The foolish among the people will say: 'What has turned them away from their Qibla which they followed?' Say: 'To Allah belong the East and the West. He guides whom He pleases to the right path'.

Commentary:

In the preceding verses the Quran spoke of the people that have gone before, at the same time hinting at the difference between their deeds and those of the Muslims. In the present verse it introduces a subject in which the Muslims differ from other People of the Book i.e. the subject of Qibla.

It is a usual practice with the Quran that it does not abruptly give any new commandment such as might appear hard to men. It generally begins by preparing the ground for the acceptance of such commandment by giving arguments in its favour and answering some objections that might possibly arise against it. See also 2:184, 185.

Similar is the case here. As the commandment regarding the change of Qibla was likely to prove a stumbling block for some people, so the ground is prepared by making a general observation to the effect that the selection of a particular direction does not really matter. What matters is the spirit of obedience to God on the one hand and unity among the Faithful on the other. The clause, To Allah belong the East and the West, signifies that the selection of the East or the West is not of much importance, the real object being God only. The selection of a particular direction is primarily meant for the purpose of unity among the Faithful. But the direction must also be good, and God was now going to choose a good direction for the Muslims and the objections of the people would prove their own folly.
144. And thus have We made you an exalted nation, that you may be guardians over men, and the Messenger of God may be a guardian over you. And We did not appoint the Qibla which thou didst follow, except that We might know him who follows the Messenger of God from him who turns upon his heels. And this is indeed hard, except for those whom Allah has guided. And it does not behove Allah to let your faith go in vain; surely, Allah is Compassionate and Merciful to the people.

150. Important Words:

اللَّهُ (exalted) is derived from رَسُولُ (meaning, he stood in between two things). رَسُولُ (wasat) or رَسُولُ (wasaatal) means, he was or became good and noble. الوَسْطُ (the middle) means: (1) occupying the middle position or taking the middle course; (2) good and exalted in rank (Aqrab). That the word الوَسْطُ is used here in the sense of good and exalted, is clear from 3:111 where Muslims are called the best people.

ٍمَلَأُ (that We might know) signifies that We may make known or distinguish. In fact, God being Omniscient knows all things; so He does not stand in need of knowing a thing because everything is already known to Him. The word has been used elsewhere also in this sense (33:51). The expression من (from him who) occurring after it also shows that the word is used here in the sense of distinguishing or making known to the people.

Commentary:

The clause, and thus have We made you an exalted nation, refers to, and is connected with, the concluding clause of the preceding verse i.e. He guides whom He pleases to the right path. God means to say that whatever guidance He sends down to the Muslims is for their own good and it is through His guidance that they have been made an exalted nation. So in the matter of the Qibla, too, they should be prepared to accept His guidance which is meant for their own good. This will make them "guardians over men" and the Messenger of God a "guardian over the Muslims."

Muslims are told that, as decreed by God, they are to become the leaders of men and win the pleasure of God by their good deeds and that on that account they will naturally become recipients of God's special favours, with the result that other people will be forced to the conclusion that the religion which they follow is the true religion. In this way will Muslims bear witness to the truth of Islam, just as the Holy Prophet was a witness of its truth for them.

Another meaning of the clause, that you may be guardians over men, is that each generation of Muslims should guard and watch over the next generation. Being the best of people, it is incumbent upon them to be always on their guard against falling away from the high standard of life expected of them, and to see that each succeeding generation also follows
the path pursued by those who enjoyed the ennobling company of the Holy Prophet. Thus the Holy Prophet was to be a guardian over his immediate followers, while they in turn were to be guardians over their successors, and so on.

Taking the particle \( \text{over} \) in the clause under discussion to mean “against” and the word \( \text{guardian} \) to mean “witness”, which it often does, the clause would mean “that you may be witnesses against men and the Holy Prophet may be a witness against you,” i.e., the Holy Prophet would serve as a mirror for the Muslims by looking into which they would be able to see their own shortcomings, while the lives of true Muslims would serve as a model for other people who, by comparing their lives with those of true Muslims, would see and realize their own defects and correct them accordingly. This state of affairs could be brought about only if Muslims faithfully followed all the behests of God including the one regarding Qibla, which was important as a rallying-point for the new community.

It may be noted here that, as hinted in the words, and We did not appoint the Qibla which thou didst follow, the Holy Prophet had adopted the Temple at Jerusalem as his Qibla by God’s command; but as it was meant by God to be only a temporary Qibla, and was to be subsequently replaced by the Ka’ba which was to be the Islamic Qibla for all time, the command with regard to the temporary Qibla was not included in the Quran. This shows that all such commandments as possessed temporary application were not included in the Quran; only those were included which were of a permanent nature. Hence the theory that the Quran contains some verses that now stand abrogated is quite unfounded.

The Arabs were greatly attached to the Ka’ba, the ancient house of worship at Mecca. It was their national Temple which had come down to them from the days of Abraham. It, therefore, proved a severe trial for them when they were asked at the very inception of Islam at Mecca to abandon the Ka’ba in favour of the Temple at Jerusalem which was the Qibla of the People of the Book. And later on at Medina the change of the Qibla from the Temple at Jerusalem to the Ka’ba proved a great trial for both Jews and Christians. It was very hard for them to abandon their Qibla for a rival temple which had been held sacred by the pagan Arabs. Thus God provided a trial for both the People of the Book and the idolaters of Mecca.

The Temple of Solomon at Jerusalem was not adopted as Qibla by the Holy Prophet to conciliate the Jewish population of Medina, as is wrongly supposed by Sale and other Christian critics, because it was not at Medina that this Temple was adopted as the Qibla. It had already been the Qibla of the Muslims at Mecca where there was no Jewish or Christian population to placate (Bukhari & Jarir). If, by appointing a Qibla, the Holy Prophet had intended to win over a people, the natural course would have been to appoint the Ka’ba as a Qibla while at Mecca and turn round to the Temple of Jerusalem at Medina. But what actually happened was quite the reverse. Moreover, the Quran expressly says that the adoption of neither of the Qiblas was meant to win over any people to Islam, but was intended only as a trial to distinguish the true believers from those not true.

The words, \( \text{it does not behave Allah to let your faith go in vain} \), have a twofold meaning: (1) that this change of Qibla is in no way calculated adversely to affect the faith of Muslims but would actually strengthen it; (2) that if Muslims were not directed to turn to the Ka’ba, they would not inherit the blessings resulting from the prayers of Abraham offered at the time of its building (2: 130). It was
145. Verily, We see thee turning thy face often to heaven; surely, then, will We make thee turn to the Qibla which thou likest. 'So, turn thy face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you be, turn your faces towards it. And they to whom the Book has been given know that this is the truth from their Lord; and Allah is not unmindful of what they do.\(^\text{151}\)

\(^\text{2:150, 151.}\)

impossible that the Companions of the Holy Prophet who had displayed such steadfast loyalty and devotion to their noble ideals should not have been made heirs to the blessings contained in Abraham's prayers with which the Promised Prophet was to be so closely associated. The faith of Muslims would, as it were, go in vain if they remained detached from the Ka'ba and did not inherit its blessings.

151. **Important Words:**

- **قد** (verily) means, already; sometimes; often; verily, etc. (Lane).
- **قلب** (turning) is derived from **قلب** which means, (1) he made the thing change direction; (2) he turned it about so that its face and back changed directions; (3) he turned it upside down; (4) he turned it inside out; (5) he changed its condition. The word **قلب** gives almost the same meaning but with greater intensification. **قلب سل»** means, the thing turned over and over, doing so much and repeatedly (Aqrab). The expression **قلب وجهك** would therefore mean, turning thy face with eagerness and anxiety to receive an order.

- **فلنرى** (We will make thee turn) is derived from **وَلَّبَ** which again is derived from **وَلَا**. **وَلَّبَّ** The expression **وَلَّبَ** gives two distinct meanings: (1) he made him ruler or master or guardian of it; (2) he made it change direction or he made it turn towards a thing or away from it as the case may be (Aqrab).

- **الحرم الحرام** (Sacred) is derived from **حرم** which means, it was or became forbidden, prohibited or unlawful whether from sanctity or owing to its being injurious. **حرم الديني** means, he denied or refused him the thing. Thus **حرم** means: (1) forbidden and unlawful; (2) sacred and inviolable (Aqrab). **المسجد الحرام** signifies, the Sacred Mosque at Mecca i.e. the Ka'ba.

**Commentary:**

While at Mecca, the Holy Prophet had orders to turn his face in Prayers towards the sacred Temple at Jerusalem. The Prophet, of course, obeyed the divine behest; but, as in his heart of hearts he desired the Ka'ba to be his Qibla and had a sort of intuition that eventually he would be ordered to turn his face towards it, he generally tried to choose such a place for worship where he could keep both the sacred Temple at Jerusalem and the Sacred Mosque of Mecca before him. When, however, the Holy Prophet emigrated to Medina, it became impossible for him to turn his face to both the places at one and the same time, and in compliance with divine command he was forced to turn his face to the Temple at Jerusalem alone. With this change the inner desire of the Holy Prophet naturally became intensified, and though, out of deference to
God's command, he did not actually pray for the change, yet he anxiously and eagerly looked towards heaven for an order to that effect. The clause, *verily We see thee turning thy face often to heaven*, is therefore highly eulogistic of the Prophet, inasmuch as it indicates (1) that the Holy Prophet had such great insight into spiritual matters that in spite of the interim command from God he knew that sooner or later the order for turning the face towards the Ka'ba would come; (2) that despite his great desire that the Ka'ba should be appointed as Qibla, the Holy Prophet had such extraordinary respect for his Lord's command that he refrained from even praying to that effect; (3) that God the Almighty had such great love for His Messenger that He most graciously refers to his turning his face towards heaven and expedites the command about the change of Qibla, lovingly adding, *We will make thee turn to the Qibla which thou likest*; and (4) that God had such great regard for the wish of the Prophet that He not only ordered him to turn his face towards the Qibla of his liking but at the same time hinted that He would soon make him master and guardian of it; for, as explained under Important Words, the expression also means, "We will make thee master or guardian." Truly did 'A'isha say to her illustrious husband, "I see that God hastens to fulfil your wishes" (Bukhārī, ch. on Tafsīr).

After the above introduction follows the commandment about the change of Qibla in the words, *So turn thy face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you be, turn your faces towards it*. This commandment was given after the Holy Prophet had emigrated to Medina and had stayed there for about sixteen months. The words "Sacred Mosque" do not merely stand for the Ka'ba but also provide an argument in favour of the change ordered. The Mosque was sacred and full of blessings and would prove a sanctuary for the Faithful. The words, *wherever you be, turn your faces towards it*, have been added with a threefold purpose: (1) to make it clear that the order was not meant for the people of Medina only but for all Muslims wherever they might be; (2) to point to the fact that one of the reasons underlying the order relating to the Qibla was to bring about unity and uniformity among all Muslims, wherever they might be; and (3) to hint that the commandment did not apply to the Holy Prophet only but extended to all Muslims, for whereas, in the preceding clause the Quran says, *turn thy face*, in the clause under comment it says, *turn your faces*.

The words, *They to whom the Book has been given know that this is the truth from their Lord*, mean that Jews and Christians were convinced on the basis of prophecies found in their scriptures having special reference to the Ka'ba and the Holy Prophet (Isa. 45: 13, 14; John 4: 21; Deut. 33: 2; Gen. 21: 21) that the commandment about the change of the Qibla from the Temple at Jerusalem to the Ka'ba at Mecca was truly from God. Mecca lies in what is known as the Desert of Faran or Paran mentioned in some of the above-mentioned verses of the Bible, and therefore the Jews knew that the prophecies contained in them applied to the Ka'ba and the Holy Prophet.

It may be noted here that, though in ordinary circumstances, the Muslims are enjoined to turn their faces to the Ka'ba when saying their Prayers, yet as direction is of secondary importance, Islam ordains that, if in special circumstances, it becomes difficult for a man to turn his face to the Ka'ba or to keep it so turned, he can say his Prayers in any direction that may be convenient. For instance, when a man does not know in which direction the Ka'ba lies, while travelling at night in a Railway train or on the back of an animal, etc., he can pray facing any direction. Similarly, a sick
146. And even if thou shouldst bring every Sign to those who have been given the Book, they would never follow thy Qibla; nor wouldst thou follow their Qibla; nor would some of them follow the Qibla of others. And if thou shouldst follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to thee, then thou shalt surely be of the transgressors.152

man lying in bed may pray in a lying posture facing any direction that he may find convenient.

152. Commentary:

This verse points to the hostility of Jews and Christians not only to Islam but also to one another. The Jews had Jerusalem as their Qibla (See I. Kings 8: 22–30; Dan. 6: 10; Ps. 5: 7; Jonah, 2: 4) while the Samaritans, a disowned section of the Jews, who also followed the Mosaic Law, had adopted a certain mountain in Palestine, named Gerizim, as their Qibla (John, 4: 20 and Commentary on the New Testament by Right Rev. W. Walsham How, D.D., published by Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, under this verse). As regards the early Christians, they followed the Qibla of the Jews (Acts 3: 1; Enc. Brit., 14th edition, v. 676; Jew. Enc. vi. 53) but we learn from authentic sources that when a party of the Christians of Najran paid a visit to Medina to have a discussion with the Holy Prophet on some doctrinal point, they worshipped in the Holy Prophet's mosque at Medina, with their faces turned to the East (Zurqäni, iv. 41). Thus the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Christians followed different Qiblas owing to their mutual jealousy and enmity. In these circumstances it was vain to expect them to follow the Qibla of the Muslims, and when obsolete faiths refused to follow the true Qibla, how could a true believer follow a Qibla that had become obsolete.

The concluding clause speaks of the practice of the People of the Book as vain "desires," not because they were not originally based on revelation but because they were opposed to the new revelation that had appointed the Ka'ba as Qibla. He who insists on sticking to an order that is no longer in force really follows naught but his own desire.

The words, then thou shalt surely be of the transgressors, do not evidently refer to the Holy Prophet, because, (1) he could in no circumstances go against Allah's commandment, and (2) the foregoing part of this very verse says about him, nor wouldst thou follow their Qibla, and (3) it is clearly stated in the preceding verse that he loved to turn his face towards the Ka'ba and eagerly awaited a divine commandment to that effect. It is, therefore, unthinkable that the Prophet could forsake the Qibla of his own liking. The words obviously refer, and the rules of the Arabic language as well as the usage of the Quran bear out this reference, either to the reader in general or to every individual Muslim who followed the Holy Prophet.
147. Those to whom We have given the Book recognize it even as they recognize their sons, but surely some of them conceal the truth knowingly.\(^\text{153}\)

148. It is the truth from thy Lord; be not therefore of those who doubt.\(^\text{154}\)

149. And everyone has a goal which dominates him; vie, then, with one another in good works. Wherever you be, Allah will bring you all together. Surely, Allah has the power to do all that He wills.\(^\text{155}\)

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153. Important Words:

- **recognize** is derived from which means, he knew or recognized or perceived a thing. Though the word is also used of such knowledge as is derived through the senses, it is particularly used of such knowledge as is obtained by thinking and meditating (Mufradat & Aqrab).

154. Important Words:

- **truth** means: (1) a truth; (2) a thing foreordained by God; (3) an established fact; (4) a right; (5) certainty and conviction (Aqrab).

155. Important Words:

- **goal** is derived from **face** therefore, means: (1) a direction to
which one turns one's face; (2) a goal or an object (Aqrab).

(vie with one another) is formed from استقرا which is derived from سباق which means; he went ahead of him and left him behind; he outstripped him; he excelled him in some quality. سباق means: (1) he tried to go ahead of others so as to reach the goal first; (2) he hastened and employed his full powers to attain or reach an object (Aqrab & Lane).

(good works) is the plural of خيرات which means: (1) anything excessively good; (2) any thing superior to other things (Aqrab).

Commentary:

This short verse contains in a few words a mighty lesson as to how the Muslims can achieve success in life. First, they should fix for themselves a goal and that goal should not be the attainment of a particular good but of every good. Nay, they should aspire for more than that. They should try to attain such things as are exceedingly good and superior to others. Again, they should not seek these things in a careless and haphazard manner but should hasten towards them, vying with one another in a spirit of healthy emulation to reach the goal before others.

The expression (vie with one another) used here in the plural form also points to the fact that in this race for all that is good Muslims should try to help those who are weak and assist them in the attainment of virtue. A true Muslim should not only himself strive after virtue but should also invite others to attain to the same stage of virtue which he himself has attained. The spiritual race referred to in the verse thus becomes a most peculiar race in which the competitors not only vie with one another but also look towards their comrades and help such of them as may stumble on their way or be lax in other respects.

The clause, Wherever you be, Allah will bring you all together, means that a Muslim should not think of vying with only those who immediately surround him and thus be satisfied by outstripping them, but should also remember the fact that in far-off places there may be those who are running very fast—faster than those who surround him—and as God will judge all together, a Muslim should not be unmindful of the unknown competitors but should try to spend his energies to the fullest possible extent so that he may truly top the list.

The clause is capable of yet another interpretation. It is human nature that when a man comes to know that the result of his works would be announced publicly, he strives all the harder to outdo others in the discharge of his duties. Hence, God calls upon Muslims to bear in mind that on a certain day they will be gathered together with the peoples of all ages and the results of their deeds will be announced before that huge assemblage; so they should exert themselves accordingly.

The clause, Surely, Allah has the power to do all that He wills, is intended to remind Muslims that there is no limit to man's spiritual progress and development. A man can rise to any stage of progress and yet the All-Powerful God can help and guide him to the attainment of a still higher stage.

The words (which dominates him) literally mean, which he makes dominant over him, i.e., a man first sets up an objective and then makes it a dominating factor in his life. The expression also means, to which he turns his face. In both these senses the underlying idea is that of engrossment and devotion.
150. And from wheresoever thou comest forth, turn thy face towards the Sacred Mosque; for that is indeed the truth from thy Lord. And Allah is not unmindful of what you do.\textsuperscript{156}

151. And from wheresoever thou comest forth, turn thy face towards the Sacred Mosque; and wherever you be, turn your faces towards it that people may have no argument against you, except those who are unjust—so fear them not, but fear Me—and that I may perfect My favour upon you; and that you may be rightly guided.\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{a}See 2:145. \textsuperscript{b}2:145, 150. \textsuperscript{c}5:4. \textsuperscript{d}5:4; 12:7.

\textbf{156. Important Words:}

\textit{خرجت} (thou comest forth) is from \textit{خرج} which means: (1) he came forth; (2) he went forth; (3) he came forth or went forth for a battle (Aqrab).

\textbf{Commentary:}

Now when the Ka’ba had been appointed the Qibla of Muslims, it became necessary that Mecca should come under their control. The verse under comment suitably refers to that matter. Muslims are bidden henceforward to direct all their energies to the conquest of Mecca. In all his campaigns, the Holy Prophet was commanded to keep in view the taking of Mecca, which had now become the centre of Islam. This is borne out by the expression \textit{خرجت} (thou comest forth) which also means “thou goest forth for a battle.” The word \textit{خرجت “thou comest forth or goest forth” has thus nothing to do with the turning of the face to the Ka’ba at the time of Prayers; for Prayers are not performed walking. Obviously the commandment cannot mean that one should, while walking, pray with one’s face turned toward the Ka’ba.

The words, \textit{for that is indeed the truth from thy Lord}, evidently imply that Mecca was sure to fall one day into the hands of the Holy Prophet. As considering the then helpless condition of the Muslims, such an achievement appeared to be almost impossible, so God gave His Messenger the assurance that the promise was a true one and its fulfilment was absolutely certain.

The expression, \textit{and Allah is not unmindful of what you do}, provides a reason for the above promise. God was well aware of the deeds of the Muslims, knowing full well how they were striving to win His favour; so He could not let their labours go unrewarded. Just as He had established their connection with the Ka’ba spiritually, so would He make them its masters physically.

\textbf{157. Commentary:}

The singular person \textit{خرجت} (thou comest forth) is used to emphasize the fact that the conquest
of Mecca was the personal responsibility of the Holy Prophet. If he could persuade others to help him, well and good; if not, he alone stood responsible before God—a mighty responsibility indeed which also strikes at the very root of the objection that Islam waited for a declaration of the defensive war till it was strong enough to hit back.

The plural person in حيٰث ما کِتَمَ (wherever you be) is used so as to include the Muslims of all places. Next to the Holy Prophet, they are also commanded to keep the same object in view i.e. the conquest of Mecca. This verse and the preceding one should afford no ground for inferring that Islam bids its followers to wage an aggressive war. For, as amply borne out by history, by the time these verses were revealed, war had already commenced with the Meccans and it was they that had forced it upon the unwilling Muslims.

The words, that people may have no argument against you, mean that if the Muslims failed to conquer Mecca, the objection would quite legitimately be raised by the enemies of Islam that the Holy Prophet had not fulfilled the prayer of Abraham, contained in 2:130, and therefore, could not claim to be the Promised Prophet. Moreover, the House to which the Muslims were commanded to turn their faces at Prayers was, while under the control of the heathen Meccans, full of idols. If the idols had continued to remain in the Ka'ba, the Muslims might have been accused of worshipping idols. This objection could be effectively answered, if the Holy House, which had been originally dedicated to the worship of One God, had been cleared of idols. Hence the commandment to substitute the Ka'ba for the Temple at Jerusalem as Qibla was naturally followed by the injunction about the conquest of Mecca.

It may be added here that the conquest of Mecca by the Muslims had also been predicted in the Quran in 28:86, and 17:81.

The prophecy contained in Deut. 33:2 was also fulfilled when the Holy Prophet entered Mecca as a conqueror at the head of ten thousand Muslims.

The clause, that I may perfect My favour upon you, provides yet another argument in favour of the commandment relating to the conquest of Mecca. God means to say that with the taking of Mecca God's favour on the Muslims would begin to be perfected; for it would mean the subjugation of all Arabia and the influx of thousands of men into the fold of Islam. The result amply justified the prophecy; for the conquest of Mecca was rapidly followed by the conversion to Islam of thousands of Arabs.

Another reason why the conquest of Mecca was followed by a general influx of Arabs into Islam was that although the Arabs followed no revealed Book, yet the prophecy of Abraham that Mecca would not be conquered by the followers of any false Prophet, and any people attempting it would meet with destruction was well known to them. They had only recently seen a remarkable illustration of the fulfilment of this prophecy in the miraculous destruction of the Abyssinian invader Abraha and his powerful army. Thus when Mecca fell into the hands of the Holy Prophet, they were at once convinced of his truth and thousands of them hastened to embrace Islam.

In this and the preceding verses (vv. 145 and 150), the command to turn to the Ka'ba has been mentioned thrice. This is not a repetition; for the first command i.e. in v. 145 pertains to the change of the Qibla, while the second and the third i.e. in vv. 150, 151 refer to the conquest of Mecca. But here, too, there is truly speaking no repetition, for the command
152. Even as aWe have sent to you a Messenger from among yourselves who recites Our signs to you, and purifies you, and teaches you the Book and Wisdom, and teaches you that which you did not know.\textsuperscript{158}

\textsuperscript{a}See 2: 130.

about the conquest of Mecca contained in each of these two verses serves a different purpose. In v. 150 Muslims are asked to turn their attention to the conquest of Mecca because God wished them to do so. So they were in duty bound to carry it out undeterred by any fear of failure; whereas in the verse under comment i.e. v. 151 the benefits which were to accrue to Muslims on their carrying out the command relating to the conquest of Mecca have been mentioned. Those benefits briefly are: (1) refutation of the objections and criticism of the enemy; (2) conversion to Islam of hundreds of thousands of Arabs, including the kith and kin of the Muslims; and (3) enlargement of the political power of Islam.

158. Commentary:

The word \textit{even as} meaning “even as” has been used to connect this verse with the preceding one by pointing out that God will bestow upon the believers the favours mentioned in the preceding verse even as, or just as, He has favoured them with a Prophet.

With a slight change in the arrangement of the words this verse refers to the work of the Holy Prophet in exactly the same words in which Abraham prayed to God about the appearance of a Prophet among the Meccans (2: 130), which clearly shows that Abraham’s prayer had found fulfilment in the person of the Holy Prophet. The change in arrangement is this, that while recounting the favours of God this verse, unlike verse 2: 130, mentions the work of purification before that of the teaching of the Book and Wisdom, because though in theory the teaching of the Book may come first, in actual practice purification is more important than the teaching of the Book and Wisdom; for whereas the former is the end, the latter is only the means to that end.

Another difference between this verse and 2: 130 is that whereas the latter ends with the words, \textit{Thou art the Mighty, the Wise}, the former concludes with the words, \textit{And (he) teaches you that which you did not know}. The reason for this change is not far to seek. Abraham had used the words, \textit{Surely, Thou art the Mighty, the Wise}, in his prayer, meaning that God being Mighty, it was not difficult for Him to accept his prayer; and as He was also Wise, He knew best what the requirements of his posterity would be. But when God spoke of the actual fulfilment of this prayer, it was quite unnecessary to repeat these words. So in place of the above-quoted words, the words, \textit{(he) teaches you that which you did not know}, have been added to signify: firstly, that, while accepting the prayer God had granted even more than Abraham had prayed for; and secondly, that the teachings of the Holy Prophet were far in advance of the teachings of the former Prophets and were such as the world really needed but had not so far known.
153. Therefore remember Me, I will remember you; and be thankful to Me and do not be ungrateful to Me.\(^{159}\)

154. O ye who believe, seek help with patience and prayer; surely, Allah is with the steadfast.\(^{160}\)

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159. **Important Words:**

- **ذكروا** (so remember Me, I will remember you): The verb ذكروا means, he remembered him; he bore it or him in mind; he spoke or talked of him. **ذكر** means, he remembered God; he glorified God and extolled His greatness; he prayed to Him or offered prayers to Him. **ذكر** means, God bestowed His favours on him; He called him to His presence to do him honour. The noun **ذكر** means, remembrance; mentioning or speaking of; eminence; honour; good name (Aqrab, Mufradāt &; Lane).

- **شكرًا** (render thanks) is from **شكر** i.e. he thanked; he was grateful. **شكر** means, he acknowledged the beneficence of God, rendering Him obedience and abstaining from disobedience (Lane).

**Commentary:**

Remembrance of God on the part of man means, to remember Him with love and devotion, to carry out His behests, to bear in mind His attributes, to glorify Him and offer prayers to Him; and remembrance of man on the part of God signifies, God’s drawing him near to Himself, bestowing favours on him and making provision for his welfare. Thus we are here told that if we seek nearness to God, He will certainly draw us near to Himself. According to yet another meaning of the word **ذكر** i.e. honour and eminence, the verse would mean that if the Muslims will remember God, He will make them honoured and eminent in the world.

The expression, remember Me, I will remember you, can also mean that one who truly loves God will eventually attract the love of God. Remembrance is really born of love and is in a way synonymous with it. Indeed, nobody can remember an object more than a lover does the object of his love.

160. **Important Words:**

- **صبر** (patience) means: (1) to be steadfast and constant in something; (2) to endure afflictions with fortitude and without complaint or murmur; (3) to hold fast to the Divine Law and the dictates of reason; (4) to refrain from doing what the Divine Law and reason forbid (Mufradāt).

**Commentary:**

The verse contains a golden principle of success. **Firstly**, a man should be constant in his endeavours, never relaxing his efforts and never losing heart, at the same time avoiding what is harmful and sticking fast to all that is good. **Secondly**, he should pray to God for success; for He alone is the source of all good.

The word صبر (patience) precedes the word **صبر** (prayer) in the verse to emphasize the importance of observing the laws of God which are sometimes flouted in ignorance. Ordinarily a prayer can be effective only when it is accompanied by the use of all the necessary means created.

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155. And say not of those who are killed in the cause of Allah that they are dead; nay, they are living; only you perceive not.161

by God for the attainment of an object. This fact, however, does not minimize the importance of prayer, nor does it impose any limit on the omnipotence of God. If God so wills it, prayer can work wonders even where all earthly means fail.

Islam does not teach utter and blind dependence on material means. Prayer indeed is the essence of Islam. Man is neither omniscient nor omnipotent, and if he does not seek divine guidance and assistance, he can neither see all good nor can he secure it for himself.

As explained under Important Words, the word مَبْنَاسِكُ (living) also signifies, enduring afflictions with fortitude and without complaint and murmur. In this sense the verse would mean that, the present being the time of war and bloodshed, Muslims should bear these hardships with perfect patience and fortitude and that if they did so, God would succour them in their trials.

The concluding portion of the verse i.e. Allah is with the steadfast, seems to confine itself to مَبْنَاسِكُ only, excluding the element of صَلَّة. But it is not so really, for مَبْنَاسِكُ in its wider sense includes prayer also. What is meant is this, that Allah is with those who are steadfast in their endeavours as well as steadfast in their prayers. The principle provides a wonderful key to success.

161. Important Words:

إِحَياُ (living) is the plural of مَبْنَاسِ which, among other things, means: (1) one whose life work does not go in vain; (2) one whose death is avenged. A well-known pre-Islamic poet, Hárid ibn Hilliza, author of the seventh Mu'allaqa, says:

Commentary:

The teaching about مَبْنَاسِ (steadfastness) naturally brings in the question of sacrifices that Muslims were making in the cause of Islam. Therefore the Quran suitably refers here to the subject of martyrs. Death is not the end of life, and in this respect believers and unbelievers stand on the same footing and the martyrs too enjoy no distinction. Nor would it be wrong to speak of them as dead in the ordinary sense of the word. But the word إِحَياُ (living) has been used here about martyrs in a special sense.

As explained under Important Words above, the word مَبْنَاسِ (living) is also applied to him whose work, or, more properly speaking, the cause for which he lays down his life, does not come to an end with his death. The verse, therefore, points out that those who lay down their lives for Islam should not be regarded as dead, because the cause for which they give their lives still stands and is all the more strongly upheld by others who take their places.

Again, according to the Arabic idiom, مَبْنَاسِ (living) is also one whose blood is avenged. The verse, therefore, implies that as full satisfaction is taken for the blood of Muslims
156. And *We will try you with something of fear and hunger, and loss of wealth and lives, and fruits; but give glad tidings to the patient.*

The verse comprises a great psychological truth which is calculated to exercise immense influence on the life and progress of a people. A community that does not duly honour those of its members who lay down their lives for the cause for which the community stands sows the seed of its own ruin. Again, a community which does not arrange to remove the fear of death from the hearts of its members seals its own fate. The verse under comment provides an effective safeguard against both these dangers.

162. Important Words:

لَيْكُمْ (and We will try you). لَايْكُمْ is derived from لَا which has two meanings: (1) learning the state or condition of a person by means of a trial or test whether through favours or afflictions; (2) manifesting the goodness or badness of an object by a similar means. لَا also means, a trial or a test imposed on a person with a view to learning or manifesting his true condition (Aqrab & Lane). See also 2: 50.

Commentary:

This verse comes as a fitting sequel to the preceding one. Muslims should be prepared not only to lay down their lives in the cause of Islam but also to suffer diverse forms of affliction which will be imposed on them as a trial. According to the Quran, God has generally two purposes in "proving" men. He "proves" or tries those who have attained to a high stage of spiritual advancement, as was the case with Abraham (2: 125); and He also tries those who have not yet attained to that stage (29:3). His object in "proving" the former is to bring them to the notice of the people and make them shine as models of virtue and purity; while in the case of the latter, the purpose is to make them acquainted with their own weaknesses so that they may try to improve their condition. Though misfortunes and afflictions involve a certain amount of pain, they also afford a good opportunity for spiritual reformation and purification. Thus afflictions and calamities have their use. They serve to strengthen the faith. Those who remain steadfast under trials, despite afflictions, become entitled to a great reward from God. A trial also sometimes becomes a means of exposing the weakness of a person and of his downfall; for after all it is an examination which, though held with the object of promoting a student, sometimes results in his failure. See 7: 177.
The tests by means of which God intended to “prove” the Faithful are, as stated in this verse: (1) Fear i.e. a state or condition in which fear will dominate them, the enemy surrounding them with diverse dangers. (2) Hunger i.e. shortage of food; the enemy will not only cut off their means of communication but will also completely boycott them, leaving them stranded without food or provision. The word “hunger” may also signify a state of famine. (3) Loss of wealth and property. The enemy will raid Muslims repeatedly and inflict heavy losses on them. (4) Loss of lives i.e. the cruel war inflicted on them by the enemy will also cause loss of life. (5) Loss of fruits. The action of the enemy will not be confined to inflicting loss of lives and property only but will extend to inflicting loss of crops as well. As مَثۡلُ (fruit) also means the fruit of one’s labour or the profit accruing to a man from any source, loss of fruits also signifies disorganization of trade and industry.

All these losses coming together constituted indeed a very heavy burden; but they were borne by the Muslims with such patience and fortitude as is unrivalled in all history. God tried them and found them truly patient.

163. Commentary:

This verse provides a true definition of the term مُصَبِّرٌ (a patient person) as mentioned in the concluding portion of the preceding verse. A مُصَبِّرٌ who is vouchsafed glad tidings in the foregoing verse is one who bears all sorts of calamities and afflictions with complete restraint and fortitude, uttering no word of complaint or murmur but sincerely saying, Surely to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return. These words comprise a formula which every Muslim is directed to utter when he is afflicted with any misfortune relating to life, property, etc.

God is the Master of all we possess, including our own selves. If the Owner in His infinite wisdom deems fit to take away anything from us, we have no ground for complaint or murmur. We should indeed be grateful for what we receive from God, but there is no justification for murmuring at a loss, because we possess no inherent right to any gift.

The clause, to Allah we belong, also teaches us the great spiritual truth that we have no real connection with the things of this world and therefore the loss of such things should cause us no real grief. Similarly, the other part of the formula, viz., and surely to Him shall we return, also contains an equally grand principle. We come from God and will have to go back to Him, when we shall have to render an account of all our deeds. So every misfortune that befalls us should, instead of depressing us, spur us to make yet greater efforts to achieve still better results in life. Thus the formula contained in this verse is not a mere verbal incantation but a great counsel and a great warning. When a Muslim sincerely utters this formula on occasions of loss, grief or bereavement, its true import is bound to be deeply impressed upon his mind and to sustain him in his hours of trials and tribulations. Nay, it is calculated to do something more; it helps to strengthen his connection with his Maker and make Him the centre of all his thoughts and actions.
158. It is these on whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is these who are rightly guided.  

159. Surely, Al-Ṣafā and Al-Marwa are among the Signs of Allah. It is, therefore, no sin for him who is on pilgrimage to the House, or performs 'Umra, to go round the two. And whoso does good beyond what is obligatory, surely then, Allah is Appreciating, All-Knowing.  

164. Commentary:

This verse speaks of the great reward of those who prove themselves to be truly or patient. It is, in fact, an explanation of the word, glad tidings, occurring in 2:156. Truly patient people who are steadfast in their connection with God and whom each and every affliction finds spiritually rising higher and higher will inherit three things: (1) blessings from their Lord; (2) His mercy; and (3) His guidance. God will bless them in every way, will cover them with His mercy and forgiveness and will look after them, providing guidance for them whenever they may need it. He will, as it were, become their friend and guardian, eager to come to their help on all occasions.

