among the people140
Will say: “What hath turned
Them from the Qibla 141 to which
They were used?” Say:
To Allah belong both East and West:

139. Verse 134 began a certain argument, which is now rounded off in the same words
in this verse. The argument is that it is wrong to claim a monopoly for Allah’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 Sūra that with the renewal of the Message and the birth of a
new People, a new ordinances become appropriate, and they are now expounded.

140. Nās = People, the unthinking multitude that sway to and fro, instead of being
firm in Allah’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,” Al-Mustafā and his
disciples in Madinah even as the Pharisees and the Sadducees of Jesus’s day tried to
entangle Jesus (Matt. xxii, 15, 23).

141. Qibla = the direction to which Muslims turn in prayer. Islam lays great stress
on social prayer in order to emphasise our universal Brotherhood and mutual co-
operation. For such prayer, order, punctuality, precision, symbolical postures, and a
common direction are essential, so that the Imam (leader) and all his congregation may
face one way and offer their supplications to Allah. In the early days, before they were
organised as a people, they followed as a symbol for their Qibla the sacred city of
Jerusalem, sacred both to the Jews and the Christians, the people of the Book. This
symbolised their allegiance to the continuity of Allah’s revelation. When, despised and
persecuted, they were turned out of Makkah and arrived in Madinah, Al-Mustafā under
divine direction began to organise its people as an Ummat, an independent people, with
laws and rituals of their own. At that stage the Ka‘ba was established as Qibla, thus going
back to the earliest centre, with which the name of Abraham was connected, and
traditionally also the name of Adam. Jerusalem still remained (and remains) sacred in
the eyes of Islam on account of its past, but Islam is a progressive religion, and its new
symbolism enabled it to shake off the tradition of a dead past and usher in the era of
untrammelled freedom dear to the spirit of Arabia. The change took place about [16½] months after Hijrat.
He guideth whom He will
To a Way that is straight.

143. Thus have We made of you
An Ummat justly balanced.

That ye might be witnesses
Over the nations,
And the Messenger a witness
Over yourselves;
And We appointed the Qibla
To which thou wast used,
Only to test those who followed
The Messenger 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

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-worldliness” 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 Muhammads Al-Mustafas.

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 not matter. 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 Prophet of Allah? Mere quibblers about non-essential matters are tested by this.
Make your faith of no effect. 146
For Allah is to all people
Most surely full of Kindness,
Most Merciful.

144. We see the turning
Of thy face (for guidance)
To the heavens: now
Shall We turn thee
To a Qibla that shall
Please thee. Turn then
Thy face in the direction
Of the Sacred Mosque: 148
Wherever ye are, turn
Your faces in that direction.

146. What became of prayer with the Jerusalem Qibla? It was equally efficacious before the new Qibla was ordained. Allah 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 Al-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 Madinah 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: i.e. the mosque wherein the Ka'ba is located, in the sacred city of Makkah. 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 Allah. 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 mansikhi 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.
Glimmerings of such a Qibla were already foreshadowed in Jewish and Christian practice but its universality was only perfected in Islam.

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.

A very clear glimpse of the old Jewish practice in the matter of the Qibla and the importance attached to it is found in the book of Daniel, vi. 10. Daniel was a righteous man of princely lineage and lived about 606-538 B.C. He was carried off to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrian, but was still living when Assyria was overthrown by the Medes and Persians. In spite of the "captivity" of the Jews, Daniel enjoyed the highest offices of state at Babylon, but he was ever true to Jerusalem. His enemies (under the Persian monarch) got a penal law passed against any one who "asked a petition of any god or man for 30 days" except the Persian King. But Daniel continued true to Jerusalem. "His windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."
Their own sons; but some of them conceal the truth which they themselves know.

147. The Truth is from thy Lord; So be not at all in doubt.

SECTION 18.

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

149. From whencesoever thou startest forth, turn

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 Prophet. 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.

152. Truth only comes from Allah, and it remains truth, however men might try to conceal it or throw doubts on it.

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 =
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.

150. So from whencesoever
Thou startest forth, turn
Thy face in the direction
Of the Sacred Mosque;
And 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 favours on you, and ye
May (consent to) be guided;

151. A similar (favour
Have ye already received)\(^\text{155}\)
In that We have sent
Among you a Messenger
Of your own, rehearsing to you

= repetitions. Note that the race and starting point argument begins at ii. 149 and is rounded off in the first part of ii. 150; while the national and general argument beginning at ii. 144 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 smaller concentric circle.

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 Makkah 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.
Our Signs, and purifying You, and instructing you In Scripture and Wisdom, And in new Knowledge.

152. Then do ye remember Me; I will remember You. Be grateful to Me, And reject not Faith.

SECTION 19.

153. O ye who believe! seek help With patient Perseverance And Prayer: for God is with those Who patiently persevere.

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.

155. Be sure we shall test you With something of fear

156. The word “remember” is too pale a word for zikr, which has now acquired a large number of associations in our religious 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.

157. See ii. 45 and n. An additional meaning implied in ṣabr is self-restraint. Ḥaqqānī 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 Allah 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 Allah. Such striving is the spending of one’s self in Allah’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.
And hunger, some loss
In goods, lives and the fruits
(Of your toil), but give
Glad tidings\textsuperscript{159} to those
Who patiently persevere,—

156. Who say, when afflicted
With calamity: “To Allah
We belong, and to Him
Is our return”:-

157. They are those on whom
(Descend) blessings from their Lord,
And Mercy.
And they are the ones
That receive guidance.

158. Behold! Safa and Marwa
Are among the Symbols\textsuperscript{160}
Of Allah. So if those who visit
The House\textsuperscript{161} in the Season
Or at other times,

159. The glad tidings are the blessings of Allah in ii. 157 or (which is the same thing)
the promise in ii. 153 that Allah 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 Makkah and close to the well of Zam-zam. Here, according to tradition,
the lady Hajar, mother of the infant Isma'il, 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 Allah) 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, Allah 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-hijja, 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 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.
Should compass them round,
It is no sin in them.
And if any one obeyeth his own
Impulse to Good,—\textsuperscript{162}
Be sure that Allah
Is He Who recogniseth
And knoweth.

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.—\textsuperscript{163}

160. Except those who repent
And make amends
And openly declare (the Truth):
To them I turn;
For I am Oft-Returning,
Most Merciful.

