

Quran

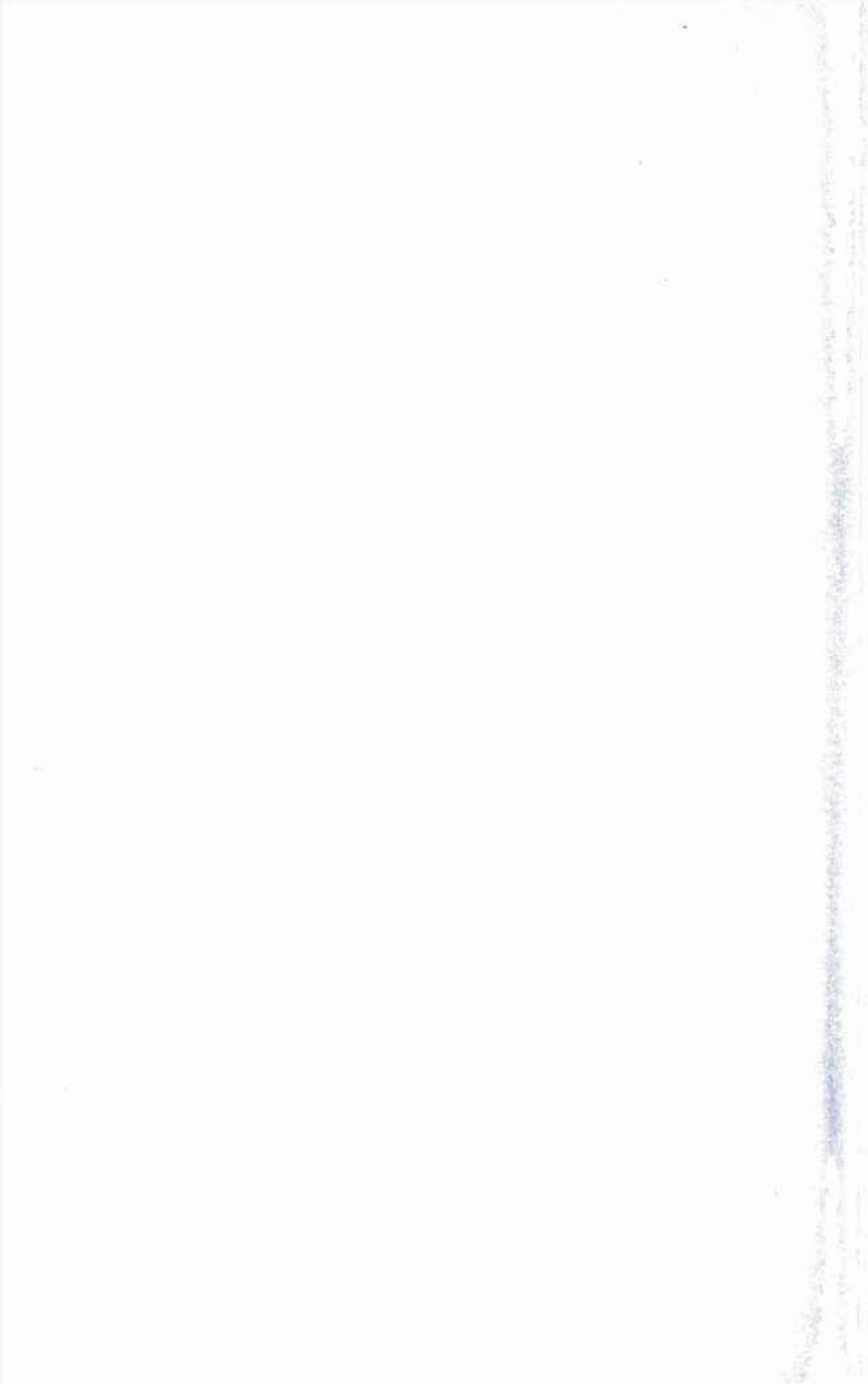
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

VOL. 2 - PART 3 & 4

Translation & Commentary by:

DR. MOHSIN NAQVI

Islamic Orientation Publications
Karachi



with best
wishes and
for Aqsa Maledi
Pamoussouli

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Quran

A COMPARATIVE STUDY PARTS 3 & 4

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Translation and Commentary
By

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LAMENTATION

Some flowers have long lasting fragrance. Ever fresh and charming odor of Mohammad Jummani will never die, since those who live in memory, reside in heart and share our psyche can never be faded out of life. Mohammad Jummani "is" such an "event" of our lives. He will remain in our minds and souls until our last breath.

Please recite **FATEHA** for our beloved Mohammad Jummani.

With Love:

Dr. Mohsin Naqvi.
Ali Raza Alladin.

Ali Asghar Allibhoy
Altaf Nazim.

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FROM THE DEPTH OF MY HEART:

Thanks to Allah who gave me the courage to complete, successfully, the first volume of the comparative study of Quran, which comprises over the commentary of the first two parts. Now, by the Grace of Allah I am carrying on with the second volume of "**Quran: A comparative Study**". I am grateful to all those who are helping me in completion of my projects, specially, the project of the study of Quran. My heartiest love and affections are due for Brothers **Altaf Nazim, Ali Raza Alladin and Mazhar Jummani**, who cordially agreed to patronize this project for one more year. My elder brother, **Ali Asghar Allibhoy** and his wife **Mehar Bhabi** deserve my special gratitude for holding my hands during my "**journey through Quran.**"

My special gratitudes for Brother **Hussain Farishta**, and his beloved son, **Abbas Farishta** who took the responsibility of printing this volume for promotion of Divine Book.

My niece, **Lanika Chinoy**, made its first proofreading, thereafter, **Ali Bhoy** himself completed this difficult task, despite his serious health problems. I cannot express my feelings for both of them in words.

Dr. Mohsin Naqvi

Raleigh. N.C.
U.S.A.

17th October, 2002

*IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT,
THE EVER MERCIFUL.*

PROLOGUE

The translation and interpretation of Quran has been a noble task of the scholars, not only inside but also outside of Islam, since the time of its revelation to Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). "It can safely be said that the textual tradition of The Quran is much firmer and more uniform than that of the New Testament," says Encyclopedia Britannica. [22. 9. 15th edition] In the following lines, I would like to briefly discuss the patterns of interpretation of Quran in Muslim tradition, as well as, the tradition of scholarship in non-Muslims.

ISLAMIC TRADITION

Muslim tradition of the interpretation of Quran is very rich and cannot be discussed in detail in a brief treatise like this, which is aimed at providing only the basic facts to the reader.

The interpretation of Quran is called, in Islamic literature, *al-Tafseer*, or *al-Taweel*. However, there is a difference in the literal meaning of these two words, but both have been used as synonym to each other. The basic theme of the scholars has been to unveil and describe the meanings of Quran by using different methods. We can classify the commentaries of Quran, in Muslim tradition, as described in the following lines.

TAFSEER BIL MA'THUR

It means interpretation of Quran in the light of the traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and his Ahlal Bayt (A.S). In Sunni schools of thought, the sayings and practices of the companions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) have equal value regarding the explanation of Quran. According to Islam, no one has the right to explain or interpret The Quran without the help of "correct and authentic" traditions of Holy

Infallibles (A.S). Muslim scholars have taken great pain in compilation and evaluation of these traditions. Tafseer Qummi, Tafseer Ayashi, Tafseer al-Burhan by Hashim Bahrani, Tafseer Noor al-Thaqlain by Abd Ali bin Juma Hawaizi are the best examples. Allama Abu Jafar Tabari has collected the relevant traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and his companions in his voluminous commentary "Jamay al-Bayan." Tafsir Ibn Kathir is considered as the best abridgment of Tafsir Tabari. Allama Sayuti has compiled al-Durr al-Manthur, which contains all kinds of traditions.

LITERARY AND LINGUISTIC APPROACH

Quran is a divine book and its language is considered superior to all existing literature of Arabic language. Its literary standard has been indisputable through out the history. Sheikh Abu Jafar Toosi has explained, in al-Tibyan, the text of Quran from this aspect. Al-Kash'shaf of Allama Zemakhshari is one of the best books discussing the literary aspect of Quran. Tafseer Jalalain and Tafseer Baidawi are essential to know the basic meaning of the words of Quran.

SCHOLASTIC COMMENTARIES

The translations of the books of Greek Philosophy, in late Umayyad and early Abbasid period, deeply influenced the Muslim thought of that era and its semantic impact can still be felt in our days. Philosophical and scholastic discussions occupied a prominent place in commentaries of Holy Quran as well. The best example of such an approach is "Mafatih al-Ghaib" by Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi. Manhaj al-Sadeqin and Tafseer Abul Futuh Razi are also famous in this regard. The commentaries by Mullah Sadra Shirazi and Allamah Ali Hairi also deal with the same subject.

MYSTIC AND ESOTERIC APPROACH

Sufis or mystics and sages have paid special attention on

deriving the esoteric meaning from the phrases of Quran. Quran is rich in ethical and esoteric teachings, which guide the people for obtaining moral excellence and forging relationship with the 'upper world'. Khwaja Abdullah Ansari [Kashf al-Israr] has written the masterpiece of esoteric approach to Quran. Rooh al-Maani by Allama Aloosi and Rooh al-Bayan by Allama Ismail Haqqi are also good examples of esoteric approach.

COMPREHENSIVE COMMENTARIES

There are some other commentators, who have dealt with all the basic aspects of Quran. For example, Allama Tabrasi, in Majmaul Bayan, tried to approach the holy book from various angles. I will also mention Tafseer Qurtabi, which is one of the best and comprehensive commentaries of Quran. Of the latter period, Tafseer Manhaj al-Sadeqin by Mullah Fateh Allah Kashani, al-Mizan, by Allama Tabatabai, Tafseer Namoonah by Ayatullah Nasir Makarim Shirazi, Fi Zilal al-Quran by Syed Qutub and a remarkable Tafseer by Allama Mustufa Maraghi are worth reading.

SPECIAL COMMENTARIES

I would specially mention those Muslim scholars who spent their lives in seeking "the logical and linguistic" harmony among the chapters and phrases of Quran. In my opinion, Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi was the first scholar who emphasized on realizing this particular aspect of Quran. Some other scholars also adopted the same approach such as Abu Jafar Ahmed bin Ibrahim al-Zubair al-Andulusi (d. 807 A.H) wrote "al-Burhan fi Munasibat Tartib Suar al-Quran." Nazm al-Durar is one of the most popular books among the scholars of Quran, from this point of view. No doubt, it is a marvelous book by Imam Burhan al-Din Ibrahim Bin Omar al-Buqaa'I (d. 885 A.H). Tafseer Abu Saood is also a reputable commentary with the same approach. Allama Hamèed al-Din Farahi has laid great emphasis on this point. His books, Nizam al-Quran, Mufradat al-Quran, Dalayl al-Nizam

are worth mentioning in this regard. Recently, Dr. Mohammad Inaytullah Asad Subhani has written a good book on the subject namely, *al-Burhan fi Nizam al-Quran*.

SHORT COMMENTARIES

There are a number of short commentaries on Quran, in Arabic, Persian, Urdu and English languages. However, I would like to mention here only two commentaries. (1) *al-Tafseer al-Kashif* by Ayatullah Jawwad Maghniah and (2) *Safwat al-Tafasir* by Mohammad Ali Sabooni. Both the commentaries are good and comprehensive.

STUDIES BY NON-MUSLIMS

Quran has attracted the attention and research of non-Muslims also. The genesis of their efforts can be traced back to the second quarter of twelfth century when Peter the Venerable, Abbot of Cluncky, visited Toledo. He became concerned of 'whole problem of Islam'. To him Islam and Muslims were a problem and it was necessary for him to sort out the root cause of this problem, i.e., "The Quran." Peter asked a group of scholars to produce a series of works for encountering Islam. One of its members, Robert of Ketton, translated The Quran into Latin in July 1143. Other works, which came out in the following two or three centuries were not serious scholarly efforts, even some of them may be called "scurrilous and pornographic."

First half of sixteenth century witnessed a big change in the form of Renaissance, invention of printing press and advance of Ottoman Turks into Europe. During this period appeared some important works on Islam, e.g., in year 1530 the first Arabic text was published in Venice and Arabic text with Latin translation of Robert of Ketton was produced at Bale in 1543. The candle of interest in Islam was lighting in curious hearts, which resulted in the production of first English translation of Quran. It was a Scotsman, Alexander Ross, who earned the credit for first English

translation in 1649. He was the author of another book on comparative study of religion in which he relied on the French translation of Holy Quran and not on Arabic Text. In 1698, at Padua, Ludovici Marraci, an Italian cleric, presented the Arabic Text of Quran based on a number of manuscripts, along with a careful Latin translation. It is believed that Marraci spent forty precious years of his life for careful study of the Quran. George Sale contributed an English translation of Quran in 1734 and added a "Preliminary Discourse on Islam" to his translation. This work is based on famous Muslim commentary *Anwar al-Tanzil wa Esrar al-Tawil* by Baidawi. Sale's work is considered valuable until our time. No one can ignore the name of Gustav Flugel whose scholarship of Quran produced the Arabic Text of Quran. Latter on, this translation was revised by Gustav Redslob.

Subsequent works appeared by those who were keen researchers of the life of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). Gustav Weil tried to write the historical account of the life of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W), followed by his book on Quran "Historische-Kritische Einleitung in den Koran." [Beilefeld, 1844, second edition, 1878] Weil's book on the life of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) is based on poor sources, but his work on Quran has its own style.

Weil's two successors got fame and reputation. Aloys Sprenger and William Muir. They both spent a considerable time in India and came across with better and older sources of the life of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). Sprenger's book *Das Leben und die Leher des Mohammad* came out in 1861 from Berlin. The book was in three volumes and first 36 pages of the third part were devoted to the discussion on Quran and its compilation. William Muir followed the footprints of Sprenger, but laid more emphasis on determining the chronological order of the Holy Book. He expressed his results in his essay on the "sources for the biography of

Mahomet", which was included in his four volume *Life of Mahomet* (London, 1858-61). Later on, Muir discussed this matter fully in his book *The Coran, its composition and teaching; and the testimony it bears to the Holy Scriptures* (London, 1878). Famous Indian Muslim scholar, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan wrote a rejoinder to Muir's life of Mohamet, wherein he tried to address all the issues, which were taken up by Muir. Undoubtedly it is a good book for removing the objections of Orientalists.