165. Important Words:

(Al-Ṣafā and Al-Marwa) are the names of two hills near the Ka'ba in Mecca, the first-mentioned being the nearer of the two. Both Arabian history and the traditions of Islam connect these hills with the story of Hagar and Ishmael when Abraham left them near these hills under God's command. Ishmael was yet a child, and when the scanty provisions ran out and he was in a pitiable condition for want of water, Hagar anxiously and repeatedly ran between these two hills in search of water and help, but none was found. When, however, she was in her seventh circuit, an angel of God called to her saying that God had brought forth a spring of water near her son and that she should go and look to it (Bukhari, ch. on Anbiyya). Thus the hills of Ṣafā and Ma'rā' became i.e. Signs of God worthy of due honour and respect in the sight of every true believer. The Bible also makes mention of Ma'rā' in a somewhat changed form (Gen. 2:2; also Enc. Bib. under Moriah) in connection with the sacrifice of Abraham's son.
(6) he overpowered a person in argument (Aqrab).

أغراب (performs ‘Umra) is derived from أغراب which means, he occupied or tenanted a house; he worshipped God and prayed to Him. أغراب means, he went to, or visited, a place. أغراب means, visiting a place; worshipping and praying to God; performing Lesser Pilgrimage in which some of the rites of حج are left out (Aqrab).

طاعون (does beyond what is obligatory) is derived from طاعون i.e. he obeyed; he did an act willingly and voluntarily. The infinitive طاعون means: (1) obedience; (2) doing an act willingly without its being obligatory on one. طاعون means, he performed an act with effort and volition. طاعون means, he performed a good act which was not obligatory on him (Aqrab & Mufradât).

Commentary:

To a superficial observer the verse under comment dealing with the subject of Pilgrimage appears to have no connection with the preceding ones which deal with the subject of trials and sacrifices. But a deeper study will at once disclose a very close connection between the two. The preceding verses warned Muslims to be prepared for sacrifices and gave them the glad tidings that if they performed the required sacrifices willingly and patiently, God would bless them greatly and would show special mercy to them and would remember them with kindness and would provide guidance for them whenever needed. Now, in order to bring home to them the truth of this promise, He invites the attention of Muslims to the great sacrifice of Abraham near the site of Al-Ṣafā and Al-Marwā. Abraham obeyed His Lord and left his wife Hagar and his son Ishmael near these two hills of Mecca, which was then a most desolate tract. The seed was sown in a soil which was apparently the most barren of all soils, but how wonderfully it prospered! God was a most loving and faithful God who so fondly remembered His servants, Abraham and Ishmael, even after the lapse of 2,500 years, and Muslims can expect the same love and the same fidelity from Him, if they too love and obey Him.

Ṣafā and Marwā, as explained under Important Words above, are two hills which stand as a memorial to Hagar's great patience and extraordinary loyalty to God on the one hand and to God's special treatment of her and her son on the other. A visit to these hills makes the pilgrim deeply impressed with the love, fidelity and power of God.

The words, it is no sin for him, should not be taken to mean that performing the circuit between Ṣafā and Marwā is only permissible and not obligatory. The expression is used simply to remove the aversion to such performance found among certain persons on the basis of the fact that heathen Arabs had placed two idols on these two hills. (Muslim). God removed this erroneous notion by saying that it was no sin to perform the circuit between Ṣafā and Marwā, which on account of the great sacrifice of Abraham, Hagar and Ishmael on the one hand and the resulting blessings of God on the other, had become أثر الله i.e. great Signs of God. That the performance of these circuits is obligatory in both حج and عمرة (the Greater and the Lesser Pilgrimage) is clear from the practice of the Holy Prophet and his injunctions to his followers (Bukhārī, ch. Al-Hajj).

The words, whoso does good beyond what is obligatory, do not refer to حج (Greater Pilgrimage), which under certain conditions is obligatory on each Muslim once in a lifetime, but to عمرة (Lesser Pilgrimage) which is not obligatory but simply supererogatory. The words may also be considered to refer to any additional حج or Pilgrimage which a Muslim may perform, after he has performed the one obligatory Pilgrimage.
160. Those who conceal what We have sent down of Signs and guidance after We have made it clear for the people in the Book, it is these whom Allah curses; and so curse them those who curse.166

161. But they who repent and amend and openly declare the truth, it is these to whom I turn with forgiveness, and I am Oft-Returning with compassion and Merciful.167

As this verse mentions the subject of Pilgrimage only secondarily, we are not giving here a note on the rites and philosophy of which will be discussed when we come to the relevant verses.

166. Important Words:

(om) (curses them). For the meaning of see note on 2 : 89.

Commentary:
The present verse has been taken to apply either to Muslims or Jews. In the former case the verse would be taken as a warning to Muslims that they should ever be careful to preach the truth of Islam and should in no circumstances hide or neglect it but should ever be ready to proclaim it, however bitter the opposition. Failing this, they will not only not attain the nearness of God but will be cast away from Him. If applied to Jews, and that indeed is the right application, the connection with the preceding verse may be easily seen in the reference to Al-Safa and Al-Marwa in that verse. It was at these places that Abraham left his wife Hagar, and his son, Ishmael, under God's command and it was here that, while building the Ka'ba, Abraham and Ishmael prayed to God for the appearance of a great Prophet among their progeny. The Quran thus refers here to the Jews who were concealing the prophecies contained in their scriptures about the Holy Prophet. The Jews are warned that if they concealed the clear prophecies given to them about the Arabian Prophet, in spite of the fact that they have now been reminded of them through the Quran, God would cast them away, depriving them of His mercy and condemning them to punishment in Hell. They are further warned that as God is the Lord of the entire universe, His curse will not come alone but everything which is subservient to Him will then begin to curse them—angels, men, the elements, laws of nature and all.

167. Important Words:

(amel) (amend) is derived from which means, he or it was or became good or virtuous or just or proper. (amel) means, he reformed him or he reformed himself or he amended. When it is followed by the preposition (between) as in it means, he brought about reconciliation between them (Aqrab).

Commentary:
God, not being vindictive, is ever ready to pardon those who repent and rectify their
162. Those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers, on them shall be the curse of Allah and of angels and of men all together.\(^\text{168}\)

163. They shall remain under it. The punishment shall not be lightened for them, nor shall they be granted respite.\(^\text{169}\)

mistakes. But repentance must be sincere and real. Mere verbal expression of regret is not sufficient. The evil-doer must try to make full amends for the wrong committed and should promise to bring about in himself a real change in future. It is only after a real change takes place in the sinner that forgiveness is promised to him. As to the Jews who concealed prophecies regarding the Holy Prophet, the verse lays down three conditions as a proof of real repentance. Firstly, they should declare their repentance and turn back from their wrong course. Secondly, they should make amends practically, not only by reforming themselves but also by trying to reform those who have been misled through them. Thirdly, they should openly declare the truth which they have been hiding regarding the prophecies in their scriptures. If they fulfilled these conditions, they would yet find God Forgiving and Merciful.

168. Commentary:

The word الناس (men) may either mean "all men" or "holy and virtuous men" i.e. those who deserve to be called "men" in the real sense of the word. This distinction is not arbitrary; for there is a class of men whom the Quran describes as "cattle or even worse" (7:180).

The cursing of the angels and the holy men means that as angels and holy men obey their Lord and Master and never go against His wishes, they would naturally sever connections with the disbelievers—the Jews—when they see Him doing the same. The angels, one of whose works is to help good men and punish the wicked, will turn against them and all good men will also strive to bring their evil efforts to naught. They will find the entire forces of God ranged against them.

If the word الناس (men) be taken to refer to all men, then the clause would mean that all men being subordinate to God, He would so arrange that no people would be able to help them against His decree.

169. Important Words:

نظر (be granted respite) is formed from نظر which means, (1) he looked; (2) he granted respite. They say نظر فلا أدن i.e. he granted him respite in respect of the payment of debt (Aqrab).

Commentary:

God is slow to punish but when the cup of the iniquities of a disbelieving people becomes full to the brim and all warning is lost upon them, then severe punishment overtakes them, and no further respite is granted; and as the punishment is primarily meant as a cure, it is of sufficiently long duration and persists till all vestige of spiritual disease is rooted out.
164. And your God is One God; there is no God but He, the Gracious, the Merciful.  

165. Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of night and day, and in the ships which sail in the sea with that which profits men, and in the water which Allah sends down from the sky and quickens therewith the earth after its death and scatters therein all kinds of beasts, and in the change of the winds, and the clouds pressed into service between the heaven and the earth,—are indeed signs for the people who understand.

170. Commentary:

As all sin springs from feebleness of faith, this verse fittingly refers to the unity of God, signifying that if people only believed in God's unity and refrained from setting up false gods, they would never digress from the right path. It must not, however, be understood that idol-worship consists in worshipping images only. Every man who loves anyone other than God as he ought to love Him, or fears anyone as he ought to fear Him, or trusts in anyone as he ought to trust in Him, is really guilty of idol-worship and must suffer the consequences thereof. In fact, the principal and primary object of religion, is to establish the unity of God, and the Quran has dealt with this subject in a manner and to an extent which has no parallel in any other Book. Islam condemns both (manifest or visible idolatry) and (hidden or invisible idolatry) in the strongest of terms.

The verse may also signify that, with the advent of Islam, God, the Maker of heavens and earth, no longer remains the God of this or that people only, but becomes the God of all peoples and all mankind. The word (the Gracious or the Provider for all peoples) occurring at the end of the verse also points to the same truth. In this sense the verse would be considered to be particularly connected with 2:159 above which speaks of the Saffa and the Marwa as the special Signs of Allah, serving as pointers to the mission of the Holy Prophet of Islam.

171. Important Words:

(alternation) is derived from . They say . i.e. he or it was or became his or its successor. means, he came after or remained after the man and stood in his place. means, he followed him as his successor. means: (1) they came one after another by turn; (2) they differed or disagreed . (ships) is derived from the verb . meaning, it became round or circular.
(al-fulk) means, a ship, or a boat, probably because it looks round and shapeless when seen at sea from a distance. The word is both singular and plural. dlAJ I (aljalak) means, the vault of heaven or the firmament in which the stars move. This is also probably owing to the apparently round shape of the sky (Aqrab, Mufradât & Lane).

دب (beast) is the active participle from د (prc~sed into service) is the passive participle from سakhkhara. They say سakhkhara-hu or سakhara-hū (not سkhira which gives a different meaning) i.e. (1) he employed him or imposed on him a task without compensation; (2) he subjugated him and made him subservient to himself. Thus سkhira is that who or which has been made subservient to another, being unable to free himself or itself from constraint (Aqrab).

Commentary:

This verse gives a twofold meaning, one literal and the other metaphorical. In the former sense, it supplies an argument in support of the existence of God referred to in the preceding verse. A careful study of the universe unfailingly points to a Creator on the one hand and to man being created with a definite object on the other. It also proves that, having created the world, God did not leave it alone but continues to watch over and control its affairs and is the First Cause of all change and every working in the universe. Heaven and earth, night and day (with alternating light and darkness), the supply of provisions, rainfall with its power of quickening and devastating, the means of communications, the blowing of winds and shade and sunshine, all point to one controlling agency, God, the Maker of heavens and earth. And if God has done so much for the material requirements of man, He cannot be imagined to have neglected his spiritual needs which are much more important. Let all thinking men think and ponder and again think and ponder.

The Quran takes the universe as a whole to prove its theme. The objects of nature taken individually do not furnish such conclusive evidence of the existence of God as the whole universe taken together. The earth may be said to owe its existence to a fortuitous concourse of atoms, or a similar reason may be given for the origin of the sun and the moon and so on. But when the universe as one united whole and the deep order that permeates it are taken into consideration, it becomes impossible to escape the conclusion, that this universe has not come into existence accidentally. Indeed, the consummate harmony that prevails throughout the universe forcefully points to the fact that the whole system has been created and is being directed by one Intelligent Being Who is All-Powerful and All-Knowing.

Taken in the metaphorical sense, the ship mentioned in the verse will be taken to stand for Prophets who help men to cross the gulfs of carnal desires and materialistic concepts of things which separate men from God, rain being likened to God's revelation which comes down like rain and gives life to the world after it has become dead. The clouds send down no new water. Water already exists in the vast oceans of the earth but, as it is impure, men cannot make use of it. God purifies it and changes it into clouds and then sends it back to earth in the form of pure rain-water. Similarly, by sending a new revelation
166. And there are some among men who take for themselves objects of worship other than Allah, loving them as they should love Allah. But believers are stronger in their love for Allah. And if those who transgress could now see the time when they shall see the punishment, they would realize that all power belongs to Allah and that Allah is severe in punishing.  

God purifies beliefs, which, with the passage of time, get mixed up with false notions and superstitious ideas. It is inconceivable that God Who supplies man with fresh rain-water for the maintenance of his physical life should have omitted to supply him with heavenly water which is so necessary for the preservation of his spiritual life. Similarly, night and day stand for the alternating periods of light and darkness, it being hinted that the coming of the Holy Prophet heralds the dawn of a new day.

Moreover, by laying special emphasis on the study of the phenomena of nature, in the verse under comment, the attention of disbelievers is also drawn to the fact that they could not possibly hope to succeed in their designs against the Holy Prophet, because the whole universe is controlled by God and is working in favour of His Prophet and in furthering his cause.

172. Important Words:

 Drain (other than) is derived from دُونِ, i.e., he or it was or became low, mean or weak. درون used as an adjective means, low, mean, paltry, or contemptible; also high and noble. When used as a preposition, as in the present verse, درون gives the sense of (1) this side of i.e., behind or lower in rank; (2) that side of i.e., ahead or higher in rank; (3) other than (Aqrab).

انداد (objects of worship). See 2: 23.

Commentary:

While dealing with the subject of idolatry the Quran makes use of the following four words: (1) لِهِ (like or equal); (2) شريك (co-partner or sharer); (3) الحاكم (worthy of worship); and (4) رب (sustainer). While the first two words are used only about those objects of worship that are other than God, the last two are used about God also. The word لِهِ (like or equal) which is used in the present verse refers to such objects of worship as are supposed to be like God or equal to Him, being contrary or opposed to the true God. Among those who have set up انداد (equals) with God may be mentioned the Zoroastrians who believe in two independent gods, i.e., Ormazd, the God of Light, and Ahriman, the God of Darkness.

Love of God is the essence of all religion. In Islam it forms the central point, the pivot round which the whole Islamic teaching revolves. No religion has laid so much emphasis on love of God as Islam has done. The Holy Prophet was so much engrossed in God that he was spoken of by the pagan Arabs as having fallen in love with Him, even as a lover falls in love with his beloved. No other subject has been so completely and so repeatedly dealt with in the Quran as God's beauty and excellence and such of His attributes as create an irresistible love and longing in the human soul for his Lord and Master Who is spoken of in the Quran as
167. **Aye, they would certainly realize if they could see the time when those who were followed shall disown their followers and shall see the punishment, and all their ties shall be cut asunder.**

168. And those who followed shall say: ‘If we could only return, we would disown them as they have disowned us.’ Thus will Allah show them their works as anguish for them, and they shall not get out of the Fire.

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**Commentary:**

This verse vividly describes the scene when those guilty of idolatry will be called to account for their evil beliefs and practices. They will look to their leaders for help and guidance, but the latter will disown them and all ties of love and kinship between them will be cut asunder and all supports and all means of rescue will be lost. The verse is a stern warning to those who blindly follow their leaders and, being misled by them, reject God’s Messengers.

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**Important Words:**

- **وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ آتَبَعُواٌ لَوْ أَنِّي لَمْ أَكْتَمْكُهُ فَسَتَّبَارُواْ مِنْهُمْ**
  - They say: ‘If we could only return, we would disown them as they have disowned us.’

- **كَمَا تَبْدَأُونَ وَمَا هُمْ يُفْرَجُونَ مِنَ التَّارِي**
  - Thus will Allah show them their works as anguish for them, and they shall not get out of the Fire.

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**Commentary:**

Having despairs of receiving help from their leaders, the disbelievers will, on the Day of Judgement, wish that they may be sent back to the
169. O ye men, eat of "what is lawful and good in the earth; and b follow not the footsteps of Satan; surely he is to you an open enemy.\footnote{b2: 209 ; 6: 143; 24: 22. c7: 23; 12: 6; 28: 16; 35: 7; 36: 61.}

world so that they may denounce these leaders in this world just as they were disowning them in the next. But this will be only a vain desire doomed to perish unfulfilled. Nay, the selfsame desire will become a source of anguish and punishment for them.

The clause, they shall not get out of the Fire, does not mean that the punishment of Hell will be unending. Islam does not believe in the eternity of Hell. While the Quran speaks of the blessings of Paradise as never-ending and everlasting, it does not say so of the punishment of Hell but simply speaks of it as being very long (11: 108, 109). The sayings of the Holy Prophet also support this view. “There will come a time over Hell,” he is reported to have said, “when there will remain none in it” (‘Ummāl). The verse only means that, being unable to bear the torment of Hell, the dwellers of the Fire will wish to come out of it, but will not be able to do so (32: 21), until their term of punishment is over. The word Fire as used in this verse may also mean the fire of anguish and agony in which they shall burn on account of their designs and cherished hopes having come to nought.

175. Important Words:

lawful is the noun-infinitive from which has several meanings. means, he unloosened the tie. means, he alighted at the house. means, God’s punishment came down on him or befell him. means, the thing became lawful. means, he absolved himself from the oath. is, therefore, that the use of which has been permitted by God; a lawful thing. The word is the opposite of which means, a forbidden or unlawful thing (Aqrab).

good is derived from meaning, he or it became good. means, the thing was good or pure or wholesome. Thus would mean, good, pure, wholesome and agreeable (Aqrab).

footsteps is the plural of which is derived from meaning, he stepped or walked. means, the distance between the two feet of a person while walking. The clause would also mean, do not follow the ways of Satan (Aqrab).

open is derived from meaning: (1) it became clear and manifest; or (2) it became separated or disunited or cut off. means: (1) he or it made the thing clear; or (2) he or it cut the thing into pieces or made it disunited. means, the thing became clear. Thus would mean: (1) a being or thing which is clear and manifest; (2) a being or thing which makes other things clear; and (3) a being or thing which cuts another thing into pieces and makes it disunited (Aqrab).

Commentary:

Good actions must accompany true faith. So with this verse begins a discussion of the second part of Abraham’s prayer regarding the work of the Promised Prophet, i.e., the teaching of the laws of Shari’at and of the wisdom underlying them.

Henceforward ordinances about Prayer, Fasting, Pilgrimage and Zakāt are given and so are the laws relating to social matters; and as
170. He only enjoins upon you what is evil and what is foul, and that you say of Allah what you do not know.176.

food plays an important part in the formation of a man's character, regulations concerning it are mentioned first. According to Islam, all food should be: (1) لاحل i.e. allowed by the Law; and (2) it should also be طيب i.e. good, pure, wholesome and agreeable. Under the second condition, sometimes even lawful things become forbidden. Thus, for instance, the eating of goat's flesh is لاحل or lawful; but if some flesh becomes rotten and putrefied, it will not be طيب and will consequently not be permissible. This distinction between لاحل (lawful) and طيب (good and pure) food is not to be found in any teaching except that of Islam. So comprehensive is the Islamic teaching on this subject that not only are conditions laid down as to when lawful things become prohibited, as in this verse, but also as to when even unlawful food becomes permissible (2: 174; 5: 4; 6: 120, 146; 16: 116).

The prohibition against following Satan, coming immediately after the commandment with respect to food, alludes to the influence which physical actions exercise on the moral and spiritual conditions of man. The use of unlawful and unwholesome food tends to impair our moral and spiritual faculties, while lawful and wholesome food improves our morals and helps the development of our spiritual powers. This subject is also dealt with in 23: 52.

As explained under Important Words above, the word مبين gives three different meanings. Thus مبين would mean: (1) that Satan is a manifest and open enemy of man; (2) that Satan is not only manifest himself but also makes his connections manifest—leaving a visible trace of wickedness wherever he treads; and (3) that he is always striving to create disunion among the Faithful and to cut asunder all such ties as God has ordered to be made firm. In this connection see also 2: 28.

176. Important Words:

مـؤده (evil) is the noun-infinitive from لـ مؤده, meaning, he or it became bad or evil. لـ مؤده means, the thing was disagreeable to such a one and made him sorrowful. لـ مؤده means: (1) evil, bad or wicked; (2) mischief and corruption; (3) anything that makes a person sad and sorrowful (Aqrab & Mufradāt).

مـؤده (foul) is derived from لـ قحه i.e. it became excessive or immoderate; or it became manifestly or excessively bad, evil or unseemly. Thus لـ قحه means: (1) anything manifestly or excessively bad, evil, etc.; (2) anything forbidden by God; (3) foul talk or saying; and (4) illegal intercourse or fornication (Lane & Aqrab).

Commentary:

This verse speaks of the subtle ways by which Satan misleads man. He first prompts him to do deeds which do not appear to be manifestly wicked and the influence of which is confined to the person of the doer alone. Then, step by step, he makes the deluded person a hardened sinner, causing him to lose all sense of modesty, till finally the man goes so far as to make innovations in religion for which he possesses neither knowledge nor authority. As Satan's promptings are never based on knowledge, so the natural consequence is that those who follow him begin to attribute to God things without having the least authority for so doing.
171. And *when it is said to them, 'Follow that which Allah has sent down,' they say: 'Nay, we will follow that wherein we found our fathers.' What! even if their fathers had no sense at all and no guidance? {177

172. And the case of those who disbelieve is like the case of one who shouts to that which hears nothing but a call and a cry. They are deaf, dumb, and blind.—so they do not understand. {178

Their theories are based on ignorance and not on knowledge. In fact, all knowledge is based on close observation, and close observation cannot be had, unless one enjoys nearness of a thing. So it is futile to expect true knowledge of God from those who are away from Him.

177. Commentary:
It is indeed strange, but nevertheless a hard fact, that in matters of religion which so deeply concern man, he is often content to follow blindly the footsteps of his forefathers and does not even care to satisfy himself that his forefathers were wise and well-guided people. On the other hand, in worldly matters where only the interests of this life are at stake, and that too partially, he often takes meticulous care to see that he adopts the right course and does not blindly follow others.

178. Important Words:
*يَتَنَّى (shouts) is derived from نَقَب which means, he cried aloud. They say نَقَب الرايع ِي شَمَى the shepherd shouted to his flock. نَقَب الْمُؤْذِن means, the مَعَزِّين raised his voice to call people to Prayer (Aqrab).

قد (call). دعا means, he called a person by addressing him (Aqrab).
نَاه (cry) means: (1) a loud voice or cry; (2) a general call without any specific person being addressed (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:
In this verse the Holy Prophet has been likened to a herdsman who shouts to his flock but they hear nothing except the sound, being unable to understand the meaning of the words uttered by him. Similarly, the people whom the Prophet addresses are like a herd of animals unable to follow and understand his call. The words of the verse fully expressed would read somewhat like this: مثل الذين كنَّا كمثل أصحاب الذي ينَقَب i.e. "the case of those who disbelieve is like that of a people surrounding one who shouts, etc." The Holy Prophet conveyed the divine message to disbelievers. They heard his voice but made no effort to grasp the meaning of his message. His words fell, as it were, on deaf ears, with the result that the spiritual faculties of the disbelievers became wholly vitiated and they stooped low to the level of animals and beasts (7:180; 25:45).
173. O ye who believe, eat of the good things We have provided for you, and render thanks to Allah, if it is He Whom you worship.  

174. He has made unlawful to you only that which dies of itself, and blood and the flesh of swine, and that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked. But he who is driven by necessity, being neither disobedient nor exceeding the limit, it shall be no sin for him. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.  

179. Commentary:  
The injunction contained in the words, “eat of the good, pure and wholesome things,” indicates that Muslims are not allowed to use things which may, in any way, injure their physical or moral or spiritual health, though they may be allowed by Law. The injunction is thus very important and must be far-reaching in its effect. The words, We have provided for you, further imply that Muslims are also not allowed to make use of things acquired by unfair and unlawful means. Only the things bestowed by God, i.e., those lawfully earned, are to be used.

180. Important Words:  
- (that which dies of itself) is derived from معات i.e. he died.  
- (natural death) means: (1) an animal that has died a natural death (Aqrab); (2) an animal that has not been slaughtered in a manner prescribed by Law (Lane & Mufradat)  
- (swine). Authorities differ as to the derivation of this word, some deriving it from خنزير and others from خنزير. The word خنزير means, hard and rugged land; or a clumsy, badly-finished axe.  
- خنزير means, the man looked with the hinder parts or outer angles of his eyes (Lisān).  
- خنزير ارجل means, the eye was or became narrow and small.  
- خنزير البحر means, the man looked from the outer angle of the eye; or he had a distortion of one of his eyes. The Arabs say: كل خنزير اخرز i.e. all swine look from the outer angles of their eyes.  
- خنزير الله means the man affected or pretended to be cunning  
- خنزير الخنزير means, the swine, the hog, the pig; a certain well-known foul animal the eating of whose flesh is said to be forbidden by every Prophet (Lane). The Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement says of the word خنزير: “The very name of this foul animal contains an allusion to the prohibition of its flesh. It is a combination of خنزير and ارجل, the first part meaning, ‘very foul’ and the second, ‘I see.’ The word thus literally means, ’I see it very foul’ . . . What is still more wonderful is that in Hindi this animal is known by the name خنزير which is similarly composed of two words i.e. خنزير and ارجل, the latter part being identical with the latter part of the Arabic word and the former being the exact equivalent of the first part of the Arabic form. The Hindi word, therefore, exactly means the same as the Arabic, viz., خنزير.
'I see it very foul'. In Hindi this animal is also known as \( \text{अल} \) meaning 'bad or foul' which is probably a translation of the original Arabic word (Teachings of Islam).

\( \text{ارر} \) (invoked) is derived from \( \text{ارر} \) meaning, it (the moon) made its appearance; he (the man) cried aloud. \( \text{ارر} \) also means, it made its appearance; he called or cried aloud.

\( \text{ارر} \) (drove by necessity) is derived from \( \text{ارر} \) meaning, it did harm. \( \text{ارر} \) means, it forced him to resort to that.

\( \text{ارر} \) (disobedient) is derived from \( \text{ارر} \) meaning, he rebelled; he disobeyed; he committed a wrong. \( \text{ارر} \) is really \( \text{ارر} \) being the active participle from \( \text{ارر} \) meaning, one who disobeys; one who is rebellious (Aqrab).

\( \text{ارر} \) (exceeding the limit) is the active participle from \( \text{ارر} \) i.e. he exceeded the proper or the prescribed limit. \( \text{ارر} \) means, he transgressed against him. \( \text{ارر} \) is really \( \text{ارر} \) meaning, one who exceeds the limit (Aqrab).

\( \text{ارر} \) (sin). The verb \( \text{ارر} \) means, he did a thing which was unlawful for him; he did a thing which made him deserving of punishment. Thus the noun \( \text{ارر} \) means: (1) anything unlawful i.e. a sin; (2) anything which makes a person deserving of punishment (Aqrab); (3) anything that pricks the mind as something evil (Mufradāt).

Commentary:

This verse speaks only of food that is حرام or unlawful. It makes no mention of طهير or pure and wholesome things to which reference has already been made in the preceding verse. It should not be supposed that the four things mentioned in this verse are the only things prohibited in Islam. As a matter of fact, Islam prohibits the use of many things; but they are divided into grades or classes, some of them being حرام or unlawful and others being منيع or simply forbidden. The verse under comment mentions only the former class. The forbidden things have been stated by the Holy Prophet and are mentioned in Hadith. They must not be used by the Faithful but they cannot be called حرام or unlawful. In fact, there is a great difference between unlawful ( Haram) and forbidden (منيع) things. Islam recognizes due difference in the importance of different things, and so all prohibitions cannot be classed together and treated as of equal importance. The use of حرام or an unlawful thing has a great and direct bearing on the moral and spiritual development of man but it is not so with a منيع or forbidden thing which stands on a lower level of importance, though both are prohibited.

Among the things declared حرام or unlawful in this verse, the injuriousness of the blood and the flesh of a dead animal as food has been recognized by most authorities on medicine. The use of the flesh of swine has also proved to be injurious not only to the physical health of man, but also to his moral and spiritual health. The swine eats filth and takes delight in living in dirty places. It has indecent habits and possesses the evil trait of sex-perversion. Tape-worms, scrofula, cancer and encysted trichina are known to be more prevalent among pork-eating peoples. The use of pork also causes trichinosis.

The clause, and that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked, refers to that animal at the time of whose slaughter the name
of any deity other than Allah is invoked or that animal which is slaughtered with a view to winning the pleasure of an idol or a saint etc., even though the name of Allah may have been mentioned while slaughtering it. Hence, all such animals as are sacrificed in order to propitiate a false deity or a saint, or any food that is cooked as an offering to a deceased person have been condemned as unlawful. Such foods are spiritually harmful. The incentive to these offerings is شرك (i.e. idolatry) and شرك is tantamount to rebellion against God.

In spite of the fact that the above mentioned things have been declared to be unlawful, the verse goes on to say that if for want of food the very life of a person should be in danger, considerations of the preservation of human life must temporarily prevail against other considerations. This is a case of choosing the lesser of two evils. Hence the verse very wisely makes an exception in case of a real and urgent necessity when no other food is available and one is in real danger of losing one's life if one does not use the unlawful food. In fact, of the four unlawful things the first three have been declared unlawful mostly on the basis of the fact that they are injurious to physical and moral health, and it is certainly wise to permit their use in case of urgent necessity when there is real danger to life. As for the fourth thing i.e. a food consecrated to any other being beside Allah, it is evident that it is not injurious intrinsically. It is injurious only from the point of view of faith. Therefore when such a thing is used merely to save one's life, which may be so usefully employed in the service of religion, there can be no real objection in eating it, because this extremely rare act cannot be considered as involving شرك or idolatry, particularly when it is performed with the sanction of God.

Permission for the exceptional use of such things is, however, qualified by two important conditions: (1) that one who resorts to this use must not be بغي (i.e. disobedient). There should be no lurking spirit of revolt or disobedience behind the act. The circumstances must be real and the condition genuine, and nothing should be done out of design and wilfulness; (2) that the user of unlawful food under exceptional circumstances should not become دلي i.e. he should not exceed the limit. He should confine himself to such quantity only as is absolutely essential to save life. Thus the exceptional use is permissible only at a time when one is under bona fide constraint and is in real danger, and then only to the extent which is absolutely necessary for saving life.

Though it has been declared in this verse that there is no sin in partaking of a prohibited food when no revolt or transgression is intended, yet as one might err in judging what is revolt or transgression and what is not, and thus be unconsciously guilty of breaking a divine commandment, the Quran adds the words: surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful, meaning that an unintentional deviation will be forgiven by the Merciful God. The clause also reminds a Muslim that though it has been made permissible for him to take unlawful food in exceptional circumstances, yet such circumstances may be due to certain hidden shortcomings of his own for which he should seek God's forgiveness, and that if he does so he will find God Forgiving and Merciful. In this connection see also 5:4; 6:146 & 16:116.
175. Those who conceal that which Allah has sent down of the Book and take in exchange for that a paltry price, they fill their bellies with nothing but fire. Allah will not speak to them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them. And for them is a grievous punishment.

176. It is they who have taken error in exchange for guidance and punishment for forgiveness. How great is their endurance of the Fire!

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181. Important Words:

زکّتم (purify them) is from زكل meaning, he purified him; he elevated him (Aqrab). See also 2:130.

Commentary:

Sin generally originates from an undue love of the world but the world is indeed a small thing as compared with the Hereafter (9:38). Those who forsake truth or conceal it for the things of this world eat naught but fire which will eventually consume their own bodies. The verse beautifully hints that the things of this world, as opposed to spiritual blessings, are like the hell-fire of the next. As food goes to make up the tissues of the body, so will the body of an enemy of truth eating fire become one whole mass of fire, serving as fuel for the fire of Hell. The words also signify that as fire cannot satisfy hunger and thirst, but rather increases them, so the things of this world cannot bring about peace of mind and contentment but rather the reverse of them. The verse also constitutes a stern warning to those preachers who, in order to gain worldly ends, accommodate their sermons to the views of the listeners and refrain from speaking the truth.

The words, Allah will not speak to them, do not mean that God will not speak to them at all; for God being the Lord and Master will speak even to the guilty on the Day of Judgement, but such speech will be like that of a judge condemning a criminal to punishment. What is meant is that God will not speak to them with love and affection.

The words, nor will He purify them, mean that He will not adjudge them as purified but will declare them unclean and unholy. These words may also mean that on the Day of Judgement God will not elevate them or exalt them to Himself but will leave them abased and neglected. Again, as these people opposed the truth in the world in order that they might enjoy the good things thereof, they will correspondingly have a painful punishment in the Hereafter and will be deprived of all sweetness of life in the world to come (see Important Words under 2:8).

182. Commentary:

The words, انتِل اك،ما اصبرهم على النار i.e. how great is their endurance of the Fire, and similar other expressions are used in the Arabic language to
177. That is because Allah has sent down the Book with the truth; and surely, they who disagree concerning the Book are gone far in enmity.\textsuperscript{183}

178. \textit{It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East or the West, but truly righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and spends his money for love of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask for charity, and for ransom the captives; and who observes Prayer and pays the Zakāt; and those who fulfil their promise when they have made one, and the patient in poverty and afflictions and the steadfast in time of war.} It is these who have proved truthful and it is these who are the God-fearing.\textsuperscript{184}

\textsuperscript{a}17:106. \textsuperscript{b}2:190. \textsuperscript{c}76:9. \textsuperscript{d}9:4; 13:21. \textsuperscript{e}2:215; 6:43; 7:95. \textsuperscript{f}49:16.

\textbf{183. Commentary:}

The estrangement of the disbelievers from the truth and their long association with falsehood have made them callous and incapable of knowing and accepting the Quranic revelation. Just as a sick person sometimes loses his faculty of taste and consequently declines to take delicious things, similarly these people, owing to their lack of contact with truth for a long time, have become inclined to reject the word of God. They prefer small worldly gains to the great spiritual and material advantages that would certainly have accrued to them, if they had accepted the truth. The words \textit{gone far in enmity} signify that there has come to exist a wide gulf between these people on the one hand and the truth on the other.

\textbf{184. Important Words:}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{Birr} (righteousness) is derived from \textit{rāḍ}. They say \textit{wā'd} \textit{rāḍ} \textit{i.e.} he obeyed his father or he behaved kindly and lovingly towards him.
  \item \textit{Rāfa} \textit{rāḍ} \textit{fi qulūb} \textit{i.e.} he obeyed God.
  \item \textit{Birr} \textit{rāḍ} \textit{fi qulūb} means, he spoke truthfully.
\end{itemize}
4) truthfulness (Aqrab); also (5) extensive goodness or goodness of a high order (Mufradāt).

And ḥ (barr) is one who does good to others. It is also one of the attributive names of God (Aqrab).

(wayfarer) literally means, son of the road. The word signifies: (1) one who travels much (Lane); (2) a traveller or wayfarer who is far away from home i.e. one who is on a long journey (Mufradāt); (3) simply one on journey; (4) one whose way has been cut short to him i.e. one who is stranded on the way (Aqrab).

(afflictions) is derived from ضر meaning, he caused him a loss or an injury. The word means: (1) vicissitudes of time; (2) hardship; (3) loss of life or property; (4) afflictions; and (5) famine (Aqrab). It is especially that evil or affliction which relates to one’s person, as disease, etc., whereas الفاسق is that which relates to property, as poverty, etc. (Lane).