161. Those who reject Faith.
And die rejecting,—
On them is Allah's curse,
And the curse of angels,
And of all mankind;

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

\textsuperscript{163} Those entitled to curse: i.e., angels and mankind (see ii. 161 below): the cursed ones will deprive themselves of the protection of Allah and of the angles, and of the good wishes of mankind, because by contumaciously rejecting Faith, they not only sin against Allah but are false to their own mankind, which Allah created in the “best of moulds” (Q. xcv. 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 least part of the ceremonial Law.
162. They will abide therein. Their penalty will not be lightened, nor will respite be their (lot).

163. And your God is One God: There is no god but He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

SECTION 20.

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 therein = in the curse. A curse is not a matter of words: it is a terrible 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 Allah. 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 Allah in prayer, and then it becomes Allah's "wrath" or curse, the deprivation of Allah's Grace as regards the wrong-doer.

165. Where the terrible consequence of Evil. i.e., the rejection of Allah, are mentioned, there is always stress laid on Allah'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.

Note its literary architecture. Allah is one: and among His wondrous Signs is the unity of design in the widest diversity of Nature. The Signs are taken from the features of beauty, power, and utility to man himself, and lead up to an appeal to Man's own intelligence and wisdom. We begin with the glory of the heavens and the earth, the wide spaces covered by man’s imagination, remote and yet so near to his own life. The most striking every-day phenomenon resulting from the interrelations of the heavens and the earth is the alternation of day and night, regular and yet changing in duration with the Seasons and the latitudes of our globe. The night for rest, and the day for work: and we can think of the work in terms of nature’s beauty; the stately ships “flowing” (as the original text has it) across the seas, for communications and merchandise as between men and men. The seas thus serve us no less than land, and the give-and-take as between sea, sky, and land, is further exemplified by the rain. The rain leads to the fertility of land, and here we are reminded of the contrast between the Winter's death of Nature and her revivification in the Spring. Here we are reminded of agriculture and the use we make of cattle and all kinds of living creatures. The word translated “beasts” has a wide meaning, including crawling creatures, insects, etc.—all contributing to the round of Nature’s operations. This leads us on to the wonderful winds, the region of the air, which man is just beginning to explore and navigate. The personified winds drive the clouds in the sky like “slaves.” Here is another aspect of clouds besides that of giving rain. The fleecy clouds are things of sunset beauty: at mid-day they temper the glare of the sun; at all times they affect radiation and other processes going on in the sky. So we come back to the sky, rounding off the argument, and correlating our human life with the Will and Power of Allah, if we had the wisdom to see!

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 Punishment: that to Allah
Belongs all power, and Allah
Will strongly enforce
The Punishment.  

166. Then would those
Who are followed
Clear themselves of those
Who follow (them):
They would see the Chastisement
And all relations
Between them would be cut off.

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.

167. Everything around and within us points to unity of purpose and design.—points to Allah. Yet there are foolish persons (unrighteous = those who deliberately use the choice given them to go wrong). They think something else is equal to Allah. Perhaps they even do lip service to Allah, but their heart is in their fetish.—unlike the heart of the righteous, who are wholly devoted and absorbed in the love of Allah. If only the unrighteous could see the consequences, they would see the terrible Penalty, and that all Power is in Allah’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 Allah; or (3) Powers of evil that deliberately mislead. When it comes to the inevitable consequences of blasphemy and the rejection of Allah, 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 leaders whose names were misused would of course disown the misuse of their names, and the evil ones would take an unholy delight in exposing the facts. The Reality is now irresistible, but alas! at what cost?

168. Cf. iii. 156, viii 36, xix. 39, lxix. 50, xxv. 23.
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."

**Good:** Taiyib = Pure, clean, wholesome, nourishing, pleasing to the taste.

The general principle then would be: what is lawful and what is good, should be followed, not what is evil, or shameful, or foisted on by false ascription to divine injunctions, or what rests merely on the usage of ancestors, even though the ancestors were ignorant or foolish. An example of a shameful custom would be that among the Pagan Arabs of taking congealed blood and eating it fried.
That listen to nothing
But calls and cries.\(^{170}\)
Deaf, dumb, and blind.\(^{171}\)
They are void of wisdom.

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.\(^{172}\)

173. He hath only forbidden you
Dead meat,\(^{173}\) and blood,
And the flesh of swine,
And that on which
Any other name hath been invoked
Besides that of Allah.\(^{174}\)
But if one is forced by necessity,
Without wilful disobedience,

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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 Allah’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.

174. For prohibited foods, cf. Also Q. v. 3-4 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.
Nor transgressing due limits,—
Then is he guiltless.
For Allah is Oft-Forgiving
Most Merciful.

174. Those who conceal
Allah's revelations in the Book,
And purchase for them
A miserable profit,—
They swallow into themselves\(^\text{175}\)
Naught but Fire;
Allah will not address them
On the Day of Resurrection,
Nor purify them:
Grievous will be
Their Chastisement.

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!

176. (Their doom is) because
Allah sent down the Book
In truth but those who seek
Causes of dispute in the Book

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175. "They eat nothing but fire into their bellies" is a literal translation that produces an effect of rude in elegance 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 regulations, but he should fix his gaze on the love of Allah 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 fellow-men; (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 Allah. 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 to-day. We also see Allah’s working in His world and in us: His 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.
178. O ye who believe! The law of equality

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.

Our law of equality only takes account of three conditions in civil society: free for free, slave for slave, woman for woman. Among free men or woman, all are equal: you cannot ask that because a wealthy, or high-born, or influential man is killed, his life is equal to two or three lives among the poor or the lowly. Nor, in cases of murder, can you go into the value or abilities of a slave. A woman is mentioned separately because her position as a mother or an economic worker is different. She does not form a third class, but a division in the other two classes. One life having been lost, do not waste =
many lives in retaliation: at most, let the Law take one life under strictly prescribed conditions, and shut the door to private vengeance or tribal retaliation. But if the aggrieved party consents (and this condition of consent is laid down to prevent worse evils), forgiveness and brotherly love is better, and the door of Mercy is kept open. In Western law, no felony can be compounded.

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.

185. 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.
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 others, 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.

The Muslim fast is not meant for self-torture. Although it is stricter than other fasts, it also provides alleviations for special circumstances. If it were merely a temporary abstention from food and drink, it would be salutary to many people, who habitually eat and drink to excess. The instincts for food, drink, and sex are strong in the animal nature, and temporary restraint from all these enables the attention to be directed to higher things. This is necessary through prayer, contemplation and acts of charity, not of the showy kind, but by seeking out those really in need. Certain standards are prescribed, but much higher standards are recommended.