In 1857, Parisian Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Letters, announced a contest of writing a monograph on the 'critical history of the text of the Coran'. Aloy Sprenger, Italian Michael Amari and a young German scholar Theodore Noldeke participated in the contest and Noldeke won the competition. Noldeke had already published a Latin disquisition on the origin and composition of Quran in 1856. The augmented version of this prize-winning book "Geschichte des Qorans" was published at Gottingen in 1860. His pupil, Friedrich Schwally, was the editor of the first two volumes of Noldeke's work, which came out in 1909 and 1919 respectively. Schwally died in Feb 1919. His successor, Gotthelf Bergstrasser, took up the task of completing the editing work. He failed to complete the task in his life and died in 1933.

Otto Pretzel completed the work in 1938. Noldeke's book is still a book of reference among the Western Scholars and researchers. He has also devoted first thirty pages of *Neuse Beitrage zur semitischen sprachwissenschaft* (Strauss berg, 1910) to the study of Quran.

I will like to mention some other works on Quran, like Hartwig Hirschfeld' book *New researches into the composition and Exegesis of the Qoran* and Hubert Grimme's works who tried to pursue independent lines, but failed to do so due to lack of expertise. Josef Horovitz studied the

narrative part of The Quran in his book 'Koranische Untersuchungen (Berlin, 1926). He has also discussed the meaning and history of 'proper names' used in Quran. Arthur Jeffery's *Foreign vocabulary of Quran* is considered one of the best books on the subject. Jeffery's other important book is "Materials for the study of the text of Quran." Ignaz Goldziher delivered some lectures on Islam and Quran, which were published under the name "Die Richtungen der islamischen Koran auslegung," from Leiden, 1920. It is an outstanding book in its field.

The next important name to be mentioned is Richard Bell, who devoted a good part of his life for studying Quran for his own set purposes. He expressed his views in his first book *The Origin of Islam in its Christian environment* (London, 1926). His two other important books on Quran are. (a) *The Quran: translation with a critical arrangement of seraphs*, 2 volumes, Edinburgh, 1937-39; and (b) *Introduction to The Quran*. Edinburgh, 1953. This important work was revised; later on, by Montgomery Watt and is easily available. Regis Blachere has written two important books namely, *Le Probleme de Mahomet* (Paris, 1952) and *Le Coran. traduction selon un essai de reclassement des sourates* (1947-52), in three volumes. Rudi Paret's contribution to the research of Quran is also worth studying. His *Mohammed und der Koran, Der Koran als Geschechtsquelle* (article published in *Der Islam*, 1961, 24-42), German translation of Quran, along with comparative study of its terms and words; as they appear in the text of Quran, are important to be noted here.

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

A number of Muslim and non-Muslim scholars have rendered the Quran in English language and the list is very long. However, I will mention some important translations. The translations by J.M. Rodwell (1864) and E.H. Palmer (1880) were thought as 'good works'. Marmaduke Pickthal,

came out with a new translation (London, 1930), which was authenticated by the authorities in Cairo. A good English translation is included in Penguin Classics by an Iraqi Muslim, N.J.Dawood. (1956). This translation has been revised by some Kuwaiti Scholars and has been published from different countries. The translation is very plain and expressive for the common English knowing people. In my opinion, Arthur Arberry's *The Koran* is one of the best translations available in English. Some other translations by Mohammad Sarwer, H.M. Shakir, Abdullah Yousuf Ali, Hashim Amir Ali, T.B. Irving, S.V.Mir Ahmed Ali, Mohammad Asad, Abdul Majid Daryabadi, Taqi-ud-Din Hilali and Muhsin Ali, Lal Mohammad Chawla and Prof. Ahmad Ali are commonly accepted versions.

I would like to write a few words about the translation of Holy Quran by Abdullah Yousuf Ali, which has been published along with the explanatory notes by the learned scholar. This is the best translation of Holy Quran available in English. The learned scholar has tried his best to maintain the force and meaning of Arabic language. At some occasions, very few in numbers, he could not express the Arabic Idioms in Idiomatic English. Its marginal notes are research oriented and the writer has avoided unnecessary information. No doubt, it is an excellent work.

Some Ahmadis have also translated the Muslim's Holy Book into English. I will mention only two important works. (1) Translation of Quran by Mohammad Ali Lahori and (2) Translation of Quran by Muhammad Zafarullah Khan. The former one is a good and industrious work, but explanatory notes have been written in specific perspective of Qadyani School of thought. The translation by Zafarullah Khan is not a good one but the translator has rendered the legal verses in a better way.

DR. MOHSIN NAQVIS

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U.S.A.

PART THREE THESE PROPHETS

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ م
مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ
وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَيَّدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ
الْقُدُسِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلَ الَّذِينَ مِن
بَعْدِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَلَكِن
اِخْتَلَفُوا فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ آمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ كَفَرَ وَلَوْ
شَاءَ اللَّهُ مَا اقْتَتَلُوا وَلَكِنِ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ

(253) The group of Messengers, however, we have excelled some of them over others; among them are those to whom Allah spoke directly and elevated some of them to the highest degrees; and bestowed on Jesus, son of Mary, clear miracles and we supported him with the Holy Spirit. Had God wished for those who followed them, they would have not battled each other after receiving the clear proofs. However, they differed from each other; there are those who attained to believe and those who rejected. If God wished, he would have prevented them combating each other, but He acts according to His own wish.

This verse is one of the difficult verses of Quran because Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has been quoted as saying "do not prefer

me over other prophets.” [Bukhari. 1: 325. Noor Mohammad Tijarat Kutub Pakistan, Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 261]

This verse of Quran is about the excellence of some prophets of Allah, in all respects, over the other prophets. Three great prophets have been mentioned here by their exclusive attributes: (a) Moses, to whom Allah addressed directly on Mount Sinai, (also see: 7: 14) (b) Jesus, to whom Allah gave some miraculous powers like healing of some incurable diseases and bringing the dead to life, by the writ of Allah. He was given the support of Holy Spirit also, (3: 49, 5: 110) (c) and Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). Allah has not mentioned the “degree or level of his excellence” because it is not easily comprehensible to normal human beings.

Scholars have tried to construe the traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) in which he has asked the people not to give him preference over the other prophets. [Umdatul Qari. 12: 251, al-Muniryah Egypt, Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 261-263] In my opinion, the negation of preference is related to the essence of Prophethood in which every prophet has a share. However, as far as the matter of superiority of one prophet over the other is concerned it is beyond doubt. No doubt, our Prophet Mohammad (S.A.A.W) was the best of prophets and he stood distinguished from all other prophets of Allah, not only in personality but also in all other aspects of preference and esteem. Ibn Abbas has rightly said that Allah has given the Prophet excellence not only over the other prophets but also on heavenly creatures. Someone inquired from him about the evidence for his support. He replied: About heavenly creatures Allah has said: One who would say that he himself is a god other than Him, we would give him the hell as reward, on this pattern we recompense the unjust ones (21: 29), while concerning the holy prophet Allah has said: I gave you a clear victory and Allah has covered your mistakes of the past and the future (48: 1). On

hearing this argument, some people asked him to explain Holy Prophet's superiority over other apostles. Ibn Abbas replied in these words: Allah has declared in The Quran that "we have never appointed any prophet but he spoke to the people in their own vernacular, so that he can clarify the message for the people (14: 4), while about the Holy Prophet Allah has said: We have not appointed you but for the whole mankind (34: 28). [Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 263].

It will not be out of place to mention here some of his special characteristics as a prophet: (a) He is the Prophet for mankind [34: 28]. (b) He is mercy over the whole mankind [21: 107]. (c) He is the last and the final prophet of Allah [33: 40]. (d) Quran, the last book of Allah was revealed on him, which is a miracle by itself and will remain unchanged [5: 48, 16: 89, 15: 9 and 17: 88]. (e) He was endowed with a *DEEN*, which is not only the most comprehensive code of life but provides us with salvation of this world and also the world to come. [30: 43] Allama Zenakh'shafi has expressed the merit of Holy Prophet in these words: Here Allah is speaking about Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) because he has been given excellence over other Prophets. He was given so many signs, which were not given to any other Prophet. These miracles have been counted as more than one thousand. If he would not have been given any other sign except The Quran it would have been sufficient for proving his superiority over the others, because there is no trace of any miracle of any prophet, but here is Quran, the miracle of Prophet of Islam, which exists until our days and will remain until the last moment of the world. [Tafseer al-Kash'shaf, 1: 293] Also see Rooh al-Maani, 2: 4, Tafseer Kabir, 2:]

According to some scholars, the tone of this verse is very general and it encompasses almost all the prophets of Quran such as Noah: 37. 79; Abraham: 2. 124 and 26. 84; Idris: 19. 57; Joseph: 12. 76; and David: 4. 163.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ
 قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خُلَّةٌ وَلَا شَفَاعَةٌ
 وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٥٤﴾

(254) Believers, spend out of what we have given to you, before the coming of the day on which there will be no bargain, neither the friendship will be fruitful, nor the intercession will be available. Surely, the disbelievers are the unjust.

Allah has repeatedly asked the people to spend out of what they have been provided by Him. This is one of the attributes of Believers (2: 3). Financial sacrifice in the name of Allah brings the people close and near to God (9: 99). Allah has appreciated those who have been made able to contribute in His cause and for his sake. (16: 75-76)

AYATUL KURSI

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا

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

(255) Allah, there is no deity but He, the ever living and ever lasting, neither slumber nor doze gets over Him. He is the owner of whatever exists in the heavens and the earth.

Is there any one who can make an intercession with Him without His permission? He knows what is in front of them and what they have left behind them, but they did not encompass even a bit of His knowledge, except what He himself wished. His control expands over the heavens and the earth and He is not fatigued of their protection. He is The High and The Great.

This famous and comprehensive verse of Quran is known as AYAT AL- KURSI, or the Verse of the Seat.

In the traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) we find a lot of praise for this particular verse of Quran. It is reported that this verse is the “most dignified verse in whole Quran” [Ibn Kathir, 1 /3: 4, Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 286, Kash’shaf, 1: 298, Rooh al-Maani, 2: 17 quote from Musnad Ahmad and Sahih Muslim, Tafseer Kabir, 3: 5, printed in Multan, all references are from this print]

According to some traditions, the “most grand name of Allah” is in this verse of Quran. [Ibn Kathir and other above mentioned books]

Allama Qurtabi says that the name and pronouns pointing to Allah have been repeated 18 times in this single verse. *Al-hay* is the name by which prophet Jesus used to bring the dead to life. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 271]

Now I will try to explain the meanings of the phrases and words of this verse.

Allah o la elaha illa hoa: Allah is the personal name of God used in Quran, traditions of Holy Prophet and entire Islamic literature. Islam categorically rejects the idea of more than one deity in the universe. In the sight of Allah, only He is worthy of

worship and reverence.

Al- Hayy al- Qayyoom: These are two very prominent attributes of Allah, mentioned in The Quran. These two adjectives contain 'infiniteness' in their roots. This first phrase has also been repeated in the beginning of third chapter of Quran. In 25: 58, we have been instructed to depend on *Hayy*, who will not die. In addition, in 40: 65 we are told that "He is *Hayy*, there is no deity but He, so call Him with being sincere to the religion." In chapter 20: 110- 111, Allah says: "He is who knows what is in front of them and what they have left behind, but they do not know about His Information. And that the faces become humble before "the ever living and ever lasting."

Allah says: "Neither slumber, nor doze gets over him." This expression has occurred only once in Quran i.e., in this very verse. According to Arabic Language, *al- senah* is a feeling of drowsiness and doze in head, *al- nuas* is what we feel in our eyes when we are about to sleep and *al- naom* is the real sleep. The phrase simply means, "Allah never becomes oblivious of His creation, He is ever watchful.

Lahoo ma fi al-samawat wa ma fi al-ard. Quran says that whatever exists in this universe is the creation of God and only He is its owner, only He has power over all things. This expression has been repeated in Quran a number of times. In one of the verses of Quran, we read: Everyone in this universe will come to the "compassionate" as the servant. (19: 93) At another occasion, we have been told that "Your Lord is Allah who created the heavens and the earth in "six periods", then He relied on His power, He drew the night as a veil over the day, each seeking the other in rapid succession; He created the sun and the moon and the stars, all are governed by His order. Beware that the "creation and command" both are for Him. Blessed be Allah, the Lord of

the worlds.(7: 54) Compare 20: 8, 30: 26.

Man za allazi yashfao... No one can make intercession with Him, except with the writ of Allah.

In Islamic Theology, “intercession” has special significance. People generally believe that they would get salvation in the end because Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) will ask Allah to forgive his followers, and his request will be granted. I would like to place three important points over here:

1. Intercession will only be for the believers and followers of Islam, not for hypocrites and rejecters of Islam.
2. Allah is not bound to accept the intercession of anyone, for anyone. [al- Mizan. 2: 334]
3. Intercession or *shifa'at* is of two kinds (a) related to creation, (b) and related to man's fate in the life here after. Both of them are, in fact, means to the ultimate goals. Moreover, it is up to Allah to activate any of them or stop the functioning of anything. Compare: 39: 43-44, 53: 26, 21: 28.

Islam is a practical religion and it demands from his followers to practice it in their daily life. Only this is the way for getting success in this life and in the life to come. (Chapter: 103)

He knows everything about us, He knows what we are doing here, and what we have done and what we are going to do in future. However, as far as our knowledge about “what He knows” is concerned, it is very limited; we only know that much what He has shared with us.