**Commentary:**

The verse points to an important principle relating to form and spirit. Every commandment must have an outward form as well as an underlying spirit. What, however, is really meant is the underlying spirit and not the outward form which mostly serves as an outer shell for preserving the inner kernel. To illustrate this principle, the verse refers to the commandment relating to the turning of faces to a particular direction while offering Prayers. The verse points out that Islam has not directed the Faithful to face in a particular direction during Prayer, because it considers such an act to be of any intrinsic virtue. The fixing of a special direction is merely meant to bring about uniformity, whereas what really counts is the purpose underlying it, which is perfection of faith and deeds. The Quran, accordingly, proceeds to give in a nutshell the Islamic teachings about these two subjects.

The literal translation of the clause ولكن الامن عن الفاسق is, “but righteousness is one who believes” which is obviously incomplete. So some words must be understood here. According to Sibwaih, a great authority on Arabic syntax, the rules of the Arabic language sometimes permit the omitting of a word for the sake of brevity or for laying special stress or for affording greater elasticity in speech. In accordance with this rule, the clause would read: ولكن الامن عن الفاسق i.e. “but righteousness is the righteousness of one who believes.” Instances of such omissions of words are not lacking in the Arabic language (Sibwaih, i. 109).

According to yet another rule of the Arabic language, a مصدر (indefinite noun) is sometimes used in place of an adjunct (active participle) in order to convey an intensified sense. Thus the word حسن (righteousness) in the verse would...
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mean i.e. “perfectly righteous or very righteous,” and the clause would be translated as “perfectly righteous or very righteous is he who believes in Allah . . . . .”

The pronoun in the expression حب (love of Him) may refer either to the word “Allah” in the previous clause, and in that case, the clause would mean, “spends his money for love of God.” Or it may refer to the word مال (money). In this case, the clause would mean, “spends his money notwithstanding his love for money.” Lastly, it may also refer to the noun implied in the verb دفع i.e. the act of spending. In this case the clause would mean “spends his money for the love of spending it.” All these meanings are correct and may be applied. Indeed, it is one of the inimitable beauties of the Quranic diction that it chooses words and constructions that go to convey a variety of meanings in the shortest of expressions.

The verse affords another example of this kind in the expression ابن السبيل (son of the road). As explained under Important Words, this expression gives no less than four meanings and all are equally applicable here. So spending on ابن السبيل would signify: (1) spending money in order to encourage travelling, which is a means of increasing knowledge and extending social relations; (2) helping such travellers as are on long journeys and are far away from home; (3) helping all wayfarers; and (4) helping such wayfarers and travellers as become stranded on the way. This is indeed a wonderful example of the combination of brevity and comprehensiveness.

The verse also throws some light on the Islamic teaching about slavery. Islam prescribes it as a sign of true faith and perfect righteousness that money be spent on emancipating slaves. Nay, even such as are made captives from among those who attack Muslims with a view to annihilating them are to be shown mercy and granted freedom out of money supplied by Muslims. For the discussion of Islamic teachings about slavery see 24: 34.

The word المارتون (the patient) in this verse is in the accusative case, while, according to the common rules of Arabic grammar, it should be in the nominative case like the preceding word المرفون (those who fulfil). The change is not without purpose and has been made to put emphasis on the word. According to Abū ‘Ali, a well-known authority on Arabic syntax, when a sentence contains a number of nouns of praise or dispraise, it is considered idiomatic to vary their grammatical inflection (Muhit, part ii). This is done to intensify the meaning.

As pointed out in the beginning, this verse gives a gist of the teachings of Islam. It begins with the fundamental Islamic beliefs and doctrines which are the source and basis of all actions and on the rectitude of which depends the rectitude of one’s actions. The most fundamental of these is belief in God Who is the central point of all faith. Second in importance is belief in the Last Day or the Day of Judgement, upon a real understanding of which depends the direction of man’s actions in this life. Then follows belief in angels who serve as a sort of intermediaries between God and His creation. Then there are divine scriptures embodying God’s revelation which point out the way to the attainment of His pleasure and the purification of man’s soul. Lastly are Prophets who are the recipients of God’s revelations, communicating to man the will of God and serving as models to be followed and imitated by him. These five objects of faith have been mentioned here in their natural order and not necessarily in order of importance.

After stating the fundamental objects of faith, the verse proceeds to mention some of the more important ordinances relating to man’s actions. Pride of place is given to charity which a man gives not as a duty imposed
179. O ye who believe, "equitable retaliation in the matter of the slain is prescribed for you; the free man for the free man, and the slave for the slave, and the female for the female. But if one is granted any remission by one's brother, then pursuing the matter for the realization of the blood-money shall be done with fairness and the murderer shall pay him the blood-money in a handsome manner. This is an alleviation from your Lord and a mercy. And whoso transgresses thereafter, for him there shall be a grievous punishment."

on him, but as prompted by love, solicitude and sympathy for his kinsmen and fellow-beings or out of love for common humanity. Next come the commandments regarding Prayer and Zakat which help to establish a true connection between God and man on the one hand and regulate relations between man and man on the other. Finally are laid down the two bulwarks of character and morality i.e. (1) the redemption of promises and pledges; and (2) the displaying of fortitude, patience and steadfastness in time of distress, the first-mentioned forming one of the bases of international morality and the latter the means of its perfection.

185. Important Words:

**أقصاء (retaliation)** is derived from قصاء. They say قصاء i.e. (1) he cut it (hair, etc.), or he clipped it; (2) he followed him closely or followed in his footsteps; and (3) he described or narrated it. قصاء الرجل means, he did with the man the like of that which he did to him; he retaliated on him for the wrong done to him. قصاء الرجل therefore, means, retaliation, by slaying for slaying, and wounding for wounding, etc. (Aqrab); or the following up of a murder or an injury with a view to retaliating or punishing (Mufradat).

**القل (the slain)** is the plural of قتل in the sense of مقتل i.e. a murdered person (Aqrab).

**الحر (freeman)** is derived from حر meaning: (1) he was free-born; (2) he was of good and noble origin. حر الأرض means, the best portion of land. Thus الحر means: (1) a freeman, opposite of slave or captive; (2) a noble person; (3) the good and pure portion of a thing (Aqrab).

**Commentary:**

This verse comprises a very important principle of civil law, i.e., equality of man and necessity of awarding proportionate punishment to all offenders without distinction, unless an offender is forgiven by the relatives of his victim under circumstances that are expected to lead to improvement and betterment of conditions.

The words كتب عليك i.e. "is prescribed for you" show that retaliation for the slain is not simply permissible but is obligatory. Failure to inflict the punishment prescribed by Law on
the offender would be tantamount to a violation of the commandment. The duty, however, of punishing the culprit does not devolve on the heirs of the murdered person but, as the plural number of the expression ﷲ (for you) shows, on the authorities responsible for the maintenance of law and order. But, as the singular number of the expression ﷳ (one's brother) shows, the former have been given the option to forgive. The clause, therefore, means that on the one hand the concerned authorities are bound to punish the offender according to the requirements of law, having no right to pardon him of their own accord, and on the other hand the heirs of the murdered person are not entitled to take the law into their own hands and inflict the punishment on the guilty person themselves.

The verse under comment makes no distinction between different classes of persons in connection with the law of retaliation. The words used are of a general nature and apply to all offenders who might be guilty of murder, no matter of what rank or station in life or of what religion. Any person, irrespective of his caste or creed and irrespective of his station, must be put to death for the murder of any other person, unless pardoned by the relatives of the victim and unless the pardon has the sanction of the authorities. The sayings of the Holy Prophet are explicit on this point (Mājah, ch. on Diyāt).

There is indeed a saying of the Holy Prophet to the effect that a Muslim should not be put to death for killing a disbeliever. But this saying, read in conjunction with several others bearing on the same subject and interpreted in the light of the relevant Quranic verses, forces us to the conclusion that the word "disbeliever" in the tradition referred to above is not general but means only a ﷳ i.e. such disbeliever as belongs to a people who are at war with the Muslims or, in other words, one who is a member of a belligerent community. In fact, the Companions of the Holy Prophet are all agreed that a Muslim may be put to death for murdering a non-belligerent unbeliever. (Tabarī, v. 44). The Holy Prophet himself ordered a Muslim murderer to be put to death for the murder of a non-belligerent non-Muslim (Qūtī).

The expression, the freeman for the freeman and the slave for the slave and the female for the female, does not mean that a freeman should not be punished with death for the murder of a slave or that a woman should not be put to death for killing a member of the opposite sex, etc. The other verses of the Quran as well as the sayings and the practice of the Holy Prophet clearly establish the fact that the social position of a person or the sex of a party was never considered a bar to the application of this law. The peculiar construction, i.e., "the freeman for the freeman," etc. has been adopted here to refer to, and abolish, a custom of the Arabs whereby they used to take into consideration the sex and the social status of the murderer and the murdered person when determining punishment. If a man of high social position happened to kill a man of humble position, or if the slave of a great man killed that of a humble man, or if a lady of noble birth murdered a woman of humble origin, etc. the murderer was not punished with death, leniency being shown to him or her in sundry other ways as well. The commandment contained in this verse seeks to abolish that obnoxious custom of the Arabs and lays down in clear and unmistakable terms that no regard should be paid to the status of the murderer in the matter of retaliation.

In fact, the law of retaliation, as stated in this verse, is confined to the clause, equitable retaliation in the matter of the slain is prescribed for you, which forms a complete sentence in itself, giving a full and complete meaning. The ensuing expression, the freeman for the freeman and the slave for the slave and the female for the female, is something extra, not forming part of the law. It only contains a repudiation
of the Arab custom referred to above and illustrates, by giving three instances, how the law is to be administered. Such an expression is known as جعل متيال or جعل متيال in Arabic grammar, and is technically introduced with a view to answering a question which is suggested by the preceding clause to which it is added without any intervening conjunction. The question answered in such an expression is often understood and not expressed (Mukhtasar).

The sayings of the Holy Prophet and his practice also support the above interpretation, for it is on record that he once ordered a woman to be put to death for murdering a man (Muslim), and on another occasion he commanded that a freeman be put to death for the murder of a slave. Says the Holy Prophet: "Whoever kills his slave shall be put to death" (Majah). At another place he says: "The blood of all Muslims is alike in respect of the law of retaliation" (Nasa'i).

The words, if one is granted any remission by one's brother, show that the infliction of capital punishment is not obligatory in all cases; for in special circumstances the murderer can be exempted from the extreme punishment by the heirs of the murdered person. Such exemption, which may be termed partial as the word شقيق (any) indicates, means that the heirs of the deceased may renounce their right to have the murderer put to death and may in place of that receive from him blood-money. Or as the Holy Prophet has made it clear, the heirs may, in exceptional cases and with the sanction of the authorities, even grant full pardon, remitting blood-money as well (Musnad & Baihaqi).

It is worthy of note that where the Quran speaks of remission, it uses the word "brother" instead of "heir of the murdered person." This is to hint to the heir of the slain person that he should, as far as possible, take a lenient view of the offence. On the other hand, the murderer is also enjoined to pay blood-money with good grace and without undue delay.

The concluding clause, i.e., whose transgresses thereafter, for him there shall be a grievous punishment, is meant to point to the fact that if, after the matter has been amicably settled and the murderer granted a remission by the heirs of the murdered person, the heirs should take it into their heads to wreak vengeance on the murderer by killing him, they will be shown no mercy and will get capital punishment. Says the Prophet: "I will allow no remission in case of one who kills the murderer after he has accepted blood-money from him" (Jarir).

The Islamic law of نما (retaliation), as briefly stated above, provides a very effective and practical means to put a stop to murder and safeguard human life. A man who shows a callous disregard for the life of a fellow-person loses his title to live as a member of human society. The option to pardon allowed to the heirs of the slain person should not be regarded as likely to encourage murder, for such option is not synonymous with exemption from punishment, as in ordinary circumstances the murderer will have to pay the blood-money. Moreover, the would-be murderer possesses no means to know that the heirs of the person whose murder he contemplates will actually be persuaded to pardon him; so the fear of capital punishment will always be there to deter him from the commission of the crime. Again, pardon or remission is permissible only where the circumstances are such that pardon or remission is likely to improve matters and bring about good results for all parties concerned (42 : 41). Thus, while on the one hand, Islam has made due provision for the suppression of crime, it has, on the other, kept open the door for the display of the noble qualities of benevolence and mercy.

The way in which the Quran has upheld the ultimate necessity of the death penalty is
180. And there is life for you in the law of retaliation, O men of understanding, that you may enjoy security.

Indeed most significant. At the time when the Quran was revealed people exacted retaliation for an injury done to them with a vengeance. They were not satisfied even with inflicting capital punishment on the murderer, to say nothing of pardoning him. They needed no incentive to retaliation. They were already overdoing it. In fact, the Islamic law of retaliation, viewed in the light of the circumstances prevailing at the time of its revelation, implied a prophecy that a time would come when people would go to the other extreme and a movement for the total abolition of capital punishment would be set on foot. So the Omniscient God laid down the law of retaliation in a form that is indispensable for the preservation and protection of human life, as well as the promotion of harmony and goodwill.

To prevent crime, Islam really aims at eliminating the conditions that produce it. It seeks to remove the very root-cause of all crime by working a complete moral reformation in man. But it does not remain content with that. It also prescribes deterrent laws in conformity with the dictates of reason, justice and humanity. The fact that, despite efforts to the contrary, the death penalty is still found on the Statute Books of most countries in one form or another constitutes a sufficient proof of the wisdom of the Islamic teaching. As a matter of fact, even the most enthusiastic protagonists of the abolition of capital punishment have not yet been able to suggest a suitable alternative to it. They have had to admit that a long term of imprisonment as an alternative is "horrible" and is "not an ideal substitute" (Capital Punishment in the Twentieth Century by E. Roy Calvert, G. P. Putnam, London, 1930). The law of retaliation still remains the most effective deterrent to crime and an essential method to satisfy the demands of justice; and the Islamic law takes a further step to bring about reconciliation between the offender and the aggrieved party.

186. Important Words:

"اللَّبَبَ (men of understanding) אלפבאללעבב is the plural of لَبُبَ (lubb) which is derived from لَبَب (labba) meaning, he was or became possessed of لَبَبَ (labb) i.e. understanding, intellect or intelligence. لَبَبَ بالمكان means, he remained or dwelt in the place and kept to it. لَبَب الْوَزَز means, he broke the almond and took out its kernel. لَبَب therefore, means: (1) the best and choicest part of anything; (2) kernel; (3) pith; (4) heart; (5) mind; (6) understanding, intellect and intelligence, because it is the choicest and best part of man; (7) the substance or essence of a thing (Lane). لَبَب is something higher and purer than مَعْلَم (understanding), being the brightest and best part of it (Mufradat). It appears that لَبَب is the name given to that quality in man which distinguishes him from other animals and makes him a rational being.

Commentary:

This verse, small in size but great in weight, points to the wisdom underlying the law of retaliation. The words used are full of beauty of diction of the highest order. As لَمْيَمًا means the killing of the murderer in retaliation of his act, the expression is like saying, "There is life
181. “It is prescribed for you, when death comes to any one of you, if he leave much wealth, that he make a will to parents and near relatives to act with fairness; it is an obligation on those who fear God.”

for you in death, O men of understanding.” How fearful the saying but how eternally true! In fact, no peaceful social life is possible without the awarding of swift capital punishment to those who consider human life to be of so little consequence.

The clause, there is life for you in the law of retaliation, has a wider significance also. For a long time Muslims suffered at the hands of disbelievers indignities, persecution and even death in patient silence. But, when the cup of the iniquities of the enemies of truth became full to overflowing, further continuation of the policy of non-resistance became tantamount to the demoralization of the victims and their national death. They were, therefore, enjoined to take up arms against the aggressors and pay the wicked people in their own coin. Indeed in the law of retaliation lies hidden the secret of individual and national life. You retaliate and you live; you refrain from retaliating and you die an ignoble death. Such is the eternal and inexorable law of nature which has been so beautifully expressed in the verse under comment.

The words, O men of understanding, have been used to make a direct appeal to that quality in man which makes him a rational being and distinguishes him from other creatures. The Quran uses this expression whenever a strong appeal is to be made to man in his capacity as a rational being. God, as it were, says to men: “We have made you the noblest among Our creation and have bestowed on you the power of understanding and intelligence as We have bestowed it on none other. Will you not, therefore, be wise and try to understand things?”

187. Important Words:

لا (much wealth) means: (1) good as opposed to evil; (2) wealth acquired or collected by fair and praiseworthy means; (3) much wealth or abundance of wealth; (4) a thing that all desire; (5) welfare and good fortune (Mufradät); (6) the existence of a thing in abundance and perfection; (7) horses, etc. (Aqrab).

نف (obligation) is derived from حـ and has been used in the verse in the accusative case, having something understood before it, the complete expression being حـ ظا (Kashshaf). حـ means: (1) equity or justice; (2) right mode of acting; (3) an obligation or a duty; (4) a debt or anything that is owed; (5) a thing suitable to the requirements of justice, truth, duty, etc. (Lane). See also 2:148.

Commentary:

As disputes about inheritance are a fruitful source of quarrels, murders, etc., the Quran here suitably turns from the subject of retaliation to that of inheritance.

The word used here for “wealth” is ثر and not ثر which is the ordinary word used in this sense. ثر means, “wealth acquired by fair and praiseworthy means.” Thus by substituting the word ثر for ثر, the Quran has also
emphasized the necessity of being very circum-
spect in the acquisition of wealth which should be acquired only by fair and lawful means. Incidentally, therefore, it has been hinted that it is not lawful for a Muslim to make a will with regard to property that has been acquired by unlawful means; for such wealth does not really belong to him.

In 4: 12, 13 the Quran fixes the shares of all those persons who should succeed to a deceased person's property, according to the Islamic law of inheritance, and these in the first instance include parents, children, and wife or husband. In the presence of this law, the injunction given in the verse under comment would, at first sight, appear to be uncalled-for and unnecessary. As a matter of fact, those who believe in the abrogation theory, have actually declared this verse to be abrogated by the ones referred to above. But they are clearly mistaken; for the verse under comment makes an additional and necessary provision in regard to inheritance. Not seldom there come forward claimants who allege that a deceased person had bequeathed such and such portion of his property to them, and even witnesses are not wanting to support their claim. The rightful heirs, not knowing anything about it, naturally suspect the claim. The result is quarrel and litigation. Every Muslim is, therefore, enjoined to make a proper bequest at the time of his death that his property be divided among his heirs, i.e., parents, children, wives, etc., according to the Law of Islam, stating therein also the portion of any other individual who is not legally entitled to inherit from him but to whom he may wish to bequeath some of his wealth. Such a declaration made with the knowledge of his heirs and relatives is calculated to put a stop to much litigation. Such a provision is all the more essential in cases when the property or wealth is considerable.

The verse also throws out a hint that a Muslim should, before his death, bequeath a part of his property, not exceeding one-third, to such of his relations as have been debarred by Law from inheriting from him, for instance, distant but deserving relations, non-Muslim parents, non-Muslim children and so on. In such a case the remaining two-thirds will go to his lawful heirs. As to the restriction relating to one-third, it may be noted that the Holy Prophet has made it clear that no testator can bequeath more than one-third of his wealth to others than the lawful heirs. At least two-thirds of the property must go to the heirs (Bukhari).

Islam excludes non-Muslim relatives from the category of heirs to avoid complications. For instance, the near relatives of a deceased person might belong to a people who are at war with the Muslims or in open hostility toward them. In that case, to put money into their hands would be to damage the cause of Islam and injure one's own interests. Non-Muslim relatives have, therefore, been excluded from lawful heirs so that they may not claim their part of the inheritance as of right. The Quran, however, instructs Muslims to leave to them a part of their property by a special will, so that, in case such property is not likely to be used against the interests of Islam, the former may in this way discharge the obligations they owe to the latter as kinsmen. Another reason for excluding non-Muslim relatives from the category of heirs is that generally non-Muslims do not in practice allow their Muslim relatives to succeed them as heirs. There is no sense, therefore, in allowing Muslim wealth to flow to non-Muslims where no such flow takes place the other way.

The verse serves yet another purpose. According to the Law of Islam, as generally accepted, the grandchild of a deceased Muslim is debarred from inheritance in case the former's father has predeceased the latter. The Quran, therefore, directs that a portion of the property may be left by a special will by a dying Muslim for such of his relatives
182. And he who alters it after he has heard it, the sin thereof shall surely lie on those who alter it. Surely Allah is All-Hearing and All-Knowing.¹⁸⁸

183. But whoso apprehends from a testator a partiality or a wrong, and makes peace between them (the parties affected), it shall be no sin for him. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving and Merciful.¹⁸⁹

as are otherwise rightful heirs but cannot inherit owing to some of their near kinsmen having predeceased them.

The verse must not be understood to lend itself to the interpretation that the heirs whose portions have been definitely fixed by the Law can be given more than their prescribed share. This is expressly forbidden by the Holy Prophet (Tirmidhi, ch. on Waṣṭiyī).

188. Commentary:
If a person makes a will in compliance with the above commandment, but his heirs, finding it to be prejudicial to their interests, alter it or hinder its execution, the blame and the responsibility for consequences will lie on those who tamper with the will and not on the maker of the will. Apparently, the verse seems to be superfluous; for what it says is obvious, i.e., the responsibility of any subsequent alteration cannot lie on the testator. But deeper consideration would show the futility of such an idea. In fact, the verse serves three important purposes. Firstly, it warns the testator that fear of any subsequent alteration should not deter him from making the will. Secondly, that he should act intelligently and cautiously and should try to foresee and forestall all possible mischief by his heirs. Thirdly, the verse warns the heirs and their friends that any alteration made by them in the will will bring them under the wrath of God Who is All-Knowing.

189. Important Words:

.strictly, that he should act intelligently and cautiously and should try to foresee and forestall all possible mischief by his heirs. The words, it shall be no sin for him, do not mean that such pious intervention is simply an act of negative virtue. The expression has been used lest, in view of what has been

189. Important Words:

- **Partiality (قًفَا)** is the infinitive noun from **حَجَفَ الْطَّرِيقَ** meaning, he deviated from the right path. **حَجَفَ في رَمَيِّه** means, he acted wrongfully in his will. **حَجَفَ الْهَالِمٍ** means, he kept away from his family out of anger and not for a just cause. **حَجَفَ لَأَسْلَمْ** means, he inclined towards sin. So **حَجَفَ** means: (1) inclining to sin, etc., (2) deviating from the right course; (3) acting unjustly or wrongfully; (4) keeping away from rightful things (Aqrab).

Commentary:
If someone should have reason to fear that the testator is showing undue favour to any particular person or party, or that he is acting contrary to Islamic Law, it would be no sin for him to bring about reconciliation between the parties concerned by removing the cause of displeasure or disagreement between the testator and his heirs and thereby having the will altered in accordance with the requirements of justice and Islamic Law. The words, it shall be no sin for him, do not mean that such pious intervention is simply an act of negative virtue. The expression has been used lest, in view of what has been
R. 23 184. O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous.¹⁶⁰

said in the preceding verse regarding the sinfulness of the act of alteration in a will, some over-cautious people should hold aloof even when they see an unjust inclination on the part of the testator. The verse thus really means that such an interference, far from being an act of sin, is an act of virtue which is sure to draw God’s mercy.

The concluding clause reminds the testator that God is Forgiving, so that if he mends his error, He will be pleased to forgive him. The declaration that God is Merciful, also serves as an inducement to other Muslims to intervene, if it is felt that the testator is unduly partial to one party, to the detriment of the other. In that case they should readily step in and set things right, for which God would give them an ample portion out of His mercy. Thus the word رحمن (Most Forgiving) relates to such testators as return to the right course when reminded to do so, and the word رحيم (Merciful) relates to those persons who succeed in persuading the testator to revert to the path of rectitude and justice.

190. Important Words:

صلوات (Fasting) is derived from صلأ, meaning, he kept back or refrained from doing something; or he refrained from eating or drinking or talking or walking, etc. The Arabs say صلأت السط, i.e., the wind became calm or motionless. صلأت (Arabs) means, a horse from which food has been withheld, or a horse which is confined to its manger and not made to walk or race. Thus صلوات means: (1) keeping back or refraining from something; (2) refraining from eating and drinking, etc.; and (3) formally refraining from eating, drinking, going in unto wives, etc. i.e., fasting from dawn till sunset as ordained by Islam. صلأت is one who so refrains from food, etc. i.e., one who keeps a fast (Aqrab & Mufradat). An interesting feature of the Arabic language is revealed when we notice that the word صلوات though derived from a different root, yet, owing to its having two root letters common with صلأت, gives a somewhat similar meaning, for, whereas صلأت means, refraining from food, drink or speech, صلوات means: (1) refraining from speech; and (2) intensity of thirst, the latter state being the direct result of refraining from drink (Aqrab).

Commentary:

As the preceding verses contain a reference to patience in trials and sacrifices as well as refraining from disputes and temptations, the Quran here fittingly turns to the subject of fasting, which is a most effective means of self-discipline.

The command to fast, whatever its details, is to be found in most religions in one form or another. The early devotions and fasting of Buddha (see Lalitavistara & Buddhacharita), the fasting of Moses, prior to his receiving the Ten Commandments (Exod. 34: 28; Deut. 9: 9), the fasts of Jesus before his receiving the heavenly Call (Matt. 4: 2), all testify to the importance of this institution. In fact, fasting is a form of devotion and self-discipline which has a natural appeal to man. “By the greater number of religions,” says the Encyclopaedia Britannica, “in the lower, middle and higher cultures alike, fasting is largely prescribed: and when it is not required, it is nevertheless practised to some extent by individuals in response to the promptings of nature.” The verse under comment, however, does not mean that fasting has been prescribed for the Muslims.
in the same form in which it was prescribed for the people of earlier faiths. Islam has greatly spiritualised this institution by attaching to it a number of highly useful regulations and restrictions.

The clause, *so that you may become righteous*, explains the deep philosophy underlying the commandment relating to fasting. It is a special characteristic of the Quran that, whenever it gives an important commandment, it does not give it arbitrarily but also explains its usefulness so that the addressee may be convinced of, and satisfied about, the wisdom underlying it. The object of fasting has been stated in this verse as the attainment of *πλοτό* or righteousness.

As explained in 2:3 the word *πλοτό* from which the word *πλοτί* used in the present verse is derived means, to guard oneself against (1) harm and suffering, and (2) evil and sin. Thus the verse points out that the real object of fasting is, first, to be saved from harm and suffering, and secondly, to be saved from sin and evil.

The first object is attained through fasting in two ways: (1) When a man commits evil deeds and becomes deserving of God's punishment on account of those deeds, but later feels ashamed of them and turns to God in repentance, then fasting serves as an atonement for his sins. (2) Fasting not only makes a man fit and able to bear hardships but also makes him realize the sufferings of his brethren in distress and feel sympathy for them. Thus fasting goes a long way to remove and minimize the pains and sufferings of humanity.

The second object, viz., that of being saved from sin and evil, is attained through fasting because, while fasting, a person has not only to abandon eating and drinking but also, to a certain extent, to keep himself aloof from worldly connections and to abstain from indulging in his desires, with the result that his thoughts naturally tend towards spiritual things. Spiritual men of all religions unanimously testify, on the basis of personal experience, that a certain degree of severance from physical relations and worldly connections is essential for spiritual advancement and has a powerful purifying effect on the mind. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that to carry such severance too far is sure to weaken the body to such an undesirable extent as to render a person unfit not only to fulfill his social and religious obligations but also to withstand temptations which require a certain amount of strength. Islam, therefore, follows the path of the golden mean. While it does prescribe a certain degree of abstention from material pleasures, it does not permit such a weakening of the body as should incapacitate it for performing its normal functions. This is why the Holy Prophet has forbidden continuous fasting, saying, "Your self has a claim upon you and your family has a claim upon you and your guests have a claim upon you" (Tirmidhi). On another occasion, he is reported to have said, "Verily, I am the most righteous of you all, yet sometimes I fast and sometimes I abstain from fasting, and so must you do" (Bukhari).

Fasting also stands as a symbol for complete sacrifice. One who fasts not only abstains from food and drink, which are the chief means of sustenance and without which one cannot live, but also from going in unto one's wife which is the means of assuring one's future race. Thus he who fasts really expresses his readiness, if need be, to sacrifice his all for the sake of truth. Fasting indeed affords a wonderful training ground for man.

It must also be noted here that this verse does not actually contain a command to fast, which follows in the verse coming after the succeeding verse. It only prepares Muslims for the coming commandment by saying that (1) the fasting which is going to be prescribed for them is not a new
185. The prescribed fasting is for a fixed number of days, but whoso among you is sick or is on a journey shall fast the same number of other days; and for those who are able to fast only with great difficulty is an expiation—the feeding of a poor man. And whoso performs a good work with willing obedience, it is better for him. And fasting is good for you, if you only knew. 191

thing but was also prescribed for the people that had gone before, and that (2) it is a most useful thing which is sure to benefit them greatly. It will be seen that very often the Quran does not give a commandment all of a sudden but first prepares the ground for it by making some general remarks. In this connection see also 2: 143—145 where a similar process has been adopted.

191. Important Words:

- ṣallā (are able to fast only with great difficulty) is derived from ṣallā. They say ṣallā or ṣallā meaning, he was able or fit to do it; or he had the strength and power to do it (Aqrab). But the word ṣallā is not used of strength generally but of such strength only as, so to speak, lies on the border i.e. just the strength with which a thing may be done and no more—a strength required to do a thing only with difficulty and trouble (Mufradāt & Lane). This is why the word ṣallā is never used to express the power of God for which words like tharīr and fi ḍār are used; for whereas the latter two words express the sense of vastness of power, the former expresses only that of its narrowness. The Quran uses the word ṣallā only twice and at both these places it uses it in a negative sentence i.e. لَا ṣالِّثة أَنْ لَا ثَنَى تَرْقُونَ wa do not even possess the requisite strength to do that” (2: 250 & 287). Thus the correct rendering of the clause would be, “for those who are able to fast but can fast only with great difficulty.”

- ṭawwāqūth (an expiation) is derived from ṭawwāqūth. They say ṭawwāqūth meaning, the man secured his release from captivity, etc. by paying his ransom. Thus ṭawwāqūth also means, a single strand which after combining with others goes to make a rope (Lane) i.e. the weak part of a rope which cannot stand tension alone.

Commentary:

This verse again refrains from giving the actual commandment regarding fasting but prepares further ground by pointing out that the fasting about to be prescribed is not meant for all days but only for a limited number of days. Again, the commandment to come is not meant to be observed in all circumstances; for those suffering from disease or those on a journey will be exempt from it. In fact, Islam is a practical religion. It does not give any commandment which is impossible of compliance. Hence, while referring to its injunctions about fasting, the Quran makes it clear that whosoever is ill or is on a journey should not fast but should redeem the omission by fasting.
186. The month of Ramadān is that in which the Quran was sent down as a guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance and of discrimination. Therefore, whosoever of you is present at home in this month, let him fast therein. But whoso is sick or is on a journey, shall fast the same number of other days. Allah desires to give you facility and He desires not hardship for you, and that you may complete the number, and that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you and that you may be grateful.\textsuperscript{192}

The pronoun \( 	ext{ذَٰلِكَ } \) (those) in the clause, \textit{those who are able}, refers to believers in general, the words \( 	ext{ذَٰلِكَ } \) (those) meaning, those who are able to fast but can fast only with great difficulty. This interpretation is supported by another reading of the verse in which the word \( 	ext{يُعَوَّدُونَ } \) (yuṭawwaqānūhā) has been substituted for \( 	ext{يُقُرُونَ } \) (yuṭiqūnūhā) (Jarir), the former word meaning, those to whom fasting is like a tight collar, \textit{i.e.}, those who are not actually sick but whose physical condition or general health is such that they are unable to fast without running the risk of injuring their health. Such people, who include old men and raw youths and weakly persons and pregnant women and mothers giving suck to their children, may not fast but should make amends for their non-observance of each day's fast by feeding a poor man according to their standard of food. Another reading of the word \( 	ext{يُعَوَّدُونَ } \) (yuṭawwaqānūhā) (Jarir) meaning, they can do it only with great difficulty, which also bears out the above meaning. Thus the verse mentions three classes of believers to whom concession is allowed with respect to fasting: (1) the sick; (2) those on a journey; and (3) those neither on a journey nor actually sick but otherwise too weak to fast except with real risk to their health.

Some Commentators do not recognize the last-mentioned class as being separate from, and independent of, the first two, but take it as being an exception from them. In this case the verse would mean that such of the sick and of those on a journey as can afford to feed poor men should also do so, besides fasting the same number of days after the sickness or the state of journey is over.

\textbf{192. Important Words:}

\textbf{Ramadān} (Ramadān) is the name given to the ninth month of the lunar year. The word is derived from the verb \textit{رَمَضُنَ} (ramūn). \textit{اِنْثَارُ} (inshār) means, the day became intensely hot. \textit{رَمَضَانُ الْرِّجْلُ} (Ramūn al-rigl) means, the man had his feet burnt by the earth which had become intensely heated by the sun. \textit{رَمَضَانُ الْعَشَّارُ} (Ramūn al-‘ash‘ār) means, his inside became very hot with thirst owing to fasting. \textit{أَرْضَتْهُ مِنَ الْحَرَّةِ} (Arda‘atū him min al-har‘) means, he began to burn, \textit{i.e.}, he was greatly distressed, with grief and sorrow. \textit{رَمَضَانُ} (Ramūn) means, the first rain of autumn which finds the earth hot and burning (Aqrab & Lane). The month of \textit{Ramadān} is so named because (1) fasting in this month causes heat and burning due to thirst; (2) worship and devotion in this month burns away the traces of sin in man, this signification
Being corroborated by a saying of the Holy Prophet ('Asākir and Merdawaih as quoted by Fath al-Qadir); and (3) its devotions produce in the heart of man the necessary warmth of love for his Creator and his fellow-beings. The name رَمَضَانُ is of Islamic origin, the former name of the month being نَافِعُ (Muḥīṭ & Mawardī, as quoted by Fath al-Qadir).

The Quran is the name given by God Himself to the Book revealed to the Holy Prophet of Islam, containing the final Law for mankind. The word is derived from قُرآن meaning: (1) he read the book i.e. he read it to himself; or (2) he recited the book i.e. he read it aloud so that others might hear it; قُرآن also means, he conveyed or delivered a message, etc., as they say قَرَأَ عِلَى الْإِلَهَم์, meaning, convey or deliver my salam to him; (3) قُرآنُ السَّابِقْيَة means, he collected or drew together the thing; (4) قُرآنُ الْمَرَاة means, the woman became pregnant and brought forth a child (Aqrab & Lane). Thus قُرآن (Quran) means: (1) a book which is meant to be read. The Quran is indeed the most widely read book in the world (Enc. Brit. 11th edition, article on Koran by Noldeke); (2) a book or message which is meant to be conveyed and delivered to other peoples. The Quran is indeed the only revealed Book whose delivery or message is absolutely unrestricted; for whereas all other Books are meant for specific times and specific peoples, the Quran is meant for all times and all peoples (34:29; also Bukhari); (3) a Book which comprises and has collected in itself all truth; the Quran is indeed a storehouse of knowledge which not only comprises all eternal truths revealed in previous Books (98:4) but also all such truths as mankind may stand in need of at any time and in any circumstances (18:50); (4) a Book which contains not only visible truth which may be seen and felt by all but, like a pregnant woman big with child, it contains truths that lie hidden from the eyes of most men and, like a new-born child, come to light only as and when time ripens (15:22). All these meanings are not only expressive of an existing state of affairs but also serve as mighty prophecies the truth of which has been established in all ages.