190. For journeys, a minimum standard of three marches is prescribed by some Commentators: others make it more precise by naming a distance of 16 farsaks, 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 Shâfis 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): *Furqān* = 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 realise this, we shall look upon Ramadhān, not as a burden, but as a blessing, and shall be duly grateful for the lead given to us in this matter.
186. When My servants
Ask thee concerning Me,
I am indeed
Close (to them): I respond
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.  

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

194. These verses 186 and 188 are not foreign to the subject of Ramadhān, but emphasise its spiritual aspect. Here we are told of Prayer and the nearness of Allah, 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.
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.

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 the fast begins.

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

199. This verse refers to the known Islamic practice called i'tikāf which means retreating to mosques for devotion and worship. The Prophet (peace be on him) used to retreat to the mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan.

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 Allah.

203. This is a Muslim proverb now, and much might be written about its manifold meanings. A few may be noted 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.

The subject of the New Moon provides a good transition between the Ramadhan fast, which begins and ends with the New Moon, the Pilgrimage, whose ten days commence with the New Moon, and the War which Islam had to wage in self-defence against the Pagans, who wanted to exclude them from the Pilgrimage after they had driven them out of house and home.

204. War is 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 Allah. 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 witheld when the enemy comes to terms.
191. And slay them
Wherever ye catch them,
And turn them out
From where they have
Turned you out;
For Persecution
Is 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 reject faith
But if they cease,
Allah is Oft-Forgiving,
Most Merciful.
And fight them on
Until there is no more
Persecution

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 Makkah, 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.

In general, it may be said that Islam is the religion of peace, goodwill, mutual understanding, and good faith. But it will not acquiesce in wrong-doing, and its men will hold their lives cheap in defence of honour, justice, and the religion which they hold sacred. Their ideal is that of heroic virtue combined with unselfish gentleness and tenderness, such as is exemplified in the life of the Prophet. They believe in courage, obedience, discipline, duty, and a constant strivings by all the means in their power, physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual, for the establishment of truth and righteousness.

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.
And the religion becomes Allah’s.  
But if they cease,  
Let there be no hostility  
Except to those  
Who practise oppression.

194. The prohibited month  
For the prohibited month,  
And so for all things prohibited,  
There is the law of equality.  
If then any one transgresses  
The prohibition against you,  
Transgress ye likewise  
Against him.  
But fear Allah, and know  
That Allah is with those  
Who restrain themselves.

195. And spend of your substance  
In the cause of Allah,  
And make not your own hands

207. 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 Allah.”

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. Harām = prohibited, sacred. The month of Pilgrimage (Zul-Hijja) was a sacred month, in which warfare, was prohibited by Arab custom. The month preceding (Zul-Qa’da) and the month following (Muḥarram) were included in the prohibition, and Muḥarram was specially called al-Ḥarām. 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 others broke it. Similarly the territory of Makkah 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 Allah. Even when we are fighting, it should be for a principle, not out of passion.
Contribute to (your) destruction;\textsuperscript{211}
But do good;
For Allah loveth those
Who do good.

196. And complete
The Hajj or ‘umra\textsuperscript{212}
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,\textsuperscript{213}

\textsuperscript{211} Every fight requires the wherewithals for the fight, the “sinews of war.” If the war is just and in the cause of Allah, 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 Allah, 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 Allah.

\textsuperscript{212} See ii. 158, n. 161. The Hajj is the complete pilgrimage, of which the chief rites are performed during the first twelve or thirteen days of the month of Zul-hijja. 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 Makkah. 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 \textit{ihram} and the resumption of the ordinary dress.

Here we are told: (1) that having once undertaken the pilgrimage, we must complete it; (2) that we must do it not for worldly ends, but as a symbol of our service and worship to Allah; (3) that if we are prevented, for any reason, from completing the rites, a sacrifice should be offered where the prevention took place.

\textsuperscript{213} If any one is taken ill after putting on the \textit{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.
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).\(^{211}\)
If any one wishes
To continue the 'umra
On to the \textit{hajj},
He must make an offering
Such as he can afford.
But if he cannot afford it,
He should fast
Three days during the \textit{hajj}.
And seven days on his return.
Making ten days in all.
This is for those
Whose household
Is not in (the precincts\(^{212}\))
Of the Sacred Mosque.
And fear Allah.
And know that Allah
Is strict in punishment.\(^{213}\)

\(^{214}\) When this was revealed, the city of Makkah 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. Makkah soon passed out of the hands of the enemies of Islam. People sometimes came long distances to Makkah before the Pilgrimage season began. Having performed the 'Umra, they stayed on for the formal \textit{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 Makkah, 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 Allah, 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 Allah'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.
SECTION 25.

197. For Ḥajj

Are the months well known?\textsuperscript{217}
If any one undertakes
That duty therein,
Let there be no obscenity,
Nor wickedness,
Nor wrangling
In the Ḥajj.
And whatever good
Ye do, (be sure)
Allah knoweth it.
And take a provision\textsuperscript{218}
(With you) for the journey,
But the best of provisions

\textsuperscript{217} The months well known: the months of Shawwāl, Zul-qa'da, and Zul-hijja (up to the 10th or the 13th) are set apart for the rites of Ḥajj. That is to say, the first rites may begin as early as the beginning of Shawwāl, with a definite approach to Makkah 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 Makkah 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 Allah; (3) after a short prayer at the Station of Abraham (Q. ii. 125), the pilgrim goes to the hills Safā and Marwā (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 Ḥajj; (5) the visit on the eighth, of the whole body of pilgrims to the Valley of Minā (about six miles north of Makkah, where the pilgrims halt and stay the night, proceeding on the ninth to the plain and hill of 'Arafāt, about five miles further north, which is also called the Mount of Mercy; (5) the tenth day, the 'Id Day, the day of Sacrifice, when the sacrifice is offered in the Valley of Minā, the head is shaved or the hair trimmed, the tawaf al-Ifāda and the symbolic ceremony of casting seven pebbles at the Jamarat 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-Adhḥā; note that the ceremony is connected with the rejection of evil in thought, word, and deed. A stay of two or three days after this is prescribed: these three days are called Tashriq days.

\textsuperscript{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 Allah.
Is right conduct.
So fear Me,
O ye that are wise.

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.

199. Then return 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.

200. So when ye have
Accomplished your rites,
Celebrate the praises of Allah,

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 Allah.” There should be no profiteering, or trade “tricks.” Good honest trade is a form of service to the community, and therefore to Allah.