The word *kursi* has been interpreted, in this verse, in various

meanings: (1) Kursi or Seat means His Power, by which he is governing the universe. (2) It means Knowledge. (Tafseer Qurtabi, Ibn Kathir and Jalalain) (3) Allama Mohammad Hussain Tabatabai says that *kursi*, in this verse represents both His knowledge and His power over the cosmos. [al- Mizan. 2: 336] In my opinion, this word is more near to power than to the knowledge. The phrase simply means that Allah has dominating power over the heavens and the earth.

Furthermore, He never gets tired of looking after the matters of the universe. It is not a "heavy task" for Him. He is the Highest and the Greatest of all.

Here I would like to quote the famous scientist Stephen Hawking for the kind perusal of the readers: Science seems to have uncovered a set of laws that, within the limits set by the uncertainty principle, tell us how the universe will develop with time, if we know its state at any one time. These laws may have originally been decreed by God, but it appears that he has since left the universe to evolve according to them and does not now intervene in it. But how did he choose the initial state or configuration of the universe? What were the "boundary conditions" at the beginning of time? One possible answer is to say that God chose the initial configuration of the universe for reasons that we cannot hope to understand. This would certainly have been within the power of an omnipotent being.... (A brief History of time, 129)

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ
 مِنَ الْغَيِّ، فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ
 فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا
 وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٦﴾

(256) There is no compulsion in religion; the "right" has

become distinct from the “wrong” opinion. Therefore, who-soever rejects the “forces other than God” and believes in Allah, surely, he holds an “unbreakable rope” and Allah is all hearing, all knowing.

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
أَوْلِيَهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ
إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا
خَالِدُونَ

(257) Allah is the friend of those who believed, He leads them out of darkness to the light; and those who used to reject, their friends are “evil forces”, they tow them from light into darkness, they are the people of fire in which they will live forever.

Islam does not believe in execution of force on the people for bringing them in its folds because it is a ‘religion’ not a political party. Religion is a set of certain beliefs and practices, it must be accepted mentally without any compulsion. This verse of Quran declares that there is no compulsion in our religion. Muslim commentators have quoted six different opinions in order to determine the meaning of this verse:

- (a) It has been abrogated, since in chapter 9: 73 God has given the order to fight with Non Muslims.
- (b) It is about the People of the Book because they pay jizyah.
- (c) Ibn Abbas says that this verse is related to some women from Ansar. These women pledged that if they would have

'surviving children' they would make them Jew. For preventing them from this practice, Allah said 'there is no compulsion regarding religion'. [Manhaj al-Sadeqin, 2: 99]

(d) Ibn Abbas has been reported as saying that there was a man called Haseen, he embraced Islam, but his two sons remained infidels. Haseen came to Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and asked whether he can force his sons to yield to Islam or not? In response to his question, this verse was revealed. [Rooh al-Maani, 2: 20]

(e) In the opinion of some scholars, these words tell us not to blame those who embraced Islam in fear.

(f) Some people of the book were taken prisoners and this verse was revealed about them, that they should not be forced to accept Islam and they have a right to remain in their original religion. [See Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 281 and Jamay al- Bayan by Tabari, 3: 10]

Allama Tabataba'i says: " this verse has not been abrogated or cancelled, as is the opinion of some scholars." [al- Mizan, 2: 344, Abul Futuh Razi, 2: 329]

There is no compulsion regarding the conversion to Islam, because the "guidance stands distinctively against the wrong beliefs". One can clearly see the difference between the two and can accept or reject either of them.

Allah is the friend of believers because he pulls them out of the abyss of ignorance and leads them to the light of knowledge and guidance, while the infidels keep *taghoot* as their friend. This word is from Arabic root *tagha*, which is used for all negative forces of society. These forces misguide the people into the

darkness from enlightened environment. These negative forces and their supporters are destined to go to hell, where they will live forever. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 282 and al- Mizan, 2: 344]

الْمُتَرَالِي الَّذِي حَاجَرَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي
رَبِّهِ أَنْ أَتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ مَرَادُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّي
الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ، قَالَ أَنَا أَحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ ،
قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالشَّمْسِ مِنَ الْمَشْرِقِ
فَأَتِ بِهَا مِنَ الْمَغْرِبِ فَبُهِتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ ، وَ
اللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ٥٥

(258) Do you not see him who made arguments with Abraham about his Lord, because Allah had granted him power? When Abraham told him that my Lord is He who causes life and death; he replied: also, I cause the people to live and die. Abraham said: My Lord brings up the sun from the east, so you bring it from the west. Thereupon, the rejecter was confounded and Allah does not guide the unjust people.

It is commonly believed that the person mentioned here was Nimrod, the king of Chaldea. Quran avoids such details; since it is not the book of history, it is the book of guidance. Quran picks up only that part of the story, which is relevant to guidance. The Bible tells us that Nimrod was a king, but modern scientific research and archaeological findings show that Nimrod was the name of a place and not the name of any ruler in this area.

NIMROD IN THE BIBLE

If we go through the genealogy of both Nimrod and Abraham, as mentioned in the Bible, it becomes clear that we cannot fit

both of them in the same period of history.

According to the Bible (Gen, 9), there were three children of Noah who came out of the ark, i.e., Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The descendants of Ham were Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. The descendants of Cush were Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabteca (Chapter 10). It is further said: Cush became the father of Nimrod, who was the first potentate on earth. He was a mighty hunter by the grace of the Lord; hence the saying, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter by the grace of the Lord." The chief cities of his kingdom were Babylon, Erech and Accad, all of them in the land of Shinar. From that land, he went forth to Asshur, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth-Ir and Caleh, as well as Resen, between Nineveh and Caleh, the latter being the principal city. (Gen, 10)

It means that, according to the Bible, Nimrod was the third generation from Noah.

Abraham was from the line of Shem, the brother of Nimrod's grandfather. According to the Bible Abraham's genealogy goes back as thus: Shem- Arpachshad- Shelah- Eber- Peleg- Reu- Serug- Nahor- Terah- Abraham (Gen, 11). It means that Abraham was in tenth generation after Noah. How can we fit them in the same period of history?

In my opinion, it is useless to determine the name of the king mentioned in this verse, because it has nothing to do with the purpose of guidance. I am convinced that Nimrod was not the king at that time.

Interestingly, the famous research scholar of our time, Ian Wilson, has tried to prove that Abraham belonged to Turkey and not to Ur of Chaldea. Furthermore, he maintained that The Bible was written in Turkey. [The Bible is History. Regnery Publishing Inc. Washington D.C]

In this verse, two important arguments have been given for proving the existence of God: (1) Only Allah can create the things and give them life and (2) Only He is governing the movement of Suns and Stars in the universe. Compare: 3: 27, 6: 95, 10: 31 and 30: 19.

Imam Ali (A.S) has said: All praise is due for the Lord, who cannot be praised by the rhetoricians; His bounties cannot be counted and enumerated; meticulous persons cannot pay homage to Him duly. His glory cannot be captured through far-reaching efforts and deep immersing wisdom. [Nahjul Balagha, Sermon No: 1]

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ

عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا، قَالَ أَنَّى
يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا، فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ
عَامٍ ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ، قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُ، قَالَ لَبِثْتُ يَوْمًا
أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ، قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ
فَانظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَشَرَابِكَ لَمْ يَتَسَنَّهْ، وَانظُرْ
إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَ آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَانظُرْ إِلَى
الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا
فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ، قَالَ أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٥٩﴾

(259) Or like him who passed by a town whose roofs had caved in and remarked: How Allah would bring it back to life after its death? Allah made him as dead for one hundred years and then resurrected him and asked: How long have you tarried? He said: One day or even part of a day. Allah said: No, but you have tarried for hundred years. Look at your food and water, which

have not become stale, but look at your donkey, we will make you a sign for the people and look at the bones, how we get them together and covered it with flesh. When the matter of life after death became clear on him he confessed: I am sure Allah has power to do anything.

This verse is related to the previous one in which prophet Abraham argued against the monarch and said, "My Lord gives life to things and causes them to die." Here in this verse Allah's same power has been elaborated by citing an event from history.

Commentators believe that it happened to Prophet Ezra or Uzair of Banu Israel. However, in the history of Jews there is no trace of this event in the life of Ezra. In view of some scholars, it was prophet Jeremiah or Ezekiel and the city was Jerusalem. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 289, Ibn Kathir, 1: 242 {Sabooni} Jalalain, Tafseer Tabari, 3:20, Ibn Hayyan, al-Bahr al-Muheet, 2: 632, Dar al- fikr, Lebanon, Rooh al-Maani 2: 33, Kash'shaf, 1: 302, Abul Futuh, 3: 343]

A similar miracle was shown to Prophet Ezekiel (Ezek, 37: 1-14), but there is a little difference between both the accounts

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُحْيِي
الْمَوْتَةَ ۗ قَالَ أَوْلَمْ تُؤْمِنُ ۗ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَٰكِن لِّيَطْمَئِنَّ قَلْبِي ۗ قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ
فَصُرْهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ جَبَلٍ
مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا مِّمَّ ۗ ادْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِينَكَ سَعْيًا ۗ وَاعْلَمْ
أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ۝

(260) When Abraham said: Lord, show me how you bring the dead back to life? God asked: Do you not believe? He replied:

I believe, but I wish to see for satisfaction of my heart. Allah told Abraham to take four birds and train them to follow you. Put their pieces on different mountains and then call them, so they will get to you quickly. Beware that Allah is powerful and wise.

Again, this verse is related to God's power of bringing things back to life. In previous verse, Allah showed that how He gives life to men and beasts and in this verse Allah shows how the birds will be resurrected separately, despite their mixed flesh. This event has no trace in the Bible.

Here I would like to elucidate one point, i.e., Abraham (A.S) had no doubt in his heart about the power of Allah, but he wished to see the process with his naked eyes. His question was not concerning the power of Allah but about the process. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 299] Allama Aloosi says that prophet Abraham wished to develop his belief from "Faith by knowledge" to "faith by observation" (Ilm al-Yaqeen to Aain al-Yaqeen). See Rooh al-Maani, 2: 42. The Arabic word Kaifa means 'How', which is used for inquiring about the state and process of anything. The question of Abraham was not about the 'reality' of resurrection; rather it was about the process. [al-Mizan, 2: 367]

There has been a great debate among the philosophers about the nature of knowledge and its relation with experience. I am not going to indulge in this debate, but it would be better to quote here the renowned 20th century philosopher Professor Whitehead: A form of words is true when it has a certain relation to a certain fact. What relation to what fact? I think the fundamental relation is this: a form of words is true if a person who knows the language is led to that form of words when he finds himself in an environment which contains features that are the meanings of those words and these features produce reac-

tions in him sufficiently strong for him to use words which mean them. [Whitehead, Philosophy, 262]

Here in this case the knowledge through 'words' is converting into 'knowledge through experience', it is transformation of knowledge into 'truth'. In the words of Dr. Osman Bakar: The Quran is not a book of science. But it does provide the knowledge of the principles of science, which it always relates to metaphysical and spiritual knowledge. The Quranic injunction to "read in the name of Thy Lord" has been faithfully observed by every generation of Muslims. It has been understood to mean that the acquisition of knowledge, including scientific knowledge should be based on the foundation of our knowledge of God's reality. Islam, in fact, gives legitimacy to a science only if it is originally related to the knowledge of God and of the world of the spirit. Consequently, Islamic science possesses a religious and spiritual character. [Tawheed and Science, 63] According to famous Muslim scientist, Ibn Sina (Avicenna): only that science is true science, which relates knowledge of the world to the knowledge of the Divine Principle. [F. Brunner, Science et realite. P. 13] Here, I would like to refer the readers to the complete works of Syed Murtaza Mutaheri (vol: 7) in which he has discussed ibn Sina's philosophy of knowledge in detail.

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ

أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَتَتْ سَبْعَ
 سَنَابِلٍ فِي كُلِّ سَنَابِلَةٍ مِائَةٌ حَبَّةٌ وَاللَّهُ يُضَعِفُ
 لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ
 أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا
 مَنًّا وَلَا أَذًى ۖ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۖ وَلَا
 خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۝ قَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ

وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ صَدَقَةٍ يَتَّبِعُهَا أَذَىٰ ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 غَنِيٌّ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٦١﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَبْطُلُوا
 صَدَقَاتِكُمْ بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَىٰ كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ
 مَالَهُ رِيقًا وَالنَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
 فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ تُرَابٌ فَأَصَابَهُ
 وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا ۗ لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَىٰ شَيْءٍ
 مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦٢﴾
 وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمُ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ
 اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيْتًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ جَنَّةٍ بِرَبْوَةٍ
 أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا ضَعْفَيْنِ ۗ فَإِن لَّمْ
 يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطُلَّ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٣﴾
 أَيُّودٌ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَ
 أَغْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۗ لَهُ فِيهَا
 مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ ۗ وَأَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَةٌ
 ضِعْفَاءُ ۗ فَاصَابَهَا إِعْصَارٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ ۗ
 كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٤﴾

(261-266) The similitude of those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah is like a plant of grain, which grew up into seven branches, in each branch exist a hundred grains, verily Allah multiplies whatever He wishes and Allah is munificent and all-knowing. (262) Those who spend for the cause of Allah and then they do not taunt or insult, for them is the reward with their Lord. They shall have no fear or grief. (263) Kind words and forgiveness are better than a charity followed by "scolding."

Allah is free of all wants and lenient one. (264) Believers, do not make your charity worthless by taunting and insults, like those who expand their wealth for "showing to people", they do not believe in Allah and the last day. Their example is like a rock, covered with some dust, a shower wipes it off and leaves the rock clean. They shall get nothing from their work and Allah does not guide the unbelievers. (265) And those who spend their money for the pleasure of Allah and reassurance of their souls, they are like a garden at hillside, if it receives shower, its produce doubles, if there is no rain then drizzling is sufficient for it. Allah keeps watch on whatever you do. (266) Any one of you likes to have orchards of dates and grapes, with flowing streams across them, yielding its fruits; then old age approaches him and he has small kids, all of a sudden a blazing whirlwind strikes the garden and burns it fully? In this way, Allah makes his signs clear for you, so that you may contemplate on them. These six verses are very important in their contents. The basic theme is that "whatever we will sow, accordingly we will yield."