Commentary:

The ground having been suitably prepared in the preceding two verses, this verse gives the awaited commandment about fasting. But even here the actual commandment is preceded by a suitable description of the month of Ramadan in which fasts were to be observed. The month was not chosen arbitrarily but was selected for the purpose of fasting because it was a sacred month in which the Quran was revealed. And the Quran is not an ordinary book. It is a Book full of right guidance and of bright Signs and of things that help to differentiate between truth and falsehood. This sublime foreword placed before the commandment about fasting contains an implied question to the effect: Will you not now fast when fasting is a tried thing, when it is so useful, when it is to be observed only for a few days, when even in these few days suitable facilities have been provided, and lastly when these few days correspond with a month which is full of blessings?

As hinted above, this verse mentions the reason for which the month of Ramadan was selected for the purpose of fasting. It was in this month that the Quran was revealed. The revelation of the Quran in the month of Ramadan may mean two things: (1) that the revelation of the Holy Book commenced in the month of Ramadan, for it is on record that it was on the 24th of Ramadan that the Holy Prophet received his first revelation (Musnad & Jarir); (2) that the revelation of the Quran was repeated to the Holy Prophet every year in the month of Ramadan, for it is on record that the angel Gabriel rehearsed every year to the Holy Prophet the whole of the revealed portion of the Quran during this month.
and this he continued to do till the very year of the Prophet's death (Bukhari, ch. on Manaqib). Thus in a way even the whole of the Quran may be said to have been sent down in Ramadān.

The words, clear proofs of guidance and discrimination, point out that the Quran is a Book which is not content with making mere assertions. It supports every assertion it makes with necessary reasons and arguments which are both clear and convincing, and it also adduces heavenly Signs which go to discriminate right from wrong with such clearness that they leave no room for doubt. This excellence belongs exclusively to the Quran. Indeed, other scriptures, too have been spoken of as "a light and guidance," but about none of them has it been said that they supply reasons, arguments and Signs in support of their assertions.

Although former Prophets also were given Signs that people might accept them as divine Messengers, yet the scriptures they brought contained nothing that might bear testimony to their truth. It is only the Quran that contains all kinds of evidence—rational, scriptural and heavenly—to demonstrate the truth of its teachings so that it might itself furnish necessary evidence of its truth, and that, unlike other scriptures, tales and stories of the past might not form its sole support.

The clause, let him fast therein, signifies that it is necessary to fast all the days of the month of Ramadān; it will not do to fast only for a few days. Thus out of every twelve months in the year one at least—that of Ramadān—must be so devoted to the worship of God.

The clause, whoso is sick or is on a journey, he shall fast the same number of other days, at first appears to be an unnecessary repetition of what has already been said in the preceding verse in identical words, but really it is not so; for whereas in the previous verse this clause formed part of a verse that was meant to prepare the ground for the commandment to fast, in this verse it forms part of the actual commandment. The clause signifies that if in the month of Ramadān one happens to be sick or is on a journey, one should not fast, owing to the extra hardship entailed, but should fast the same number of other days when one has recovered from sickness or when the journey is over. The Quran, however, wisely refrains from defining the terms "sickness" and "journey," leaving them to be defined by the common usage of the people.

The clause, He desires not hardship for you, points to the very important principle that divine commands are not meant to cause trouble or inconvenience but to afford ease and facility. In this connection it may well be noted that St. Paul looks upon the Law as an entanglement with "the yoke of bondage" if not as an actual curse (Gal. chs. 3 and 5). But he forgets that true freedom, and for that matter, true happiness lie only in willing obedience to a good and righteous legislation. The Islamic law, even "in meats and drinks and divers washings, and carnal ordinances," is a real help and guidance rather than a hindrance and a bondage.

The clause, so that you may complete the number, indicates that God's purpose in prescribing a fixed number of days is that believers may be able to complete the number which, in His sight, is essential for their spiritual welfare. A fixed number was essential; for, otherwise, some people might have failed to fast even the minimum number, while others would have unduly suffered for doubt as to their having completed the necessary number even after they had long exceeded it.

The clause, that you may exalt Allah for His having guided you, points to yet another object underlying the commandment. All such expressions in which the offering of a particular praise to God is enjoined signify two things: (1) that man being God's creation should continuously offer praise to Him, invoking the particular divine attribute that may suit the
187. And when My servants ask thee about Me, say: "I am near. I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he prays to Me. So they should hearken to Me and believe in Me, that they may follow the right way."
he answered him or answered his question.

إجابة الأرض means, the earth brought forth its vegetation, i.e., responded to sowing.

إجابة له means, he answered him or responded to him.

إجابة له means, he obeyed him or complied with his wish and did what he was asked to do (Aqrab & Lane).

رشد (may follow the right way) is derived from رشد meaning, he was rightly guided and became steadfast in his guidance; he took or followed the right way. رشد and رشاد (rashd) and راشد mean, true guidance; following the right way with firmness and steadfastness; rectitude; maturity of intellect. راشد and رشيد mean, one who is rightly guided, one who takes or follows the right way. رشيد is more intensive of the two and is also applied to God when it means, “Director to the right way; One Who follows a perfect course in His decrees” (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

When the Faithful came to know of the blessings of the month of Ramadhan and of fasting therein, they naturally became eager to derive as much benefit from it as possible and asked the Holy Prophet as to the particular attitude of God in this month i.e. whether He came nearer to His servants in respect of grace and mercy, and whether He accepted more prayers in Ramadhan and so on. The verse provides an answer to this question.

The words, My servants, do not obviously refer to all people but to only such men as believe in God and are willing to obey Him, particularly Muslims who follow His commandments regarding Prayers, Fasting, etc. In fact atheists or, for that matter, rebellious people are never spoken of as “My servants” in the Quran.

The clause, I am near, does not, and indeed cannot, refer to bodily nearness. The preceding verses told us that the command to fast was given with a view to purifying us, and that in giving it God desired our own welfare and meant no torture. The conception of such a loving God naturally creates the desire in the minds of all men to attain spiritual nearness to Him. Hence the present verse contains the glad tidings that access to God is not beyond human power nor is His nearness the monopoly of any particular people. The attainment of union with Him is within the reach of every man and woman, and the door of His mercy and grace is also open to all.

The words, I answer the prayers of the supplicant, point to the fact that it is not only the true believers and the righteous who have their prayers accepted by God but that God hears and accepts the prayers of all. As a matter of fact, the acceptance of prayer is an expression of God’s grace and mercy which encompass Muslims as well as non-Muslims. It would be unjust to think that God, Who is “the Lord of the worlds,” accepts the prayers of Muslims alone. It is natural, however, that He should show greater favour to those who obey Him and hold fast to truth and act righteously. He therefore listens more to their prayers than to those of others, and He certainly rejects such prayers as are offered against His beloved ones. Nor does He accept such prayers as may lead to results that are detrimental to the cause of truth. But He is the Lord of all and listens to all.

The clause, so they should hearken to Me, means that they should believe in God (for without believing there can be no hearkening, and no response to His calls) and obey Him. God promises acceptance of prayers to “His servants” but He also expects that His creatures should believe in Him and obey His commandments. This will make their prayers all the more entitled to acceptance.

The words, and believe in Me, do not here refer to a belief in the existence of God; for this idea is included in the preceding clause, they should hearken to Me,
it being impossible that one should hearken to God and obey His commandments without believing in His existence. The words, believe in Me, therefore refer here to belief in the power of God to accept prayers and belief in the fact that if appealed to, He will certainly come to our help.

The final clause, that they may follow the right way, means that if men would act upon the guidance contained in this commandment they would (1) attain God's nearness, and (2) find God inclined to accept their prayers more and more.

But as with all other things, there are limitations and conditions attached to the acceptance of prayers also, to some of which the verse under comment refers. They may be briefly stated as follows:

(1) One should be a servant of God, accepting His dominion over him and worshipping Him alone, as the words, My servants, indicate.

(2) One should call on God alone for help and turn to no other being or thing opposed to Him, as the words, when he prays to Me, show. There are indeed many who, while seemingly praying to God, put their real trust in other things or sometimes even turn to false deities for help. Such men cannot expect their prayers to be accepted.

(3) One should hearken to God's call, i.e., not only believe in Him but also obey His commandments, accepting His Messengers and acting righteously in accordance with His Law, as the words, hearken to Me, point out.

(4) One should have firm belief in the fact that God not only has the power to accept one's prayers but would actually accept them if one could only persist in asking, as the words believe in Me, signify. There are indeed many who pray for a time and then get tired of it. These really do not believe; for if they had believed, they would willingly have waited. Says the Holy Prophet: "God would accept one's prayer if only one did not show impatience, by saying, 'I have prayed and I have not been answered'" (Muslim).

(5) The prayers of those who are rebellious against God, rejecting His commandments and opposing His will, are not accepted, particularly such prayers in which something against His will or something likely to injure the cause of His beloved ones is solicited. Says God: "The prayer of the rebellious ones is nothing but wasted" (40:51).

A saying of the Holy Prophet very beautifully explains the philosophy of prayer. He is reported to have said: "Every Muslim who prays to God and whose prayer does not consist in anything which is a sin i.e. anything against God's will or against His commandments or against His way, or anything which involves an injustice or unkindness to a relative, will have his prayer accepted. But the acceptance of prayer may take three forms: (a) either God will grant to the supplicant his request in this very life; or (b) He will store the thing for him in the next; or (c) He will ward off a like evil from him" (Bukhari).

The Holy Founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement says: "God treats His servants like friends. A friend would sometimes accept the request of his friend and would sometimes expect him to accept his will. So does God. But even when God seemingly rejects the prayer of a believer, He is very often acting in his interests" (Haqiqat, p. 19).
188. It is made lawful for you to go in unto your wives on the night of the fast. They are a garment for you, and you are a garment for them. Allah knows that you have been acting unjustly to yourselves, wherefore He has turned to you with mercy and afforded you relief. So you may now go in unto them and seek what Allah has ordained for you; and eat and drink until the white thread becomes distinct to you from the black thread of the dawn. Then complete the fast till nightfall and do not go in unto them while you remain in the mosques for devotion. These are the limits fixed by Allah, so approach them not. Thus does Allah make His commandments clear to men that they may become secure against evil.\(^\text{194}\)

194. Important Words:

\(\text{رفت} \) (going in unto) has a number of meanings: amatory talk, kissing, caressing, embracing, compressing, coition, etc.; in fact, everything that a man desires of his wife. When \(\text{رفت} \) is followed by the preposition \(\text{إلى} \) it means, coition or going in unto one's wife, and it is in this sense that the word has been used here. \(\text{رفت} \) also means, immodest, foul and lewd talk or speech (Lane).

\(\text{تمتَّنَّ} \) (you have been acting unjustly) is derived from \(\text{خان} \). They say \(\text{خان} \), i.e. he acted unfaithfully or perfidiously towards him; he was not faithful to the trust reposed in him. \(\text{خان} \) is like \(\text{خان} \), giving the same meaning. It also means, he acted wrongfully or unjustly towards him. The Arabs say \(\text{خان} \), i.e. his feet or legs acted unfaithfully towards him, meaning he was unable to walk. \(\text{تمتَّنَّ} \) would, therefore, mean, you failed to give your souls (i.e. yourselves) their due either (1) by preventing them from their duty to God, or (2) by refusing them the satisfaction of their natural and lawful cravings. The former act is a sin, while the latter, though not a sin, may endanger one's health or deprive one of just happiness. The word has been used in both these senses in the Quran. In 4:108, it has been used in the sense of "sin", while in the present verse it has been used in the sense of "depriving the soul of the gratification of its natural and just desires."

\(\text{عفا} \) (afforded you relief). The word \(\text{عفا} \) gives a number of meanings (see 2:53). The expression \(\text{عفا} \) is sometimes used where there is no question of pardoning any sin or obliterating traces thereof but simply in the sense of removing one's mistake or misunderstanding or improving one's condition or bestowing honour on one (Aqrab). It also means, making things easy i.e. affording relief (Mu'it).
if‘)\  \(\text{(go in unto them)}\) is derived from \(\text{بَرَّرُونَهُم}\) from which is also derived the word \(\text{بَرَّرُةٌ}\) or \(\text{بَارِثةٌ}\) meaning, glad tidings. The expression \(\text{بَرَّرُةٌ}\) means, he became glad and happy because of that. The words \(\text{بَرِّرَ بَلَدُ}\) mean, he removed or peeled off its skin. \(\text{البَرَّرُةٌ}\) means, outer part of skin, or what is visible of the face or body. \(\text{بَرِّرَةٌ}\) means, he came in contact with his wife skin to skin; he went in unto her. \(\text{بَرَّرُةٌ}\) (glad tidings) is so called because it changes the colour of the listener's face. \(\text{بَرّرُةٌ}\) (man) is also so called because, unlike other animals, man's skin is visible and not concealed under hair (\text{Aqrab, Mufradât & Lane}).

**Commentary:**

It was a custom among the Israelites to abstain from all kinds of food from one evening to the other on the occasion of the fast of the Atonement Day, the only fast prescribed by Moses for his people. When fasts were first prescribed for Muslims, and details had not yet been revealed, they thought that, like the Jews, they too would have to fast for 24 hours with a slight intervening breakfast. Hence, following their own judgement, they concluded that it was lawful for them to eat and drink and to go in unto their wives only as long as they did not go to bed, and that after they had gone to sleep, they were not allowed to partake of any food or drink or to go in unto their wives until the next evening. Bukhārī gives the following tradition on the authority of Barāː; “When the command to fast was revealed, if anybody kept a fast and then went to sleep in the evening, he abstained from eating, drinking and sexual intercourse until the time for breaking the fast the following day” (Bukhārī ch. on \text{Saum}). This tradition and others of the same import show that it was not in obedience to any command from God or the Holy Prophet that his Companions abstained from sexual intercourse after going to bed at night; but it was owing to their own imitation of similar customs among the People of the Book that they had imposed these restrictions on themselves. As, however, these restrictions were against the will of God, a revelation was soon sent down allowing the Faithful to eat and drink and approach their wives as they liked during the night; only they were forbidden to do so while fasting during the day.

Some Commentators have inferred from the words, \textit{you have been acting unjustly to yourselves}, that the Companions of the Holy Prophet were unable to act upon the commandment to abstain from intercourse with their wives during the nights of fasts and frequently broke it. But this is evidently wrong, for the good reason that there was no such commandment to be broken. Moreover, the words of the Quran \textit{i.e. you may now go in}, also belie this interpretation, for the use of the word \textit{“now”} clearly indicates that the Companions of the Holy Prophet were erring not on the side of indulgence but on that of abstinence. The Quran could not obviously say, \textit{you may now go in}, to a people who were already going in unto their wives.

The clause, \textit{they are a garment for you and you are a garment for them}, very beautifully describes the object of marriage. The verse points out that the object of marriage is not the gratification of carnal passions. The real object is the comfort, protection and embellishment of the parties, for such are the uses of a garment as explained in 7:27 & 16:82. Thus in a very few words, the Quran has described the true relationship that should exist between husband and wife, a description which has hardly a parallel in any other scripture.

The clause, \textit{the white thread becomes distinct from the black thread of the dawn}, does not refer to the thread made of yarn but to the streak of light that appears along the eastern horizon at the time of dawn. The verse enjoins that from dawn till sunset Muslims should abstain
189. And do not devour your wealth among yourselves through falsehood, and offer it not as bribe to the authorities that you may knowingly devour a part of the wealth of other people with injustice.

from food and drink and intercourse while fasting. But they are free to have recourse to these things between sunset and dawn. At places where days and nights are unusually long i.e. nearer the poles, calculation should be made for the purpose of fasting on the basis of average conditions i.e. in such a case day and night would each be supposed to be of twelve hours' duration. (Muslim, ch. on Ashrāt-al-Sā'at).

The clause, while you remain in the mosques for devotion, refers to the practice of ʿiṭkāf which is observed by remaining in the mosque, night and day, during the last ten days of Ramaḍān. During these days, the devotee who decides to observe ʿiṭkāf is not to leave the mosque except from human necessity i.e. to answer a call of nature, etc. He enters the mosque on the morning of the 20th of Ramaḍān and abides therein till the end of the month, fasting from daybreak to sunset and occupying himself in prayer or recitation of the Quran or other religious study or meditation. During ʿiṭkāf (Iʿtikāf), which is, as it were, the consummation of the spirit of fasting, intercourse with wives and preliminaries thereto are not allowed even at night time.

The clause, these are the limits fixed by Allah, so approach them not, points to the very important principle that a man can attain true piety only if he refrains from even "approaching" the things that have been forbidden by God. "Some acts," says the Holy Prophet "are of doubtful character, one not knowing whether they are right or wrong. It is always better to avoid these. The forbidden things are like a pasture-land which the Wise God prohibits to the people. If you make your beasts graze on the borders of such land, i.e., allow your beasts to approach near them, there is danger of their trespassing upon the prohibited area" (Bukhārī, ch. on Imān). This is an extremely wise injunction which cuts at the root of all trespass. Only those can protect themselves against sin who give all unlawful things a wide berth.

The final clause, that they may become secure against evil, repeats the idea contained in 2:184 in which the subject of fasting was first introduced. In both verses the underlying object of fasting has been stated to be the attainment of ṭaʿīr i.e. piety, righteousness and protection against evil, which are all different forms of divine blessings. The reader may, with advantage, compare this idea with the belief of the Christians that the Law is a curse (Gal. 3:10, 13).

195. Important Words:

.offer it (offer it) is derived from ʿadl meaning, he let down the bucket (into the well), or he pulled it up. ʿadl means, he let down the bucket (into the well.) ʿadl meaning, he offered or gave him money (Aqrab).

Commentary:
The commandment relating to fasting enjoined Muslims to refrain from lawful eating and
They ask thee about the new moons. Say, "They are means for measuring time for the general good of mankind and for the Pilgrimage." And it is not righteousness that you come into houses by the backs thereof; but truly righteous is he who fears God. And you should come into houses by the doors thereof; and fear Allah that you may prosper.\(^{196}\)

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drinking within specified periods with a view to attaining piety and righteousness. This was thus the most opportune time to remind the people that unlawful eating i.e. unlawful acquisition of wealth, must be all the more scrupulously avoided.

Indeed, one of the greatest evils prevailing in the world is the practice of devouring other men's property by means of falsehood, fraud and litigation. Many a sin is nothing but an offshoot of this evil. Islam condemns the practice of taking another man's property without his knowledge or consent. Similarly, it is unlawful to appropriate another person's possessions by means of false litigation. If a man takes possession of a property that does not belong to him by right, it will prove the ruin of him, even if a court of justice should decree the property as his. Says the Holy Prophet: "Beware! I am but a man like you and it sometimes happens that a litigant comes to me and he is more eloquent than his opponent, and I, after listening to his arguments, may give my decision in his favour. But if the property is really not his, my decision will not make it his in the sight of God; in that case it is nothing but a piece of burning fire; so let him put this fire into his belly if he likes, or let him leave it" (Bukhari).

The verse cuts at the root of the evil that has made its appearance in the present age even among those who lay claim to culture and enlightenment. People generally do not deem it worth while to consider what right is. All that is seen is how the judge decides. When a judge awards a property to a man, he eagerly takes possession of it without the slightest compunction, even if it happens not to belong to him by right. It never occurs to him that in the sight of God he is no less a usurper than he who forcibly seizes another man's property.

Incidentally the verse also forcefully condemns the practice of the giving and taking of bribe which unfortunately is so rampant nowadays. In many countries justice has actually to be bought. What is still worse is that through this evil practice the door of justice is often closed to a rightful owner. The practice is to be found even in some advanced Western countries and is said to be prevalent in certain parts of the New World. The Holy Prophet has condemned it in the strongest of terms saying: "The taker and giver of a bribe are alike, and both stand accursed" (Tirmidhi).

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**196. Important Words:**

اللّا (new moons) is the plural of اللّا (i.e. the new moon. The word is generally used about the moon of the first two or three nights. About the moon of other nights the word used is ر (Aqrab).
This is the plural of نَمَاثْتْ which is derived from نَمَثْتَ i.e. time. نَمَثْتْ means: (1) time; (2) time fixed or appointed for a certain thing; (3) a promise for which a time is fixed; (4) a place in which a meeting is appointed to take place at a particular time (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:
When the Companions of the Holy Prophet heard of the great blessings of the month of Ramadān, they naturally desired to know the blessings attending other months. This question on their part shows how solicitous they were to win God's blessings and attain His nearness.

The clause, they are means for measuring time, should not give rise to the misunderstanding that Islam looks upon the moon only as a means of measuring time; for elsewhere the Quran speaks of the sun also as such (6:97 and 17:13). In fact, Islam has made use of both the lunar and solar systems for measuring time. Where worship is to be performed in different parts of the day the solar system of reckoning time is used, as in the five daily Prayers or for the opening and the closing of a daily fast; and where worship is to be connected with a particular month or part thereof, the lunar system is used, as in selecting the month of fasting or the appointment of the time of Pilgrimage, etc. As a matter of fact, as religious commandments are meant for the general public, the system used is always such as may be easily understandable by the common people. All commandments relating to a fixed time are therefore based on the visible part of the solar or the lunar system of reckoning time, as the case may be. Changes in the position of the sun during the day are visible but the beginning of a solar month is not visible. On the other hand, the appearance of a new moon in the beginning of a lunar month is visible. Therefore Islam has made use of both; and the solar system is as much Islamic as the lunar system.

The clause, and it is not righteousness that you come into houses by the backs thereof, points to a very important principle that the real purpose in appointing different acts of worship is the intrinsic usefulness thereof and not that to each change of time there should be attached an act of worship. Therefore the question, resulting from the over-eagerness of the Faithful, that, like fasting, there may be prescribed other acts of worship relating to other months also, was like approaching a house not through its door but by "the back thereof." The primary thing was worship and time was only secondary, but those who put the question wanted to make time primary and worship merely secondary. This was like putting the cart before the horse.

The clause also means that one should adopt the right course to attain an object. Every end can be attained by having recourse to certain means. Similarly, certain ways have been prescribed by God for winning His pleasure and attaining His nearness. People should faithfully stick to these and not devise ways of their own. By doing so, they will only suffer trouble, and gain nothing.

It is also on record that it was the practice among the idolaters of Arabia that when they left their homes and started on Pilgrimage to Mecca, then if for some purpose or object they had to come back to their houses, they did not enter them by their doors, but climbed into them by their back walls (Bukhārī, ch. on Tafsīr). Islam does not approve of such meaningless practices.
191. And fight in the cause of Allah against those who fight against you, but do not transgress. Surely, Allah loves not the transgressors.

192. And kill them wherever you meet them and drive them out from where they have driven you out; for persecution is worse than killing. And fight them not in, and near, the Sacred Mosque until they fight you therein. But if they fight you, then fight them: such is the requital for the disbelievers.

197. Important Words:
(1) قتالاً (the cause of Allah) literally means, "the way of Allah." Anything done to remove the obstacles hindering people from approaching God or accepting His religion is termed قتالاً, i.e. in the cause of Allah; also anything done to further the cause of Allah or any act performed in compliance with God’s commandment. Thus holy wars, missionary campaigns, Pilgrimage, search of knowledge, etc., in fact anything done to further the cause of goodness and virtue as commanded by God is قتالاً.
(2) Such war is allowed only against those who first take up arms against Muslims as the words, "(those who fight against you)", indicate.
(3) Great care should be taken that women, children and old men of the belligerent nation who do not take actual part in the war against Islam are spared, for religious war is allowed only against those who fight against you. If, however, an old man or a woman takes actual part in the fighting the responsibility lies on him or her and in such a case he or she loses the concession. Says the Holy Prophet: "Do not kill an old man or a child or a woman, and always try to improve things and reform matters and act kindly towards others, for Allah loves those who act kindly" (Dāwūd).
(4) Muslims should bring the war to an end as soon as the enemy desists from fighting, for in this case further fighting is not permissible, as the words لا تقدموا (i.e. do not transgress; surely Allah loves not the transgressors, clearly prove. What a just and noble teaching and how tersely and beautifully expressed!

198. Important Words:
(1) نجدهم (you meet them) is derived from نجد, i.e. (1) he faced him or he met
193. But if they desist, then surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

The verse relates to conditions when a war has actually broken out. Obviously it does not apply to all disbelievers, for it only says, "kill them" and not "kill the disbelievers." The pronoun "them" clearly refers to those who fight against you, as mentioned in the previous verse. The verse calls upon Muslims to fight against only such disbelievers as take up arms against them. It does not call upon them to slay each and every disbeliever that may happen to come in their way. Indeed this verse affords a remarkable instance of the way in which the plain words of the Quran are generally distorted by the opponents of Islam.

The clause, and drive them out from where they have driven you out, refers to the time when the enemies of Islam compelled the Holy Prophet and his Companions to flee from Mecca. It enjoins Muslims to bear in mind that they have eventually to conquer Mecca which being the centre and the most sacred place of Islam, no non-Muslim would be allowed to remain in it.

The clause, persecution is worse than killing, provides an argument in support of defensive war. The disbelievers were persecuting Muslims in diverse ways with a view to turning them away from their faith and they were also creating disorder in the land. It was certainly better to put a stop to this state of affairs by fighting against the aggressors than to allow it to continue. There are circumstances when, to every right-thinking man, war becomes necessary.

The words (persecution) and (killing) may be interpreted in another way also. means, "persecution or war waged against a people with a view to turning them from their faith," and means, "an ordinary secular war." Now the verse points out that a war of religious persecution is worse than an ordinary war; for, firstly, worldly interests are nothing as compared with matters of faith; and secondly, wars caused by religious differences are more bitter and cruel, and seldom come to an end.

The clause, and fight them not in and near the Sacred Mosque until they fight you therein, contains a very important principle. Even after the declaration of war there are restrictions to be observed, and Muslims should never be the first to break them. The sanctity of the holy precincts of the Ka'ba must be safeguarded even in time of war. If, however, the other party violates its sanctity, Muslims may retaliate so that the attacking party may thereby be brought to its senses.

199. Commentary:

The verse speaks of the great clemency of Islamic teaching. Even after the disbelievers have inflicted diverse torments on Muslims, turning them out of their homes and making
194. And fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is professed for Allah. But if they desist, then remember that no hostility is allowed except against the aggressors.\(^a8\) See 2 : 191.

The word which throws light on the true significance of this verse is نَعَظة (persecution) which, as has been explained in the preceding verse, means religious persecution. This verse therefore enjoins Muslims to fight only till persecution for religion is over. It is on record that during the war between Hazrat 'Ali and Mu'āwiyah, 'Abdullah, son of 'Umar, was once asked why he did not take part in the war when the Quran enjoined the Muslims to fight to put an end to نَعَظة. He replied: “We did indeed act upon this injunction of the Quran when in the time of the Holy Prophet the number of Muslims was small and a man was subjected to نَعَظة i.e. persecution for his religious beliefs, being either put to death outright or tortured, until at last Islam spread and the نَعَظة was over.” (Bukhārī, ch. on Tafsir). These words of 'Abdullah, son of 'Umar, leave no doubt that the word نَعَظة in this verse means persecution for religious beliefs and nothing else. Muslims are enjoined to fight until there is no نَعَظة i.e. no persecution for religious beliefs.

The words that follow, i.e., and religion is professed for Allah, would, therefore, mean that Muslims should fight till profession of a faith is not influenced by the fear of men, but that whatever religion a man follows, he should follow it only for the sake of God, and not out of the fear of men. The above interpretation is also borne out by the fact that the Holy Prophet entered into a number of treaties of peace with disbelievers, which could have no justification if the divine commandment had been to continue fighting until all embraced Islam. The object of the Jihad or holy war which the Holy Prophet was bidden to undertake is clearly stated in 22: 40—42, which were the first verses that gave Muslims the permission to take up arms against disbelievers and the idea has been further clarified in 2 : 191, 193 above. Among the numerous other verses

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\(^a8\) 40. See 2 : 191.
The violation of a Sacred Month should be retaliated in the Sacred Month; and for all sacred things there is the law of retaliation. So, whoso transgresses against you, punish him for his transgression to the extent to which he has transgressed against you. And fear Allah and know that Allah is with those who fear Him.


The concluding clause i.e. but if they desist, then remember that no hostility is allowed except against the aggressors, further confirms the interpretation of the verse as given above. If the Quran enjoined the waging of war till Islam obtained universal acceptance, then there would be no sense whatever in the injunction that if disbelievers desisted from fighting and no longer remained aggressors, Muslims should also stop hostilities; for, as the verse puts it, fighting is not permissible "except against the aggressors."

201. Important Words:

الشهر الحرام (Sacred Month). From the earliest pre-Islamic times four out of the twelve lunar months have been regarded as sacred (9:36) in which fighting, etc., was held to be unlawful and people travelled in perfect peace and security. They were (1) Dhul-Qa'da, (2) Dhul-Hijja, (3) Al-Muhurram, and (4) Rajab, the first named three months occurring consecutively and the last separately. As ج (Pilgrimage) was performed in Dhul-Hijja, the three consecutive months served as a safe period for travelling for the purposes of Pilgrimage, both for the inward and the outward journey. The month of Rajab was generally meant for هم (the Lesser Pilgrimage). The system was pre-Islamic not in the sense that it had its origin in pagan Arabia but in the sense that it came in vogue along with the institution of Pilgrimage established by Abraham under the commandment of God (22:27, 28). As Islam retained the institution of ـ it naturally upheld the sanctity of the Sacred Months as well. Even warring tribes desisted from fighting at the approach of a Sacred Month when all bloodshed vanished from the land (Bukhari, Qasṭalānī, Zurqānī & Tāj).

The words قاطرلا عليه (punish him for his transgression) literally mean, "transgress against him," but as one who retaliates against the transgression of a party does not really transgress but simply punishes the transgression of the aggressor, the words have been rightly translated as punish him for his transgression. This is quite in accordance with the Arabic idiom; for, as shown under 2:16, the Arabs generally repeat the very word used for expressing the wrongdoing of a party to signify the punishment thereof.

Commentary:

The verse embodies an important principle. If, in fighting, the sanctity of a Sacred Month is violated by some tribe hostile to Islam, Muslims are not to sit hand-bound and allow the aggressors to victimize them. They should retaliate; for in such retaliation lies the very
196. And spend for the cause of Allah, and cast not yourselves into ruin with your own hands, and do good; surely, Allah loves those who do good. 202

safeguarding of the sanctity of a sacred thing; otherwise, the enemy would be unduly encouraged and would be all the more emboldened to commit such sacrileges.

But as fighting in a Sacred Month is a dangerous thing (2:218) and as the punishment of an act of transgression is also likely to exceed proper limits and a slight error of judgement on the part of Muslims might make them sinful in the sight of God, the latter part of the verse suitably warns them to fear God and always remain within proper bounds; for, Allah is with those who fear Him.

202. Commentary:

As the successful prosecution of war required money, the Faithful are here exhorted to spend in the cause of Allah so that the war which they have been bidden to wage in the defence of their faith may be conducted with efficiency.

The clause, and cast not yourselves into ruin with your own hands, does not mean, as supposed by some ignorant people, that Muslims should spare themselves and do nothing that may endanger their lives. On the contrary, it means that if Muslims will not spend money freely to carry on the war properly, they will be casting themselves into ruin with their own hands; for in that case the enemy will continue to persecute them and will one day wipe them out of existence. This interpretation is borne out by the sayings of some of the Companions themselves (Dāwūd, Tirmidhī & Jarīr).

The clause, and do good, surely Allah loves those who do good, may have four meanings: (1) Either it means, do not spend money yourselves only but give it to your poorer brethren also so that they too may be able to take part in the war. (2) Or it means, do not be unjust or cruel to your enemies in your eagerness to bring the war to a speedy end, for Allah loves those who are good to others. Elsewhere the Qurān says: Let not the enmity of a people incite you to be unjust. Be just (to all) for that is nearer righteousness. (3) Or it means, think well of your Lord i.e. do not think that if you spend your money under God's commandment, He will suffer you to come to ruin thereby. Or (4) it means, perform your duties well and fulfil your obligations faithfully and efficiently. The latter two meanings are supported by the sayings of the Companions of the Holy Prophet also (Jarīr).
197. And complete the Hajj and the 'Umra for the sake of Allah: but if you are kept back, then make whatever offering is easily available; and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination. And whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head, should make an expiation either by fasting or almsgiving or a sacrifice. But when you are safe, then he, who would avail himself of the 'Umra together with the Hajj, should make whatever offering is easily obtainable. But such of you as cannot find an offering should fast three days during the Pilgrimage, and seven when you return home; these are ten complete. This is for him whose family do not reside near the Sacred Mosque. And fear Allah and know that Allah is severe in punishing. 203

203. Commentary: 

From this verse begin commandments relating to the Hajj or the Pilgrimage. The Pilgrimage is performed in the following manner: The would-be pilgrim enters into a state of Ihrām (Ihrām) on reaching the āmmat (i.e. certain prescribed places slightly varying in distance in different directions, but in all cases outside the āmmat (the Sacred Territory). In the state of āmmat (the Sacred Territory), the pilgrim is forbidden sexual intercourse, the use of scent or perfumed oil, the wearing of sewn garments, hunting and the like. The male pilgrim discards ordinary clothes, putting on white unsown sheets and keeping the head uncovered. The female pilgrim may put on ordinary but simple clothes and should ordinarily keep her face uncovered. The pilgrim (male or female) is required to repeat the following words as often as possible: Allāhuma labbaik, labbaik; là sharika laka labbaik; innal hamda wan-ni’mata wal mulka laka; là sharika laka labbaik i.e. “My Lord! I am at Thy service. There is no equal or partner with Thee. So I am at Thy service alone. All praise belongs to Thee and all blessings are from Thee and all authority rests in Thee. I say again, there is no equal or partner with Thee. So I am at Thy service alone.”

At Mecca the first thing the pilgrim does, preferably after having a bath, is to perform seven circuits round the Ka’ba; then he briskly walks or runs between the Safa and the Marwa (see 2: 159) seven times. On the eighth day of Dha‘l-Hijja (the month of Pilgrimage) he goes in the morning from Mecca to Mina, which is about three miles from Mecca, where he halts to perform, at their appointed time, the five daily Prayers, beginning from the midday...
Prayer. Next morning (i.e. the 9th) he starts from Minâ and passing through, or by, Mash'âr al-Hasrâm, which is about six miles from Mecca, he goes on to the great plain at 'Arafât, three miles further ahead, where, before he actually enters 'Arafât, he says the midday and the afternoon Prayers together; and when all the pilgrims have entered 'Arafât, the Imam delivers a sermon, while the pilgrims do nothing but silently pray and stand still. Thereafter the pilgrim returns after sunset to Muzdalifah or Mash'âr al-Hasrâm where he says the evening and the night Prayers together and spends most of his time in prayer and meditation. Next day (i.e., the 10th) after offering his morning Prayer at Mash'âr al-Hasrâm he starts back early for Minâ, where he casts pebbles (seven in number) at the three appointed pillars beginning with the Jamrat al-'Aqaba, repeating this each day that he stays at Minâ. The same day, i.e., the 10th, the pilgrim offers his sacrifice (goat, sheep, ram, cow, camel, etc.), gets his head shaved, takes a bath and puts on his ordinary clothes. Thereafter he proceeds to Mecca and again performs the circuit of the Ka'ba seven times and then returns to Minâ if he should so desire. The stay at Minâ may last from part of a day to three or four days known as أيام مادرات (i.e. the numbered days) with which the Hajj is completed. All this time the pilgrim should repeat, as many times as possible, the above-mentioned prayer.