220. About midway between ‘Arafat and Minā (see n. 217 to ii. 197) is a place called Muzdalifa where the Holy Prophet 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 Makkah 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.
225. Our spiritual account is mounting up, both on the debit and credit side. In worldly accounts, both our profits and our losses may be delayed. But in Allah'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 Minā 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.

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 purified in Islam, so this aftermath of the Pilgrimage was also purified. It was required from pilgrims to stay on two or three days after the Day of Sacrifice, but they must use them in prayer and praise to Allah. 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 future life.
And if any one 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.

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.

205. When he turns his back,  
His aim everywhere  
Is to spread mischief  
Through the earth and destroy  
Crops and progeny  
But Allah loveth not mischief.

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).  

207. And there is the type of man  
Who gives his life

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 worldliness, 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 Allah’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 Allah'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 Allah. They might and do say: "Oh yes! we shall believe if Allah appears to us with His angels in His glory!" In other words they want to settle the question in their way, and not in Allah's way. That will not do. The decision in all questions belongs to Allah. If we are true to Him, we wait for His times and seasons, and do not expect Him to wait on ours.
SECTION 26

211. Ask the Children of Israel232
How many Clear (Signs)
We have sent them.
But if any one,
After Allah's favour
Has come to him,
Substitutes (something else),
Allah is strict in punishment.233

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 measure
On whom He will.234

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,

232. The Israelites under Moses were shown Allah'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. Allah'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 Allah. Here the question is of those who reject Allah's Signs.

234. Allah's gifts in this world seem unequal, and sometimes those get them who seem to deserve them least. Allah'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.
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.

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 Messenger 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!

215. They ask thee What they should spend (In charity). Say: Whatever wealth 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.

216. Fighting is prescribed
Upon you, and ye dislike it. 236
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.

SECTION 27

217. They ask thee
Concerning fighting
In the Prohibited Month. 237
Say: “Fighting therein
Is a grave (offence);
But graver is it
In the sight of Allah

with a harmful intent, e.g., a sword to a madman, or a drug or sweets or even money
To some one 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 Allah; this 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. Allah knows the value of things better than you do.

To prevent access
To the path of Allah
To deny Him,
To prevent access
To the Sacred Mosque,
And drive out its members. 238

Tumult and oppression 239
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.

218. Those who believed
And those who suffered exile
And fought (and strove and
struggled)
In the path of Allah:–
They have the hope

238. The intolerance and persecution of the Pagan clique at Makkah caused untold hardships to the holy Messenger of Islam and his early disciples. They bore all with meekness and long-suffering patience until Allah permitted them to take up arms in self-defence. Then they were twitted with breach of the custom about Prohibited Month, 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 Allah, 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. 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 carcass 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. The principle on which the objection is based is: that, 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.

242. Hoarding is no use either to ourselves, or to anyone 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. 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 spiritually.
Concerning orphans. 244

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." 245

221. Do not marry
Unbelieving 245-A woman
Until they believe:
A slave woman who believes
Is better than an unbelieving 245-A 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 245-A

244. For Orphans the best rule is to keep their property, household, and accounts separate, lest there should be any temptation to get a personal advantage to their guardian by mixing them with the guardian's property, household or accounts, also to keep clear of any ideas of marriage, where this fiduciary relation exists. Q. vi. 152 may possibly suggest complete separation. But it may be an economy and an advantage to the orphan to have his property and accounts administered with the guardian's property and accounts and to have him live in the guardian's household, or to marry into the guardian's family, especially where the orphan's property is small and he or she has no other friend. The test is: what is best in the orphan's interests? If the guardian does fall into temptation, even if human law does not detect him, he is told he is sinning in Allah's sight and that should keep him straight.

245. The idea in Islam is not to make Allah's Law a burdensome fetter, but to ease a man's path in all kinds of difficult situations by putting him on his honour and trusting him. The strictest probity is demanded of him, but if he falls short of it, he is told that he cannot escape Allah's punishment even though he may evade human punishment.

245-A. Literally "pagan".
Even though he allure you. \(246\)
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
Receive admonition.

SECTION 28

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. As religion is 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.
251. Our highest spiritual ambition should be the hope of meeting Allah. To uphold such a hope is to give glad tidings to people of faith.

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 tillh; 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 soil. 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 Allah.

250. Our highest spiritual ambition should be the hope of meeting Allah. 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.
In your oaths against
Doing good, or acting rightly,
Or making peace
Between persons;
For Allah is One
Who heareth and knoweth\textsuperscript{251}
All things.

225. Allah will not
Call you to account
For thoughtlessness
In your oaths,
But for the intention
In your hearts,\textsuperscript{252}
And He is
Oft-forgiving
Most Forbearing.

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

227. But if their intention
Is firm for divorce,
Allah heareth

\textsuperscript{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 Allah 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. Allah knows our inmost hearts, and right conduct, and not obstinacy or quibbling is what He demands from us.

\textsuperscript{252} It has been held that thoughtless oaths, if there is no intention behind them, can be expiated by an act of charity.
And knoweth all things

228. Divorced women
Shall wait concerning themselves
For three monthly periods.
And it is not 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

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

The Pagan Arabs had a custom very unfair to women in wedlock, and this was suppressed by Islam. Sometimes, in a fit of anger or caprice, a husband would take an oath by Allah not to approach his wife. This deprived her of conjugal rights, but at the same time kept her tied to him indefinitely, so that she could not marry again. If the husband was remonstrated with, he would say that his oath by Allah bound him. Islam in the first place disapproved of the thoughtless oaths, but insisted on proper solemn intentional oaths being scrupulously observed. In a serious matter like that affecting a wife, if the oath was put forward as an excuse, the man is told that it is no excuse at all. Allah looks to intention, not mere thoughtless words. The parties are allowed a period of four months to make up their minds and see if an adjustment is possible. Reconciliation is recommended, but if they are really determined against reconciliation, it is unfair to keep them tied indefinitely.

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.
SECTION 29.

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 ordain a divorce of this kind, it is called Khuṭba.

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 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 other prohibitions and limits prescribed here are in the interests 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 Khuṭba.
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).  

230. So if a husband divorces his wife (irrevocably), he cannot, after that, re-marry 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 re-unite, 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 know.

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259. Wrong (themselves as well as others): Zālimān: 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.
231. When ye divorce

Women, and they (are about to) 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 any one does that,
He wrongs his own soul.
Do not treat Allah's Signs
As a jest,
But solemnly rehearse Allah's favours on you,
And the fact that He
Sent down to you
The Book
And Wisdom,
For your instruction.
And fear Allah,

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 some one 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 Allah'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 device 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 Prophet in his lifetime.