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS:

1: Quran repeatedly insists on spending in the name of Allah, for the sake of Allah and for the cause of Allah. It contains all the acts of welfare, charity and protection of Muslim Society. Quran also points out the reward for such a generous acts. In 6: 16 we read: Whosoever will come with one good act, he will be rewarded ten times more. And in this verse [2: 261], seven hundred time rewards has been promised. Compare, 2:245 and 39: 10.

2: The basis of this reward should be that the act would be done sincerely for the sake of Allah, for pleasing Him only and not for the sake of people and their appreciations.

3: One should not repeat or mention the charity or alms he has contributed to any good task, because it hurts the people

and 'the good act' becomes a waste.

4: It is better to show sympathy and express kind words, rather than hurting people by mentioning the charity to them.

5: Those who do well for the sake of people and their appreciations, they are like 'hard rocks', nothing can grow on their surface.

6: Those who do well for the sake of Allah, they have strong potentials.

7: For us, it is better to look for the favor of Allah, because only He can produce the good results of our efforts and only He can convert our endeavors into waste.

8: One should not be proud of his wealth and possessions.

Both the Arabic words *Wabel* and *T'll*, are different in meanings. The former is used here in the sense of heavy rain, while the latter is used for "drizzling." [Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 317, Ibn Kathir, 1: 246 {Sabooni} al-Sahah by Jauhari)

Mua'alla bin Khunais has reported Imam Jafer Sadiq (A.S) as saying: "there are seven rights of a Muslim over the other Muslim, if you will ignore any of them, then you will loose Allah's friendship and these rights are: that you do like for him what you like for yourself, and detest for him what you dislike for yourself and it is the simplest and the easiest of all rights; secondly, you avoid his displeasure, honor his wishes and follow his will; the third right is that you have to support him with your body, wealth, tongue, hands and feet; the fourth one is that be for him like an eye, the guide and the mirror; the fifth right is that do not take food if he is hungry, do not drink water if he is thirsty and do

not wear a good dress if he is not properly dressed; the sixth right is that if you have a servant, but he does not have one, then it is compulsory on you to send your servant for washing his clothes, preparing his food and for making his bed for him; and the seventh right is that you testify his oath, accept his invitation, visit him when he is sick, attend his funeral and if you know that he is in need, then rush for satisfying his need and do not wait for his request to do so, but rush as fast as you can. If you will do all that then you will combine your friendship with his friendship. (Usool al-Kafi, Kitab al- Iman wal Kufr, a Momin's rights on other Momin and the dispensing of duties, H.2)

Under fourth right Imam (A.S) has said: "be for him like an eye, guide and mirror." It means "be vigilant for him, try to see for him what he cannot see, guide him to the right path and to the best of things and situations, try to show him his faults as a mirror shows to you."

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ
 وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا
 الْحَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِأَخِيذِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ
 تُغِيضُوا فِيهِ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَسِيدٌ ۝
 الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُم بِالْفَحْشَاءِ ۚ
 وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُم مَّغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ وَفَضْلًا ۗ وَاللَّهُ
 وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ۝ يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَمَنْ
 يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا
 يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ۝ وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ

مِّن نَّفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذْرَتُمْ مِّن نَّذْرِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
 يَعْلَمُهَا وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِّنْ أَنْصَارٍ ۖ إِنَّ تَبْدُوءَ
 الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعْمًا هِيَ، وَإِنْ تُخْفُوهَا وَتُؤْتُوهَا
 الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ، وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنْكُمْ مِّنْ
 سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ، وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ۖ لَيْسَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ
 وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَا يُفْسِدْهُمُ مَا تَنفِقُونَ
 إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ، وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ
 يُّؤْتِ الْيَتِيمَ وَالْيَتِيمَ وَالْيَتِيمَ وَالْيَتِيمَ وَالْيَتِيمَ
 الَّذِينَ أَحْصَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ
 ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يُحْسِبُهُمُ الْجَاهِلُ أَغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ
 التَّعْقِيفِ، تَعْرِفُهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ، لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ إِحْقَاقًا
 وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ۖ
 الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ سِرًّا وَ
 عَلَانِيَةً فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ، وَلَا خَوْفٌ
 عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۖ

(267- 274) Believers, spend the good portion of what you earn and what we bring out for you from the earth, do not even intend to spend its bad portion, which also you cannot take without closing your eyes. Beware that Allah is 'free of needs' and is praiseworthy. (268) Satan warns you of poverty and asks you to do bad, but Allah promises you of his forgiveness and bounties; Allah is munificent and all knowing. (269) He gives wisdom to whom He wishes, one who has been favored

with wisdom, he has been given 'goodness in plenty'. Only those people realize it that has minds. (270) Whatever you spend or pledge, Allah is aware of it, there would be no supporter for the unjust people. (271) The public charity is good, but if you give it to the needy ones in privacy, it is even better than the former and it will shorten the list of your bad deeds; and Allah knows every act of yours. (272) You cannot make them the guided one, but Allah guides those He wishes; whatever good thing you spend, it is for your sake only and you spend only for the countenance of Allah, what the good things you will spend in the name of Allah, you will be rewarded duly and you will not be treated unjustly. (273) Alms is for those who have been confined to their homes for the sake of Allah and they cannot travel on the earth, those who are ignorant of their condition consider them as "self sufficient", you can recognize them by their apparent condition, they do not ask importunately from people; whatever good you expand, God knows it. (274) Those who spend their wealth openly and secretly and in day or night, for them is the reward with their Lord, they should not feel any fear or regret.

This group of eight verses is again an ardent statement in favor of charity and alms giving. It sheds light on the following important aspects:

1. Only the 'good' portion of one's earning is worthy of spending in the name of Allah. One must avoid giving bad portions in charity.
2. One should not fear poverty after spending in the name of Allah. In fact, Satan fills the mind with such thoughts. One should rely on the promise of Allah.
3. Public charity is appreciative, but it is better to do it secretly.

4. This type of charity shortens the list of our bad deeds.
5. Whatever we spend on poor and needy people, its benefit ultimately comes to us in return.
6. One should only spend for the sake of God, not for any one else.
7. In our society, there may be some persons, who cannot earn their bread due to particular circumstances created by their enemies. They cannot go to people for help, since it hurts their dignity. People think that they are self-sufficient and they do not even think to help them. They are the most deserving people, because they are being punished for their good faith. [al-Mizan, 2: 399] Allama Qurtabi says: "This verse is about the people of *suffa*, which were four hundred in total. They had nothing to eat for several days." [Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 340 Kabir, 3: 67, Namoonah, 2: 206, quote from Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S), Abul Futuh Razi, 2: 384].
8. Ibn Kathir says: "this verse is about *muhajerin*" (Immigrants) [Ibn Kathir, 1: 252]
9. Those who will spend money day and night, openly and secretly, they will receive their rewards from their Lord in the life hereafter.

There are a number of traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and Ahlal Bait (A.S) in which 'spending in the name of Allah, supporting the poor and doing "sadaqat" have been praised. Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: "All the creatures are like the family of Allah, he who does good for His family is really good. [al-Wafi, 3: 99] Islam teaches us to take care of our society. Prophet (S.A.A.W) says: one who wakes up in the morning

and remains oblivious of other Muslims, he is not a Muslim. Likewise, Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has pointed out that **sadaqah** cools down the anger of God. [Kanz al-Ummal, H. No: 16114] Islam has given a wider and more sophisticated meanings to the concept of **sadaqah**. Once Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) said: Every Muslim has to pay **sadaqah**. Someone asked: Who can afford it? Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) said, “removing a harmful thing from the way is also **sadaqah**, prohibiting the wrong doing is also **sadaqah** and replying one’s **salam** is also **sadaqah**. [Behar al-Anwar 75: 50 and 96: 183] Keeping others safe from your harmful act is also **sadaqah** for your own self. [Kanz al-Ummal 16306, Behar al-Anwar 77: 160]

CHARITY IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

The concept of *zedakah* or charity is etymologically related to *zedek* (justice). It is a person’s response to the needs of society and other human beings. In Leviticus, 25: 35 God says: “And if your brother becomes poor and his means fail him with you, then you shall strengthen him, be he a stranger or a settler, he shall live with you.” On the authority of Rabbi Assi (BT BB 9a), the Mamonides claim “We are duty bound to observe the *mizvah of zedekah* more than all other *mizvot ‘aseh’* (positive commandments)” [MT Hil. Matenot Aniyyim 10: 1]. The concept of *zedekah* is so strong that it lies at the heart of all other commands. Judaism also asks the followers to help people out before they are perished. “Do not let him slip down until he falls completely, for then it will be difficult to raise him; rather strengthen him as he begins to fall. To what is this comparable? To a burden upon an ass: while it is still on the ass, one person can hold it and set it in place; if it falls to the earth, even five people cannot set it back”. (Torat Kohanim, Behar, 5:1) See also Deuteronomy 15: 7-11.

In the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, we find very clear commands of alms giving: “give to the man who begs from you. Do not turn your back on the borrower” (Matt, 5: 42). Jesus told one of his believers: “if you seek perfection, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor. You will then have treasure in heaven. (Matt, 19: 21) At one occasion Jesus has been reported as saying: “Sell what you have and give alms. Get purses for yourselves that do not wear out, a never failing treasure with the Lord, which no thief comes near or any moth destroys. (Luke, 12: 33) And finally I would like to quote from 2 Cor, 9: 6-9, which reads “ Let me say this much: He who sows sparingly will reap sparingly and he who sows bountifully will reap bountifully. Everyone must give according to what he has inwardly decided; not sadly, not grudgingly, for God loves a cheerful giver. God can multiply His favors among you so that you may always have enough of everything and even a surplus for good works, as it is written: **He scattered abroad and gave to the poor / his justice endures forever.**

These are the prime principles of almost all the religions, which should be honored by everyone.

WHAT IS HIKMAT?

In verse 269, it is said that: He gives wisdom to the person He wishes. Wisdom or *hikmat* is generally explained as the power of reasoning and understanding of Quran and Islam. (Tafseer Qurtabi, Ibn Kathir, Behr al- Muhit, 2: 683- 684). But in fact it is equal to ‘absolute intellect and understanding’ of all the social and religious matters. *Hikmat* or wisdom has been divided into two major kinds: (a) theoretical: it means to use ones utmost knowledge and intellectual power for understanding the ‘facts’; and (b) practical wisdom: it is subdivided into three branches (1) if it is related to an individual’s development, it is

called Ethics, (2) if it is related to the family's well being and management then it is called 'social wisdom' and if it is concerned with the welfare of the whole society or city or a country then it is called 'political wisdom'. In my opinion, in this verse, this word *hikmat* or wisdom has been used in the last sense of the word, thus relating to the welfare of society and community. [See al- Mizan, 2: 395-96]

Muslim Philosophers have described the *hikmah* differently. According to al-Farabi: wisdom is a theoretical virtue, which refers to the highest form of theoretical knowledge. This is the knowledge of the One and of its relationship with the many. It is the knowledge of the divine essence, attributes and acts. [Fusus al-Madani, 43-44]

I have discussed the meaning of *nazr* and its different types in first volume.

Concerning the solution to social problems, Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: One who sleeps in night with full stomach, but his neighbor remains hungry, he is not a believer. [al-Wafi. 3: 96-99] Application of this single tradition can eliminate the devouring problem of starvation from the world.

Hazrat Abbas bin Abdul Muttalib, the uncle of Prophet (S.A.A.W) said: Goodness must have three attributes, speed, deeming it very small, and secrecy. When a man does well in haste, he causes pleasure in the heart of the beneficiary, when he deems his act as 'small', it becomes magnificent and if it is done in secrecy then it is completely good. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 334]

According to Abdullah Ibn Abbas, the verse 274 was revealed in appreciation of Hazrat Ali (A.S) who once had only four Dirhams and spent them during the whole day openly and se-

cretly, one by one. [Qurtabi, 3: 347, Rooh al-Maani, 2: 78, quote from Musannaf Abd al-Razzaq, Ibn Kathir, 1: 253, quote from Ibn Ubai and Ibn Marduwayh]

One more point is worthy of consideration over here. Allah has used the word *fahsha*, which is from the root word *fa ha sheen*, its meanings are 'immodesty'. Here in this verse (2: 268) it stands for "avoiding the needs of other people", stinginess, parsimony and tightfistedness. Those who do not spend for the welfare of the people, they are 'shameful and discreditable' in the sight of Allah.

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ

الرِّبَا أَلَا يَقْوَمُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا يَقُومُ الَّذِينَ يَتَخَبَّطُهُ
الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا
الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا وَأَحَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا
فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَانْتَهَى فَلَهُ مَا
سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٦٨﴾ يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا
وَيُزِيدُ الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٦٩﴾
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَاتَوَاتُوا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٠﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنْتُمْ
مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧١﴾ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِنَ
اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ

اللَّهُ وَرَسُولِهِ، وَإِنْ تُبْتُمْ فَلَكُمْ رُءُوسُ أَمْوَالِكُمْ
 لَا تَظْلِمُونَ وَلَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٥﴾ وَإِنْ كَانَتْ ذُو
 عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ، وَأَنْ تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ
 لَّكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٦﴾ وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ
 فِيهِ إِلَىٰ اللَّهِ تَبْتَئْتُمْ تَوْقَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ
 وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

(275- 281) Those who keep on taking usury, will come forth behaving like he who had become "crazy" by the touch of Satan, because they say 'there is no difference between trading and usury'. Allah has allowed trading and forbidden usury. One who withdraws from it, after receiving Allah's advice, he can keep the 'interest' he has already earned. And his matter is up to God to decide. But one who will repeat it, they are the men of the fire, they will live there forever. (276) Allah wipes off usury and increases the 'alms giving'; and Allah does not like any impious and sinful people. (277) On the other hand, those who believed and performed good deeds, established their prayers and paid alms levy, for them is reward with their Lord, they would have no fear or regret. (278) Believers, have fear of Allah and give up the rest of interest if you are true believers. (279) Failing this, hear the declaration of war from Allah and his Prophet, if you will repent, then you can take your 'principal amount', suffering no loss and causing loss to none. (280) And if the debtor is in difficulties, let him have respite until things are easier for him, but if you waive it, then it would be better for you, if you realize it. (281) Have fear of the day you will go back to Allah and everyone should be paid what he earned and people will not be dealt with unjustly.