The Lesser Pilgrimage consists in entering into a state of إحرام (Ihrâm) in the way described above, circuiting the Ka'ba seven times, running between the Safâ and the Marwa and offering a sacrifice which, however, is not obligatory. 'Umra may be performed at any time of the year, whereas the Hajj or the Greater Pilgrimage is performed only during the month of Dhul-Hijja. For the literal meanings of the words Hajj and 'Umra see note on 2:159.

The words, If you are kept back, refer to a state of affairs when a would-be pilgrim is prevented by disease, or a state of war, or some other cause, from visiting the Ka'ba to perform the Hajj or the 'Umra. In this case the pilgrim may refrain from proceeding further and should sacrifice whatsoever offering is easily available i.e. a goat, a sheep, a cow, or a camel, etc. But he should not shave his head until the offering reaches its destination, the idea being to remain in the state of Ihram until the offering reaches Minâ which is the place meant for it. If, however, the offering cannot be sent to Mecca, it may be sacrificed by the pilgrim at the place where he is detained and the meat either consumed by the pilgrim himself or distributed among friends, relatives, neighbours, etc. It will be noted that the offering of a sacrifice is obligatory only when a would-be pilgrim is prevented from completing his Hajj or 'Umra. In ordinary circumstances when a person performs a Hajj or an 'Umra separately, it is only supererogatory, becoming obligatory only when the Hajj and the 'Umra are combined.

The clause, should make an expiation either by fasting or almsgiving or a sacrifice, relates to such people as cannot shave their heads owing to some ailment. The alternatives mentioned are meant to suit different grades of people. Fasting is meant for the poor; feeding the needy for the pilgrims of the middle class; and the offering of a sacrifice for the rich. The Quran does not fix the number of days for which one is to fast, or the number of the poor whom one is to feed or the kind of animal which one is to sacrifice. The Holy Prophet is reported to have once prescribed fasting for three days (i.e. three one-day fasts), and the feeding of six poor men and the offering of a goat as a sacrifice (Bukhârî).

The words, when you are safe, mean, when the war is over, or when other obstacles are removed. In such case it is open to a person to proceed to Mecca with the intention of
performing 'Umra and then stay on to perform Hajj in the ensuing month of Dhūl-Hijja. This is what is referred to in the words: who would avail himself of 'Umra together with the Hajj.

'Umra and Hajj may be combined in two ways: One way is for the would-be pilgrim to make up his mind to perform the 'Umra only and enter into the state of Ihram with that intention, and then perform its rites and finish it. After that on the eighth day of Dhūl-Hijja one should again enter into the state of Ihram and then perform the prescribed rites of Hajj. This form of combining the 'Umra and the Hajj is technically called Tamattu' which literally means, "availing oneself of a thing."

The second way is that a man should make up his mind to perform the 'Umra and Hajj simultaneously. He should, in this case, enter into the state of Ihram with that intention and should remain in that state till the end of the Pilgrimage. This combination of Hajj and 'Umra is called Qirān which literally means, "the putting together of two things." In both Tamattu' and Qirān it is obligatory to offer the sacrifice, while in the case of Hajj alone or in the case of 'Umra alone, the offering of the sacrifice is not obligatory. In the verse under comment the word 'الله' is not used in the technical sense and covers إن An also.

The fasting mentioned in the clause, should fast three days during the Pilgrimage, is distinct and separate from the fasting mentioned above. The first-mentioned fasting was meant for those who cannot shave their heads, while this fasting is meant for those who are unable to offer a sacrifice in case of Tamattu'. The three days spoken of are preferably the 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhūl-Hijja. The remaining seven fasts may be observed after one has returned home.

The clause, this is for him whose family does not reside near the Sacred Mosque, means that the permission to combine Hajj with 'Umra is meant not for the residents of Mecca but for those who come from outside. By some, however, the words "the Sacred Mosque" have been extended to include the whole of i.e. the Sacred Territory in and around Mecca.

The final clause, fear Allah and know that Allah is severe in punishing, has a twofold meaning: (1) That Muslims should not think that these are mere minor details of certain outward rites and may therefore not be strictly observed; for all these things which the All-Knowing God has prescribed for the Faithful are necessary in His sight and are meant for their own good. So, whoever neglects these details not only incurs the displeasure of God but also hinders his own spiritual progress. (2) That the performance of Hajj should not fill the heart with pride (which unfortunately is very often the case nowadays), for this would defeat the very object of Pilgrimage which is the attainment of حسن or God-fearingness. In such case the so-called pilgrim will not find himself nearer God but rather would see His punishment descending on him.

In connection with this verse, it should also be noted that besides giving a general meaning as stated above, it also refers to a specific incident in Islamic history i.e. the Truce of Ḥudaybiya. The verse was revealed before that truce and hinted that a time was coming when Muslims would start towards Mecca with the intention of performing Pilgrimage, but they would be "kept back" from doing so by disbelievers. Later, however, God would grant them victory over the disbelievers and they would be "safe" to perform the Pilgrimage in peace. What a true picture of the apparent set-back at Ḥudaybiya and the subsequent fall of Mecca at the hands of the Holy Prophet!
The months of the Hajj are well known; so whoever determines to perform the Pilgrimage in these months, should remember that there is to be no foul talk, nor any transgression, nor any quarrelling during the Pilgrimage. And whatever good you do, Allah knows it. And furnish yourselves with necessary provisions, and surely the best provision is righteousness. And fear Me alone, O men of understanding.
199. It is no sin for you that you seek the bounty of your Lord. But when you pour forth from 'Arafat, remember Allah at Mash'ar al-Haram; and remember Him as He has guided you; although, before this, you were of those gone astray. 

The clause, And furnish yourselves with necessary provisions, does not only refer to the preparation which one makes for an ordinary journey which is necessary in its own way, but also to the preparation which one has to make for a spiritual journey. In this sense the clause would signify “provide yourselves with piety and righteousness,” and in order to emphasize the latter kind of provision, the Quran fittingly adds, and surely the best provision is righteousness. But ordinary provision is also necessary; for, if a man does not take necessary provisions with him, he will be certainly put to great inconvenience and hardship on the way and will have to beg of others for help and both these things are detrimental to the noble object underlying Pilgrimage.

205. Important Words:

اًطأّ (you pour forth) is derived from تاء which is again derived from قَطُّ which is the flood-water was great in quantity and overflowed the banks. دَعَتْهْ means, his eye was full of tears, which began to flow down fast. قَطُّ is both transitive and intransitive. They say قَطُّ الْمَاء, i.e. he poured out water. قَطُّ الدِّمْنَم من المكَان means, the people, who were great in number, poured forth from the house and dispersed. قَطُّ is one whose charity flows like water (Aqrab).

Commentary:

As the object of Pilgrimage is that the greatest possible number of Muslims should take part in it, therefore, the Quran permits pilgrims to engage in commerce and trade. Those who cannot take hard cash with them may carry merchandise, and thereby earn money to meet the expenses of the journey. This is what is hinted in the clause, it is no sin for you that you seek the bounty of your Lord. Similar permission
200. Then pour forth from where the people pour forth, and seek forgiveness from Allah; surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

is granted to those who gather for the Friday Prayers (62: 11).

But trade should not interfere with the acts of worship and devotion prescribed in Pilgrimage. Says God, but when you pour forth from 'Arafāt, remember Him as He has guided you. The Holy Prophet used to pass his time in prayer and meditation at Mash'ar al-Ḥarām and the Faithful are warned that trade or any other worldly occupation should not make them forget the real object of Pilgrimage. The word اضطر (pour forth, lit. overflow) also has a metaphorical meaning i.e. when you return from 'Arafāt, you should not return empty-handed but should return like a vessel full to overflowing with spiritual knowledge and blessings.

The reader will note that عنةات ('Arafāt) and شامئل (Mash'ar al-Ḥarām) are both attributive names which have now come to be used as proper ones. They are used to draw the attention of the pilgrim to the fact that Ḥajj should be a source of knowledge and spiritual realization to him and not a mere outward rite, a mere shell, with no inner soul. The word 'Arafāt also hints that it should be a means of mutual introduction and recognition for Muslims coming from different parts of the world.

206. Important Words:

اسم حسن (ask forgiveness) is derived from واستمر ( forgiving) for which see 2: 59. Would thus mean, he asked God for مغفرت, in all its senses i.e. covering up of sins, forgiveness, protection against stumbling, protection against punishment of sins, etc. استمر is not confined to verbal asking for forgiveness only, but extends to, and includes, practical change for the better on the part of him who asks for forgiveness. He should ask for pardon both by word and deed (Mufradat).

Commentary:

The word ثم (then) in the clause, then pour forth from where the people pour forth, has given rise to a divergence of opinion among Commentators. If it means, "then," it must needs be taken to indicate sequence or order and the clause would thus signify: "after you have returned to Mash'ar al-Ḥarām (as mentioned in the preceding verse), you should return (from منشأ al-Ḥarām) from where the people return." But this is obviously superfluous, as nobody has ever differed about proceeding to and returning from Mash'ar al-Ḥarām with the people. A difference existed only with regard to proceeding to and returning from عنةات; for, whereas the Quraish and the Kināna, known as Hums, stopped short at Mash'ar al-Ḥarām, a place within حرم (the Sacred Territory) and did not go up to 'Arafāt which is outside حرم, other pilgrims went right up to 'Arafāt. Consequently if the commandment with regard to "pouring forth with the people" was at all needed, it was needed with regard to 'Arafāt and not with regard to Mash'ar al-Ḥarām; but in the verse under comment the Quran appears to mention it in connection with the latter. This difficulty has led some to interpret the word ثم not as " then " but simply as " and " which the idiom of the Arabic language justifies (Lane). These Commentators have translated the words ثم اسفنا not as " then pour forth " but simply as " and pour forth." In this case the "pouring forth" spoken of may relate to 'Arafāt and not to Mash'ar al-Ḥarām as the clause under comment appears to indicate. This is certainly not an incorrect interpretation.
so far as the rules of the Arabic language go; but another interpretation is also possible in which the primary meaning of ' (then) is retained. This may be explained as follows. The preceding verse speaks of "pouring forth" or returning from 'Arafāt, thereby making it plain that going up to 'Arafāt is necessary. This completes the commandment with regard to the stay at and return from 'Arafāt. The verse under comment takes us further, speaking of the return from Mash'ar al-Ḥarām and not from 'Arafāt, and thus the primary significance of ' i.e. "then" is retained, for the obvious reason that the return from Mash'ar al-Ḥarām comes after the return from 'Arafāt. As to the words, pour forth from where the people pour forth, it may be noted that in this case they would be taken to have been used merely to indicate that whereas the return from 'Arafāt is confined to those who adhere to the right custom and go right up to 'Arafāt, the return from Mash'ar al-Ḥarām is general, including also the proud Hums who stopped short at Mash'ar al-Ḥarām and did not go further. This is further corroborated by the fact that whereas the Quran uses the word تَفْعَلُونَ (you pour forth) with regard to the return from 'Arafāt, it uses the words تَفْعَلُونَ مِنْ حَيْثُ الْأَلَّامُ النَّاسُ, i.e. "pour forth from where the people (i.e., all people) pour forth" with regard to the return from Mash'ar al-Ḥarām which was at that time more general and extended to all. Thus the meaning of the word الناس would also change with the change in the meaning of the word مَثَل. If مَثَل is taken to mean "and," and "the return" spoken of in this verse is taken to refer to the return from 'Arafāt, then الناس would mean "other people"; but if مَثَل is taken to mean "then" and "the return" spoken of here is taken to refer to the return from Mash'ar al-Ḥarām, then الناس would signify "all people" and both these meanings are justified by the rules of the Arabic language.

In short, before the advent of Islam the Quraish and the Banū Kināma known as Hums did not accompany other pilgrims to 'Arafāt, but stopped short at Mash'ar al-Ḥarām, waiting to join other people returning from 'Arafāt. In this and the preceding verse, they are bidden not to stop short at Mash'ar al-Ḥarām but to go up to 'Arafāt and do as other people do. After returning from 'Arafāt to Mash'ar al-Ḥarām, pilgrims should proceed to Minā where sacrifices are offered and the state of Ḥarām comes to an end. The clause, and seek forgiveness from Allah, hints that as Ḥжаj consists of certain rites, there is the possibility of some persons not understanding the meaning and spirit of these rites. Moreover, where a number of religious acts are crowded into a short space of time, there is always the possibility of some persons missing and omitting certain things or of forgetting the prescribed order thereof. The pilgrims are, therefore, exhorted to have recourse to Ḳaṣf, i.e., seeking God's forgiveness as well as His protection against error and its consequences.

The word استغفار literally means "to pray for the covering up of sins and protection," which signifies forgiveness for past sins and protection against future ones. Thus, when a pilgrim offers Ḳaṣf, he seeks not only forgiveness for what is past or protection against stumbling with regard to the observance of the rites of Pilgrimage but also protection against future stumblings.

It should also be remembered that Ḳaṣf is not needed by ordinary people only, but holy servants of God also resort to it. The former offer Ḳaṣf to seek protection against future sins as well as from the consequences of past errors; while the latter seek protection against human shortcomings and limitations that may hinder their progress and work. Holy men, too, are human, and though they may be free from sins, they are always eager to seek divine help and assistance against human
201. And when you have performed the acts of worship prescribed for you, celebrate the praises of Allah as you celebrated the praises of your fathers, or even more than that. And of men there are some who say, ‘Our Lord, grant us good things in this world;’ and such a one shall have no share in the Hereafter.  

207. Important Words:  

ناذكروا (celebrate praises of) is derived from ذكر which means, (1) he talked of him by way of praising him; (2) he remembered him in his heart (Aqrab & Mufradat). See also 2:41, 153.  

أو (or) is a preposition used to convey a number of meanings, the more important being: (1) or; (2) and; (3) nay; (4) unless; (5) until (Aqrab & Lane).  

شارك (share) means, an abundant share in what is good (Aqrab).  

Commentary:  

The clause, when you have performed the acts of worship prescribed for you, celebrate the praises of Allah as you celebrated the praises of your fathers or even more than that, has yet another meaning. As the word ذكر also means ‘remembering’ and the word أب (father) includes mother as well (12:101), the clause may also signify that the rites of Pilgrimage, if performed in the right spirit, should fill the heart of man with such love for God as to make him always remember Him just as a child remembers his parents. This is why the Quran begins the word ذكر with the conjunction نا meaning “so” or “then,” hinting that the result of the performance of the rites of Pilgrimage should be that a pilgrim should
202. And “of them there are some who say: ‘Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the Fire.” 208

ever after remember his Creator with the fondness displayed by a child for his parents. But this is only the first stage. With holier men God’s love should be even greater, as the verse hints in the words, or even more than that. Says the Holy Prophet, “The sign of true faith is that a believer’s love for God and His Apostle should be greater than his love for any other being or thing” (Bukhari).

The concluding clause, i.e., of men there are some who say, ‘Our Lord, grant us (good things) in this world,’ and such a one shall have no share in the Hereafter, points to the fact that if the pilgrim confines himself to the celebration of the praises of his fathers and forgets his Creator, he would be like a person who spends all his efforts in the pursuit of this world, even his prayers being confined to search after worldly things. Such a person shall evidently have no claim to the good things of the Hereafter. It is also significant that in this clause the Quran does not use the word حصة (good things) with the words في الدنيا (in this world) thereby hinting that such men generally make no distinction between the good things of this world and the bad things thereof, their sole object being the things of this world, irrespective of whether they are good or bad.

As explained under Important Words, the word خلاف (share) occurring in the clause, such a one shall have no share in the Hereafter, really means, “an abundant share in what is good.” So the verse would really mean not that such a person will get only a small share in the Hereafter but that, by remaining engrossed in the things of this world, he will deprive himself of a big share and will get no share at all. As the Quran has to condense vast subjects in a small space, it purposely uses words and constructions that take the smallest space but convey the vastest meaning.

208. Commentary:

In this verse God mentions that class of men whose efforts and wishes are not confined to this world only. They (1) seek the good things of this world, and (2) seek the good things of the next world, and (3) try to be saved from the Fire which not only signifies the fire of Hell but also everything that is painful and is a source of heart-burning. It may be noted that here, unlike the preceding verse, God uses the word حصة (good) with the words في الدنيا (in this world), meaning that even virtuous men may seek the things of this world but they should always be good and not bad.

The prayer mentioned in this verse is indeed very comprehensive and may be used by men of all grades in all their spiritual and temporal requirements, and the Holy Prophet is reported to have used this prayer very often (Muslim, ch. on Dhikr) with a view to teaching his Companions that if and when they choose to seek both the good things of this world and of the next, they should pray like this.

The prayer has another significance also. The good things of this world and the good things of the Hereafter spoken of in this verse may both stand for spiritual blessings, the good things of this world standing for such spiritual blessings as a righteous man gets in this world
203. For these there shall be a 

**goodly** share because of what they have earned. And Allah is swift at 

reckoning.\(^{209}\)

204. And remember Allah during the appointed number of days; but whoso hastens to leave in two days, it shall be no sin for him; and whoso stays behind, it shall be no sin for him. This is for him who fears God. And fear Allah and know that you shall

all be brought together before Him.\(^{210}\)

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\(^{209}\) See 2:153.

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and the good things of the next world standing for those which he will get Hereafter. In fact, the very words used in the verse point to that signification, for the Quranic words do not mean "good things of this world" but simply "good in this world." In this case the Fire would stand not for Hell, protection against which is, in fact, included in the good things of the next world, but for such trials and hardships as one may come across in this world in the struggle for spiritual advancement or in the effort to benefit others. It was in this sense that the Holy Prophet used this prayer with regard to himself; for personally he never sought even the good things of this world, though he always sought "good in this world."

209. Important Words:

- **صُدُر** (share) is derived from **صُبر** i.e. he set it up. Therefore **صُدُر** means, a set share or portion (Lane).

- **Commentary:**

Such men as seek the good things of this world as well as the good things of the Hereafter (2:202) will have their reward from God according to their deserts. The clause, *Allah is swift at reckoning*, however, contains a warning to such men, hinting that as some of their efforts are being spent in pursuit of the things of this world, they should be careful lest any stumbling or weakness on their part should bring on them God's displeasure. The clause also points to the important fact that God has so ordained that in nature every action is immediately followed by its consequences, inasmuch as it leaves an impression on man, and thus all actions are preserved. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said that when a man commits an evil deed, a black spot is formed in his heart and if he repeats the sin, the spot grows bigger and so on (Musnad). This, indeed, is the result which quickly follows the actions of man. In fact it is a reckoning which accompanies all actions of man.

210. **Commentary:**

The glorification of God or the celebration of His praises enjoined in the preceding verses is to be particularly observed in the appointed number of days to be spent in *Minā* after the *Hajj* is over. These are the 11th, the 12th and the 13th day of Dhul-Hijja during which the pilgrims are required, so far as possible, to stay at *Minā* and pass their time in God's glorification. In these days they are also required, as a symbol of the driving out of Satan, to cast pebbles daily at the three pillars so long as they stay there. These are called *يَامُ اِلْشَّرِيقُ* i.e. the days of beauty and brightness.
The clause, *whoso hastens to leave in two days*, refers to the stay in *Mina*. If a pilgrim leaves *Mina* two days earlier or stays behind for two days more, no sin shall attach to him, provided everything he does is done with good intention, acting righteously and God-fearingly.

The verse ends with the clause, and *fear Allah and know that you shall be brought together before Him*, to bring home to the reader or the pilgrim that the underlying object of the Pilgrimage is the very word with which the Quran began its commandments about *Hajj* in 2 : 197, thus emphasizing that mere outward observance of certain rites is nothing unless they are accompanied by the spirit of righteousness which must underlie all actions of man.

The clause, *واعلموا أنكم إله متعورون* translated above as, *know that you shall all be brought together before Him*, is also intended to hint that the gathering in *Hajj* is not meant for the performance of certain rites and ceremonies but, as it were, for meeting God. In this case, the clause would be rendered as, "know that (in *Hajj*) you are brought together (i.e. the purpose of your gathering is) to meet God" and you must, therefore, behave accordingly. The gathering in *Hajj* is truly like the *جنر (gathering)* on the great Day of Judgement.

Now that the description of *Hajj* as given in these verses has come to an end, it would be appropriate to give here a brief but collective note on the wisdom and the significance of this act of worship and devotion. The Pilgrimage is indeed a great spiritual ordinance. According to the Quran, the Ka'ba is the first house of worship that was built for mankind (3 : 97). It dates not from Abraham, who simply rebuilt it, but from Adam. The Quran speaks of it as "the Ancient House" (22 : 30, 34). A Jewish tradition also says that Abraham built "the altar which Adam had built, which had been destroyed by the waters of the Deluge, which Noah had again builded, and which had been destroyed in the age of divisions" (The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel translated by J. W. Ethebridge, London, 1862, p. 226). The Ka'ba is the only altar that answers this description; there is no other place so ancient. It was the purpose of God that men from all quarters should assemble at this central house and thus be reminded of their common humanity and common relation with the Lord of the worlds. Differences which divided one nation from another were to be forgotten and all drawn closer to one another in one common bond. The *Hajj* provides pilgrims of different lands and diverse nationalities with an excellent opportunity to cultivate acquaintance with one another and discuss matters of common interest. This purpose has been made all the more accessible by ordering pilgrims to pass the days of *Hajj*, and the days following, not within thefour walls of Mecca but out in the open desert at *Mina*, *Muzdalifah* and *'Arafat* and back again in *Mina*.

The different objects and places which play an important part in Pilgrimage are spoken of in the Quran as *شئر الله* (2 : 159; 5 : 3; 22 : 33) or the Signs of God, which shows that they are meant by God to serve as symbols to impress upon the minds of pilgrims their inward significance.

The Ka'ba or the *Bait Allah* (the House of God), the very first house of worship round which thousands of devout pilgrims perform the circuit and towards which they all turn while offering their Prayers wherever they be, recalls to their mind the Unity and Majesty of God upon Whom depends all creation. It also reminds one of the unity of mankind.

The act of running between the *Safâ* and the *Marwa* calls to the minds of pilgrims the pathetic story of Hagar and Ishmael, reminding them how God provides for his helpless servants even in the solitude of a great wilderness.
Minā is a name derived from the word unniyya which means "an object" or "a desire." This reminds the pilgrim of the fact that he goes there with the "object" or the "desire" of meeting God. From Minā the pilgrim proceeds to Muzdalifah which means "nearness" and reminds him that the object with which he had set out has drawn "near." The other name of Muzdalifah is Mash‘ar al-Harām, meaning the sacred symbol. This also hints that the final stage is near. From Muzdalifah, the pilgrim proceeds to ‘Arafāt, the root-meaning of which is "to recognize." This reminds him that he has now reached the stage of "recognition" where he has "recognized" or known the One Lord and has met Him.

Again, the place chosen for this great concourse of the Faithful is a barren waste, devoid of all vegetation, as the Quran itself states (14: 38). The only things that are met with there are sand, pebbles, rocks and rugged hillocks. Such a place has been chosen to bring home to us the fact that it possesses absolutely no attraction for which one might visit it. If there is anything for which one should go there, it is God and God alone. This is why in the present verse the Quran says, "know that you are being gathered here (not for any worldly object but) to meet Him."

Ihram reminds one of the Day of Resurrection. Like the shroud of a dead body, the pilgrim is covered only with two unsewn sheets, one for the upper part of the body and the other for the lower; and he also has to remain bareheaded. This condition is to remind him that he has here, as it were, risen from the dead. The pilgrims gathered together at ‘Arafāt truly present the spectacle of the Day of Resurrection—men suddenly risen from the dead in their white shrouds and assembled in the presence of their Lord.

The casting of pebbles at the three pillars at Minā—known as Dunyā, Wusṭā and ‘Aqaba—is also an interesting representation. It reminds the pilgrim of the three stages through which man has to pass and which have been referred to in the Quran as the three stages of human life, viz., (1) the present world, or Dunyā as it is called, which is symbolized by the first pillar, significantly called Jamrat al-Dunyā i.e. the pillar situated near; (2) the grave or the middle stage lying between this world and the next, the pillar corresponding to which is called Jamrat al-Wustā i.e. the middle pillar; and (3) the next world (known also as ‘Uqba) which is symbolized by the third pillar, which is accordingly called Jamrat al-‘Aqaba i.e. the pillar of the distant hillock that comes after the others. The casting of pebbles at these pillars is also symbolic of Satan being pelted. Evil thoughts should be driven out of one’s mind just as God has driven away Satan from His presence.

The animals sacrificed are reminders of the great sacrifice of his son Ishmael offered by Abraham, and teach, in symbolic language, that man should ever be willing not only to sacrifice himself but also his wealth and property and even children in the way of God out of love for Him.

Pilgrims perform seven circuits round the Ka'ba, run seven times between the Safā and the Marwa and cast seven pebbles at the pillars at Minā. The number seven being regarded by the Arabs as a symbol of perfection (Aqrab), the pilgrim is thereby reminded that in Pilgrimage, as in all other things, he should not be satisfied with half measures. He should always aim at perfection and get it. It is significant that the stages of spiritual progress which lead man to perfection and which have been detailed in 23: 2—12 are also seven.

In short, the various rites of the Hajj and the objects that play a part therein are all emblematic and are replete with great and momentous lessons, but only for those who care to meditate.
205. And of men there is he whose talk on this life would please thee, and he would call Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart, and yet he is the most contentious of quarrellers.\[211]

206. And when he is in authority, he runs about in the land to create disorder in it and destroy the crops and the progeny of man; and Allah loves not disorder.\[212]

63:5.

211. Important Words:

\(\text{would please thee}\) is derived from meaning, he wondered; he became pleased. meaning, it pleased him and caused him to wonder (Aqrab).

\(\text{most contentious}\) is derived from (ladda). They say meaning, he contended or quarrelled with him vehemently. So which is the noun of pre-eminence from it, means, one who is a great quarreller. The plural of \(\text{is} \) \(\text{ludd}\) (Aqrab).

\(\text{quarrellers}\) is the plural of (quarreller). They say i.e. he quarrelled or disputed with him. and and all give the same meaning i.e. quarreller. The word is also used in the infinitive sense, meaning the act of quarrelling (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

Two kinds of men have already been mentioned: (1) those who seek only the things of this world (2: 201); and (2) those who seek both the good things of this world and those of the next (2: 202). The present verse and those that follow mention two extreme types of these two classes. Of the former class, states the verse under comment, there are those who wax eloquent in their talk about this world, pleading for the necessity of improving the conditions of life for mankind and calling God to witness their sincerity. Their eloquence and apparent love for fellow-beings would deceive the listener, but at heart they love only their own selfish interests and would vehemently dispute with others for their smallest rights, supposed or real, displaying none of that spirit of sacrifice which is essential for real human progress. They would look to their own interests or the interests of their family or those of their community or their nation only and would not make any sacrifice for, or even do justice to, others.

The clause, he would call Allah to witness, shows that such people outwardly profess faith in God but at heart are lacking in the quality of universal brotherhood which must result from a true belief in a Universal God—"Lord of all the worlds," as the Quran puts it.

212. Important Words:

\(\text{is in authority}\) is derived from means: (1) he turned his back, he went away from one's presence; (2) he held command, or he was in authority; he became a or ruler (Aqrab & Taj).

\(\text{runs about}\) means: (1) he walked briskly or he ran; (2) he made an effort; or he strove to obtain an object (Aqrab).
207. And when it is said to him, ‘Fear Allah,’ pride incites him to further sin. So Hell shall be his sufficient reward; and surely, it is an evil place of rest.213

The crops is the noun-infinitive from حُرَث (the crops) i.e. he ploughed or tilled the soil; he sowed seeds or planted plants in it; he acquired or earned or laboured for wealth or sustenance; he worked or laboured for the goods of the world.

حَرْث means: (1) a tilth or a piece of land ploughed for sowing, or land actually sown with some crop; (2) land under crop; (3) crop or produce of land whether field crop or garden crop; (4) gain, acquisition or earning; (5) reward or recompense; (6) worldly goods; (7) wife or wives, because a wife is like a tilth in which seed is sown to bear crop in the form of children; (8) a much used road or a beaten track (Lane).

النسل (progeny). نسل الرجال means, he begot a child. نسل الرجال means, the man had many children; the progeny of the man increased.

نسل means: (1) creatures; (2) children; (3) progeny, whether of man or beast (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

This verse further develops the idea contained in the preceding one. The type of man described in the previous verse (i.e. one whose talk about the affairs of this world is very pleasing but who is selfish at heart) becomes unmasked when he happens to be in authority, or when he goes away from the presence of the people and meets his associates in private. Thus both the meanings of the word تولى as mentioned under Important Words are appropriate here: (1) While he is in the presence of those who are sincere lovers of mankind, he says pleasing things; but when he goes away from them and meets his comrades in private, he strives to create disorder on the earth. (2) Similarly, when he happens to come to power, he becomes exposed and all his talk about improving the affairs of the world vanishes like smoke, and instead of acting like a reformer he actually becomes a source of disorder.

The clause, destroy the crops and the progeny, means that all his efforts are directed towards harming people and their property. The words حُرَث and نسل have a number of meanings and all are applicable here. They refer to all kinds of damage relating to person and property.

The words, Allah loves not disorder, come as a fitting reply to the clause in the preceding verse, i.e., he calls Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart. Allah’s evidence goes against him, for the man is after disorder, and Allah loves not disorder.

213. Important Words:

أخذته (incites him) is from اخذ meaning, he took, or he took hold; or he seized; or he punished, etc. (Aqrab). اخذته بكذا means, you incited him to do that and made him stick to it (Kashshaf). اخذته المرة إلَّام may also mean, pride encompasses him with sin (Muhit); or pride seizes him owing to his sin (Fath).

المرة (pride) is derived from مَرَأ which means, he became mighty and honoured and noble.

مرأ means, the thing became rare.

مرأ means, (1) might and power; (2) high position; (3) honour; (4) self-exaltation (Lane); (5) consciousness of one’s position and rank; (6) pride in bad sense; (7) vanity (Aqrab).

جَهَنَم (Hell). Lexicographers differ as to the origin of the word جَهَنَم; but they generally agree that in Arabic it has no root except itself
298. And of men there is he who would sell himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and Allah is Compassionate to His servants.\textsuperscript{214}

\begin{quote}
and is used as a proper name for the place of punishment reserved for the evil-doers in the next world. It is, however, possible that the word has been derived from جهیم meaning, he became frowning or contracted, or ugly in face. جهیم means, the middle or the darkest part of the night. جهیم means, clouds that have no water (Lane). In this case the جهیم would be something additional as in the word \textit{الندن} derived from navigation, a quarreler (Muniit). Thus جهیم would mean, a place of punishment which is dark and waterless and makes the faces of its inmates ugly and contracted.

Commentary:
The description of the kind of man mentioned in 2:205 is continued in this verse also. When such a person comes to power and enters upon a career of disorder and destruction, he becomes deaf to advice and good counsel. Nay, if anyone makes bold to offer him a word of advice, he flares up and becomes all the more stiffened in his tendency towards mischief-making. A false sense of dignity and prestige is his chief stumbling block, his vanity inciting him to further acts of sin, till his pride virtually encompasses him on all sides. Such a one paves his own way to Hell, which is indeed a bad resting place.

The word جهیم (sufficient) in the clause, \textit{Hell shall be his sufficient reward}, points to the fact that as such a man is never contented in this life, and is always hungering for more wealth and more power and more dominion, so nothing in this world would suffice him. He will find satisfaction and sufficiency only in the fire of Hell. Similarly, the word مهد (place of rest) points to the fact that the man who tramples on the rights of others in order to secure comfort for himself will find no rest in this life; his only rest will be in Hell.

214. Important Words:

\begin{quote}
\textit{رحمه} (Compassionate) is derived from رحم. They say رحم meaning, he pitied him, he was compassionate to him. رحم (compassion) is like رحم (mercy) but signifies greater tenderness, though the latter is certainly more extensive in meaning. رحم means, compassionate or pitiful, and is one of the attributes of God, though like رحم it may also be applied to human beings as in 9:128 (Lane).

Commentary:

Having completed the description of an extreme type of man belonging to the first-mentioned class of people, i.e., those who seek only the things of this world, the Quran now describes a type of man belonging to the second-mentioned class, i.e., those who seek the good things of this world as well as of the next. And of these it singles out here the noblest type whose aim is to seek the pleasure of God alone. To such men the good things of this world mean only such spiritual blessings as are vouchsafed to righteous men in this very world or such things as lead to the attainment thereof (2:202). Their sole concern is to seek the pleasure of their Lord, as if they had given away their souls for that very purpose. They use the things of this world, not because these things please them, but because God's law has made them the support of a life which they find
209. O ye who believe, come into submission wholly and do not follow not the footsteps of Satan; surely, he is your open enemy. 

pleasure in devoting to the service of God. Thus they approach the things of this world not directly but through God. To such servants of His, God is indeed most Compassionate and His compassion for them has a good leaven of tenderness in it.

215. Important Words:

السلام (submission) is derived from سلم meaning, he was or became safe from danger or disease or defect, etc. سلم means, he made peace with him. السلام means, he submitted; he embraced Islam. السلام therefore, means (1) submission; (2) peace; (3) the religion of Islam (Aqrab).

كافة (wholly) is derived from كف. They say كاف meaning, he filled the vessel to the full. كنف التبلى means, he collected the thing all in one place. كنف الطنيوت means, he turned him away from it and consequently he (the latter) kept back; he prevented or restrained him from the affair, so that, as a result thereof, he (the latter) desisted from it. Thus كاف is both transitive and intransitive. كاية is the feminine from كاف and means: (1) all together with none standing aside (Aqrab); (2) wholly or completely, not partially or half-heartedly (Lane); (3) preventing the enemy and turning him back; and (4) restraining oneself, or restraining the people, from sin and digression (Mufradat).

Commentary:

Having completed the description of the two classes of men along with their sub-divisions in the previous verses, the Quran now fittingly addresses believers generally and those weak in faith particularly, calling upon them to try to be reckoned among the best and noblest type of men. To attain this end they should do two things, one positive and the other negative: (1) Individually they should come into submission or, in other words, they should enter Islam, wholly. Partial submission and half-hearted obedience will not do; and collectively they should try to offer submission all together, allowing no member to stand aside and remain outside the circle. (2) They should eschew the ways of Satan, who is an open enemy of Islam and is out to cut all holy ties asunder (2:169).

Besides the above two meanings, the clause إدخلا في السلام كاف (come into submission wholly) is capable of yet another meaning. As كاف also means, restraining or turning one back, the clause may be translated as, “come into submission wholly, shutting all such doors through which sin may enter.” This is indeed a most comprehensive advice and can save many a soul, if people only care to act up to it.