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 course 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 =
For two whole years,
For him who desires
To complete the term.
But he shall bear the cost
Of their food and clothing\(^\text{266-A}\)
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 foster mother)
What ye offered,
On equitable terms.
But fear Allah and know
That Allah sees well
What ye do.

234. If any of you die
And leave widows behind;
They shall wait concerning
themselves

\(^{266-A}. \text{i.e. in case of divorce.}\)
Four months and ten days\textsuperscript{267} 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.

235. There is no blame On you if ye make An indirect offer of betrothal Or hold it in your hearts.\textsuperscript{268} Allah knows that ye Cherish them in your hearts: But do not make a secret contract With them except That you speak to them In terms honourable, 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.

267. The \textit{Iddat} of widowhood (four months and ten days) is longer than the \textit{Iddat} of divorce (three monthly courses. ii. 228). In the latter the only consideration is to ascertain if there is any unborn issue of the marriage dissolved. This is clear from xxxiii. 49, where it is laid down that there is no \textit{Iddat} for virgin divorcees. 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. Meanwhile her maintenance on a reasonable scale is chargeable to the late husband's estate.

268. A definite contract of remarriage for the woman during her period of \textit{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.
SECTION 31

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.

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)
If the nearest to righteousness.
And do not forget
Liberality between yourselves.
For Allah sees well
All that ye do.

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 behoves him to be all the more liberal to the woman and pay her the full dower even if the marriage was not consummated.
238. Guard strictly
Your (habit of) prayers.
Especially the Middle Prayer;\textsuperscript{271}
And stand before Allah
In a devout (frame of mind).

239. If ye fear (an enemy),\textsuperscript{272}
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).

240. Those of you
Who die and leave widows
Should bequeath
For their widows
A year's maintenance
Without expulsion;\textsuperscript{273}
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.

\textsuperscript{271} The Middle Prayer: \textit{Salātul-wusāt}: 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 \textit{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 Allah in the midst of our worldly affairs.

\textsuperscript{272} Verses 238-239 are parenthetical, introducing the subject of prayer in danger. This is more fully dealt with in iv. 101-03.

\textsuperscript{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.
241. For divorced women
   Is a suitable Gift
   This is a duty
   On the righteous.

242. Thus doth Allah
   Make clear His Signs
   To you: in order that
   Ye may understand.

SECTION 32.

243. Didst thou not
   Turn by 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.274
   For Allah is full of bounty
   To mankind, but
   Most of them are ungrateful.

244. Then fight in the cause
   Of Allah, and know that Allah
   Heareth and knoweth all things.275

274. We now return to the subject of Jihad, which we left at ii. 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, Allah 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 Allah 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 Allah's cause we must fight, but never to satisfy our own selfish passions or greed, for the warning is repeated: "Allah 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 Allah 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 to 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 Allah, 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 Allah, he pointed out their backslidings, 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 (qaryya) of Ya‘arim (Kirjath-jearim): 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 of fight in the cause of Allah.
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”: 1. Samuel. xiii. 6-7.

280. Ṭālūt 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: Tābūt: a chest of acacia wood covered and lined with pure gold, about 5ft. X 3ft. X 3ft. See Exod. xxv. 10-22. It was to contain the "testimony of Allah", or the Ten Commandments engraved on stone, with relics of Moses and Aaron. Its Gold lid was to be the "Mercy Seat." 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, tranquillity, peace. Later Jewish writings use the same word for a symbol of Allah'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 Tābūt or Ark.

284. A Commander is hampered by a large force if it is not in perfect discipline and does not whole-heartedly 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.

SECTION 33.

249. When Tālūt set forth
With the armies, he said: 284

And bodily prowess: Allah
Granteth His authority to whom
He pleaseth; Allah is
All-embracing, and He knoweth
All things.”

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, 281
With (an assurance) therein
Of security 282 from your Lord,
And the relics left
By the family of Moses
And the family of Aaron,
Carried by angels. 283
In this is a Symbol
For you if ye indeed
Have faith.”
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 (Jālūt). But there was a very small band who were determined to face all odds because they had perfect confidence in Allah and in the cause for which they were fighting. They were for making a firm stand and seeking Allah's help. Of that number was David: see next note.

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.

David was a raw youth, with no arms or armour. He was not known even in the Israelite camp, and the giant Goliath mocked him. Even David's own elder brother chid him for deserting his sheep, for he was a poor shepherd lad to outward appearance, but his faith had made him more than a match for the Philistine hosts. When Saul offered his own armour and arms to David, the young hero declined, as he had not tried them, while his shepherd's sling and staff were his well-tried implements. He picked up five smooth pebbles on the spot from the stream, and used his sling to such effect that he knocked down Goliath. He then used Goliath's own sword to slay him. There was consternation in the Philistine army: they broke and fled, and were pursued and cut to pieces.

Apart from the main lesson that if we would preserve our national existence and our faith it is our duty to fight with courage and firmness, there are other lessons in David's story: (1) numbers do not count, but faith, determination and the blessing of Allah; (2) size and strength are of no avail against truth, courage, and careful planning; (3) the hero tries his own weapons, and those that are available to him at the time and place, even though people may laugh at him; (4) if Allah is with us, the enemy's weapon may become an instrument of his own destruction; (5) personality conquers all dangers, and puts heart into our own wavering friends; (6) pure faith brings Allah's reward, which may take many forms: in David's case it was Power, Wisdom, and other gifts; see next note.

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.

288. Allah's plan is universal. He loves and protects all His creatures and His bounties are for all the worlds (i. 2 n.). To protect one He may have to check another, but we must never lose faith that His love is for all in boundless measure.
253. Those Messengers
We endowed with gifts,
Some above others: 289
To some of them Allah spoke; 290
Others He raised
To degrees (of honour); 291
To Jesus the son of Mary
We gave Clear (Signs), 292
And strengthened him
With the Holy Spirit. 292-A
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

289. Different gifts and different modes of procedure are prescribed to Allah's Messengers 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 Allah's Messengers (ii. 136). As this winds up the argument about fighting, three illustrations are given from the past, how it affected Allah's Messengers. To Moses Allah spoke directly: 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 Allah's mercy before his enterprise ripened, and it fell to Joshua to carry out his plan. David was chosen by Allah. He overthrew the greatest warrior of his time, became a king, a Prophet and waged successful wars. 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 Madinah he ruled and gave laws, and the Qur'an has a vaster scope than the Scriptures before.

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.