This group of verses is about economic exploitation of a person by another person or a group of people by way of interest and

usury. Some other commandments, concerning this issue, were revealed in 3: 75,130, 4: 161 and 30: 39, which will be explained at their places. This group of verses explicates the following points:

- 1: Usury and trading are not the same things, the former is prohibited and the latter is allowed in Islam.
- 2: Those who take usury and interest will come up on the Day of Judgment like 'crazy' people. They will be recognizable by their mental condition.
- 3: Those who will stop taking usury, after receiving the commands from God, they will be allowed to keep what they have already received and God will decide about them.
- 4: But those who will restart such a heinous practice they will go to hell where they would abide forever.
- 5: God wants to eradicate 'interest and usury' from the society and wishes to create a culture of 'charity and support'. And he does not like those who go against this plan.
- 6: Allah has ordered the people to 'give up' the interest, which the other people owe to them as a token of their belief in Allah.
- 7: Those who will avoid compliance to God, Allah and His Prophet will wage a war against them. Those who repent, they can get their principal amount back.
- 8: If the debtor is in hardship, then he must be given relief until he can pay the loan easily. Quran also obliges to right off the loan and asks the people to consider it a charity.

This is Allah's social system, and to him we have to go back one day. Only those people can translate the fear of God into good deeds that realize the fact that they are accountable before Allah on the Day of Judgment. There are two most strong statements of Quran against two different matters (the war of Allah and his Prophet against some people), one is about keeping the enemies of religion as one's friends and the other one is about the usury and interest.

The Arabic word *riba* is usually translated with 'usury' in English language, but it is not the proper word for covering the whole concept of the word. Usury simply means 'exorbitant or extortionate' interest. While the Arabic word 'riba' means an addition, whether minor or extortionate, over the principal amount, which a lender receives from the debtor. [Mufradat, Taj al- Uroos, Kitab al-fiqh by al-Jaziri, 2: 245]

There are two major kinds of 'riba': (1) *riba bil fadl*, it means selling the quantity of a crop or material against the increased quantity of the same thing, like one kilo gram of wheat against 1 and a ½ kilo gram of wheat. It is strictly forbidden in Islam. (2) *Riba bi al-nasiyah*, or interest on deferred loans: For example: A man in need borrows \$ 100 from a moneylender and pledges that the money will be returned after six months with 2% interest per month, it means \$ 112 will be payable in the end. But, unfortunately, he cannot pay the required amount and goes to the lender for asking some more time. The moneylender gives him 3 more months, but asks to pay 4% per month on the total amount, not on \$100 but on \$112. This type of interest is also forbidden in Islam. [Tafseer Kabir, 2:351, Ibn Qudamah, al- Mughni, 4:27, Tafseer Qurtabi and Ibn Kathir] In both the cases, the lender exploits the 'poor condition' of the borrower. [For further detail, see Fiqh al-Imam Jafar al-Sadiq, 3: 269 and Jamay al-Madarik, 3: 234]

I would like to refer the reader to three important books on this topic: (1) Ayatullah Baqir al- Sadr, *Iqtasaduna*; (2) Abul Aala Maudodi, *The Interest in Islam*; (3) Mufti Mohammad Shafi and Taqi Uthmani, *The problem of Interest*.

There are two conditions, which make a transaction *riba*, in its proper sense: (a) selling of same thing, though with different qualities, against additional quantity; (b) only the weighable things are subject to 'riba'. If the thing is being sold by counting, such as eggs or citrus then there is no harm in selling them with increase.

Exchange of currency of one country with the other one is allowed with the customized increase. [Ayatullah Seestani, *Minhaj al- Salehin*, 2: 71-75] For example, one U.S. \$ can be exchanged for 60 Pakistani Rupees.

As far as the Interest of Modern Banking system is concerned it is also a source of exploitation of the poor by the wealthy class of the society. Allama Tabatabai is also of the opinion that Bank Interest is *riba and haram*. [al- Mizan, 2: 430]

In opinion of some modern scholars, Bank Interest, which a common man gets by depositing his money in 'saving account', does not fall in the category of 'riba' and is, therefore, allowed in Islam. I think it is better for these scholars to review their dictate. Ayatullah Khomeini says that financial and leasing institutions receive certain percentage of interest from the borrowers, this stipulated amount is forbidden or haram. [Tahrir al-Waseelah, 2: 613 and 616]

In these verses, Allah has warned the people that if they will not stop taking 'interest' then they would face 'war' against them from Allah and his Prophet (S.A.A.W). This verse was re-

vealed for deciding a dispute between Banu Amr bin Umair bin Aaof, who had a big claim of interest against Banu Mughirah. When Banu Mughira accepted Islam, they refused to pay the interest to Banu Umair. The matter was brought to Atab bin Usaid, the Governor of Mecca. The Governor sent the matter to the Prophet (S.A.A.W) to decide. At that time, Allah sent down these verses. [Tafseer Tabari, 3: 71] Allama Aloosi says, "The war should be waged against them as it has been ordered against the rebellions." [Rooh al-Maani, 2: 86]

According to Allama Nasir Makarim Shirazi, the Islamic Government has right to eliminate the practice of Usury and Interest by force. [Namoonah, 2: 217, al-Mizan, 2: 423]

The status of usury and interest in Judaism and Christianity will be discussed at 4: 161.

The verse 281 was the last ayat, which was revealed on Holy Prophet, seven days before his death and he himself asked the scribes to place it just after verse 280 of chapter ii. [Tabari, 3:76; Dur Manthur, 1:370; Rooh al-Maani, 3: 55, Tafseer Qurtabi, 3: 375, Ibn Kathir, 1: 259, al-Mizan, 2:423, Namoonah, 2: 218]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا

تَدَايَيْنْتُمْ بِدِينٍ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاكْتُبُوهُ

وَلْيَكْتُبْ بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ ۚ وَلَا يَأْبَ

كَاتِبٌ أَنْ يَكْتُبَ كَمَا عَلَّمَهُ اللَّهُ فَلْيَكْتُبْ ۚ وَلْيُمْلِلِ

الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا يَبْخَسْ

مِنْهُ شَيْئًا ۚ فَإِنْ كَانَ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِ الْحَقُّ سَفِيهًا

أَوْ ضَعِيفًا أَوْ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُ أَنْ يُمِلَّ هُوَ فَلْيُمِلْ
 وَلِيَّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ، وَأُسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ
 رِجَالِكُمْ، فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ
 مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ إِحْدَاهُمَا
 فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَى وَلَا يَأْبَ الشُّهَدَاءُ
 إِذَا مَا دُعُوا وَلَا تَسْعَمُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا
 إِلَىٰ أَجَلِهِمْ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ
 لِلشَّهَادَةِ وَأَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَرْتَابُوا إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ
 تِجَارَةً حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ
 عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهِدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ
 وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلُوا
 فَإِنَّهُ فُسُوقٌ بِكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ
 وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ
 وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا فَرِهْنَ مَقْبُوضَةً فَإِنْ آمَنَ
 بَعْضُكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِنَ أَمَانَتَهُ
 وَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ
 يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ آثَمٌ قَلْبًا وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ۝

(282- 283) Believers, if you give loan to each other for a stipulated time, write it down. Let a person, who can write, to bring it to book for you, justly. The writer would not avoid writing the deed, as God has enabled him to write. That person should dictate the deed who owes the money, keeping fear of God he should not skip anything from the debt deed; if the

borrower is weak minded, or very old, or he cannot make a statement, then his care taker (*wali*) will dictate it with justice. Make two men, from among you, witnesses on it and if 'two' men are not available then 'one man and two women' of your own satisfaction as witnesses. Therefore, if one of them forgets the other one would remind her. Witnesses should not avoid responding if they are called to give evidence. Do not fail to put the debts, whether small or big, in writing, along with its terms of payment. It is a just way in the sight of Allah and good evidence, so that there should be no chance of doubt. In addition, if you make 'hand to hand transaction' with each other, then there is no harm if you do not write it down. However, when you do trade with each other then make witnesses, do not harm the writer or witness, if you will do that it would be considered 'transgression' from your side; have fear of Allah, He teaches all of you and He knows everything. (283) If you are traveling and cannot find a writer, then loan may be given against a thing. If you entrust some thing to another, he must give the 'entrusted thing' back to the owner and have fear of his Lord, do not hide the evidence and one who hides the evidence, is sick in his heart. Allah knows whatever you do. The verse 282 is the biggest verse of Quran and is called the 'verse of debts'.

These verses are very clear and emphasize on writing the debts and trade deeds. It is a safe and lawful way. It is obligatory to pay back the debts that one owes, whether the debt is of small amount or a big one, it makes no difference.

In the same way, Islam asks the people to hand over the things, which someone has entrusted to you. One should not breach the trust of his fellows. In 4: 58, God says: "Allah asks you to handover the 'trusts' to whom they belonged and when you pass judgment among people, do it with justice. Allah advises

you in these words; verily Allah is all hearing and all seeing.” Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: Handover the entrusted things back to them who have entrusted these items to you and do not show dishonesty to those who have been fraudulent to you. [Dar Qutni, Musnad Ahmed, Tafseer Qurtabi, Ibn Kathir and Noor al- Thaqlain]

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ وَاِنْ تُبَدُّوا
 مَا فِيْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ تُخْفَوْهُ يُحٰسِبْكُمْ بِهٖ ۗ اللهُ
 فَيَغْفِرْ لِمَنْ يَّشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَاءُ ۗ وَاللهُ عَلٰى
 كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٥٧﴾

(284) For Allah is whatever exists in the heavens and the earth, whether you express what is in your heart or conceal it, Allah will call you to account for that. Then He will forgive or punish whosoever He wishes. Allah has power over everything.

This verse of Quran is speaking about the power of Allah who has not only created this universe, but only He has control over all things, which exist in the universe.

I would like to quote here some lines from Patrick Glynn’s book “God: the evidence”. He is the associate director and scholar in residence at George Washington University. He says: “This book had its origin in a spiritual awakening — or, to put the situation somewhat less glamorously, after many years of being a philosophical atheist or agnostic, I finally realized that there was in fact a God. A God, a soul, and survival after death. [Page. 1, FORUM, An Imprint of Prima Publishing. USA]

The same writer, after writing a few pages on the ‘anthropic principle’ tells us: “The anthropic principle marked an important turning point in the history of science: the first time a scientific

discovery seemed to take us toward, rather than away from the idea that there is a God. For hundreds of years science had been whittling away at the proposition that the universe was created or designed. Suddenly, scientists came upon a series of facts that seemed to point toward precisely such a conclusion ——— that the universe is the product of intelligence and aim, that in the absence of intelligent organization of a thousand details vast and small, we would not exist. [God: The Evidence, 9]

This verse of Quran also shows that our thoughts are the basis of our actions and deeds, whether we express them or not, we are accountable for them before our Lord. It does not mean that whatever passes quickly in our hearts and minds, that is being put on record, and we will be held responsible for all these thoughts. But we will be held responsible only for those thoughts, which become the basis of our actions in our daily lives. [al- Mizan, 2: 437]

There are some other verses of same insinuation in the Quran, e.g., 2: 225; 2: 283; 17: 36; 24: 9.

أَمِنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ
 إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمِنَ بِاللَّهِ
 وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ
 مِّنْ رُّسُلِهِ تَوَقَّالُوا سَبْعَنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ
 رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا
 وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ
 رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا
 وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ

مِنْ قَبْلِنَا، رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ،
وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا
فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٨٥﴾

(285) The Prophet had believed in whatever was revealed on him from his Lord, as do the men of faith, all of them believed in Allah, His angels, His books and His messengers and they say that we make no difference among the prophets and we accept that what we listened and obeyed; forgive us our Lord and to you is our return. (286) God does not burden anyone beyond his capacity, he will be rewarded for what good he earned and will be punished, equally, for what bad he earned. Our Lord, do not clasp us, if we forget or commit any mistake inadvertently. Our Lord, do not put that much weight on us, as you put upon our predecessors. Our Lord, do not put that much load on us, which we are unable to carry. Pardon us, forgive us and pour your mercy on us; you are our Lord, so help us against the people who do not believe.

These two last verses (chapter 2) are clear in their contents and meanings. It is considered as one of the best supplications, which have been praised in the traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). [Tafseer Namoonah, 2: 233] Mullah Fatehullah Kashani has mentioned that Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) prayed to God in these words during his Meraj and all the angels said Amin in its support. Again, there is a tradition of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) in which he has said: "After each phrase of this supplication, Allah says that I accepted your supplication and answered it." [Manhaj al-Sadeqin, 2: 169]



The House of Imran

Chapter: 3

Introduction:

This is the second biggest chapter of The Quran and it consists of 200 verses. It may be noted here that in the previous chapter (2) the overall discussion was about the Jews and how they distorted the word of God. Their role in the history and God's punishment to them was also described in the last chapter. This third chapter of Quran deals mainly with the Christians, who claim to believe in Jesus, the Christ, but Quran points out that their belief is wrong. They not only made Jesus the Son of God, but also made massive changes in Injil. The Gospels, which are included in the New Testament, were not revealed on Prophet Jesus.

The second important point, discussed in this Surah, is the importance of the help of God in the life of Prophet and the believers. People have been reminded of the Battles of Badr and Uhud, so that they may realize that Allah helps those who devotedly work for His Teachings.

In addition to it, this chapter speaks about the responsibilities of the Muslim Community.