The word خطوات (footsteps) in the clause follow not the footsteps of Satan, apparently seems to be superfluous, for, “following Satan” seems to give the same meaning as “following in his footsteps,” but it is not so really. Th word خطوات (footsteps) has been very wisely added to hint that those who follow Satan do so slavishly and blindly. Just as a blind man who cannot see his way finds it convenient to place his hand on the shoulder of an passer-by and then blindly tread on in his footsteps, so do they.
210. But if you slip after the clear Signs that have come to you, then know that Allah is Mighty and Wise.\textsuperscript{216}

\begin{quote}
إِنَّ رَبَّنَّٰهُ بَلَدَّ ما جَاءَ نَكَّرَ أَنْفَكُتَ فَأَعْلَمُوا
أَنِ اللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ
\end{quote}

211. "Are they waiting for anything but that Allah should come to them in the coverings of the clouds with angels, and the matter be decided? And to Allah do all things return.\textsuperscript{217}

\begin{quote}
هِلَّ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يُبَيَّنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلُّكُمْ
الْعَكَاوَةُ وَالْعَلَّاِكْهَةُ وَقَضَى الأَمْرَ وَأَلَّا يُقْتَرَعُ
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{26:159; 16:34; 89:23.}

216. \textbf{Commentary:}

The preceding verse called upon believers, particularly those weak in faith, to try to become perfect Muslims, and pointed out to them the means by which they could become so. The present verse makes it clear that if, even after this warning and after God's clear Signs had come to them, they should slip and digress from the true path, they would find God "Mighty and Wise," hinting that in that case they would rightly deserve punishment by the Wise God Who possesses the power to punish.

The word "Wise" also hints that erring ones should not despair; for, God being Wise, He has kept the way open for their return to the right faith. In fact, the liability of man to err is not without purpose. In His eternal wisdom, God has made man a free agent who is liable to err, so that his error might serve as an incentive for him to rise again and make a redoubled effort towards the ideal.

217. \textbf{Important Words:}

\textsuperscript{16:27; 59:3). In contrast to this, the Quran uses the metaphor تَوبَ اللَّهُ i.e. turning of God, to express His turning with mercy (2:38; 9:117). Similarly, أَيُّانِ الْمَلِكَةُ i.e. the coming of the angels, indicates their coming with punishment.}

(coverings) is the plural of ظَلَّةُ (gulla) which is derived from ظَلَّ and ظَلَّ, the latter word meaning, he or it afforded or cast a shadow. But whereas ظَلَّ (gulla) the plural of which is ظَلَالُ, means, shadow, ظَلَالُ whose plural is ظَلَال, means, a covering or a shade, i.e., a thing that casts or gives a shade or a shadow (Aqrab). The word ظَلَال or ظَلَالُ is generally used in connection with punishment (Mufradat).

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(coverings) for which see 2:58. The word has been used by the Quran both in connection with mercy (7:161) and punishment (25:26).

\textbf{Commentary:}

The form of speech has been changed here from the second to the third person. The verse has apparently been addressed to either disbelievers or to hypocrites and the weak in faith. If it be taken to refer to disbelievers, as the change of form in the address indicates, it would mean that by desisting from belief they are, as it were, waiting for the punishment of God, and the verse incidentally hints that the
212. Ask of the children of Israel how many clear Signs We gave them. But whoso changes the gift of Allah after it has come to him, surely then, Allah is severe in punishing.  

appointed punishment would come to them through raining clouds. The reference is to the Battle of Badr, when God helped believers by sending down clouds and rain (Bukhari), as was promised (25:26), and also sent down angels (3:10) who inspired the believers with courage and filled the hearts of the disbelievers with fear (8:13). Some of the disbelievers are reported to have actually seen the angels on that day (Zurqani). The matter was then "decided"; for, on that memorable day, all the chief leaders of the Quraish were killed, the Muslims obtaining a decisive victory which broke the power of the enemy. The coming of clouds refers to the rainfall which on the battlefield of Badr proved a blessing for the Muslims. It made the sand firm for them, while the land on the side of the enemy, being clayey, became slippery.

If, however, the verse be taken to refer to the hypocrites or the weak in faith, as the preceding two verses would suggest, then the clause, that Allah should come to them in the coverings of the clouds, would mean that if they did not mend their ways, God would have to chastise them even though they were apparently resting in the shade of faith, which is likened to a غام or cloud. As shown under Important Words above, the word غام (clouds) is sometimes used in connection with God's mercy (7:161).

218. Commentary:
The preceding verses referred to those weak in faith who had not yet "come into submission wholly" (2:209). The position of these people was this that they had received a favour of God but practically they sought to "change" it. They wished to be known as Muslims and yet to be free to live as they liked. This was exactly what the Israelites had done before. So the Quran fittingly turns here to the story of the children of Israel who afforded an object-lesson for Muslims. The Holy Prophet and, for that matter, every reader of the Quran is asked to enquire of the descendants of Israel how many and how varied were the Signs which God had bestowed upon them as a favour and how persistent and impudent was their rejection of His Messengers and their disregard of His teachings.

The expression, whoso changes the gift of God, appears to be rather peculiar; but really the word يبدل (changes) gives a very interesting meaning. For believers it means, accepting the teaching of a Prophet in theory but rejecting it in practice, as unfortunately is very often the case with the weak in faith. They receive a thing as a gift or blessing, but by abstaining from acting upon it they incur the displeasure of God, thus practically "changing" a favour into a disfavour.

For disbelievers the expression means converting a بشر or bearer of glad tidings for those who accept him, and he is a بشر or
213. "The life of this world is made to appear attractive to those who disbelieve; and they scoff at those who believe. But those who fear God shall be above them on the Day of Resurrection; and Allah bestows His gifts on whomsoever He pleases without reckoning. 219

219. Important Words:

زین (is made to appear attractive) is passive voice from زین which is derived from زین the gift of Allah, may mean that though they knew that their scriptures embodied the word of God which was a favour and a blessing, yet they had the audacity to interfere with it in order to meet their own ends (5: 14), thus “changing” the very substance of God’s favour.

The expression may have yet another meaning. The or Law being meant as a guidance, is a mercy or a blessing of God (5: 4 and 6: 155, 156). But Christians, who are an offshoot of the Jews have “changed” it into a curse (Gal. 3: 13).

The expression “gift of God” may refer to the manifold and multifarious favours which God had bestowed upon the Israelites in the form of Prophets and their noble teachings. But they “changed” the gift of God by rejecting the Prophets and disobeying their teachings. The expression may also refer to the Holy Prophet and the religion brought by him; they are certainly the greatest gifts of God for mankind, and whoever rejects Islam either by disbelieving in, or by disobeying, its teachings deserves God’s severest punishment. In either case the verse also warns hypocrites and those weak of faith among Muslims that if they accepted the Holy Prophet outwardly but rejected him in their heart or if they accepted his teachings as being from God but did not act upon them, they would be “changing” the gift of God and would make themselves liable to severe punishment.

warner of coming punishment for those who reject him (18: 57). Now when God sends a Prophet He wishes the people to accept him as a bearer of glad tidings only, and it is the people themselves who reverse the position by rejecting him. In this way the people, as it were, “change” the Prophet into the Prophet.

Again, for Israelites or Jews the expression, whoso changes the gift of Allah, may mean that though they knew that their scriptures embodied the word of God which was a favour and a blessing, yet they had the audacity to interfere with it in order to meet their own ends (5: 14), thus “changing” the very substance of God’s favour.

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(day) is also used to denote time generally, as already explained in 1: 4; and (resurrection) is derived from (standing) meaning, (1) he stood up, or (2) he stood still. The expression means, the appointed hour of resurrection came to pass. Therefore, means the rising of the dead or the Resurrection (Aqrab). The word is also used for such occasions on which people leave their homes and gather in a place in response to a call, as in the Friday Prayers (Taj). Thus figuratively the word (resurrection) may denote a state of unusual life and activity following a state of inertia and lifelessness. The word is really (the act of standing) which is the noun-infinitive from (standing), the final being added to denote the act of resurrection being sudden and all together (Mufradat).

Commentary:

As the preceding verse spoke of those who change the gift of God by rejecting it or refusing to act upon it, the present verse fittingly provides the underlying reason of such rejection or refusal. The attention of these people is devoted to the affairs of this world, which appear so attractive to them as to leave no room in their hearts for God and His Messenger. The author or author of the act denoted by the verb (which is in the passive voice has not been named here; but elsewhere the Quran clearly states that it is Satan who has taken upon himself to make the things of this world look beautiful and attractive in the eyes of unbelieving people (15: 40), who thus become engrossed in the affairs of the world.

Intoxicated with their material gains and worldly possessions, disbelievers, and for that matter, hypocrites also, look down upon believers and scoff at them when they see their apparently low worldly position and hear promises of victory and future greatness being made to them. In view of the utter helplessness of the believers, they cannot possibly bring themselves to conceive that believers will ever become heirs to that eminence and glory which is promised to them by God and, therefore, they treat such promises with contempt. But truth has always triumphed over falsehood in the end. The history of all religions and particularly that of Islam bears undeniable testimony to this fact.

The clause, but those who fear God shall be above them on the Day of Resurrection, does not mean that the triumph of the Faithful over disbelievers will be confined to the next world only. The words the Day of Resurrection have been added to point out that whereas believers will also triumph in this world, as borne out by the facts of history, their triumph in the next world will be complete and perpetual. These words may also refer, according to Arab usage, to the time of the downfall of disbelievers and the rise of the Faithful in this very world. In this sense the clause would signify, “wait a while, for the appointed time is not far distant when Muslims will triumph over their enemies and will be above them in all respects,” i.e., in knowledge, wealth, power, etc.—a fact to which the early history of Islam in Medina, Damascus, Baghdad, Egypt, Spain, etc., bears ample testimony. To quote only one instance, i.e., that of the Arabs being in their time above the rest of the world in science, Robert Briffault says: “The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal to Arab culture; it owes its existence" (The Making of Humanity).

It will be noted that while making the promise of future greatness the verse substitutes the expression those who fear God for the expression those who believe. This change has been made to point to the fact that to obtain triumph mere (belief) is not enough; the Muslims should effect a real change in themselves, by attaining or God-fearingness.
214. Mankind were one community, then they differed among themselves, so Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and sent down with them the Book containing the truth that He might judge between the people wherein they differed. But now they began to differ about the Book, and none differed about it except those to whom it was given, after clear Signs had come to them, out of envy towards one another. Now has Allah, by His command, guided the believers to the truth in regard to which they (the unbelievers) differed; and Allah guides whomsoever He pleases to the right path.

The phrase “without reckoning” may mean three things: (1) that the favours and gifts of God know no ending; for a thing that does not end cannot be reckoned; (2) that God bestows upon believers more favours and more gifts than they appear to deserve, the more so because believers spend in the cause of God to the utmost of their power without keeping an account of what they spend, so God also showers His blessings upon them without reckoning; (3) that God treats the believers as friends; and as people do not keep an account of what they give to their friends, therefore God also keeps no account of what He gives to the Faithful.

As to the relevancy of this clause to the previous one, it may be noted that as God promised to grant special victory and unusual greatness to believers—so much so that they were to be “above” the unbelievers in all respects when the time of “resurrection” (i.e. the fall of the unbelievers and the rise of the believers) came—the question naturally arose, how out of all proportion to their efforts and resources were the handful of believers going to attain this glorious triumph? In reply to this implied question, the Quran says that the people need not doubt this prophecy; for the matter is not to be settled by ordinary rules of cause and effect but by the fact, so amply borne out by history, that “Allah bestows His favours on whomsoever He pleases without reckoning.” In this connection we may well quote from Carlyle who, while speaking of the spectacular rise of Islam to power, says: “These Arabs, the man Mohammad, one spark on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand; but lo, the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Granada!” (On Heroes and Hero Worship).

220. Commentary:

In the preceding verses different classes of people—believers and unbelievers together with their sub-divisions—have been mentioned. The verse under comment not only traces the genesis of these classes but also hints to Muslims that, just as the world began with all people as one
community, God now wishes them again to become one community through the Holy Prophet who, unlike previous Prophets, came with a universal mission.

The clause, *Mankind were one community*, may mean: (1) mankind i.e. all men were originally one people; (2) all disbelievers are one people. In the first-mentioned case, the verse would mean that, in the beginning of the world, all mankind were one people. They had no social rules, no polity, no civic laws. Then in the course of time, differences arose among them with regard to these things. So God sent to them Prophets to guide them how to live good and useful lives.

In the second case, the meaning of the clause would be that before the advent of a Prophet all men are like one people in the sense that they are all disbelievers, and disbelief and wrongdoing reign supreme in the world. But when a Prophet appears, all people, in spite of their mutual differences, form one united front against him. This meaning is in harmony with the well-known saying of the Holy Prophet, i.e. all disbelievers (to whatever creed or religion they may belong) are one people.

The clause, *and sent down with them the Book*, does not mean that God revealed a separate Book to every Prophet. In that case, “Books,” instead of “the Book,” would have been the appropriate word. In fact, the “sending down of a Book” to a Prophet does not always mean the actual revelation of it to him in person. The Quran uses similar words with regard to those Prophets who were not the direct recipients of any revealed Book (6: 115, 157, 158; 3: 73, 200; 29: 47; 21: 11). The clause, therefore, only means that every Prophet has received a Book from God, whether it was revealed to him direct or whether it was revealed to a previous Prophet whose mission he was called upon to serve.

The “difference” referred to in the verse at two separate places signifies two different kinds of disagreement. Before the advent of a Prophet people differ among themselves about false beliefs and idolatrous practices. But after the appearance of the truth, they begin to differ with regard to the truth itself. The advent of a Prophet, however, does not, as may be wrongly imagined, create differences. The differences are already there; they merely assume a new form. But whereas before a Prophet has made his appearance the people, in spite of their differences, look like one people, they become divided into two distinct camps, believers and disbelievers, after he has appeared.

The clause, *out of envy towards one another*, points to the important fact that invariably the root-cause of the rejection of a Prophet is jealousy. Disbelievers cannot reconcile themselves to the idea that an ordinary person from among them, generally inferior to many of them in wealth, power or social status, should be made their teacher and leader. Disbelievers also consider it below their dignity to ally themselves with a community a large majority of whose members are of humble origin, as is often the case with the early followers of divine Messengers.

The clause, *Now has Allah, by His command, guided believers to the truth in regard to which they (the unbelievers) differed*, refers to the advent of the Holy Prophet who was raised by God with a universal mission to remove the differences of all the peoples of the earth. The expression *بأذن*, translated as “by His command” may also mean “according to His eternal decree.” In the beginning of the world God willed that the final Law-giving Prophet should come with a universal mission and should constitute, as it were, the zenith of the system of prophecy. Says the Holy Prophet “I was a Prophet of God while Adam was yet in the making between the body and the soul” (Tirmidhi).
215. Do you think that you will enter Heaven while there has not come over you the condition of those who passed away before you? Poverty and afflictions befall them, and they were violently shaken until the Messenger and those who believed along with him said: ‘When will come the help of Allah?’ Yea, surely the help of Allah is nigh.

Viewed collectively, the verse describes five different stages through which mankind has passed: (1) When there was unity among the people, all forming one community. This was in the beginning of the human race. (2) When, with the increase in population and the extension of interests and the complexity of problems confronting man, people began to differ among themselves. (3) When God raised Prophets among different peoples and different countries to show them the right path and revealed His will to the various contending sections. (4) When the very revelation of God sent to remove differences was made a cause of difference by the mischievous people. (5) When God finally raised the Holy Prophet with His last Book and a universal mission, calling upon entire humanity to rally round his banner. Thus a beautiful circle was completed and the world which began with unity was designed to end with it.

221. Important Words:
زَلَزِلْتُم (violently shaken) is from زلزلة or زلزلتْ الأرض, i.e. God made the earth quake violently or put the earth in a state of commotion or violent motion. زلزلة, which is the noun-infinitive from زلزل, means: (1) violent shaking or commotion; (2) earthquake. The word is also used, especially in its plural form, to denote afflictions, miseries and trials (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:
In the preceding two verses God promised believers a reward “without reckoning” and called upon them to strive to bring all the peoples of the world under the banner of Islam so that they might become one people. The fulfilment of this great promise and the attainment of this noble object necessitated unusual sacrifices on the part of the Faithful, to which the verse under comment fittingly draws the attention of Muslims.

Indeed, acceptance of the message of Islam was no bed of roses, and Muslims were warned that they would have to pass through a fiery ordeal of trials and tribulations before they could hope to achieve their sublime ideal. Incidentally, they were also told that the sufferings and hardships they had already undergone were nothing as compared with the trials that were yet in store for them. They were being mentally prepared to meet the storm which was brewing in Mecca and which reached its culmination in the Battle of the Ditch.

The word لَحْيَة literally meaning garden and translated here as “Heaven” need not necessarily refer to the Heaven vouchsafed to the Faithful in the Hereafter. The word
216. They ask thee what they shall spend. Say: ˹Whatever of good and abundant wealth you spend should be for parents and near relatives and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer. And whatever good you do, surely Allah knows it well.\textsuperscript{222}˷

\*2:178; 4:37.

is also used to express a state of success and prosperity in this very world. Nay, God has definitely promised in the Quran that the righteous would have \textit{Heaven} even in this life (55:47). In this sense the word "Heaven" in this verse would refer to the great success and prosperity promised to Muslims in the preceding verses.

The word \textit{until} also means, so that or in order that. According to the latter signification, the verse would mean that God proves or tries the Prophet and the believers with difficulties and hardships and withholds His help from them so that they may invoke it by earnest prayers and supplications. This is a beautiful way by which God manifests His love for the Prophet and his followers. He delights in treating them like children, wishing them to beg of Him so that He may give them.

The pathetic cry for help embodied in the words, \textit{when will come the help of Allah?} does not denote despair, because an attitude of despair on the part of a Prophet of God and his followers is inconceivable, being inconsistent with true faith (12:88). The words are simply a form of prayer, a way of earnestly beseeching God to expedite His help, and not an expression denoting despair and disappointment. The reply given by God in the words, \textit{Yea, surely the help of Allah is nigh}, also corroborates this interpretation; for, if the words of the Faithful had been expressive of despair, God would certainly not have answered in that loving manner but would have taken notice of it.

222. Important Words:
- \textit{خیر} (good and abundant wealth). See 2:181.
- \textit{اقرب} (near relatives) is the plural of \textit{اقرب} (derived from \textit{اقرب} meaning, one nearer; a near relative (Aqrab).

Commentary:
When the Companions of the Holy Prophet were told that they could not win the pleasure of God and enter Heaven unless they were made to pass through sufferings and afflictions like those that had gone before, they at once signified their readiness to part with their wealth and property in the cause of God and asked the Holy Prophet to let them know what they should spend in order to win the promised Heaven. They were so eager to win the pleasure of God and attain spiritual progress that they did not wait for the threatened trials actually to overtake them, but were prepared to make every kind of sacrifice in advance. They simply wanted to be told what form their sacrifice should take.

In reply to their eager question, God's reply also indicates a sort of eagerness, as if He meant to impart to the Faithful the relevant commandment in its entirety, without waiting for any further question on their part; for whereas their question related only to "what" they should spend, God's answer
217. "Fighting is ordained for you, though it is repugnant to you; but it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you like a thing while it is bad for you. Allah knows all things, and you know not."

a8: 6.

goes a step further, describing also "on whom" the money is to be spent. As to the question, what is to be spent, the answer is "good and abundant wealth", hinting that the money to be spent should be (1) well-acquired and (2) abundant. In moments of great national need there can be no hope of success unless people spend freely and generously. But as free and generous expenditure carries with it the danger of weak people resorting to acquiring wealth by unfair means, therefore the condition about the money being "good" has been added.

As to the other part of the anticipated question, i.e., on whom should the money be spent, the Quran says that money should be spent on parents and near relatives (lit. near ones) and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer. These five classes include all such persons as generally stand in need of help. The two first-mentioned classes include relatives, neighbours and friends who go to form the group that immediately surrounds a man and must claim his first attention, owing to personal relationship or personal contact. Then follow two classes that deserve help owing to their particular circumstances, orphans being without anyone to support them and the needy without any means of support. Lastly comes the wayfarer, whose claim consists in his being a stranger, with no friend, no relative and no supporter. By pointing out these five classes as deserving of help, the Quran desires to hint that unless the entire community, including those who come to stay with them temporarily, is prepared to fight in the cause of Allah and unless the well-to-do classes help the weaker ones in their preparation for the national struggle, Muslims cannot present a united front nor can their efforts bring about the desired result. Each and every person must gird up his loins to contribute his fullest possible share, and those who cannot do so for want of means must receive help from others who can afford such help.

223. Important Words:

- ـ (repugnant) is the noun-infinitive from ـ (he disliked). ـ means, a thing which is disliked; a thing which one is required to do against his wish or liking (Aqrab).

Commentary:

In 2:215 God warned Muslims that in order to reach the promised goal they must pass through an ordeal of poverty, afflictions and violent shakings. In conformity with the ordeal of poverty, verse 2:216 called upon them to be prepared to make great monetary sacrifices. Now in the verse under comment, God refers to the ordeal of afflictions and violent shakings by drawing the attention of the Faithful to the menace of war surrounding them. As, however, Muslims were averse from war, the verse also enjoins them to put implicit trust in the guidance of Allah; for, it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you.
218. They ask thee about fighting in the Sacred Month. Say: "Fighting therein is a great transgression, but to hinder men from the way of Allah, and to be ungrateful to Him and the Sacred Mosque, and to turn out its people therefrom, is a greater sin with Allah; and persecution is worse than killing." And they will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith, if they can. And whoso from among you turns back from his faith and dies while he is a disbeliever, it is they whose works shall be vain in this world and the next. These are the inmates of the Fire and therein shall they abide.224

But the aversion of the Holy Prophet's Companions from war was not due to cowardice. They did not dislike war because they thought that they were few in number or because they were not properly equipped. History gives the direct lie to all such insinuations. Muslims hated war, because they did not like to shed human blood; also because they thought that a peaceful atmosphere was more conducive to the propagation of Islam than a state of war, for the obvious reason that the atmosphere of peace gave disbelievers more opportunities for dispassionate consideration of the noble teachings of Islam.

But it was too late. The leaders of the disbelievers had gone too far in their evil designs against Islam and were bent upon extirpating the New Faith. It was evidently a war of self-defence, and he who shirked a war of self-defence commits an act of suicide (22: 40, 41). Thus the verse constitutes an eloquent testimony to the love of peace of the Holy Prophet's Companions and a convincing repudiation of the mischievous accusation that it was for the sake of booty or for spreading their faith by force that the early Muslims resorted to arms.

The clause, it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you like a thing while it is bad for you, points to a very important principle, i.e., that errors of judgement mostly result from two causes: (1) abuse of the sentiment of love; and (2) abuse of the sentiment of dislike or hatred. One should, therefore, be particularly careful about one's judgement when one is swayed by either of these two sentiments. They undermine dispassionate thinking as nothing else does. Elsewhere the Quran gives a still clearer warning to Muslims to beware of the abuse of the sentiments of love and hatred (64: 15, 16 & 5: 9).

224. Important Words:

(280)
comparative degree and means, a greater sin, etc.

(to hinder) is the infinitive from مَعَ. They say, i.e. he prevented him; he turned him back. مَعَ أَنفُسَهُ means, he kept back from it. Thus the word is both transitive and intransitive. مَعَ, therefore, means: (1) to hinder or to prevent; (2) a hindrance or a barrier; (3) a mountain or a wall, etc., because it serves as a barrier (Aqrab).

(turned back) and (turns back) are both derived from رَدِّ. They say, i.e. he turned him back; and رَدِّ إِلَى الْإِسْلاَمِ, i.e. he himself turned back. رَدِّ إِلَى الْإِسْلاَمِ means, he turned back from Islam and reverted to a state of disbelief. رَدِّ مِنْ إِلَيْهِ means, one who turns back from his religion, particularly from Islam; one who apostatises (Täj).

(shall be in vain). حَيْطَابِيْلٍ means, the stomach of the camel became inflated and his belly became bound by eating unwholesome food. حَيْطَاب عَرْيْلٍ means: (1) his work or deed became null and void and went for nothing; (2) his work or deed became evil and corrupt. حَيْطَاب دَمٍ means, his blood went unavenged. حَيْطَاب مَاءِ إِلْثِر means, the water of the well receded and went down never to return to its original level (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

The words translated as “to be ungrateful to Him and the Sacred Mosque” may also be rendered as “to be ungrateful to Him and to hinder men from the Sacred Mosque.”

The Quran has already explained that if disbelievers violate the sanctity of a Sacred Month, Muslims may also retaliate in a Sacred Month; for thus only can the sanctity of a sacred thing be safeguarded (2:195).

The present verse provides a further reason for defending Islam, if need be, in a Sacred Month. Disbelievers, particularly those of Mecca, had violated the sanctity of things far more sacred than a “Sacred Month”—they were trying forcibly to turn men from the way of God; they were preventing people from approaching the Sacred Mosque and they had forced the Muslim dwellers of Mecca to flee from it. This was a form of persecution which was certainly much more heinous than fighting in a Sacred Month.

Commentators generally state, and in fact there are also traditions to the effect, that once the Holy Prophet sent one of his Companions, named ‘Abdullâh bin Jaḥsh, to bring news about a party of the Quraish proceeding to Mecca. When ‘Abdullâh and his comrades reached a place called Nakhla, they met a small party proceeding to Mecca. Guided by his own judgement and without any instructions to that effect from the Prophet, ‘Abdullâh attacked the party, killing one of them and capturing two. The date was doubtful, some considering it to be as one of the Sacred Month and others as not. When the news reached Mecca, the Quraish took advantage of the doubt as regards date and clamoured that the Muslims had violated the Sacred Month. The verse under comment was revealed on that occasion (Ṭabarî, Hishâm & Zurqânî).

The verse acknowledges the sanctity of the Sacred Months and considers it an act of sin and transgression knowingly to fight in a Sacred Month, but forcefully points out that the sanctities which disbelievers were violating were far more worthy of safeguarding. Disbelievers were forcibly preventing people from accepting Islam. They did not allow Muslims to approach the Sacred Mosque and they had mercilessly turned the Prophet and his followers out of their homes.

The verse should not be understood to imply that Muslims did start a fight in a Sacred Month, it only purports to bring home to disbelievers the fact that in view of their persistent violation of highly sacred things, it does not lie in their mouth to accuse Muslims of violating the sanctity of a Sacred Month.
219. Those who believe and those who emigrate and strive hard in the cause of Allah, it is these who hope for Allah's Mercy; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.  

The clause, *it is they whose works shall be vain in this world and the next*, does not mean that everything that a renegade from Islam, or, for that matter, everything that a disbeliever, does will go for nothing and produce no result. The clause only means that such actions of the renegades as they might do to weaken the cause of Islam in this world as well as those of their actions which they might perform in opposition to the teachings of Islam in order to win the pleasure of God in the world to come will all be in vain. Thus the clause does not refer to such good actions as a person may perform in the state of unbelief; for, as the Quran expressly states, these must have their reward (99:8) which may either take the form of the acceptance of Islam or that of the lightening of punishment. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said about his uncle Abu Talib that on account of the good treatment the latter extended to him, he is likely to be only lightly punished for his non-acceptance of Islam (Bukhari). On another occasion when Hakim b. Hizam, a nephew of his wife Khadija, asked the Prophet whether he would get any reward for the good deeds he did before he accepted Islam, the Holy Prophet said, "Your very acceptance of Islam is a reward thereof" (Bukhari).

The clause, *their works shall be vain in this world and the next*, also signifies that if such men as apostatize from Islam had not done so, their deeds would have brought them the great reward promised to Muslims both in this world and the next, but by apostatizing from Islam they had totally deprived themselves of this twofold reward.

Finally, the clause, *and they will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith, if they can*, throws a flood of light on the attitude of disbelievers towards Muslims. They were not only the first to begin hostilities, but had also vowed not to cease fighting until Islam had been totally wiped out from Arabia and not a soul remained to call himself a Muslim. This clear testimony of the Quran should be an eye-opener for those who accuse Muslims of being aggressors in their early struggle against disbelievers. The words, *if they can*, are highly eulogistic of the Companions of the Holy Prophet. Do what they could, disbelievers would never be able to turn back Muslims from their faith. Their love for Islam was too deep to be extirpated by persecution; however severe and bitter it might be.

225. **Important Words:**

- حجر (emigrated) is derived from حـر. They say حر التبت (i.e. (1) he cut it or he severed it; (2) he avoided it or kept away from it, or he gave it up. حجر means, he left one place to settle in another (Aqrab). The word is particularly used about one who leaves a place where religion is persecuted and goes to a place where there is no such persecution, especially to a place where there exists means of serving and supporting the faith. The early Muslims who emigrated from Mecca to Medina were known as مهاجرين i.e. those who left Mecca and
220. They ask thee concerning wine and the game of hazard. Say: 'In both there is great sin and also some advantages for men; but their sin is greater than their advantage.' And they ask thee what they should spend. Say: 'Spend what you can spare.' Thus does Allah make His commandments clear to you that you may reflect. 226

settled in Medina with the intention of helping the cause of Islam.

*جهاد* (strive hard) is derived from جهاد which means, he strove or laboured hard, taking extraordinary pains. جهاد في الأمر means, he used his utmost power in prosecuting the affair. جهاد جهاد means, he fought with the enemy exerting his utmost effort to repel him, his enemy doing the like. جهاد means, exerting one's utmost power in contending with an object of disapprobation; and this is of three kinds, namely, (1) with a visible enemy (2) with Satan, and (3) with one's self (Lane).

*رجون* (who hope) is derived from رجأ which gives twofold meaning. They say رجأ لذلك meaning: (1) he hoped to get the thing; (2) he was afraid of the thing (Aqrab). When used in the sense of hoping, it is used on occasions when the thing hoped for is likely to afford pleasure (Mufradāt).

**Commentary:**

The verse holds out the promise to Muslims, and they are indeed buoyed up with the hope, that though now they are beset with great difficulties and unusual hardships, the time is fast approaching when all difficulties would disappear and they would become heirs to God’s mercy both in this world and the next.

As the context shows, the words, *those who believe,* occurring in the verse refer to such of the believers as resided in Medina and had not been called upon to emigrate. Thus the verse mentions two classes of believers who can hope to get Allah’s mercy; (1) believers resident in Medina i.e. the Helpers, who engaged themselves in جهاد or holy war against the forces of Satan; and (2) Emigrants from Mecca who were also engaged in such war. The words, *Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful,* have been added to point out that Allah will forgive the above-mentioned two classes of believers their sins and shortcomings which will not stand in the way of their winning God’s mercy, provided they remain sincere in their faith and continue striving hard in the cause of Allah, for, as the Quran elsewhere explains, the good works of a man drive away his evil ones (11:115).

**226. Important Words:**

الخمر (wine) is the noun-infinitive from خمر meaning, he veiled or covered up the thing. خمر التحية means, he concealed the evidence. خمر الخبز means, he leavened the dough and left it till it became well fermented. خمر means, it became mixed or blended with it; it infected or pervaded it. A veil worn by a woman is called خمار because it screens or covers her face and head. Wine is called خمر because it covers or obfuscates or infects the intellect or the senses, or because it agitates and excites the brain so as to make it
uncontrolled. The word is specific for wine prepared from grapes but is also used generally (Aqrab & Lane).

(game of hazard) is derived from i.e. he became docile and submissive. means, the woman was easily delivered of the child. means, the man became well off. means, such a one played a game of hazard or a game of chance i.e. he gambled. Thus the primary meaning of the word is to get a thing easily and thereby become well off. A game of chance or a game of hazard is called because by means of such games people seek to become rich easily and quickly without undergoing the trouble of earning with work and labour. The word is used to indicate (1) any game of hazard or game of chance; (2) a game of hazard played by the Arabs with headless arrows; (3) play for stakes and wages (Lisān & Mufradāt).

(sin) is the noun-infinitive form meaning, he did what was unlawful. means: (1) that which is unlawful (Aqrab); (2) that which keeps back a person from what is good (Mufradāt); (3) punishment of sins and evil actions (Lane).

(spares) is derived from i.e. the thing became long and abundant. means: (1) what exceeds or remains over and above one's requirements; (2) the best portion of a thing (Aqrab).

Commentary:

While dealing with the subject of war, the Quran fittingly turns to the subject of wine and gambling which are directly related to war.

It was a custom among the Arabs that in time of war they used to cast lots in the name of a few wealthy persons, and those in whose names the lots were drawn were bound to feed the army and supply it with wine. This is how the Arabs defrayed the expenses of war. So when Muslims were called upon to take up arms, they naturally enquired of the Holy Prophet about the legality of this peculiar way of meeting the expenses of war and about the use of wine also, which was considered essential to produce a state of reckless courage in the fighters so as to make them blind to all consequences. Islam declared both these practices unlawful because their harm was greater than their advantage. The conviction of faith had infused into the hearts of believers far greater and nobler courage than the blind daring engendered by drinking. Similarly, the expenses of war were to be met in a fairer and more respectable manner than the casting of lots. The burden must fall on all according to their means and must come through willing and eager contributions by the Faithful.

The clause, their sin is greater than their advantage, embodies a very important principle. A thing should not be adopted simply because it contains some advantage nor should a thing be condemned simply because it is harmful in certain respects. On the contrary, both sides should be carefully weighed and a thing should be condemned only if its harm outweighs its advantage. It is in fact a great characteristic of Islam that it never condemns a thing wholesale but frankly and freely admits even the smallest good that may be found in it. Islam prohibits certain things not because it considers them to be devoid of all good, for there is nothing in the world which is wholly bad, but because their evil outweighs their good. This is why, while prohibiting the use of intoxicants and games of chance because of their great harm, Islam has not failed to acknowledge the few advantages they possess.

It is worthy of note that of all religions Islam alone has forbidden the use of wine. In Hinduism drinking forms an essential part of certain religious ceremonies. Judaism does not seem to prohibit drinking, because nowhere has the Bible declared it to be unlawful; while according to the New Testament the very first
The miracle which Jesus showed was that he turned water into wine for the use of a marriage party (John 2:7—9).

Attempts have been made during the ages by social reformers, and even the help of legislation has been enlisted in some countries, to put an end to wine-drinking. But all such attempts have so far failed. The only experiment on record which met with complete success in this direction was that made in Arabia more than thirteen hundred years ago. A whole people steeped in drinking became absolute teetotallers by the mere declaration by the Prophet that God had forbidden drinking. This constitutes no small testimony to the great hold that Islam had come to possess on the minds of the unlettered and unruly Arabs and to the wonderful transformation it had brought about in their lives.

From the meaning of the word كَحْرَة (wine) as given above under Important Words it should not be understood that Islam prohibits the use of only such quantity of wine as may make one drunk. The Holy Prophet has made it definitely clear that even small doses of such things as may intoxicate one when used in larger doses are unlawful (Tirmidhi).

When the principal means hitherto employed in Arabia for meeting the expenses of war, i.e., by casting lots, was prohibited, the question naturally arose as to how the expenses of war were to be met. Believers, realizing that they would themselves have to meet these expenses, hastened to inquire of the Holy Prophet as to how much they would have to contribute towards the expenses of war. In reply to their query they were told that they should spend كَحْرَة, i.e., what may be spared after meeting the necessities of life. The word كَحْرَة by virtue of its twofold connotation, given under Important Words above, applies to two different classes of persons. Ordinary believers are required to spend what remains after their needs have been met, i.e., what they can spare; and the higher class of believers are expected to go ahead and spend the best portion of their possessions. If, however, the clause be applied collectively to all believers, it would mean that in times of war they should retain for themselves only such portion of their possessions as may suffice to meet their bare necessities of life. The balance should be spent in the cause of God. This is what God wanted them to do. Actually, however, some of the Companions spent even more than that. For instance, when the Holy Prophet appealed for funds for the campaign of Tabūk, Abū Bakr brought his entire possessions and laid them at the feet of his Master. When asked how much he had retained for himself and his family and how much he had brought to be spent in Allah's cause, Abū Bakr replied that he had brought all that he possessed and that nothing remained in his house except the name of Allah (Tirmidhi, ch. on Manāqib & Zurqānī).