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

292-A. "Holy spirit," according to commentators signifies Gabriel.
Each other; but Allah
Does what He wills.\textsuperscript{293}

SECTION 34.

254. O ye who believe!
Spend out of (the bounties)\textsuperscript{294}
We have provided for you,
Before the Day comes
When no bargaining
(Will avail), nor friendship
Nor intercession.\textsuperscript{295}
Those who reject Faith—they
Are the wrong-doers

255. Allah! There is no god
But He,—the Living,
The Self-subsisting, Supporter of all\textsuperscript{296}

\textsuperscript{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 Allah's Plan. He carries it out as He
will.

\textsuperscript{294.} \textit{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 neighbour or a stranger or that advances the good of the community,
or even the good of the person himself to whom Allah 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.

\textsuperscript{295.} Cf. ii. 123 and ii. 48.

\textsuperscript{296.} This is the \textit{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.

The attributes of Allah are different from anything we know in our present world:
He lives, but His life is selfsubsisting and eternal: it does not depend upon other beings
and is not limited to time and space. The attribute of \textit{Qayyūm} includes not only the idea
of "Self-subsisting" but also the idea of "Keeping up and maintaining all life." His life
being the source and constant support of all derived forms of life. Perfect life is perfect
activity, in contrast to the imperfect life which we see around us, which is not only subject
to death but to the need for rest or slowed-down activity, (something which is between
activity and sleep, for which I in common with other translators have used the word
"slumber") and the need for full sleep itself. But Allah has no need for rest or sleep.
His activity, like His life, is perfect and selfsubsisting. Contrast with this the expression
used in Psalms lxxviii. 65. "Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty
man that shouteth by reason of wine."
No slumber can seize Him
Nor sleep. His are all things
In the heavens and on earth.
Who is thee can intercede
In His presence except
As He permitteth? He knoweth
What (appeareth to His creatures
As) Before or After
Or Behind them. 297
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 299
For He is the Most High.
The Supreme (in glory).

296. Let there be no compulsion
In religion: Truth stands out

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. 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? 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. Allah'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. In our thoughts we exhaust everything when we say "the heavens and the earth". Well, then, in everything is the working of Allah's power, will, and authority. Everything of course includes spiritual things as well as things of sense.

299. A life of activity that is imperfect or relative would not only need rest for carrying on its own activities, but would be in need of double rest when it has to look after and guard, or cherish, or help other activities. In contrast with this is the Absolute Life, which is free from any such need or contingency. For it is supreme above anything that we can conceive.

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 =
Clear from Error: whoever Rejects Tagut\(^{300-A}\) and believes In Allah hath grasped The most trustworthy Hand-hold, that never breaks.\(^{301}\) And Allah heareth And knoweth all things.

257. Allah is the Protector Of those who have faith: From the depths of darkness He leads them forth Into light. Of those Who reject faith the patrons Are the Tagut from light They will lead them forth Into the depths of darkness. They will be Companions Of the fire, to dwell therein (For ever).

SECTION 35.

258. Hast thou not Turned thy thought to one Who disputed with Abraham\(^{302}\) About his Lord, because Allah had granted him

\[^{300-A}\text{‘Tagut’ here means; anything worshipped beside Allah.}\]

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

\[^{302}\text{The three verses 258-260 have been the subject of much controversy as to the exact meaning to be attached to the incidents and the precise persons alluded to, whose names are not mentioned. In such matters, where the Qur-\'an has given no names and the Holy Prophet has himself given no indication, it seems to me useless to speculate, and still worse to put forward positive opinions. In questions of learning, speculations are}\]
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 it To rise from the West.”
Thus was he confounded Who (in arrogance) rejected Faith. Nor doth Allah Give guidance To a people unjust. 303

259. Or (take) the similitude Of one who passed By a hamlet, all in ruins 304

= often interesting. But it seems to me that the meaning of the Qur-ān 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 life-time, and be seen in impersonal vision at any time. Here they are connected with Al-Mustafā’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 Allah’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 Creator. 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 civilisation. But Allah can cause resurrection as He has done many times in history, and as He will do at the final Resurrection. Time is nothing before Allah. 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 Allah; (2) It affects different things in different ways; (3) The keys of life and death are in Allah's hand; (4) Man's power is nothing; his faith should be in Allah.

260. Behold! Abraham said:

"My Lord! Show me how

To its roots. 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."305

When this was shown clearly To him, he said: "I know That Allah hath power Over all things."

305. A man is in despair when he sees the destruction of a whole people, city, or civilisation. But Allah can cause resurrection as He has done many times in history, and as He will do at the final Resurrection. Time is nothing before Allah. 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 Allah; (2) It affects different things in different ways; (3) The keys of life and death are in Allah's hand; (4) Man's power is nothing; his faith should be in Allah.
Thou givest life to the dead.”  
He said: “Dost thou not
Then believe?” He said:
“Yea! but to satisfy
My own heart.”
He said: “Take four birds;
Tie them (cut them into pieces),
Then 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.”

SECTION 36

261. The parable of those
Who spend their wealth
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.

262. Those who spend
Their wealth in the cause
Of Allah, and follow not up

306. Verse 258, we saw, illustrated Allah’s power over Life and Death, contrasted
with man’s vain boasts or imaginings. Verse 259 illustrated how Time is immaterial to
Allah’s working; things, individuals and nations are subject to laws of life and death,
which are under Allah’s complete control, however much we may be misled by
appearances.

307. Abraham had complete faith in Allah’s power, but he wanted, with Allah’s
permission, to give an explanation of that faith to his own heart and mind.

308. A portion of them: Juz-an. The 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 Allah gives life to the dead.
A very high standard is set for charity. (1) It must be in the way of Allah. (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 Allah—material, moral, and spiritual—according to His own good pleasure and plan. If we spend in the way of Allah, it is not as if Allah 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.

False charity, “to be seen of men,” is really no charity. It is worse, for it betokens a disbelief in Allah and the Hereafter. “Allah seeth well whatever ye do” (ii. 265). It is compared to 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 favourable 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 situated to attract the bounties of Allah, 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 Allah's pleasure and the strengthening of his own soul.

312. The true 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 labour 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 pleasance, and have ample means of support for ourselves and our

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.  