With the mercy of Allah, which dominates over the world, I will try to explain the meanings of this third chapter in the following pages.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT,
THE MERCIFUL.

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ

(1-2) Alif. Lam. Mim. Allah, there is no deity except He, the ever living, the ever lasting.

I have discussed this phrase while explaining "The verse of Seat" (2: 255). Some more discussion will be fruitful over here. The believers are, usually, very curious to know the Grand Name of Allah (*al- Ism al- Azam*), in order to get their desires fulfilled in this world, or to praise Him with it for their own excellence. There are a large number of traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W), the proverbs of Imams (A.S) and the sayings of Scholars and Saints describing the Grand Name of Allah. It is a commonly accepted opinion that the Grand Name is hidden in these two verses of chapter 3 and verse 255 of chapter 2. After a thorough and long research on this point, I have come to the conclusion that ALLAH is His personal and Grand Name. And the rest of the adjectives, which have been used in Quran, are His Attributes. The adjective *al-Rahman* is also, in a sense, the 'grand name' of Allah. I believe that this links up God with the universe. For this universe "the essence of the prophethood of Mohammad" (S.A.A.W), or *al-haqiqat al-Mohammadiyah*", is the Grand Name of Allah, since he is the meaningful link between Allah and the Universe. It has been reported that *Bismillah...* is the nearest phrase to the Grand Name of Allah, which consists only two things: (a) his personal Name, (b) and his mercy. Every one knows that Allah has called Prophet Mohammad (S.A.A.W) "the mercy for the world." In surah al-Anbya.(The Prophets), Allah has said: I send you only as 'mercy for the worlds'. (21: 107)

Since Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) is the 'physical manifestation of Allah's mercy' on this earth, so many times I have seen the power of the result of this explanation.

I would like to make a quote from a sermon of Imam Ali (A.S) in which he has praised Allah in theses words: "Praise be to Allah who lies inside all hidden things and to His presence all the cosmic signs guide. He is prevented to be seen by the onlooker, but no eye can deny Him because of His invisibility; and the

heart, which affirms His existence, cannot perceive Him. He is the most High, nothing is higher than He is. Even though He is so near that nothing can be nearer than he can. His sublimity did not make Him away from His creation, nor the 'nearness' puts them at equal level to Him. He has not made the human wit intimated with His attributes, but He has not prevented them from His 'essential knowledge'. All the signs of 'existence' bear witness over His 'being' so that denying minds may also believe in him. [Nahj al- Balagha, Sermon: 49]

I will ask the readers to compare it with the first 5 chapters of "The Confessions of St. Augustine" and they will apparently feel the difference between Christian and Muslim Theology.

نَزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَ أَنْزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ۚ مِنْ قَبْلُ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَنْزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ
اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ۝

(3-4) He revealed the "book" on you, with truth, which confirms all that they already had and he sent down the Torah and Injil (the Gospel), in the past, for the guidance of people. And he revealed a criterion for 'right and wrong'; surely, for those who refuse to accept the signs of Allah, is a severe torment and Allah is all-powerful and capable of taking revenge.

These two verses speak about the three divine books, Torah, Injil and Quran, which were revealed on prophets Moses, Jesus and Mohammad (A.S) respectively.

Revelation of Torah has been mentioned in Quran 23 times, Zuboor or Psalms twice and Injil four times.

THE MEANINGS OF TORAH AND INJIL

Muslim scholars have said that *Torah* means "the light" as Allah has said in 21: 48, or it is derived from *toriah*, which means hiding something from some people. Since the common people were not allowed to read it, therefore, it was named as *torah*. (Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 5) Allama Tabatabai has said that it is a Hebrew word, which means the law; he also says that Injil is a Greek word, it is also said that it is originally a Persian word, which means 'good tidings'. [al-Mizan, 3:9] Unfortunately, the descriptions of both these great scholars are incorrect.

The earliest beginnings of *Torah* are obscure and, even today; the Hebrew Philologists do not agree upon a definite source of this word. The verbal stem from which it might appear to be derived "*horah*" is believed to be the linguistic back-formation from the normal form *torah*, rather than vice versa. According to some scholars, Accadian word "*tertu*" may be the root of the word *torah*. The Accadian word is used for 'oracle'. In view of some scholars, the Hebrew root *yarah* (casting the arrows for predicting the future) may be its root. When we closely study its usage in different books of Hebrew Scriptures the word is found in plural '*torot*', which is very near to 'law or commandments'. In Leviticus and Numbers, it is used in singular for specific cultic instructions (Lev. 6. 2, Num. 6. 13). In Ezekiel, Haggai and Malachi, the word *torah* has been used in the sense of 'law'. In Wisdom literature and especially in the Book of Proverbs, the word has been used in different senses such as "good counsel" or "discipline"; *torah* may refer to individual's store of learning, the *torah of the wise man* (13: 4) or of a parent (1: 8). Surprisingly, Ben Sira defines the 'wisdom' as *torah* (Ecclesiastes. 24). From the above discussion it might have become clear that the real meanings of the word *Torah* are still to be explored, but this word has been used in the sense of law, command and a piece of wisdom in different

books of the Old Testament.

The book, which was revealed on Prophet Jesus, is named in Quran as 'Injil'. According to Arabic Philologists, this word has been derived from *najl*, which means the 'root, origin and source'. The Quran calls it 'Injil' because, after the distortion of Torah, Injil was the only source of guidance. (Tafseer Qurtabi, Mufradat, Taj al- Uroos) Some other commentators are of the view that Injil is a Greek word and is not derived from any Arabic word, in their opinion its meaning in the Greek language are 'the glad tidings'. But unfortunately there is no such word in Greek language. [Zemakhshari, al- Kash'shaf, 1: 331] There is one more possibility: if it is not an Arabic word, then it may be the Arabic variant of the word *Evangel*, which came in Middle English from Old French *evangel*, in Latin it is *evangelium* and in Greek *euaggelion*, meaning the good news. In my opinion, this explanation is more appropriate than any other. Christians have named the first four books of Greek Scriptures as Gospels. In Old English, it was 'godspel', which means 'good news'. But this word cannot be the mother of Arabic word Injil. These books are called Gospels because their authors were *evangelists*, which mean an enunciator of good news. Commonly, an author dictated to a writing secretary, called an *amanuensis*. Sometimes the author gave the amanuensis greater or lesser freedom in the choice of words. [E.R. Richards, The secretary in the Letters of Paul, Tübingen: Mohr, 1991] The original documents, none of which is extant, go by the term *autographs*, or memoirs. The term Gospel is a latter usage. The earliest manuscripts in possession of modern scholars date from the second century. The very earliest, the Rayland's Fragment of John, dates from about A.D. 135. [A survey of the New Testament, 88] It was believed that Prophet Jesus was himself 'a scripture and word of God'. St. Augustine, in his Confessions speaks in these words:

“ For also among us, in his Christ, has God made heaven and earth, the spiritual and carnal parts of his church” [Book 13, Chapter 12, The Body of Christ, Page 343 Image Books]. Jesus himself was a living scripture; therefore, early Christians did not attempt to compile a Gospel. “In the early years of the church, the message of Christianity was transmitted orally. The oral traditions of apostles would continue to be recited well into the second century. [Jeffery L. Sheler, Is The Bible True? Page 18 and B. Du Toit, Canon of New Testament, The Oxford Companion to The Bible, 103, 1993]. For further reading on Oral Tradition, see H. Riesenfeld, The Gospel Tradition and its beginnings, London 1957, Gerhardson, The Origins of the Gospel tradition, 1979 and Patte D. Structural Exegesis for New Testament Critics, 1990.

I would like to note here that research has convinced the scholars to believe that the first three gospels of the New Testament (synoptic gospels) had a common source, which has been named as “Q” Gospel. The Gospel of Mark is the first book on which the Matthew and Luke based their writings. However, in these two latter books there are some details, which are missing in the Mark. It is certainly believed that there existed another writing as a source of these details. This common source is called “Q,” which is a short form of a German word *quelle*, meaning the source. The Quranic word *Injil* may be representing this ‘source book’, the original book revealed on Prophet Jesus. [Allah knows better] For the explanation of this Mark-Q theory please see, W.R.Farmer, The Synoptic Problem: A critical Analysis, 1976, Robert Gundry, A survey of the New Testament, 96-100]

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَىٰ عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي
 السَّمَاءِ ۗ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ
 يَشَاءُ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٠١﴾

(5-6) Verily, nothing in the earth or heaven is covert from Him. (6) He determines your physiognomy in the wombs as He wishes; there is no divinity but He, the powerful, the Wise.

These verses are about the knowledge and power of Allah. Nothing that exists in the depths of oceans or on the surface of the earth is veiled from Him. Whatever exists in the heavens and other spheres is already in His knowledge because He is the creator of the whole universe. He knows, not only what is developing in the wombs of human beings and animals, but also it is He who determines the physiognomy of the fetus in the uterus. He has power to do that and he shapes the 'beings' in best proportions, because He is wise.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ
 هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخْرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ
 فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ
 الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا
 اللَّهُ ۗ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ ۖ
 كُلٌّ مِّنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا ۚ وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ٥
 رَبَّنَا لَا تَزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ
 لَنَا مِن لَّدُنكَ رَحْمَةً ۚ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ٥

(7-8) He is who revealed the scripture on you, in it are some verses of clear meaning and they are the source-verses of the book, but there are some other verses that depend on the source-verses for their meanings. So those who are sick in heart, they pursue the 'depending' verses for creating mischief and for seeking their hidden meanings. No one knows its real meaning except Allah. In addition, those who are at the level of "certain knowledge" declare: "We believe in the book, the whole

scripture is from our Lord.” No one takes heed of it save those who have wisdom. (8) Lord, do not let our hearts slip, after you have given us the guidance, provide us with your mercy; surely, you are the “bestowing one.”

This is one of the most controversial verses of Quran as per its meanings. Scholars had taken a lot of pain in its explanation. There is an unending debate among the exegetes on the real meanings of two terms “*muhkamat* and *mutashabehat*,” used in this verse. The latter term has been translated as ‘consimilar’ (Daryabadi), *ambiguous* (Arberry, N.J. Dawood) and ‘allegorical’ (Irving, Abdullah Yousuf Ali, Pickthall).

I think that the real sense of the word cannot be comprehended without understanding the real meanings of the word *Um*, meaning the source, the thing on which the others depend, the center point. The mother is named so because she begets the child and the child depends on her.

In this statement God has categorized the verses of Quran into two main types: (a) Ummul Kitab, the source-verses and, (b) Mutashabehat. Keeping in view the meanings of word *um* this second type of verses must be the ‘depending’ ones, depending on the source-verses.

Imam Ali bin Musa Reza (A.S) has said: One who refers the *mutashabeh* to the *muhkam* gets guidance to the right path. Verily some of our traditions are also *mutashabeh*, therefore, refer them to our “clear traditions”; and do not follow the first category or you will go astray. [Aayoon Akhbar al- Reza, 1: 290]

“Ummul Kitab” are the clear statements of Quran while Mutashabehat are those statements, which cannot be explained without referring them to the source-verses. For example 42

Shura: 11 explains 20 Taha: 5, and 6 al- An'aam: 103 explains 65 Al- Qayamah: 23. In the same way, the 'amended' verses depend on 'amending' verses in their explanation. [See Ibn Kathir and al- Mizan]

Allama Murtaza Zabidi, in his famous lexicon, Taj al- Uroos, says: The Muta'shabeh is a word, which is not self-explanatory and no one knows its meanings. It is of two kinds: (1) which is explainable in the light of *muhkam* and, (2) which is ambiguous and cannot be explained. [Taj al- Uroos, 9: 393, Khairiah Egypt] Allama Raghīb Isphahani has described three kinds of *mutashabehat*: (a) we do not have definite knowledge of, like the time of *qiyamat* and, the time at which *dabah al- ard* will come out; (b) one can know its meanings, by one source or other, such as difficult words, words and terms of foreign languages and brief orders; (c) the matters in between these two categories. Those who have firm knowledge may know the actuality of these matters. Prophet (S.A.A.W) prayed for Ali (A.S): O'Allah provide him with the understanding of *deen* and teach him the hidden meanings of the verses. In another tradition, the Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) requested the same, from Allah, for Abdullah ibn Abbas (r.a). (Mufradat al- Quran, 255) There is another type of *mutashabehat*: the statements about the universe and the laws of nature. Science has explained some verses and some other are still awaiting their explanations.

This verse of Quran certainly confines the knowledge of *mutashabehat* within Allah. But it does not mean that no one knows the real sense of these verses. The absolute knowledge of these verses lies with God, but he can bestow this knowledge on some of His chosen people called *al- rasekhoon fil ilm*. It has been reported in the traditions of Ahl al-Bayt (A.S) that such erudite persons are the 12 infallible Imams. [al- Kafi, Kitab al- Hujjah, chapter on *rasekhin fil ilm are imams*, tradition No. 1, 2 and 3]

Someone asked Imam Ali (A.S): Do you receive any sort of 'revelation'? Imam replied, "No, by God, who splits the seed and breezes the air, it is nothing but a gift of the understanding of the Book, which Allah has given to His servant." Offering his comments on this tradition of Imam Ali (A.S) Allama Tabatabai says " this is the best saying, it shows that whatever wonderful knowledge he has imparted with us is based on his knowledge of Quran. [al-Mizan, 3: 71]

Verse 8 is a method for seeking refuge of Allah against the non-guidance and wrong knowledge. Those who ask Allah for knowledge they are provided with it, if they but knew.

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ۝

(9) Lord, surely you will gather humankind, together on the day, which is beyond doubt. Surely, Allah never defiles his promise.