Finally, a word about the sin or harm of wine and gambling as mentioned in the verse under comment appears to be called for. Though Islam was the first to prohibit the use of intoxicants and games of chance, the world now appears to be agreed on condemning these two evils which so deeply affect not only the physical but also the moral and spiritual condition of man. Here are some quotations in which non-Muslim writers have forcefully pointed out the harmful effects of wine:

(1) "Alcoholism is an important factor in the causation of disease; and in all diseases alcoholics are bad patients. In epidemics the mortality among drinkers is excessive; and the general power of resistance to disease, injury, and fatigue is diminished. . . . . Alcoholism lessens the chance of life; the English life-insurance companies found that the presumptive length of life of non-drinkers was about twice that of drinkers. . . . . . The close relationship of alcoholism and crime
is well known; and the statistics of Baer, Kurella, Gallavardin and Sichart show that from 25 to 85 per cent. of all malefactors are drunkards. The rate of suicide varies with the general rate of consumption of alcohol in different countries.

"The evil effects of alcoholism are evident in the drunkard's posterity. epilepsy, insanity, idiocy and various forms of physical, mental, and moral degeneracy are very disproportionately prevalent among the offsprings of alcoholics" (Jew. Enc. i. 333-334).

(2) "The effects of consumption of alcohol are almost all due to its action upon the nervous system. Thus the immediate sensation of well-being is due to the flushing of the skin, suppressing temporarily the sense of chill, and to the fact that the sensibility to minor pains and inconveniences becomes blunted; whilst with larger doses the diminution of the power of self-control and sense of personal responsibility gives rise to excitability. In the secondary stage the fineness of the senses (hearing, touch, taste and vision) is affected, and this gives rise to an inability to control bodily movements such as facial expression. In the advanced stage of drunkenness, the intellectual processes of judgement and control are suspended." (Enc. Brit. 14th Edition, i. 540).

As to the harm caused by gambling the following quotation would suffice:

"The vicious tendency of gambling has never been called in question. Lord Beaconsfield spoke of it as 'a vast engine of national demoralization.' In 12 years (1895-6 to 1906-7) there were 156 suicides or attempted suicides in England assigned to this cause, as well as 719 cases of theft or embezzlement and 442 bankruptcies. In view of these facts, it is not surprising that, in all civilized countries, gambling is subjected to definite legislative restraints. It is, as Herbert Spencer says, a kind of action by which pleasure is obtained at the cost of pain to another. The happiness of the winner implies the misery of the loser. This kind of action, therefore, is essentially anti-social; it sears the sympathies, cultivates a hard egoism, and so produces a general deterioration of character. It is a habit intrinsically savage. In an atmosphere of brotherhood no form of gambling could exist."
221. Yes, that you may reflect upon this world and the next. And they ask thee concerning "the orphans. Say: 'Promotion of their welfare is an act of great goodness. And if you intermix with them, they are your brethren. And Allah knows the mischief-maker from the reformer. And if Allah had willed, He would have put you to hardship. Surely, Allah is Mighty and Wise.'

227. Important Words:

(orphans) is the plural of which is derived from meaning, he fell short of a thing, feeling weak and tired; he lost his father in childhood. Thus is one whose father has died and who has not yet attained the age of puberty, which, according to Islamic jurisprudence, is 18 years. The word is also used about a thing which is without equal (Aqrab & Mufradāt).

(intermix with them) is derived from i.e. he mixed up one thing with the other. means, he mixed or mingled or associated with him; he mixed or joined with him in his affairs; he became co-partner with him. means, anxiety pervaded his heart (Aqrab & Lane).

(put you to hardship) is derived from which means, he fell into difficulty or hardship. means, he put him to

of gambling may be argued on higher grounds than a calculation of pleasure.

"(a) Every gambling transaction involves a transfer of property in one shape or another. When the gambler is asked why he stakes his money on a game or a race, his reply is, 'To add an interest to the game.' The interest thus added is, simply stated, the interest of acquisition. If the real object were, as is claimed, merely the sport and the excitement, then men might just as well wager counters, or, for the matter of that, agree to hand over all winnings to public charities. But this is not done. The transfer of property, in one shape or another, is essential to the act. There are only three ways in which property can be legitimately acquired—by gift, by labour, and by exchange. Gambling stands outside all of these.

"(b) Its motive is, however, carefully disguised covetousness. It is an attempt to get property without paying the price for it. It is a violation of the law of equivalents. It is a kind of robbery by mutual agreement; but it is still robbery, just as duelling, which is murder by mutual agreement, is still treated as murder. It is begotten of covetousness; it leads to idleness.

"(c) It is, moreover, an appeal to chance. If in any contest skill comes in, odds are given or handicaps arranged so as to equalize the chances as far as possible. To make chance the arbiter of conduct is to subvert the moral order and stability of life.

"(d) It concentrates attention upon lucre, and thereby withdraws attention from worthier objects of life" (Enc. Rel. Eth. vi. pp. 165-166).
hardship; he burdened him with a task that was beyond his power (Aqrab).

Commentary:

The opening words of this verse apparently seem to be misplaced, for they are connected not with the following words of the verse in which they are placed, but with the concluding words of the previous one. The complete sentence, therefore, should read like this, “thus Allah makes His commandments clear to you that you may reflect upon this world and the next.” If read like this, the clause would mean that God has refrained from issuing a definite commandment with regard to war expenditure and has simply ordered you to retain such portion of your possessions as you may require for your worldly needs and spend the balance in the cause of religion so that you may be trained to think over and judge the comparative value of this world and the next and act accordingly. The words, “upon this world and the next” have been separated from the preceding words to provide a pause with the object of impressing the importance of the matter on the mind of the listener or reader.

As Quranic verses follow a natural order—an order prompted and followed by the innermost nature of the addressee—this verse follows in the wake of the verses dealing with war. As the war leaves behind orphans, this verse lays down basic instructions as to how they should be treated and looked after. Muslims are told that the bringing-up of orphans is a very delicate affair and an important social duty. Orphans should be brought up in the manner most conducive to their greatest good i.e. their physical, moral and spiritual welfare. They should be treated as members of the family, and their property properly looked after and steps taken to augment it. The words, and if you intermix with them, they are your brethren, signify not only permission but exhortation. The exhortation lies in the word “brethren” which is meant to point to Muslims to allow orphans to live as members of their family, this being not only wise and humane but also based on considerations of convenience. If orphans had been directed to be kept aloof and their property managed on a strictly legal basis, it would have in most cases entailed a good deal of unnecessary inconvenience and trouble for both parties concerned.

The words, Allah knows the mischief-maker from the reformer, serve as a stern warning to the guardians of orphans. Anything they do is sure to come to the knowledge of God. Nay, God knows even the hidden things of the human heart. So they should beware of playing the part of mischief-makers in the garb of reformers.

God’s attributes of “Powerful” and “Wise” placed at the end of the verse contain a general admonition to guardians of orphans to be very careful about their dealings with them. They should not delude themselves with the idea that, being weak and not yet possessed of proper understanding, the orphans are entirely at their mercy and that they can treat them as they like. For, if orphans are not strong and wise, God certainly is, and He would call them to account if they behaved unkindly or dishonestly towards these helpless and friendless creatures of His. By mentioning God’s attributes of “Powerful” and “Wise” the Quran also means to exhort Muslims to look after orphans in such a way and give them such good education and training as should help them to grow strong and wise and become useful members of the community.
222. And marry not idolatrous women until they believe; even a believing bondwoman is better than an idolatress, although she may highly please you. And give not believing women in marriage to idolaters until they believe; even a believing slave is better than an idolater, although he may highly please you. These call to the Fire, but Allah calls to Heaven and to forgiveness by His command. And He makes His Signs clear to the people that they may remember.  

228. Important Words:

*tankihū* (marry) and *tankīḥū* (give in marriage) are both derived from *tankū* i.e. the rain fell on the earth and became mixed with the soil. They *say* *tankū* means, he married a woman. He *takē* it means, he went in unto his wife. He *tankā* means, the woman married a man. He *tankūlā* means, he gave the woman in marriage to Zaid. Thus *tankū* means, both (1) marriage and (2) coition with one's wife. The Quran itself uses the word in the latter sense in 2: 231 (Aqrab & Mufradat).

*ṣārīk* (an idolater) is derived from *ṣārik* i.e. manifest idolatry, and *ṣārik* i.e. hidden idolatry; and *ṣārik* i.e. believing one to be a co-partner with God in His person, and *ṣārik* i.e. ascribing any of the attributes of God to some one. The term *ṣārīkin* (idolaters) is generally confined to such peoples as set up co-partners with God and do not believe in any revealed Book.

Commentary:

The question of marriage with "idolatrous women" is intimately connected with the subject of war, for it is during war that Muslims, being away from their homes for a considerable time, are liable to be tempted to contract marriages with such women. This the Quran strictly disallows in the verse under comment, which also forbids the giving of believing women in marriage to idolatrous men. The prohibition is based on religious as well as on moral and social grounds. An idolatrous husband
And they ask thee concerning menstruation. Say, 'It is a harmful thing, so keep away from women during menstruation, and go not in unto them until they are clean. But when they have cleansed themselves, go in unto them as Allah has commanded you. Allah loves those who turn to Him and loves those who keep themselves clean.'

is bound to exercise an extremely baneful influence not only on his wife but on his children as well; whereas an idolatrous wife is sure to ruin the early training of the offspring. Moreover, when a believing man has an idolatrous wife or vice versa, their ideas, beliefs, culture and outlook on life being widely different, there cannot possibly be harmony or concord between the two and their life is sure to become miserable, if they possess any attachment whatever for their religion. Again Islam (submission to one God) and shirk (setting up co-partners with God) being poles apart, there can be no real contact or permanent intermixing between the two. In this connection, it may be noted that Islam allows, though it certainly does not encourage, the marriage of a Muslim with a woman belonging to the People of the Book who are decidedly nearer to Islam (5: 6). But of this we will speak when we come to the relevant verses.

The words, until they believe, appear to be redundant at first sight; for, if marriage with an idolatrous person is prohibited, it is evident that this prohibition will automatically cease to operate when an idolatrous person is converted to Islam. On deeper thought, however, the words, until they believe, prove to be most rightly placed. They have indeed been used to remind Muslims of their duty pertaining to the conversion of idolatrous people to Islam. The words also contain a veiled prophecy that the time was fast coming when idolatry would become extinct in Arabia.

The expression بذى (by His command) when used with regard to a certain action of God signifies, according to the Quranic idiom, that God has provided or intends to provide extraordinary means for the accomplishment of the thing aimed at. So is the case here, the clause signifying that Allah's call to Heaven and to forgiveness is not an empty announcement but that He has made special arrangements to bring about the desired end. It is further interesting to note that the word جنة and مغفرة both convey the sense of covering up a thing, the idea being that God's favours and His forgiveness will be so liberal and so generous as to cover or overwhelm believers.

229. Important Words:

\( 
\text{\text{مساء} (menstruation) is derived from \text{مساء}}. \)

They say \( \text{مساء} \) i.e. the woman menstruated; blood came forth from her womb or uterus at the known time and in the known manner. Thus مساء means, (1) menstruation i.e. the monthly course; (2) time of menstruation; (3) place of menstruation (Lane & Mufradât). According to some, the word مساء which means a tank or a place where water collects, is also derived from the same root though the central letter of the root is different (Lane).

اذى (harmful thing) is the infinitive-noun from اذى meaning, he came to harm, or he was
224. Your wives are a tilth for you; approach your tilth when and how you like and send ahead some good for yourselves; and fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him; and bear good tidings to those who obey.

Commentary:

After laying down, in brief, the law about intermarriage, reference to marital relations and conjugal obligations became necessary. The verse under comment indicates that coition or sexual intercourse with one's wife is not permissible during menses, for such intercourse would be harmful for both parties. Coition becomes permissible when menses cease, but as a further precaution the husband should wait till the wife has washed herself by taking a bath. The verse under comment indicates that coition with one's wife is not permissible during menses, for such intercourse would be harmful for both parties. Coition becomes permissible when menses cease, but as a further precaution the husband should wait till the wife has washed herself by taking a bath.

The command referred to in the words, go in upon them as Allah has commanded you, is contained in 2 : 189, hinting that coition with one's wife should be in a manner productive of issue. A further hint to the above is contained in the following verse.

The words, and go not in unto them (lit. do not go near them) until they are clean, do not mean that the husband should keep away from his wife completely and in no case go near her. The Holy Prophet's sayings as well as his practice belie that inference. The expression simply refers to coition and does not debar other forms of loving approach.

The concluding word, i.e. those who keep themselves clean, have been put in the masculine gender, because firstly the Ulama of the masculine gender generally include and extend to females as well; and secondly because by using this word the Quran means to hint that if men go in unto their wives while they are unclean, they are sure to make themselves unclean too. Thirdly this word also hints that though it becomes lawful for a man to go in unto his wife after the monthly flow has ceased, yet it is better for him to wait till she has properly washed herself, for God loves those who are more careful about cleanliness.

Important Words:

- كم (how and when) means: (1) how; (2) when; and (3) where (Aqrab).
- ينتر (send ahead) is derived from ينتر (go in front) meaning, he came or stepped forward. 

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means, he sent forward or sent ahead; he put forward; he offered. قَمْ لَعْبَةٌ means, he did good or evil that will in future bear good or bad fruit for himself. قَمْ لَطَينَ means, he preferred him to others. قَمْ لَأَسْتَهْبَ means, he paid him the price in advance (Aqrab). The Quran uses this expression to point out that whatever good or evil deed a man does, serves like a seed to bear a future crop. No action is ever lost.

مُؤْمِنٌ (those who obey) is derived from أَمِن meaning: (1) he believed; (2) he obeyed (Aqrab). Here it gives the latter meaning. For a fuller discussion of this word see 2:4.

Commentary:

This verse constitutes an eloquent testimony to the inimitably pure and dignified language of the Quran. An extremely delicate subject has been dealt with in a most decent and discreet manner, and the whole philosophy of marriage and conjugal relations has been given in one brief sentence i.e. Your wives are a tilth for you. A woman is indeed like a tilth in which the seed of progeny is sown. The expression has a twofold significance depending on the meaning of the words اتِوا حَسَّم (approach your tilth). If approaching the tilth means coition, then the expression, approach your tilth how you like, would signify that: (1) you should go in unto your wife in a manner suited to her capacity as a tilth and in no other manner; and (2) that both of you should try to keep your hearts pure at the time of coition so that the issue of the process may also share that purity. Says the Holy Prophet, "When the husband goes in unto his wife, they should both pray to God saying, 'Our Lord, keep both of us away from Satan; and if Thou grant us an issue, keep that also away from him'" (Muslim, Kitāb al-Nikāh).

On the contrary, if "approaching the tilth" means selecting and dealing with the wife, the expression, approach your tilth how you like, would mean: (1) That you should select a wife who is best suited as a tilth, i.e., (a) she should be وَدَرَدُ viz. capable of producing children and not barren; (b) she should be healthy, capable of producing healthy children; (c) she should be well qualified to give good training to the children; and (d) she should be رَدَدُ i.e. loving nature so that there may reign an atmosphere of love and harmony in the house and the children may benefit by it. (2) That you should look after and treat your wife well so that her life may be happy and contented and she may become best disposed to bring up the children well. (3) That you should keep yourselves also in a state of good physical and moral health so that your seed for your tilth may also be healthy in every respect.

A wise husbandman selects the best soil, prepares the best tilth, secures the best seed, and chooses the best time and manner of sowing it. So should you, for on the harvest which you are to reap in the form of children depends not only your own but also your community's entire future. It is to this supreme fact that the clause, and send ahead some good for yourselves, so pointedly refers. In short, the likening of woman to tilth throws a flood of light on the morality of eugenics and sex. But the real basis of all happiness and progress is the fear of God and in the words, fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him, the Quran warns the Faithful never to lose sight of the real object of marriage even in the heat of carnal passions; for even the seat of these passions is the source of the procreation of children and the continuation of a good race on the earth. Finally, the clause, and bear glad tidings to those who obey, contains a mighty بَشَرَة (good news) for those who may obey this injunction, for it would not only make their own lives supremely happy but would also secure for them the best progeny for all time.
225. And make not Allah a target for your oaths that you may thereby abstain from doing good and acting righteously and making peace between men. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. 231

226. Allah will not call you to account for such of your oaths as are vain, but He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned. And Allah is Most Forgiving, Forbearing. 232

231. Important Words:

- **النَّتَجُّوكُوا اللَّهُ عَرْضَةً لَا يُبَيِّنكُمُ الْيَدُ أوْ يَتْنَفَّوْا**
  - They say: "We set up an obstacle before our eyes, we exhibited or offered the thing before the people. "

- **النَّصْائِحُ لِلَّهِ اللَّهُ عَرْضَةً وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعُ عَلَيْهِمْ**
  - Thus "ىبَيِّنكُمُ الْيَدُ" means, "a hindrance came across my way." Thus "عَرْضَةً" means: (1) an obstacle or hindrance in the way of a person; (2) a thing or person exposed to or confronting someone or something; (3) a butt or target like the butt of archers; also figuratively, as one might say, "he became the butt or butt of their rebukes"; (4) an object; (5) an excuse or pretext (Aqrab & Taj).

- **أَيْنَ الْرِّجْلُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نَعْمَالَ فَلَأْتَا**
  - They say: "I approached him from the right hand side." إِنَّ اللَّهَ نَعْمَالَ means, "God made him blessed." إِنَّ اللَّهَ نَعْمَالَ means, (1) the right hand side; (2) the right hand; (3) strength, blessing and good fortune; (4) an oath (Aqrab).

Commentary:

As there are men to be found who are likely to forget that a wife being a sacred tilth is to be treated well not only for her own sake but also for the sake of children, and such men flare up at slight causes and then resort to swearing that they would not treat their wives well nor act kindly towards their relations, the Quran here makes a suitable reference to such men and prohibits them from using the name of God for acts of injustice and transgression. The verse under comment and the one that follows serve as a sort of introduction to verse 2:227 in which the subject of swearing to keep away from one's wife has been more pointedly stated. God's name, being the holiest of all holy things, should not be used as an obstacle in the way of righteousness and of doing good to others.

The word "عَرْضَةً" meaning a butt or an obstacle, has been very appropriately used in the verse to point out that such men as swear by God to abstain from acts of righteousness hopelessly fail to appreciate the true dignity of the Supreme Being. It is indeed an act of blasphemy that one should use the name of Allah, Who is the fountain-head of all goodness, to keep away from the path of goodness. Again, it is a gross violation of the sanctity of Allah's name that it should be used as a butt or target for profane or purposeless oaths.

232. Important Words:

- **لَا يُؤْخَذُكُمْ إِلَّا لَأَخْذَهُ عَلَيْهِمْ**
  - (will call you to account) is derived from أَخْذُ. أَخْذُ means, he took hold of him; he seized him. أَخْذُ means, he called him to account; he punished or chastised him (Aqrab).
227. For those who vow abstinence from their wives, the maximum period of waiting is four months; then if they go back from the vow, surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.\(^{233}\)
228. And if they decide upon a divorce, then surely, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

The words, if they go back from the vow, surely Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful, indicate that swearing abstinence from wife is reprehensible in the sight of God Who loves to see reconciliation between husband and wife. The verse thus abolishes the custom of which was prevalent among the Arabs before the advent of Islam and by which it was sought to deprive women of their conjugal rights for long and indefinite periods.

Commentary:

After the two introductory and intervening verses in which the subject of taking oaths has been dealt with, the Quran now reverts to the original subject of conjugal relations. The verse under comment speaks of those men who vow abstinence from their wives without actually divorcing them. It is, in this connection, interesting to note that while approaching the subject of divorce, dealt with in the succeeding verses, the Quran first speaks of menstruation (2:223) which is a sort of temporary and partial, though unreal, separation. Then (as in the present verse) it speaks of real though indefinite separation. And then, as in the succeeding verses, it speaks of real though revocable divorce. And finally (2:231) it speaks of irrevocable divorce. A really wonderful order designed to put as many obstacles as possible in the way of divorce which Islam recognizes and retains as a sort of necessary evil.

As clearly stated in the verse under comment, Islam allows four months at the most to a person who swears not to approach his wife. During this period, he must either get reconciled to his wife and restore conjugal relations, or separation will be effected between the two. Islam would in no case permit indefinite separation without divorce, leaving the woman "suspended" as it were.

234. Important Words:

The words, if they decide, means, he made up his mind; he decided; he was determined to do a thing (Aqrab).

Commentary:

If, after vowing abstinence from his wife, as stated in the preceding verse, the husband decides on divorce, he is free to take that course. But the words, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing, warn him that if he is thereby acting unjustly to his wife, he should not think that he can so act with impunity, for Allah is there to hear the supplications of the wife; and even if she does not or cannot pray to God, Allah knows everything.

With this verse begins a discussion of the Islamic law of divorce. According to this law, the husband possesses the right to divorce... 
And the divorced women shall wait concerning themselves for three courses; and it is not lawful for them that they conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and the Last Day; and their husbands have the greater right to take them back during that period, provided they desire reconciliation. And they (the women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in equity; but men have a rank above them. And Allah is Mighty and Wise.

235. Important Words:

- (courses) is the plural of which is derived from i.e. he collected or put together the thing.
- means, the pregnant woman gave birth to a child.
- means, the woman became pure from menstrual discharge. also means, she menstruated, thus giving contrary meanings.
- (Qur'an) or (Qur'an) means: (1) a time, and this is the primary significance of the word, as we say i.e. the wind blew at its fixed time; (2) menstruation; (3) period or state of purity preceding and following a menstrual discharge i.e. the period between two menstruations; thus the word gives contrary meanings; (4) termination of a menstruation (Aqrab & Lane). The word is also sometimes applied to the period of menstruation and that of purity taken together i.e. the whole month (Muhit). According to Raghib means the time or state when a woman leaves her state of purity and enters that of menstruation (Mufradat).

- (wombs) is the plural of womb (ri'hm) or (rahim) which is from the verb. They say i.e. he showed him mercy, he was tender towards him. means, the woman had complaint of the womb after childbirth. (rahim) or (ri'hm) means, (1) womb; (2) relationship, particularly by the female side. The expression means, relatives or kinsmen. In Muslim jurisprudence the expression signifies such relations as are not direct heirs (Lane).

- (husbands), like , is the plural of . They say i.e. the man became a husband. means, the man married and had a husband. is like meaning, both a husband and a wife i.e. a partner in life; but the significance of husband is more common. The word also means, lord, master or owner of a thing; or a person in authority. The Arabs sometimes gave the name to their idols also (Lane & Mufradat).

- (equity) is a common Arabic word which has been freely used in the Quran as well.
They say  it, i.e., he knew it either by means of the five senses or by mental perception, as by reflection, or by consideration of the effect of a thing on the mind; he recognized it.

among means, (1) a known or commonly known thing; (2) an action or thing the goodness of which is known by reason i.e. equity; (3) an action or thing the goodness of which is known by the law of Shari'at; (4) goodness, kindness and beneficence; (5) liberality coupled with moderation; (6) good fellowship with one's family and others; (7) sincere and honest word of advice, etc. (Lane). It may be noted here that while taking the oath of allegiance from would-be Muslims, the Holy Prophet always used the word  among asking them to solemnly affirm that they would obey him in all things i.e. not only in such things as formed part of the divine law of Shari'at but also in those which the Prophet held to be good by his own reason.

 درجة (rank) means, (1) the various steps forming a set of stairs; (2) rank; (3) eminence; (4) degree (Aqrab).

Commentary:

In view of the fact that divorce is the most hateful of all lawful things in the sight of God (Dāwūd), it has been hedged round by many checks and limitations. One of these checks is that a husband can divorce his wife only when she is clean i.e. in a state of purity, and he has had no sexual knowledge of her in her period of purity. After the pronouncement of divorce the wife must wait for three menstruations i.e. about three months, which period is called  عبد (‘iddat) or the period of waiting. This is another check, because this period of waiting gives to the husband sufficient time to consider the pros and cons of his action and to allow his love for her, if there is yet a dormant spark lying smouldering somewhere, to reassert itself. The third check laid down in this verse is that a divorced woman, if pregnant, must not conceal this fact from her husband, for the expected birth of a child is calculated to go a long way in bringing about reconciliation between the couple. The fourth check, as mentioned in the succeeding verses, is that for complete and irrevocable separation there should be three divorces. After the pronouncement of the first as well as the second divorce, and before the expiry of the period of waiting, the husband enjoys the privilege of taking his wife back, if he so desires. Even after the period of waiting is over, the couple can become reunited in the case of the first and second divorce by renewing the marriage tie.

The verse adds that as far as personal rights are concerned, the husband and the wife stand on a par, but in matters relating to discipline, the husband has superiority over the wife, i.e., in case of difference the final authority is vested in him. The reasons for this are given in 4:35.

The divine attribute Mighty added at the end of the verse contains a reminder and a warning to the husband that he must not misuse the authority he has been given in household affairs, for there is the Almighty God over his head to Whom he is responsible for his actions. The attribute also provides a reason for vesting authority in the husband, who is the stronger of the parties. The attribute Wise brings home to the husband the fact that the vesting of the final authority in him is based on just and wise considerations, because wherever two or more persons live together, it is necessary that the wisest among them be appointed the Amir or the chief for the efficient running of their affairs and the uniformity of their actions.

A word here about the significance of  ب ب seems essential. As explained under Important Words, this word gives two distinct and contrary meanings, i.e., (1) menstruation; and (2) the period of purity between two menstruations. This has given rise to much difference
293 230. Such divorce may be pronounced twice; then, either retain them in a becoming manner or send them away with kindness. And it is not lawful for you that you take anything of what you have given them (your wives) unless both fear that they cannot observe the limits prescribed by Allah. But, if you fear that they cannot observe the limits prescribed by Allah, then it shall be no sin for either of them in what she gives to get her freedom. These are the limits prescribed by Allah, so transgress them not; and whoso transgresses the limits prescribed by Allah, it is they that are the wrongdoers.236

236. Important Words:

- انسك (retain) is derived from انسك which is again derived from انسك. They say انسك i.e. he stuck to it. انسك is both transitive and intransitive. انسك means, he got hold of it and stopped and retained it. انسك means, he abstained from talking. انسك means, (1) to hold or stop or prevent or retain; (2) to refrain or abstain (Aqrab).

- سري (send away) is the noun-infinitive from سرح (sarahz) which is derived from سرح. They say سرح i.e. the cattle went forth for grazing. سرح means, the flood moved on leisurely. سرح means, he sent him away. سرح means, he sent away or divorced his wife (Aqrab).

- حدود (limits) is the plural of حد i.e. a limit. حدود means, he put a limit to it. حدود means, he distinguished one thing from the other. حدود means, (1) the limit or the line where two things meet; (2) last limit or extremity of a thing; (3) that by which a thing may be defined; (4) prescribed punishment for an offence. حدود الله means God's religious commandments (Aqrab).
Commentary:

This verse contains the fifth check on divorce. A man who seeks permanent and irrevocable separation from his wife must pronounce divorce on three separate occasions, each in a separate period of purity, when the woman is clean and the man has not gone in unto her during that period of purity. The pronouncement of divorce twice or thrice at one and the same time is not permissible as the verse hints in the word 

The Holy Prophet treated such collective pronouncements, whatever their number, as only one divorce (Tirmidhi & Dāwūd). According to Nasa'i, the Holy Prophet was extremely angry when one day he was told that a person had made all the three pronouncements of divorce at one and the same time, and said: “Is the Book of God going to be made a plaything while I am yet among you?”

After the pronouncement of the first two divorces, the husband can take back the divorced wife within 'iddat i.e. the period of waiting, with or without her consent; but after the period of waiting is over, he can take her back only with her consent and that after remarrying her. After the pronouncement of the third divorce, however, the husband forfeits this right and the couple are finally separated. A Companion of the Holy Prophet once asked him saying, “The Quran has here spoken of two divorces only, whence comes in the third?” The Prophet referred him to the Quranic words

The present verse also makes it clear that when a person divorces his wife, he forfeits i.e. the dower-money he has given her; and if at the time of divorce he has not yet given her the dower-money agreed on by the parties, he must make the payment before the divorce becomes effective. Again, he is not allowed to take back anything he might have given her in the form of gifts and presents as the clause, it is not lawful for you that you take anything of what you have given them, indicates.

If, however, it is the wife who demands separation, technically known as (Khul'a lit. the putting off of clothes etc., or the shedding of old leaves), she must get it through a Qādi or judge as the word (you fear), which has been put in the plural number, hints. In this case she has to part with, in full or in part, her dowry as well as the gifts she might have received from her husband, as agreed on by the parties or decided by the judge. The case of Jamila, wife of Qais bin Thābit, provides a good illustration of the exercise of the right of Khul'a by women. She demanded separation from her husband, Qais, on the ground that she did not like him, i.e., their temperaments being different she could not get on with him. She was granted Khul'a by the Holy Prophet, but she had to return to her husband the orchard he had given her (Bukhārī). This right, however, is not to be exercised in a light-hearted manner. The Holy Prophet has condemned the action of a woman who demands separation from her husband without valid reason even as he has condemned the action of a man who divorces his wife without genuine cause. He is reported to have said, “A woman who seeks separation from her husband without a legitimate cause shall be deprived of the fragrance of Heaven” (Dāwūd & Tirmidhi). This is what is hinted in the concluding words,
231. And if he divorce her the third time, then she is not lawful for him thereafter, until she marries another husband; and, if he also divorce her, then it shall be no sin for them to return to each other, provided they are sure that they would be able to observe the limits prescribed by Allah. And these are the limits prescribed by Allah which He makes clear to the people who have knowledge.  

Commentary:

This verse refers to the third and final pronouncement of divorce after which the husband loses all right of reunion with his wife unless the divorced woman marries another man and establishes conjugal relations with him, and is then formally divorced by him or he dies, leaving her free to marry another man. By the inclusion of this provision in the law of divorce, Islam has, on the one hand, enhanced the sanctity of the marriage tie which must not be trifled with and has declared unlawful the evil practice of ḥalāla; and, on the other, it has afforded yet another opportunity to the couple who once had lived as husband and wife to become reunited if they so desired. The practice of ḥalāla referred to above consists in a divorced woman marrying a man, other than her former husband, with the object of obtaining divorce from him and thereby making herself lawful for the former husband. Islam condemns this practice as a thing accursed (Tirmidhi ch. on Nikāh) and enjoins that marriage with and divorce from another husband must both be genuine.
232. And when you divorce your wives and *they approach* the end of their *appointed* period, then *either* retain them in a becoming manner or send them away in a becoming manner; but retain them not wrongfully so that you may transgress. And whoso does that, surely wrongs his own soul. And do not make a jest of the commandments of Allah, and remember the favour of Allah upon you and the Book and the Wisdom which He has sent down to you, whereby He exhorts you. And fear Allah and know that Allah knows all things well.  

238. Important Words:

* علم (they approach)* is from لَغ which means, he reached or came to or attained; or he was near to reaching or attaining (Lane).

* نَذَر (period)* is the noun-infinitive from the verb نَذَر meaning, he or it delayed or fell short. نَذَر therefore means, he appointed a time or period for the thing. نَذَر therefore means, the term or period appointed or specified for a thing; also the end of such period. Death is called نَذَر because for every life there is an appointed time when it must come to an end (Aqrab & Lane).

* مُخْتَضِر (exhorts you)* is derived from مَخْتَضِر meaning, he gave him good advice; he exhorted him; he admonished him; he warned him of the consequences of his actions and called him to a life of righteousness (Aqrab).

Commentary:

The verse contains a general injunction about the treatment of divorced women.

As is apparent from the context, the divorce spoken of here refers to the revocable divorce. After such divorce has been pronounced, there are only two courses open to the husband. He may either retain his wife and treat her with kindness or he may part with her in a good and becoming manner. He is not allowed to maltreat her and keep her in a state of suspense. The concluding part of the verse warns the husband against making light of the commandments of Allah relating to the rights of women, adding that, God being All-Knowing, even the hidden intentions and secret machinations of man are known to Him.
233. And when you divorce women and they reach the end of their period, prevent them not from marrying their husbands, if they agree between themselves in a decent manner. This is an admonition for him among you who believes in Allah and the Last Day. It is more blessed for you and purer; and Allah knows but you do not know.

239. Important Words:

(prevent them) is derived from ضل לה. They say ضلها i.e. he prevented or debarred her from marrying. The primary signification of ضل is the act of straitening or preventing, or withholding or debarred. ضل عليه means, he straitened him in his affairs and intervened as an obstacle between him and that which he desired (Taj).

(agree between themselves) is derived from رضى. They mean, the people agreed between themselves, or they came to a mutual agreement (Aqrab).

(more blessed) is derived from زك. It means, it increased or augmented; it received blessing from God; it was or became pure. زك means, more blessed, containing greater benefits, conducive to more good (Aqrab).

Commentary:

The word “husbands” mentioned in this verse may refer either to former husbands or to prospective ones. In the former case, the clause, and when you divorce women, would be taken as referring to the first or second pronouncement of divorce. Sometimes, when a husband desires to take back his wife before pronouncing the third or irrevocable divorce, her offended relatives do not like her to go back to him again and therefore try to prevent her from remarrying him. The verse condemns that practice. In case the word “husbands” stands for prospective husbands, the above phrase would refer to the third or final divorce. Some men, even after the complete dissolution of their marriage, do not like the idea that their divorced wives should marry other persons and try to prevent them from contracting new marriages. This practice is also condemned in the clause, prevent them not from marrying their (prospective) husbands. Should the guardian of a divorced woman prevent her from remarrying her former husband or should the former husband prevent her from marrying a new husband, she can do so with the permission of the Qadi or the judge. The verse under comment also implies a repudiation of the evil practice of pronouncing three divorces at one and the same time, because had it been permissible, the question of divorced women remarrying their former husbands would have been meaningless.
234. And mothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years; this is for those who desire to complete the suckling. And the man to whom the child belongs shall be responsible for their (the mothers') food and clothing according to usage. No soul is burdened beyond its capacity. The mother shall not make the father suffer on account of her child, nor shall he to whom the child belongs make the mother suffer on account of his child, and the same is incumbent on the heir. If they both decide upon weaning the child by mutual consent and consultation, there is no blame on them. And if you desire to engage a wet-nurse for your children, there shall be no blame on you, provided you pay what you have agreed to pay, in a fair manner. And fear Allah and know that Allah sees what you do.

240. Important Words:

- (give suck) is derived from جَعَلَتْ, i.e. he (the babe) sucked. means, she (the mother or the wet-nurse) gave suck to the child. means, he arranged for the suckling of the child; he engaged a wet-nurse for it. The infinitive-noun رَخَّةُ signifies suckling. means, he is my foster-brother, both having sucked from the breast of the same woman (Aqrab & Lane).

- (two years) is the dual of حرِّل (a year) which is the infinitive-noun from أَحَلَلَ, meaning, it passed and became complete, or it passed from one state to another, or it turned round. A year is called حرِّل because it is a complete measure of time and turns round and round. also means strength and power to do a thing as in the well-known formula لا حَرَل وَلا نَوْلَةٌ إِلَّا إِلَّا (Aqrab).