265. And the likeness of those  
Who spend their wealth  
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.  

266. Does any of you wish  
That he should have a garden  
With date-palms and vines  
And streams flowing  
Underneath, and all kinds  

311 \[\text{Falls heavy rain,} \]
\[\text{Which leaves it} \]
\[\text{(Just) a bare stone.} \]
\[\text{They will be able to do nothing} \]
\[\text{With aught they have earned.} \]
\[\text{And Allah guideth not} \]
\[\text{Those who reject faith.} \]

312 \[\text{The true nature of charity having been explained in three parables (ii. 261, 264, 265) a fourth parable is now added, explaining its bearing on the whole of our life. Suppose we had a beautiful garden well-watered and fertile, with delightful views of streams, and a haven of rest for mind and body; suppose old age were creeping in on us, and our children were either too young to look after themselves or too feeble in health: how should we feel if a sudden whirlwind came with lightning or fire in its train, and burnt it up, thus blasting the whole of our hopes for the present and for the future, and destroying the result of all our labour and savings in the past? Well, this life of ours is a probation. We may work hard, we may save, we may have good luck. We may make ourselves a goodly pleasance, and have ample means of support for ourselves and our} \]
Of fruit, while he is stricken
With old age, and his children
Are not strong (enough)\(^{313}\)
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.

SECTION 37

267. O ye who believe!
Give of the good things
Which ye have (honourably)\(^{314}\)
earned,
And of the fruits of the earth
Which We have produced

\(^{313}\) Not strong (enough): \textit{dhū'afā-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 is given, (2) which has been honourably earned or acquired by the giver, or (3) which can be referred to as a bounty of Allah, (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 in charity 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 honourable. 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 =
For you, and do not aim\textsuperscript{315} At anything Which is bad, Out of it ye may give away Something, when ye yourselves Would not receive it Except with closed eyes.\textsuperscript{316} And know that Allah Is Free of all wants, And Worthy of all praise.\textsuperscript{317}

268. Satan threatens You with poverty And bids you to conduct Unseemly. Allah promiseth You His forgiveness And bounties.\textsuperscript{318} And Allah careth for all And He knoweth all things.

\textsuperscript{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 practise charity out of them.

\textsuperscript{316} Closed eyes imply disgust or connivance because of some feature which we would not openly acknowledge.

\textsuperscript{317} To dedicate tainted things to Allah is a dishonour to Allah, Who is independent of all wants, and Who is worthy of all honour and praise.

\textsuperscript{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, Allah 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 any one. It is false generosity that is sometimes shown as leading to ruin. As Allah 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.
269. He granteth wisdom
   To whom He pleaseth;
   And he to whom wisdom
   Is granted receiveth
   Indeed a benefit overflowing;
   But none will receive admonition
   But men of understanding

270. And whatever ye spend
   In charity or
   Whatever vow you make,
   Be sure Allah knows it all.
   But the wrong-doers
   Have no helpers.

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.

272. It is not for you
   To guide them to the right path.
But Allah guides  
To 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.

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.

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 honourable 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. "Allah'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 the Public Purse, to find them out.
SECTION 38.

274. Those who (in charity)\textsuperscript{323}
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.

275. Those who devour usury\textsuperscript{324}
Will not stand except
As stands one whom
The Satan by his touch
Hath driven to madness.\textsuperscript{325}
That is because they say:
"Trade is like usury,"\textsuperscript{326}

323. We recapitulate the beauty of charity (\textit{i.e.}, unselfish giving of one's self or one's goods) before we come to its opposite, \textit{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 Prophet left this world before the details of the question were settled. This was one of the three questions on which he wished he had had more light from the Prophet. Our 'Ulma, 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 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 \textit{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) to give time for payment of capital if necessary, or (c) to write off the debt altogether as an act of charity.

276. Allah will deprive Usury of all blessing, But will give increase For deeds of charity: For He loveth not Any ungrateful Sinner.

277. Those who believe, And do deeds of righteousness, And establish regular prayers And give Zakat, Will have their reward With their Lord: On them shall be no fear, Nor shall they grieve.327

278. O ye who believe! Fear Allah, and give up What remains of your demand For usury, if ye are Indeed believers.

327. But Allah hath permitted trade And forbidden usury. Those who after receiving Admonition 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).

But Allah hath permitted trade And forbidden usury. Those who after receiving Admonition 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).
279. If ye do it not, 
Take notice of war\textsuperscript{328} 
From Allah and His Messenger: 
But if ye repent 
Ye shall have 
Your capital sums: 
Deal not unjustly, 
And ye shall not 
Be dealt with unjustly.

280. If the debtor is 
In a difficulty, 
Grant him time 
Till it is easy 
For him to repay. 
But if ye remit it 
By way of charity, 
That is best for you 
If ye only knew.

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.

SECTION 39.

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\textsuperscript{329}

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

\textsuperscript{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 =
Let a scribe write down

Faithfully as between

The parties: let not the scribe

Refuse to write: as Allah\(^1\) has taught him,

So let him write.

Let him who incurs

The liability dictate,

But let him fear Allah

His Lord

And not diminish

Aught of what he owes.

If the party liable

Is mentally deficient,

Or weak, or unable

Himself to dictate,\(^2\)

Let his guardian

Dictate faithfully.

And get two witnesses,

Out of your own men.\(^3\)

And if there are not two men,

Then a man and two women,

Such as ye choose,

For witnesses,

---

\(^1\) 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 Judiciary capacity: he should therefore remember to act as in the presence of Allah, with full justice to both parties. The art of writing he should look upon as a gift from Allah, 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.
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.333

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 Allah.
283. If ye are on a journey,
And cannot find
A scribe, a pledge
With possession (may serve
The purpose).\footnote{334}
And if one of you
Deposits a thing
On trust with another,\footnote{335}
Let the trustee
(Faithfully) discharge
His trust, and let him
Fear Allah his Lord.
Conceal not evidence;
For whoever conceals it,—
His heart is tainted\footnote{336}
With sin. And Allah
Knoweth all that ye do.

SECTION 40.

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

\footnote{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.

\footnote{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.

\footnote{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 the seat of our affections, and false dealing taints all our affections.
And calleth you to account for it.
He forgiveth whom He pleaseth,
And punisheth whom He pleaseth.
For Allah hath power
Over all things.

285. The Messenger 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 Messengers. 337
"We make no distinction (they say)
Between one and another 338
Of his Messengers." And they say:
"We hear, and we obey:
(We seek) Thy forgiveness, 339
Our Lord, and to Thee
Is the end of all journeys."