This verse shows the great power of Allah and tells us that He will summon all of us at the Day of Judgment. The concept of accountability changes one's perception of life and the world. It has very deep affect on one's character.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لَنْ تَغْنِي عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ
اللَّهِ شَيْئًا ۗ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ وَقُودُ النَّارِ ۝ كَذَابٍ إِلَىٰ
فِرْعَوْنَ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۗ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا ۗ
فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝
قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتْغْلِبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ
جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَبِئْسَ الْإِهَادُ ۝

(10-12) Those who disbelieved, neither their wealth nor their children will suffice them instead of Allah and they will be the fuel for fire. (11) Their behavior is like the behavior of Pharaoh's people and their predecessors, they belied our signs, and, therefore, Allah clutched at them for their sins and Allah gives the severe torment. (12) Tell those who disbelieved: "you will nearly be subdued and taken towards hell, that is the worst abode.

These verses are about the final fate of those who refuse to believe in the prophets and signs of Allah. Such people usually think that their great wealth and the large family or clan can protect them from the wrath of Allah. Quran repeatedly refutes their speculations. In 8: Anfal. 28, we have been told "your wealth and progeny are nothing but a trial for you." Moreover, in chapter 26 al- Shu'aara, 88, we read: "On the day of judgment neither wealth nor progeny will give any benefit." Also, compare 34: 37 and 57: 20.

The Arabic word *da'b* means behavior and pattern of action. The animals are called *da'abbah* because they keep on wandering on the same pattern. [al-Mizan, 3: 91, Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 22, Kash'shaf, 1: 335] Here, in this verse, this word has been used for denoting the set pattern of unfaithfulness of Banu Israel through out the history. Allah is warning the people that they should incur severe torment of God same as the Pharaoh and his people were inflicted with in the past. (Also, see, 40: 46)

قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ

فِي فِتْنَتَيْنِ التَّقَاتُ فِئَةً تُقَاتِلُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ

وَآخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُمْ مِثْلَيْهِمْ رَأَى الْعَيْنِ

وَاللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصْرِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ

لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿١٠﴾

(13) There was a sign for you when two armies faced each other, one group was fighting in the cause of Allah; and the second group, consisted over the infidels, was seeing the believers double in number with open eyes. And Allah assists those, with His help, whosoever He wishes. This is a lesson for the men of insight.

These verses were revealed at the eve of the battle of Badr; which took place in the second year of Hijra (Jan, 624 A.D). This battle was fought against the Quraysh of Mecca, who rushed to fight the Muslims on assumption that Muslims were going to rob the caravan of Abu Sufyan, which was coming from Syria with 50,000 pieces of gold. When Prophet (S.A.A.W) heard the news of Maccan Army, he asked the believers to prepare for a Holy War for the survival. The opponent army consisted of 1000 best soldiers of Mecca. They had 700 camels and 100 horse riders, all clad in mails. On the other hand, Muslims were only 313 in total. [Muir, William, The Life of Muhammad, 221]. They were ill armed and roughly equipped; most of them belonged to the Ansar. [Robert Payne, The History of Islam, 34]

Everyone can realize that Muslim's victory had seemed to be beyond imagination. At this time, Prophet prayed to Allah very earnestly and his prayers were answered as usual, [Robert Payne, 35]

The verse under consideration tells us that by the special favor of Allah, the Muslim Army appeared to be double in number in the sight of Quraysh. It was a special help, which produced a negative effect on the psychology of Quraysh and, consequently, Muslims won the battle. The detailed account of the battle of Badr will be given in the discussions on relevant verses of chapter eight.

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ

الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ
 مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَ
 الْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا
 وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَبَإِ ﴿١٤﴾ قُلْ أَوْ نَبِّئُكُمْ
 بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذَلِكَ لِّلَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
 جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
 وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
 بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَمَّا
 فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾ الصَّابِرِينَ وَ
 الصَّادِقِينَ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ
 بِالْأَسْحَارِ ﴿١٧﴾

(14-17) The pleasure of women, children, the substantial accumulation of gold and silver, distinguished horses, beasts and the flourishing fields have been made gorgeous for the people, this is the worldly wealth, while the best return lies with God. (15) Ask, should I tell you the thing far better than all these (mentioned in verse 14)? For God fearing people, with their Lord are, gardens with the flowing streams, which is a permanent abode for them and chaste spouses and the contentment from Allah. Allah is watching all His servants. (16) Those who say: Our Lord, we attained to faith, so forgive our sins and protect us from the torment of fire. (17) They are steadfast, truthful, devout people and those who spend in charity and seek pardon of Allah in the mornings.

Some words and their meanings: *Hub* means love and incli-

nation, *Shahwah* means excitement and strong desire, *Qanatir* is the plural of *qintar*, which means accumulated wealth, also it is a measure equal to 50 kg, *muqantarah* is from *qantarah*, which means a bridge or heap of a thing, *zahab* means gold and *fizzah* means silver, *khail* is plural, its singular is *fras*, which means horse, *anaam* is the plural of *naam*, which means camel, it is also used for all beasts.

Islam is the religion of spirituality and ethical values. Its moral system is based on this prime fact that the world and its creatures are not only the creation of Allah but also He is the one and only owner of the whole universe. Man has been created on this earth for obeying the orders of Allah and the universe is a means for accomplishing this task. Those who fail to realize this fact they indulge themselves in its love and this worldly life becomes their ultimate goal. These people mainly focus on enjoying the world and its fascinations besides ignoring the divine law.

These verses also divulge the fact that the things, which God will bestow on the people, in paradise, would be far better than the worldly eye catching allures. It is Satan who exposes the things to humankind so beautifully that they even forget the divine commands. Compare 6: 43 and 8: 48. These worldly attractions are only a test for human beings (18:7).

The favors of paradise are for those whose characteristics have been mentioned here in the verses 16 and 17. The verse 16 deals with "muttaqin" the God fearing people, mentioned in the previous phrase. They pray to God for getting protection against the torment of fire as a reward of their belief. They also request Allah to pardon and forgive their sins and mistakes of the past. One should keep this in mind that 'pardon of sins' does not mean that 'absolved' person must necessarily be freed from the sufferings of hell, because it is not related to 'forgiveness'. It

depends only at the mercy of Allah. Allah says “come to believe in Him, He will forgive your sins and will make you free from a teasing punishment.” (46: 31) In some verses, the ‘freedom from fire’ has been made conditional. In 61: 12, we read: He will forgive your sins and admit you to Gardens beneath which rivers flow and to beautiful mansions in Gardens of eternity: that is indeed the Supreme Triumph.

In verse 17, Allah has mentioned five more attributes of *muttaqin*. The ‘steadfastness’ excels over all other attributes and consists of three kinds: patience of obedience, keeping from sins, mistakes, and resoluteness at the time of crisis. Truthfulness, here, stands for truthfulness about belief in Allah and Islam. Devoutness encompasses the absolute obedience of Allah in all matters of life. And ‘seeking pardon in early morning’ means *tahajjud* or night prayer, which is offered before ‘dawn prayer’. (Compare 73: 19, 76: 29)

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَ
الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا
هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝

(18) Allah bears witness that there is no deity except He and so do the angels and the men of knowledge. He implements justice; there is no god but He, the Powerful and Wise.

In some traditions, it is reported that the Grand Name of Allah is in this verse of Quran and its power is beyond doubt.

In Arabic *shahadah* means to bear witness on behalf of the certain facts and truths. The importance of testimony is related to the greatness of a testifying person or document. In this verse Allah is Himself bearing witness over His own being for ascertaining the people that there is no god but He. Angels also bear

the same along with the men of true knowledge.

The knowledge and the scholars have a special significance in Quran and traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). In Quran, Allah asks the Holy Prophet "say, Lord! Increase me in knowledge" (20: 114) "Can knowledgeable persons ever be equal to ignorant ones?" the Quran asks (39: 9). Quran praises the scholars in these words "Only the knowledgeable persons have the fear of God" (35: 28)

Prophet (S.A.A.W) has ordained the acquisition of knowledge on each Muslim, the men and women. In one of his traditions, the Prophet (S.A.A.W) has asked the people to obtain knowledge even by traveling to far-flung areas. Even in some of his sayings, the Holy Prophet has emphasized on getting knowledge from the infidels. [For all these traditions, please see Allama Ibn Abdul Barr, Jamay Bayan al- Ilm, 1: 7-9; and Behar al- Anwar, 1: 177, 180; 2: 97; 78: 34; Hafiz Munzari, al-Tarhib wa al-Tarheeb, 1: 97; Kanz al-Ummal, 28697-8]

I would like to quote here a few lines from al-Mizan [3: 116]. Allama Tabatabai says: Those who make 'companions' of Allah, they think that these people are intercessors and links between them and God. Quoting polytheists the Quran says: "We do not worship them except for the purpose that they would make us close to God" (39:3). It is the condition of those who secretly take worldly desires obedience to a leader other than Allah, wealth, or children, as His associates. It is not *shirk* in personality, but it is *shirk* in His attributes and works. This kind of 'shirk' is also against the teaching of Allah, as mentioned in 10: 18: They serve, besides Allah, what can hurt them not nor profit them and they say: They are our intercessors with Allah. Say: Do ye indeed inform Allah of something He knows not, in the heavens or on earth? Glory is to Him! And He is far above the partners they ascribe to Him.

إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ۗ
 وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ
 مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ
 بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝ فَإِنْ
 حَاجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسَلَّمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ ۗ
 وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُمِّيِّينَ أَسَلَّمْتُ ۗ
 فَإِنْ أَسَلَّمُوا فَقَدْ اهْتَدَوْا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا
 عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِصِيرٍ بِالْعِبَادِ ۝

ISLAM: THE RELIGION OF GOD

Verses 19 and 20 declare clearly that only Islam is an acceptable religion in the sight of Allah. In these verses Allah says: In the sight of Allah Islam is the only religion and those who were given the book did not differ about it, after receiving the true knowledge, except out of transgression. And anyone who will reject the revelations of Allah should know that Allah is swift in 'bringing to justice'. (20) If they argue with you, say, "I and my followers have bowed our faces before Allah. Say to those who have been given the book and to the Gentiles: Are you going to submit? If they would surrender then they would be guided, if they will turn their faces, then on you is ordained only the preaching. And Allah keeps an eye on His servants.

In these verses of Quran Allah is pronouncing that the only acceptable religion in the sight of Allah is The Islam, which has been sent to you through Prophet Mohammad (S.A.A.W). The meaning of the word *deen*, in this verse, is obedience and faith (Majma al Bayan, 2: 202), and the word *Islam* is used here for 'believing and practicing'. Allama Qurtabi has referred to a tradition of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W)

in which he asks the people of Abd Qais "Do you know what is *iman*? They replied: Allah and His messenger know better. Holy Prophet said: that you bear witness that there is no god but Allah and Mohammad is His Prophet, establish prayer, pay alms levy, fast in the month of Ramadan and that you pay one fifth of your saving. [Qurtabi, 4: 44] Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) says: The supporting pillar of deen is it's understanding. [Behar al-Anwar, 1: 216] In another maxim, he says: One who takes the deen from all of its corners, only he can take the stand about religion. [Kanz al-Ummal, Khutbah: 5612] Imam Ali has given a very strong standard: The essence of deen is opposition to the lusts. [Ghurur al-Hikam] In addition, he has said: There is no life but with deen and refutation of certainties is equal to death. [al-Irshad, 157]

Quran has laid great emphasis on the fact that Islam is not a new religion, but it belongs to the tradition of prophets, right from Adam to Holy Prophet Mohammad (S.A.A.W). This was the religion of prophets Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Patriarchs, Moses and Jesus the son of Mary. See, 6: 84-87, 19: 58 and 42: 13.

Imam Ali (A.S) has described the essence of Islam in these words: I am going to tell you the reality of Islam the way it has never been described in the past and will never be explained after me. Islam means total capitulation, the essence of capitulation is certitude, this depends on testifying from the core of the heart, its essence is 'pronouncement' this pronouncement requires 'action and deeds', which means to discharge the duties. The believer does not believe in his own speculations, but 'the belief' comes to him from His Lord and he embraces it. A believer sees his certitude in his conduct and an infidel sees his rejection in his own activities. [Usool al- Kafi, Kitab al- Iman wal Kufr, chapter on *nisbat al- Islam* 3: 76 with Persian translation by Jawad Mustafawi, see also Nahjul Balagha, saying 125, Tafseer Ali bin Ibrahim Qummi, 90, Amali Sadooq, 211, Amali Toosi, 3: 137, Mahasin of Barqi, 1: 222, Maani al-Akhbar,

In Tafseer Qummi, referred to above, there are some additional words "Take care of your religion, again take care of your religion, because a mistake along with belief might be pardoned but the mistake without believing is not pardonable."

In verse 19, we have been intimated that both, the people of the book and the infidels of Arab, started disputing with Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) about his prophethood, though they knew the signs of his advent, which were mentioned in the old scriptures.

The next verse (20) divulges that all the Jews, Christians, followers of other religions and all other people are required to follow Islam in its true spirit, because only Islam is acceptable as a religion in the eyes of Allah. "Those who should seek" says the Quran, "any religion other than Islam, that should not be accepted from them" (3: 85, also compare 4: 125, 5: 3 and 6: 161) In one of the verses Allah tells the Holy Prophet to say: "People, I am prophet of Allah for all of you" (7: 158, also see 25: 1) In 11: 108, Allah orders the Holy Prophet "Say to them, this is my *path*, I call you to Allah on account of my own perspicacity and also of those who follow me".

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّنَ
بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ
مِنَ النَّاسِ قَبَشْرَهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ۝ أُولَٰئِكَ
الَّذِينَ حَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ
مِنْ تَصْرِيحٍ ۝

(21-22) Those who disbelieve the revelation of God and unjustly kill the prophets and the enjoiners of justice, inform them of painful affliction. (22) Surely, their actions

wasted in vain in this world, in the world to come, and for them will be no helpers.