- (its capacity) is derived from وَسْمَة. means, God's mercy extends to, and covers, all things. means capacity or power or strength. The infinitive-noun from it is سَمَاء meaning, breadth; extent; capaciousness; capacity and power. means, a man of means or a man of ample means (Aqrab).

- (is burdened) is derived from كَفَّى. They say كَفَّى, i.e. he imposed on him the task of doing a thing, or he tasked him to do a thing. It also means, he ordered him to do a thing which was difficult or troublesome or inconvenient (Lane).

- (weaning the child) is derived from فَنَمَلَ which is both transitive and intransitive, meaning, he separated, he divided, he partitioned; or he got separated, he went forth.
235. And {those of you who die and leave wives behind, these (wives) shall wait concerning themselves four months and ten days. And when they have reached the end of their period, no sin shall lie on you in any-thing that they do with regard to themselves according to what is fair. And Allah is aware of what you do.  

The expression لا تمار is both in the active and the passive voice; the clause لا تمار والدة براءا may therefore mean that: (1) the mother shall not make the father suffer on account of her child; and (2) the mother shall not be made to suffer on account of her child; and both meanings are equally good and equitable. The words والد (he to whom the child belongs) have been used here in preference to the simpler word والد (father), in order to point to the inherent right of the father to possess the child and to his natural responsibility for its maintenance.

The clause, and the same is incumbent on the heir, lays down an important social principle. If a father dies leaving behind a child, it is the duty of his heirs to bring up the child and maintain it until it reaches puberty. This shall not be considered an act of favour on their part, but an act of duty. One who inherits the property of a deceased person is in duty bound to bring up the children the latter may leave behind. He who receives a support from another must be prepared to give the same to him, when he may stand in need of it.

241. Important Words:

ترق (who die) is derived from رق (wafā'), which is derived from رئ (wafā'). They say i.e. he fulfilled his promise;
236. And there shall be no blame on you in throwing out a hint regarding a proposal of marriage to these women or in keeping the desire hidden in your minds. Allah knows that you will think of them in this connection. But make not a contract with them in secret, except that you say a fair word. And resolve not on the marriage tie until the prescribed period reaches its end. And know that Allah knows what is in your mind; so beware of it. And know that Allah is Most Forgiving, Forbearing.

he was faithful in his word. وَقِ فَلَنَا حَقٌّ (waffā) means, he gave him his right in full. اْنْفَّ (wqf) gives both the meanings ascribed to it. وَقِ فَلَنَا (waffā) above, means, he took something in full, as they say وَقِ فَلَنَا حَقٌّ i.e., he got or obtained his right in full.

وَقِ فَلَنَا (waffā) means, God took away the soul of Zaid, leaving the body behind; God caused Zaid to die. وَقِ فَلَنَا حَقٌّ means, his soul was taken away i.e., he died. In this case God is مَوْفَقٌ (mutawaffa) and the man who dies is مَوْفَقٌ (mutawaffa). The Quran says: إنَّ اللَّهَ يَتَّقِقَ الْإِنسَانَ حَيَّاً وَمَتَّا لَمْ يَكُنَّ فِي مَانِهَا. i.e., God takes away the souls of men at the time of their death; and He also takes away the souls of men that have not died, during their sleep (39 : 43). The Arabic idiom, which has the support of the Quranic usage, definitely shows that wherever God is Fā'il (i.e. subject) and a being having a soul is مَعْرُوفٌ (mawruf) (i.e. object) the word وَقِ فَلَنَا invariably means, the taking away of the soul.

Commentary:

After having dealt with the question of the remarriage of divorced women, the Quran in this verse proceeds to issue commandments regarding widows. The word فِتْنَةٌ i.e. the period of waiting in the case of widows, is four months and ten days which roughly corresponds to four alternate periods of menstruation and purity combined. Islam has prescribed a longer period in the case of a widow as a mark of respect for her feelings at the death of her husband and has thus added to the dignity and sanctity of the marriage tie.

This verse also implies a rebuke to those who are opposed to widow remarriage, thinking it to be an insult to the family and a disgrace to the widowed woman. The words, what is fair, show that it is not only lawful, but preferable and desirable, for a widow to remarry. The words, in anything that they do with regard to themselves, obviously refer to remarriage. Elsewhere the Quran says, And marry your widows (24 : 33).

242. Important Words:

ارْجَعَ (you throw out a hint) is derived from عَرْضَ (arraj'a) meaning, he offered and presented a thing. عَرْضَ (arraj'a) means, he used an expression susceptible of different meanings; or he mentioned a thing not clearly but in a veiled manner; or he used words to convey a sense which the words used did not definitely convey (Lane).
31 237. It shall be no sin for you if you divorce women while you have not touched them, nor settled for them a dowry. But provide for them—the rich man according to his means and the poor man according to his means—a provision in a becoming manner, an obligation upon the virtuous.\footnote{\textsuperscript{213}}

(\textit{khubû}) is derived from \textit{khub} meaning, he addressed a meeting; he delivered a sermon. \textit{khub} means, a sermon. \textit{khub} means, a proposal of marriage (\textit{Aqrab}).

\textit{kun} means, the man became well off. \textit{kun} means, God granted him life and the necessaries thereof. \textit{kun} means, he provided his divorced wife with necessaries of life. \textit{kun} or \textit{kun} means, he profited by it for some length of time; he was afforded an opportunity to enjoy it. "\textit{kun}" means, things that are necessary for life without affording opulence; things useful and necessary for life.

\textit{uwâd} is the infinitive-noun from \textit{uwâd} meaning, he tied; he made a thing firm and fast. \textit{uwâd} means, he tied the rope; he tied it in knots. \textit{uwâd} means, a tie; a contract that ties up or binds two parties; a marriage contract (\textit{Aqrab}).

Commentary:

According to this verse it is forbidden to a man to make an open proposal of marriage to a widow within her period of waiting. He who intends to marry a widow must keep his intention concealed from her. He may drop a hint indirectly suggestive of his intention. But he must on no account make an open suggestion or a formal proposal or even a secret proposal concerning marriage. A widow, too, is prohibited from giving her consent to such a proposal within the prescribed period. She must patiently wait for four months and ten days out of deference to the memory of her departed spouse and in order that her possible pregnancy may become apparent, because a pregnant woman is not allowed to marry until she is delivered of the child.

The words, \textit{beware of it}, are meant to caution men to be on their guard against disobeying these commandments which are meant for their own good. If God had not laid them down, all social order would have gone to pieces.

The divine attributes, "Forgiving" and "Forbearing," have been mentioned at the end of this verse not to hint that breach of these injunctions would find God Forgiving and Forbearing but that the exigencies of the circumstances required stricter laws in this matter, but as God knows human weaknesses, He has been lenient in this respect. So whatever commandment has now been given must be faithfully followed and all lapse be honestly guarded against.

243. Important Words:

(\textit{mata'a}). \textit{mata'a} means, i.e. the thing became tall. \textit{mata'a} means, the man became well off. \textit{mata'a} means, God granted him life and the necessaries thereof. \textit{mata'a} means, he provided his divorced wife with necessaries of life.
238. And if you divorce them before you have touched them, but have settled upon them a dowry, then half of what you have settled shall be due from you, unless they remit, or he, in whose hand is the tie of marriage, should remit. And that you should remit is nearer to righteousness. And do not forget to do good to one another. Surely, Allah sees what you do.

such as food, clothing, household utensils, furniture, etc. (Aqrab & Lane).

القرن (the poor man) is derived from لة. They say لة. i.e. he was niggardly towards his family. التراجل means, the man became poor and straitened in circumstances. القرن is, therefore, one who is poor, one who is in straitened circumstances (Aqrab).

Commentary:

Circumstances might arise when a husband may consider it necessary or desirable to divorce his wife before they have had conjugal relations i.e. before the man has gone in unto his wife and even before any مير (dowry) has been decided upon by the parties. The verse allows this procedure but makes it obligatory on the husband to see that in such a case his divorced wife receives suitable provision according to his means. Thus Islam seeks not only to provide for the divorced woman but to leave no trace of bitterness, which is very often the result of the dissolution of a marriage. The word الحسن i.e. the virtuous or those who act benevolently, has been used to exhort the husband that the more generous he is in his treatment of his divorced wife, the more pleasing will his conduct be in the sight of God.

244. Important Words:

should remit is derived from لة meaning: (1) he gave more than what was due; or (2) he relinquished his right or remitted it in whole or in part (Taj). See also 2:220.

Commentary:

If the divorce occurs after the dowry has been fixed but before the husband has gone in unto his wife, the husband shall pay half of the fixed dowry. The clause, he in whose hand is the tie of marriage, may signify either the husband or the guardian of the divorced woman, because whereas after marriage the tie of marriage is in the hands of the husband, before marriage the guardian of the woman also holds it in his hands. In the former case, the word لة would mean that the husband should try to give more than half the dowry, or if he has already paid the whole dowry, he should try not to demand its return. If, however, the clause, he in whose hand is the tie of marriage, be considered to apply to the guardian of the divorced woman, the word لة would mean that he should try to remit or relinquish her right, i.e., he should, so far as possible, strive to give up even that which he is entitled to receive on behalf of the divorced woman. But God certainly prefers that the husband should make a greater show of generosity.

This is how each party is exhorted to vie with the other in acting generously toward the other, the husband by paying more than
239. Watch over Prayers, and the middle Prayer, and stand before Allah submissively.

Hence, the necessity of urging married people to be regular and punctual in their Prayers.

The expression, And that you should remit is nearer to righteousness, applies to the husband particularly; but it may, in its broader significance, apply to all—husbands, wives and guardians.

245. Important Words:

- حِفَظَةُ (watch) is derived from حَفَظَتْ. They say حَفَظَتْ i.e. he preserved it, or he guarded or protected it, or he prevented it from perishing or becoming lost. حِفَظَتْ القرآن means, he memorized the Quran, i.e. he learned it by heart. حِفَظَتْ مِنْ الْأَمْر means, he watched over the thing; he attended to it carefully and constantly (Tāj).

- قَانِتًا (submissively) is derived from كَفَّاتَ for which see 2:117. The word conveys, among others, three important meanings: (1) standing motionless, (2) refraining from speech and (3) standing submissively (Lane). All these meanings are applicable here.

Commentary:

This verse which stresses the importance of, and regularity in, Prayers appears to be rather oddly placed, being wedged in between verses relating to conjugal relations. But the very context of it explains the deep philosophy of its meaning. After marriage one is apt to become a little lax in Prayers, particularly the supererogatory Tahajjud Prayer (said in the latter part of the night). Besides, family life multiplies the cares of both man and woman.
240. *If you are in a state of fear, then say your Prayer on foot or riding; but *when you are safe, remember Allah as He has taught you that which you did not know.*

241. And *those of you who die and leave behind wives shall bequeath to their wives provision for a year without their being turned out. But if they themselves go out, there shall be no blame upon you in regard to any proper thing which they do concerning themselves. And Allah is Mighty and Wise.*

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246. Important Words:

- (on foot) is the plural of جَرِّب (one who walks on foot) which is derived from جَرِب ( جر ) meaning motionless and refrain from making any movement, and (3) his general attitude should be that of submissiveness, as lack of these is liable adversely to affect concentration and detract from the sanctity of worship.

246. Important Words:

- جَرِّب (on foot) is the plural of جَرِب (one who walks on foot) which is derived from جَرِب ( جر ) meaning a foot. جَرِب ( جر ) which means man is so called because man walks on foot and not on both hands and feet like quadrupeds (Lane).

- راكب (riding) is the plural of راكب (one who rides) which is derived from راكب ( رك ) i.e. he rode an animal or a conveyance. One says, راكب ( رك ) i.e. I mounted the horse. راكب ( رك ) al-الرجل إلى البحر means, the man embarked on a sea voyage. راكب ذناب means, he made sin his riding beast, i.e., he committed a sin (Lane).

Commentary:

The five daily Prayers constitute the most important worship in Islam. In no circumstances can a Muslim neglect his Prayers as long as he is sane and conscious. Even when a person is moving about in a state of extreme fear and consternation, he must not fail to say his Prayers and should perform them on horseback or on foot, whether running or sitting or lying, as the case may be.

In view of this great importance of Prayers, a married couple can ill afford to be careless about them. The form in which Prayers are to be performed in time of ordinary fear or danger is mentioned in 4:102, 103; but the present verse refers to a state of extreme fear when one cannot observe even the form of ordinary مَرَّةَ الْخَوَف (Prayer in a state of fear).

The clause, *but when you are safe, remember Allah as He has taught you,* means that the injunction with regard to offering Prayers on foot or on horseback, etc. pertains to very special circumstances only. As soon as better conditions return, one should pray in the ordinary way as taught in the closing portion of the preceding verse i.e. one should stand motionless in Prayer and refrain from speech, etc.

247. Commentary

The middle verses, which came in like the middle Prayer, having ended, the Quran returns...
242. And for the divorced women also there should be a provision according to what is fair—an obligation on the God-fearing.

243. Thus does Allah make His commandments clear to you that you may understand.

Commentary:

The verse under comment is erroneously believed by some to have been abrogated by 2:235 and 4:13. Apart from the fact that the abrogation theory is based on lack of the knowledge of true teaching of the Quran, there is nothing in the verses referred to above which contradicts the provision contained in the present verse. The period of waiting laid down for a widow in 2:235 is four months and ten days in which time she can, as of right, claim residence and maintenance from the heirs of her deceased husband. The period of one year mentioned in the present verse has nothing to do with the above-mentioned period of waiting, as the words, but if they themselves go out, there shall be no blame upon you, clearly show. The present verse only contains a concession or a favour for a widow in addition to her right of residence and maintenance mentioned in 2:235. One year is about the time conveniently required by a widow for making suitable arrangements about her future. It is also the requisite time for a pregnant widow to be delivered of the child and relieved of the encumbrances attending thereto. Nor has this verse anything to do with the share of a widow in the property left by her husband as stated in 4:13. The concession about residence and maintenance for one year mentioned in the present verse forms no part of her share in the inheritance. The verse contains no obligatory injunction, but only an additional exhortation to the heirs of the deceased person to show special kindness to the widow for a period of one year, just as the following verse embodies an identical exhortation in favour of a divorced woman.

248. Commentary:

Just as the preceding verse bestowed an additional favour on widows, the present one bestows an additional favour on divorced women. The injunction is particularly essential in the case of divorced women, because in moments of bitterness, which is the inevitable aftermath of a dissolved marriage, people are liable to be unjust and cruel towards their former wives. The verse warns them not to lose sight of the fear of God on such occasions and to act towards their former spouses not only with justice but with positive benevolence and kindness.

249. Important Words:

(you may understand) is derived from , for which see 2:45. The word also signifies the sense of binding and restraining.

Commentary:

The verse points out that the above commandments have been given so that people might learn to act wisely and by exercising restraint on themselves refrain from breaking God's behests.
244. Dost thou not know of those who went forth from their homes, and they were thousands, fearing death? And Allah said to them: 'Die'; then He brought them to life. Surely, Allah is Munificent to men, but most men are not grateful.250

The story of the exodus of the Israelites is briefly this. When, being persecuted by Pharaoh, they left Egypt and crossed over to Asia, Moses wanted them to enter the Promised Land, but they were afraid of the people that dwelt there and refused to march ahead, saying Go thou and thy Lord and fight and here we sit (5:25). The result was that they drew upon themselves the wrath of God, Who said to Moses, Verily, it shall be forbidden them for forty years; in distraction shall they wander through the land (5:27). The promise was thus put off for forty years and the children of Israel were left to wander in the wilderness until those who had refused to fight perished in the desert, whereafter the younger generation led by Joshua conquered the land. Thus it was that the people whom God had caused to perish, had new life breathed into them. It is with reference to these events that the Quran uses the word "die" in the verse under comment. This very death i.e. destruction of the rebellious and training of the youth through trials and ordeals, proved the forerunner of life. Elsewhere, the Quran says about the Israelites: Then We raised you up after your death (2:57).

It may also be noted here that from this verse onward the Quran begins the description of كعبة or means of national progress spoken of in 2:130, reference to "Signs" and "the Book" and "Wisdom" having already been made.

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250. Commentary:
The commandments relating to conjugal relations were mentioned as an offshoot of the subject of {مجرد} (holy war) dealt with in 2:217 and the following verses. The Quran now reverts to the original subject and by way of re-introduction cites the example of the Israelites who had left the land of the Pharaohs for fear of death. Trodden under the foot of the tyrant, the children of Israel were then in a most abject condition, and the wise God, in His eternal wisdom, decreed that they should lead a life of ordeals in the wilderness before becoming fit for the great life that awaited them in the Promised Land. The words, Allah said to them: 'Die', point to the great truth that all life must be preceded by death i.e. great trials and extraordinary sacrifices.

As mentioned above, the clause, those who went forth from their homes, refers to the Israelites who had gone forth from Egypt to escape persecution by Pharaoh. It was the fear of death which had made the Israelites migrate from the land (2:50).

The words, they were thousands, contradict the Bible which represents the number of the Israelites migrating from Egypt as six hundred thousand. Recent researches favour the Quranic view (See History of the People of Israel, p. 145, by Ernest Renan, London, 1888, and History of Palestine and the Jews, i. 174 by John Kitto, London, 1844). See also. 2:55.
245. And *fight in the cause of Allah and know that Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.\textsuperscript{251}

246. \textit{Who is it that will lend Allah a goodly loan that He may multiply it for him manifold? And Allah receives and enlarges, and to Him shall you be made to return.}\textsuperscript{252}

\textsuperscript{251} Commentary:

The clause, \textit{and fight in the cause of Allah}, is addressed to Muslims, who are warned of the fate which overtook the Israelites when they refused to fight the enemy when called upon to do so by Moses. God tells Muslims that a people who fear death do not deserve to live. This is the first secret of national progress which the Quran inculcates, viz., that a people can live and prosper only if they shed the fear of death, and that those who are afraid of death die ignobly.

It is hardly necessary to point out here how well Muslims took this lesson to heart. When the well-equipped force of the Quraish came forth from Mecca to destroy the small and ill-equipped Muslim community of Medina, and the Holy Prophet consulted his followers as to whether they were prepared to face and fight the enemy, they told him that they would not behave like the companions of Moses who said to him, \textit{Go thou and thy Lord and fight, and here we sit} (5 : 25) but that they would willingly fight on his right and on his left and in his front and at his back, and the enemy would not reach him except over their corpses, and that they would unhesitatingly plunge their horses even into the raging sea, if he only wished them to do so. The tradition says that when the Holy Prophet heard these words from his Companions, his face beamed with joy and he said to them, "Then go forth and trust in Allah Who will be with you" (Tabari & Hishâm).

The words “All-Hearing” and “All-Knowing” point out that though Muslims were weak and without equipment, yet the help of their Lord was with them, Who heard their prayers and knew their condition.

\textsuperscript{252} Important Words:

\textit{ئَدُّ} (will lend) is derived from 
\textit{ئَدُّ} which again is derived from 
\textit{ئَدُّ} i.e. he cut or severed the thing. 
\textit{ئَدُّ} means, he gave him a loan. 
\textit{ئَدُّ} means, he cut off for him a portion so that he may requite or recompense it. 
\textit{ئَدُّ} means, the act of giving a loan; a loan itself; any good or evil act which brings reward or punishment (Lane).

\textit{ئَدُّ} (receives) is derived from 
\textit{ئَدُّ} i.e. he got hold of it; he received it. 
\textit{ئَدُّ} means, he kept back or withdrew his hand from it. 
\textit{ئَدُّ} means, God straitened his means and lessened his provision (Aqrab).
Commentary:

This verse gives the second means of national advancement, i.e., free expenditure in nation-saving and nation-building affairs. If a nation desires to rise and prosper, it must spend money freely for national purposes, which include helping the poor and the needy. The Quran speaks of spending money in the cause of Allah as giving a loan to God, meaning thereby that money spent in the cause of God should not be regarded as something wasted or even consumed. It should be considered as something given to God as a loan which He would return to the lender manifold. The word loan, however, should not cause any misunderstanding. God needs no loans, for He is not only Self-Sufficient, but is also the Supporter and Sustainer of all other beings and things. He has used the term to indicate that one who spends in the cause of Allah will receive an ample reward from Him; his money, as it were, will be returned to him, being multiplied many times.

The interrogative form in the clause, Who is it that will lend, is used by way of exhortation, and the words, a goodly loan, have been added to indicate that this money is to be spent with a willing and cheerful heart.

It should be noted that apart from specifically national expenditures, the spending of money to help the poor and the needy also is tantamount to giving a loan to God. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said, "God will say to the sinful man on the Day of Judgement, 'O son of man, I fell ill, but you paid Me no visit; I asked you for food, but you gave Me no food; I asked you for water, but you gave Me no water.' The man will say, 'O my Lord, when didst Thou fall ill that I did not visit Thee? When didst Thou ask for food that I did not give it to Thee? When didst Thou ask for water that I gave it Thee not?' God will say, 'O son of man, know you not that one of My servants fell ill and you did not pay him a visit; he asked you for food and you did not give it to him; and he asked you for water and you gave him no water'" (Muslim, ch. on Birr wal Siila). This shows that spending money for the poor and the needy is tantamount to giving money to God.

The words, Allah receives and enlarges, signify that God accepts the money spent in His cause and multiplies it exceedingly so that the reward a man gets is out of all proportion to what he spends. The words, and to Him shall you be made to return, have been added to point out that, though virtuous men get their reward even in this life, yet what is in store for them in the next is still greater.
247. Hast thou not heard of the chiefs of the children of Israel after Moses, when they said to a Prophet of theirs: 'Appoint for us a king that we may fight in the cause of Allah'? He said: 'Is it not likely that you will not fight, if fighting is prescribed for you?' They said: 'What reason have we to abstain from fighting in the cause of Allah when we have been driven forth from our homes and our sons?' But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned back except a small number of them. And Allah knows the transgressors well.

253. Important Words:
لاضل (chiefs) is derived from مَلَأ. They say مَلَأُ الأُمّة, i.e. he filled the vessel with water. مَلَأُ رَأْيَهُ means, he was filled with fright. مَلَأُ الأُمّة means: (1) assembly of persons; (2) chiefs and nobles, for they fill the eyes and hearts of the commoners with awe and admiration; or because with them a meeting becomes full and appears to be properly attended. الأمم الأعلى means, the community of high placed angels (Aqrab).

Commentary:
The Quran now proceeds to give the story of how the different tribes of Israel were welded into one great nation, also noting incidentally the weaknesses displayed by them, so that their example may serve as a lesson to Muslims.

The incident mentioned in the verse under comment indicates an improvement in the condition of the Israelites in the time to which this verse relates over that of the time of Moses himself. In 5:25 the Quran relates that when Moses exhorted his followers to fight the enemy in the cause of Allah, they replied, Go thou and thy Lord and fight, and here we sit. On the contrary, in the present verse the Israelites are reported to have said, What reason have we to abstain from fighting in the cause of Allah when we have been driven forth from our homes and our sons? The improvement, however, was more verbal than real; for when the time of actual fighting came, many of these people wavered and refused to fight. The incident thus serves as a grim warning to Muslims to beware of treading the same path.
248. And their Prophet said to them, ‘Allah has appointed for you Talut as a king.’ They said: ‘How can he have sovereignty over us while we are better entitled to sovereignty than he, and he is not given abundance of wealth?’ He said: ‘Surely, Allah has chosen him above you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and body.’ And ‘Allah gives sovereignty to whom He pleases and Allah is Bountiful, All-Knowing.’

254. **Important Words:**

Talut (Talut) is the attributive name of an Israelite king who lived about two hundred years before David and about the same number of years after Moses. Most Commentators regard Talut to be a name of Hebrew origin and consider him to be synonymous with Saul (1. Sam. ch. 9). As Hebrew is only an offshoot of Arabic, the word Talut appears to be derived from the Arabic root تل - i.e. he became tall or high—a description coinciding with the one given in the verse under comment viz., one increased abundantly in knowledge and body. It is, however, not right to identify Talut with Saul. The description of the Quran fits more with Gideon (Judg. chs. 6-8) than with Saul. Gideon lived in about 1250 B.C. and the Bible calls him a “mighty man of valour” (Judg. 6:12) which is the same as Talut.

**Commentary:**

There has been a difference of opinion as to the identity of the person to whom the name Talut has been applied. According to a number of Muslim Commentators, Talut stands for Saul, and the passage refers to the reign of Saul. Christian writers have, however, taken exception to this view. According to them the incidents related in this passage refer to two different periods which are separated from each other by the long interval of 200 years; and these critics refer to this passage as an instance of historical anachronism found in the Quran. The passage does indeed refer to two different periods, but if Christian critics had carefully thought over their own history, they would have seen that there is no confusion of dates in the passage in question and that the Quran has here referred to both these periods. Its object in doing so is to show how the unification of the different tribes of Israel began in the time of Gideon (i.e. Talut) two hundred years before David, and was finally consummated in the time of David.

In order to determine the identity of Talut, let us glance over the main incidents related in verses 247 to 252. These are as follows:

1. The people of the period to which Talut belongs had been driven forth from their homes and their children (2:247). 2. One who was not originally a king was appointed as such (2:248). 3. God helped the followers of this king, giving them the Talut as a token of his sovereignty (2:249). 4. The people were tried by means of water (2:250). 5. There existed a
great disparity in numbers between these people and the enemy, and the trial reduced their number still further (ibid). 6. In spite of the small number of his followers this king overcame the enemy (2:252).

Now some of these details do indeed apply to Saul, but there are others which do not. The key words which afford a clue to the identity of Tālūt are, Hast thou not heard of the chiefs of the children of Israel after Moses? The words “after Moses” indicate that the incident belongs to an early period when the Jews as a nation had just begun to take a definite shape in history. For two hundred years after Moses the Israelites were divided into different tribes and had no king and no fighting force. In 1256 B.C., owing to their iniquity, God delivered them into the hands of the Midianites who plundered and ravaged them for seven long years, and they were compelled to take refuge in caves (Judg. 6:1,2). This is why they are represented in the Quran as saying, we have been driven forth from our homes. The Midianites attacked them and carried away their sheep and oxen and asses, and destroyed their crops and pillaged them as far as Gaza (Judg. 6:4-6). The Israelites then cried to their Lord, and God raised among them a Prophet; and an angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, appointed him king and promised him divine help. Then Gideon said to God, “Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house” (Judg. 6:15). This tallies with the description given in the Quran which represents the chiefs among the Israelites as saying with regard to the new king, How can he have sovereignty over us while we are better entitled to sovereignty than he, and he is not given abundance of wealth, indicates that the people raised two objections against Tālūt or Gideon: (1) that he did not belong to a highly placed family and was therefore not entitled to kingship, and (2) that he did not possess the requisite wealth for exercising influence. Both of these are plausible objections that are usually made by ordinary people of the world; but a chosen people guided by the will of the Just and Wise God must think otherwise. With them the real title to sovereignty is neither family status nor wealth but the personal qualities of a man; hence the clause, surely Allah has chosen him above you and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and body. The superiority of a man in physical and mental faculties coupled
249. And their Prophet said to them:

The sign of his sovereignty is, that there shall be given you a heart wherein there will be tranquillity from your Lord and a legacy of good left by the family of Moses and the family of Aaron,—the angels bearing it. Surely, in this there is a Sign for you if you are believers."

with knowledge and prowess must remain the basis for all title to rulership. And in the case of 产品的 title had the additional strength of coinciding with the choice of God Who is the best and, in fact, the only true Judge of all titles.

255. Important Words:

عَارْبَة (heart) is derived from "" return; he returned to God; he repented; he left off the way of sin and began to tread the path of rectitude. إن كانت عَارْبَة means: (1) a chest or box, as things are repeatedly taken out of, and returned to, it; (2) a coffin or a bier; (3) chest or breast or bosom or the ribs with what they contain, as the heart, etc. (Lane); (4) the heart which is the storehouse of knowledge, wisdom and peace (Mufradat).

سَكِينة (tranquillity) is derived from "" i.e., it became calm and tranquil. سَكِينة means, peace, tranquillity, calmness, freedom from agitation and disturbance (Aqrab & Lane).

بِقِية (legacy) is derived from "" i.e., he or it remained behind; or he or it continued or lasted for long or for ever. بِقِية means, that which remains behind i.e., legacy; remainder; remains; remnant; residue; relic; the best portion of a thing, as it is always the best part of a thing that survives. لائِن بِقِية أَذُور means, such a one is the best and the most excellent of the party (Lane).

Commentary:

Though Commentators have differed about the significance of the word لائِة and the Bible mentions it as an "ark" or chest, the description of the Quran definitely shows that the word has been used here in the sense of "heart" or "bosom." The words of the Quran are: wherein there will be tranquillity from your Lord. Now this description cannot apply to an ark or a chest; for, far from granting peace and tranquillity to others, the ark spoken of by the Bible could neither protect the Israelites against defeat nor could it protect itself, and was carried away by the enemy. Even Saul who took with him the ark during his campaigns suffered crushing defeats, so much so that even the enemy pitied him and he met with an ignominious end. Such an ark could not be a source of tranquillity to the Israelites. What God gave them was a heart full of tranquillity which was aided by angels who buoyed up the Israelites and filled their hearts with courage and perseverance so that after the coming of the said tranquillity they successfully resisted the attacks of the enemy and inflicted heavy defeats on them.

Another favour which God conferred on the Israelites has been referred to in the word بِقِية or legacy. God imbued their hearts with the noble qualities which characterized their ancestors, the people or the descendants of Moses and Aaron. The legacy left by the descendants of Moses and Aaron did not consist of any material things but referred to the good qualities which they were given as the heritage of their great ancestors. This heritage was
And when Tālūt set out with the forces, he said: ‘Surely, Allah will try you with a river. So he who drinks therefrom is not of me; and he who tastes it not is assuredly of me, except him who takes a handful of water with his hand.’ But they drank of it, except a few of them. And when they crossed it—he and those who believed along with him—they said: ‘We have no power today against Jālūt and his forces.’ But those who knew for certain that they would one day meet Allah said: ‘How many a small party has triumphed over a large party by Allah’s command! And Allah is with the steadfast.’

256. Important Words:

- نهر (nahr) (river). The verb نَهْرَ (nahr) means, it flowed with force. They say نَهْرَ الْدِّمَ (nahar al-dim) i.e. the blood poured forth with force. نَهْرَ الْدِّمَ (nahar al-dim) means, the water poured forth in the land and cut out a channel for itself. النَّهْرُ (al-nahr) means, a body of flowing water, i.e., stream or river; channel through which such water flows. النَّهْرُ (al-nahr) means, (1) plenty and abundance; (2) a river channel; (3) a river (Aqrab).

- جَنَوُد (jarnud) (forces) is the plural of جَنَوُد (jarnud). They say جَنَوُد (jarnud), i.e. he collected or gathered together his forces. جَنَوُد (jarnud) means, a force or an army; helpers (Aqrab).

- جَالِلُ (jallul) is derived from جَالِلُ (jallul) i.e., he ran about without stopping. They say جَالِلُ (jallul), i.e., the horse galloped about in the field, sometimes going this way and sometimes that way. جَالِلُ (jallul) means, the people drew back and then made a joint onslaught. جَالِلُ (jallul) means, they assailed or assaulted one another in battle, etc. (Aqrab & Taj). Thus جَالِلُ (jallul) is an attributive name meaning, a person or a people who is unruly and moves about attacking and assaulting others. In the Bible the parallel name is Goliath (1 Sam. 17: 4) which means, “running, ravaging and destroying spirits” or “a leader or a giant” (Enc. Bib. and Jew, 318.

similar to the one to which reference has been made in the words, that (he) may be heir to me and to the House of Jacob (19: 7). Evidently, it is not a material heritage but a spiritual and moral heritage that is mentioned in this verse. Similarly, the followers of Gideon were imbued with a spiritual and moral بَقِيَّة (bqiyah) i.e. such noble attributes of Moses and Aaron and their descendants as God had endowed them with. It was a sign that it was God Who had set up Gideon as king over the tribes of Israel so that he might protect them against the ravages of their enemy and breathe into them a martial spirit, a work which saw its consummation in the days of David.
251. And when they issued forth to encounter Jálút and his forces, they said: 'O our Lord, pour forth steadfastness upon us, and make our steps firm, and help us against the disbelieving people.'

Enc. The Bible uses the name about one individual but really the word signifies a party of ruthless freebooters, though it may also be applied to certain individuals symbolizing the characteristics of the party. The Quran appears to have used it in both these senses in the verses under comment.

Commentary:
Self-control and discipline are the key to most successes, and possession of these qualities is necessary successfully to meet God's trials. The present verse speaks of one such trial. The exception of a handful of water was made with a twofold purpose: (1) to afford the marching force an essential physical relief by permitting them to moisten their parched throats, but at the same time to prevent them from drinking freely, which would have damped their spirits and made them negligent of the enemy; and (2) to make the trial all the more tantalizing, for in many cases it is easier to withhold from a thing altogether than to use it in a strictly limited measure. The Bible mentions the incident in Judg. 7:5-6.

The concluding clause, i.e., how many a small party has triumphed over a large party by Allah's command, contains a mighty lesson of hope for the righteous. When God wills a thing, numbers do not matter. The truth of this statement has been borne out by history in all ages.

The Jálút spoken of in this verse does not signify a person but a people, while the word جَوْرُود (forces) points to the helpers and associates of these people. The Bible refers to Jálút under the name of Midianites who pillaged and harassed the Israelites and destroyed their land for several years (Judg. 6:1-6). The Amalekites and all the eastern tribes assisted the Midianites in their raids (Judg. 6:3) and formed "the forces" referred to in the verse.

257. Commentary:
The trial by water referred to in the preceding verse and the subsequent exhortation mentioned in the concluding clause of that verse seem to have filled the Israelites with hope and courage. Consequently their prayer in the verse under comment does not betray a defeatist tendency as heretofore shown by them, but a buoyant spirit of hope and good cheer.
252. So they routed them by the command of Allah; and David slew Jālūt, and Allah gave him sovereignty and wisdom, and taught him of what He pleased. And had it not been for Allah's repelling men, some of them by the others, the earth would have become filled with disorder. But Allah is Munificent to all peoples.  

253. These are the Signs of Allah; We recite them unto thee with truth. Surely, thou art one of the Messengers.

258. Commentary:

Ṭālūt or Gideon was able to defeat Ṣālūt or the Midianites and curb their rising spirits, but their crushing defeat to which the verse refers as the killing of Jālūt came in the time of David about two hundred years afterwards. This is why, whereas the defeat of Jālūt by Ṣālūt has been spoken of by the Quran as i.e. routing, the complete crushing of their power has been referred to by the word i.e. killing. The Bible speaks of the man defeated by David as Goliath (1. Sam. 17:4), which is similar to Jālūt. Probably the attributive name given by the Quran to the people was also borne by their leader in the time of David.

The last clause of the verse, i.e., _and had it not been for Allah's repelling men, some of them by the others, the earth would have become filled with disorder_, gives in a nutshell the whole philosophy of all wars of truth and justice. War should be resorted to only as a means of checking disorder and restoring peace, and not for creating disorder and breaking peace. The clause also serves as a criterion between Muslims and their adversaries and beautifully points to the party destined for final victory in the struggle.

259. Commentary:

The story of Ṣālūt, Jālūt and David has been fittingly concluded by God with the verse under comment to point out that these incidents have been referred to by the Quran not by way of telling a story but as divine Signs in order to hint that the Prophet of Islam, being also a Messenger of God, is sure to receive at least the same help and succour as was received by His Messengers of yore.