286. On no soul doth Allah
Place a burden greater
Than it can bear. 340
It gets every good that it earns.

337. This Sûra 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 Allah’s help
and guidance.

338. Cf. ii. 253, n. 289. It is not for us to make any distinction between one and
another of Allah’s Messengers: we must honour them all equally, though we know that
Allah 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 realise how far from perfection we
are, and we humbly pray to Allah for the forgiveness of our sins. We feel that Allah
imposes no burden on us that we cannot bear, and with this realisation 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 Allah 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.
We must not be arrogant, and think that because Allah has granted us His favour 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 realisation that we have all the greater need for Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

And so we end the whole argument of the Sûra with a prayer for Allah's help, not in our own selfish ends, but in our resolve to uphold Allah's truth against all Unbelief.

341. We must not be arrogant, and think that because Allah has granted us His favour 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 realisation that we have all the greater need for Allah's mercy and forgiveness.

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;
Grant us victory
Over the unbelievers.

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; Grant us victory Over the unbelievers.
APPENDIX 1.

The abbreviated Letters (*Al-Muqaṭṭa‘āt*)

Certain Suras have certain initials prefixed to them, which are called the "Abbreviated letters." A number of conjectures have been made as to their meaning. Opinions are divided as to the exact meaning of each particular letter or combination of letters, and it is agreed that only Allah knows their exact meaning.

Their presence is not inconsistent with the character of the Qurān as a "plain book." The book of nature is also a plain book, but how few can fully understand it? Every one can get out of the Qurān plain guidance for his life according to his capacity for spiritual understanding. As his capacity grows, so will his understanding grow. The whole Book is a Record for all time. It must necessarily contain meanings that only gradually unfold themselves to humanity.

This is not a mystery of the same class as "mysteries" by which we are asked to believe against the dictates of reason. If we are asked to believe that one is three and three is one, we can give no intelligible meaning to the words. If we are asked to believe that certain initials have a meaning which will be understood in the fullness of time, we are asked to draw upon Faith, but we are not asked to do any violence to our reason.

I shall try to discuss some of the probable meanings of any particular abbreviated letters or set of abbreviated letters on the first occasion on which it appears in the Qurān. But it may be desirable here to take a general view of the facts of their occurrence to help us in appreciating the various views which are held about them.

There are 29 letters in the Arabic alphabet (counting hamza and alif as two letters), and there are 29 Suras which have abbreviated letters prefixed to them. One of these Suras (S. xlii.) has two sets of abbreviated letters, but we need not count this Sura twice. If we take the half of the alphabet, omitting the fraction, we get 14, and this is the number of letters which actually occur in the *Muqatta‘āt*.

The 14 letters, which occur in various combinations, are:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ا} & \quad \text{ص} & \quad \text{ك} & \quad \text{ه} \\
\text{ح} & \quad \text{ط} & \quad \text{ل} & \quad \text{ي} \\
\text{ر} & \quad \text{ع} & \quad & \\
\text{س} & \quad \text{ق} & \quad & \\
\end{align*}
\]
Appendix 1.

The science of phonetics tells us that our vocal sounds arise from the expulsion of the air from the lungs, and the sounds are determined by the way in which the breath passes through the various organs of speech, e.g., the throat (guttural), or the various positions of the tongue to the middle or front of the palate or to the teeth, or the play of the lips. Everyone of these kinds of sounds is represented in these letters.

Let us now examine the combinations.

Three of these letters occur alone, prefixed each to only one Sūra. The letters and Sūras are:

S. xxxviii.
S. i.
S. lxxviii.

The combinations of two letters occur in ten Sūras as shown below. Three of them occur only once each, but the fourth ٍحم occurs in seven consecutive Sūras.

S. xx.
S. xxvii.
S. xxxvi.
S. xl.
S. xli.
S. xliii.
S. xlvii.
S. xlv.
S. xli.
S. xlvi.

Note that S. xlii. has a double combination of abbreviated letters, one of two followed by one of three. See under combinations of five.

There are three combinations of three letters each, occurring as follows in 13 Sūras:

S. ii.
S. iii.
S. xxix.
S. xxx.
S. xxxi.
S. xxxii.
S. x.
S. xi.
S. xii.
S. xiv.
S. xv.
Combinations of four letters occur twice, each only once:

S. vii.
S. xlii.

Note that the three preceding and the two following Sūras have the triple letters.

Finally there remain the combinations of five letters, each of which occurs once only, as follows:

S. xix.
S. xlii.

In S.xlii. the حم and عسق are put in separate verses. From that point of view they may be considered two separate combinations. The first combination has already been listed under the group of two-letter combinations.

This arithmetical analysis brings certain facts into prominence. I do not know how far they have a bearing on the inner meaning of the Muqatta‘āt.

The combinations of abbreviated letters that run in a series in consecutive Sūras is noticeable. For example, حم occurs in seven consecutive Sūras from xl. to xlvi. The combination أُم occurs in six consecutive Sūras x. to xv., but in one of them (S. xiii.) it is modified to أُم connecting it with the أُم series. The أُم series covers 6 Sūras. It begins with S. ii. and S. iii., which are practically the beginning of the Qur-ān, and ends with the four consecutive Sūras xxix. to xxxii. I call S. ii. and S. iii. practically the beginning of the Qur-ān, because S. i. is considered a general introduction to the Qur-ān, and the first Sipāra is commonly known as أُم , the first verse of S. ii. The combination طس is prefixed to S. xxvi. and S. xxviii., but the intervening S. xxvii. has the combination طس , which may be considered a syncopated form, or the three-letter combination طس may be considered an extended form of طس. Again the question arises: does the حم in أُم , and طس, stand for the same signification, or does it mean a different thing in each case? We may generalise and say that there are three series of six, and one series of three, and the others occur all singly.

We should logically look for a common factor in the Sūras bearing the same initials, and this factor should be different for Sūras bearing other initials. In all cases where the abbreviated letters occur, there is some mention of the Qur-ān or the Book. The Itqān makes an exception in the case of three Sūras 'Ankabūt (S. xxix), Rūm (S. xxx), and Nūn (S. lxviii). But a close perusal will show that these Sūras are no exceptions. In xxix. 27 we have a reference to
the Book remaining in the family of Abraham, and later on we have a whole Section, devoted to the Book, with special reference to the continuity of revelation in the previous Books and the Qur-ān (xxix. 45-51). In xxx. 58 there is express mention of the Qur-ān, and the whole argument of the Sūra leads up to the intimate relation between Allah's "Signs" in nature (xxx. 20-27) and His revelation in the Qur-ān. In S. lxviii, the very first verse begins the theme with the Pen as the instrument of writing, exhorts Al-Muṣṭafā to stand forth boldly to proclaim the Message, and ends (lxviii. 52) with the declaration that it is a Message for all the worlds.

These are general considerations, which I have thought it most convenient to present in the form of an Appendix.