For the murder of Prophets see Matt 23:34-37, Luke 11:51, Thess: 2: 15. Those who had killed the prophets of Allah, guides and enjoiner of righteousness, they should face very painful punishment. Enjoining the goodness and forbidding the bad manners is one of the most important institutions of Islam, it is built-in immunity system of our religion. Hassan Basari says that Holy Prophet has said "One who orders for goodness and forbids the wrong doings he is the deputy of Allah, the deputy of book and the deputy of His Prophet on this earth." In another tradition of Holy Prophet he has been reported as saying 'One who observes a bad practice but is unable to change the condition then he would say three times: "God, verily it is not a good thing" and by doing this he would discharge his duty. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 47]

Here Quran has used a very important phrase "*habetat aamaluhum.*" Some times a person does something for getting a particular result but the consequences show up quite opposite to the expected ones. It is called: *habetat aamaluhum.* On the Day of Judgment, no one will help them out. [al-Mizan, 3: 124, Majma al Bayan, 2: 205, Rooh al-Maani, 2: 177, Tafseer Kabir, 3: 177]

الْمُتَرَاتِلِ الَّذِينَ أوتُوا نَصِيبًا
 مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى كِتَابِ اللَّهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ
 ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوْا فَرِيقًا مِّنْهُمْ وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾
 ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَنْ نَمَسَّنَا النَّارُ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا
 مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۖ وَغَرَّهُمْ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا
 يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

(23-24) Have you seen those who were favored with the book and were invited to the Scripture for arbitration between them, but a group of them turned their backs and they were the eschewers. (24) On account of their belief that “fire will not touch us except for a few countable days”, they became deceived by their bogus belief, which they had added in their theology.

Here the God is referring to Jews and the word “book” stands for *Torah*. [Majma al- Bayan, 2: 205] Allama Tabatabai and some other analysts say that the Arabic words *nasiban minal torah* show that the people of Arabia did not have complete *torah* with them. And whatever they had was amended and distorted literature. [al- Mizan, 3: 124]

Who sought the arbitration of the ‘book’ from Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and for what? The scholars have given different answers to this question: (a) about the status of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) as a messenger, (b) about Prophet Abraham and his religion, (c) for determining the punishment of fornication. [Majma al-Bayan, 2: 206]

In my opinion, this verse was revealed for determining the punishment of adultery in Judaism. It has been reported in the history that a young Jew girl and a boy committed adultery and came to Prophet for getting judgment on the issue. The Prophet asked them to call their religious scholar in order to know the Jewish Law concerning this crime. They summoned Ibn Surya from Fadak. When he came to the Prophet, he was asked to recite the verses of Torah for him concerning the punishment of fornication. Ibn Surya started reading Torah but skipped the verse about stoning the sinners. Prophet ordered him to remove the finger and recite the same and punishment for this crime was mentioned at that place. [Majma al- Bayan, 2: 206 and Bukhari, chapters on *rajm*, Mu’watta Imam Malik, Tafseer Kabir, 3:

178, Rooh al-Maani, 2: 179, Namoonah, 2: 283, Majma al-Bayan, 2: 424] The Holy Prophet decided the case accordingly, but the Jews refused to accept it.

Another tradition says: "The Holy Prophet went to Jewish Seminary and invited the people to accept the 'path of Allah'. Noaim bin Amr and Haris bin Zaid inquired of him: At what religion you are? "My deen is the religion of Abraham," replied the Prophet. They said: Abraham was a Jew. Holy Prophet said: Let us decide the matter in the light of Torah. But the Jews avoided doing it. This verse of Quran was revealed on this occasion. [Qurtabi, 4: 50, Rooh al-Maani, 2: 178, Tafseer Kabir, 3: 178, Manhaj al-Sadeqin, 2: 198]

F. E. Peters, in his book "Children of Abraham, Judaism, Christianity, Islam" has described the political and social factors behind the changes, which were made in the main texts of both the Old and the New Testaments. No doubt, it is a good book, but its author failed to understand the nature of the development of Islam. [Princeton University, N.J]

At this point Allama Qurtabi has discussed a very important issue. He says: It means the previous divine laws are also valid for us, save those which have been abrogated by Islam and we are bind to follow the laws of the preceding prophets, though we do not settle the matters according to Torah and we do not recite the same due to its distortion by the Jews and Rabbis. Still, if we know for sure, that some part of it is definitely the revealed one then we can recite it as the divine book. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 51] In Quran (24: 48-49), Allah has said: When they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that he may judge between them, behold, some of them decline to come. Had justice been on their side, they would have come to him in all submission.

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جَمَعْنَاهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ
 فِيهِ تَسَوَّوْا وَقِيَّتَ كُلِّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا
 يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

(25) And how would it be, when we will summon them on the day beyond doubt and they will, merely, be given rewards and punishments due against their earnings. And they will not be dealt with unjustly.

It means that the wrong doers will not be punished for their sins and crimes more than what they deserve. They will be treated according to justice.

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ طِبْكَ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ
 مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّن تَشَاءُ وَتَعَزُّ
 مَن تَشَاءُ وَتَذِلُّ مَن تَشَاءُ بِإِيدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ
 عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَ
 تُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ
 وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَن تَشَاءُ
 بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

(26-27) Pray! Allah, the Sovereign of all sovereignty, you give power to whom you wish and withdraw it from whom you desire, you make those people respectable whom you wish and strip those of respect whom you desire. Goodness is in your hand and you have power over everything. (26) You cause the night to disappear in the bright day and you cause the day to hide in the night. And you create 'living beings' out of "lifeless matter" and bring forth 'the dead' out of the living being. In addition, you provide the sustenance to whom you long for, without stint.

Ibn Kathir has quoted Ibn Abbas as saying that Holy Prophet said: the Grand name of Allah, by which the prayers are answered, exists in this verse. Muaaz bin Jabal has reported that Holy Prophet asked him to recite these two verses, just after the daily prayers, for overpowering the difficulties of life. [Ibn Kathir, 1: 283, Majma al- Bayan, 2: 426]

The Quran repeatedly stresses on the fact that Allah is the creator and owner of the world and He has power over all the things. In chapter 64: 1, we read, "For Him is the power and the praise" and 54: 55 reads as "in the presence of a mighty king" and in chapter 57 Allah asks "why do you not spend in the cause of Allah, the wealth of heavens and the earth is for Allah alone (V: 10). On the Day of Judgment Allah will ask the people "to whom belongs the sovereignty except Allah, the One and the dominating?" (40: 16) Also compare 24: 33, 114: 2, 14: 34, 57: 7.

Likewise, the respect and honor belongs to Allah alone, and it is Allah who confers the respect and honor on the people. He made the prophet and the believers respectable in the eyes of the people. (4: 139 and 63: 8] Also compare 10: 65, 35: 10 and 37: 18o.

The goodness is in the hands of Allah. The Arabic word *khair* means 'goodness' in its absolute sense and its essence is 'selection and choice'. When this word is used along with the other attributes of Allah, it denotes the superlative degree of that adjective. This expression has also been used with these attributes: The provider of sustenance (62: 11), The best ruler (7: 87), The best judge (6: 57), The best helper (3: 150), The best planner (3: 54), The best conqueror (7: 89), The best forgiver (7: 155), The best inheritor (21: 89), The best to enable us to disembark (23: 29) and You are the best merciful (23: 109). Quran tells us that Allah is the best and enduring one (20: 73).

It also asks the people: different lords are better or Allah, the One and Overpowering? (12: 39)

In these two verses 12 attributes of Allah have been mentioned: (1) He is the sovereign, (2) He gives the power to others, (3) He withdraws the power, (4) He makes the people respectable, (5) He throws the people in disgrace, (6) The goodness is in his hands, (7) He has power over all things, (8) He creates the night, (9) He creates the day, (10) He creates the living beings from lifeless things, (11) He creates lifeless things from the living things, (12) and He provides the sustenance to all.

لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ
أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ
فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَتَّقُوا مِنْهُمْ
تَقِيَةً وَيُحِذِّرْكُمْ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨﴾
قُلْ إِنْ تَخَفُوا مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ تُبْدُوهُ يُعَلِّمَهُ
اللَّهُ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ط
وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

(28-29) "The Believers" should not make the unbelievers their soul-mates by avoiding the believers and one who should do that nowhere he should stand before God, save you wish to protect yourselves from them. God asks you to have His fear and towards Allah is your return. (29) Say, whether you hide or disclose it, Allah knows all that you have in your hearts and He knows what exists in the heavens and the earth and Allah has dominance over everything.

In verse 28 Allah has used the word *awlia*, the plural of *wali*. Wali is a person who takes the responsibility of managing the affairs of someone, e.g., guardian of an orphan, or caretaker

of a special child. But Arabs use this word for friends and lovers also because two friends have rights over each other.

In the previous verse, Allah has made it clear that he has power over each and everything, he is the creator, he bestows the power on and snatches it back from the people. In this verse, (28) the believers are being advised to avoid making infidels their soul mates, because friendship with them may lead to corruption of beliefs and conduct as well. This verse must be studied in the typical circumstances of the Muslims of that time. Obviously, those who are dependant on others cannot use their will freely. In The Quran, there are some other verses of same suggestion such as 5: 51, 58: 22 and 60: 1. These verses should be considered strictly in the socio-political state of affairs at that time. But Muslims of that time were allowed to be friends with those infidels who could hurt them in daily life.

This provision of Islamic Jurisprudence is known as *Taqayyah* originating from the same word used here in Quran. If some one feels potential threat to his life or property from the non-believers, he can hide his original beliefs or express them in a vague style in order to avoid probable harm. If someone is forced to even talk against Allah and his teachings, but he is true believer in his heart, he can fulfill the desire of the infidels for the time being, as happened with Ammar bin Yasir, as reported in Quran 16: 106. According to commentators of Quran, *taqayyah* is compulsory in case of threat to life or property. [Majma al- Bayan, 2: 212, Al-Mizan, 3: 153, Al- Tibyan of Sheikh Tusi] I feel better to quote here some words from Tafseer Ibn Kathir: Those who feel fear in their cities, or at some occasions, they can do *taqayyah* with their tongues and not from their hearts and intentions, as has been reported in Sahih Bukhari from Abu Darda... And Thauri has quoted Ibn Abbas as saying: *Taqayyah* would be from tongue and not from action; Atya Aaofi has reported the same from Ibn Abbas. Abul Aalia, Abu Shaasa, Dhahak and Rabi bin Anas are

also of the same opinion based on verse 106 of chapter 16. Bukhari says, "Hasan Basri believed that the injunction of *taqayyah* is valid until the Day of Judgment." [Ibn Kathir, 1: 284 by Sabooni and Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 57, al-Kash'shaf, 1: 346] Allama Aloosi has discussed this issue in detail in his commentary *Rooh al-Maani*. At a point, he says: Some scholars have included in *taqayyah* showing the courtesy to infidels, transgressors, and oppressors. They have also included in it the soft speech, smiling gestures, good behavior, and economic favors in order to get protection from harmful actions of infidels. This courtesy is not forbidden, rather it is lawful and the Sunnah of Holy Prophet. [*Rooh al-Maani*, 2: 197] Allama Mohammad Ali al-Sabooni has also described this verse in almost the same words. [*Safwat al-Tafasir*, 1: 178]

Here I would like to summarize the description from *Tafseer Kabir* of Allama Fakhruddin Razi: Musailama, The Liar, arrested two companions of Holy Prophet and asked from one of them "Do you bear witness that Mohammad is a Prophet"? He replied: Yes, yes, yes. He again asked: Do you bear witness that I am also a Prophet? The companion replied: Yes. Musailamah released him and called the other one. He put the same questions before him. Regarding the first question he replied: Yes, I do believe that Mohammad is the Prophet of Allah. However, concerning the second question he replied in negative. Musailamah killed him brutally. This event was reported to Holy Prophet. And after listening to the whole story he commented in these words: One of them is a martyr of his certitude and truthfulness, while the second one followed the "provision of law" so he will not be accused of anything. The other verse of same implication is 106 of Surah al-Nahal (16). Allama Fakhruddin Razi says: I am mentioning here some dictates concerning *taqayyah*: (1) *Taqayyah* is applicable when a believer is present between non-believers and therefore scared of their behavior. In this case, he can show courtesy with his tongue by using ambiguous words or by not show-

ing enmity with them. But it must not be from his heart, because the essence of taqayyah is to express something against the real feelings. (2) Though taqayyah is allowed, but it is better to confess the real beliefs. (3) Taqayyah is only the expression of some kind words or pronouncing of wrong beliefs. But one cannot make any statement, which may result in damage to anyone else, or the Muslim society. (4) Taqayyah is applicable only when Muslims are confined to a society of infidels in which they feel threat to life, property, and honor. Imam Shafa'i says that it is applicable even in perverted Muslim societies. (5) Taqayyah is applicable not only for the safety of life but also for the safety of property. (6) In the opinion of Mohair, Taqayyah was ordained when Muslims were weak and the non-believers were strong. Nowadays, there is no need of taqayyah. In view of Hassan, as reported by Aoof, taqayyah is applicable until the Day of Judgment. I think this point of view is right and strong, because guarding one's life is compulsory without fail. [Tafseer Kabir, 3: 193-94]

Unfortunately, the issue of taqayyah has been a matter of dispute among Shia and non-shia scholars through the centuries. However, it must be clear on the readers that taqayyah is an Islamic injunction beyond doubt.

Al- Hazar means to abandon something due to fear of its harm. Allah has asked, in this verse, to be concerned of His punishment. See Quran 5: 49, 17: 57 and 63: 4. It means the Muslims were allowed to deal with the infidels friendly, if they feel themselves insecure, but it is better for them to have fear of God because He is all powerful. Taqayyah is a provision for the safety of the believers and it is valid until the Day of Judgment.

Verse 29 is closely related to the previous one. There were some hypocrites, who tried to deceive the believers by saying: "whatever we were expressing before the non believers was not the voice of our hearts." God has declared whether

you hide your true beliefs or express them, Allah is aware of the real state of affairs.

The Jews and Christians have the same feelings for the fellows of other religions. [See Ezra, chapters 9, 10]

يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ

نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُّحَضَّرًا^{٣٠} وَمَا عَمِلَتْ

مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا^{٣١}

وَيُحَذِّرُكُمُ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ^{٣٢}

(30) The day when every soul would find the reward of his good deeds in front of them and for bad deeds he will wish a long interval between him and the punishment, Allah warns you of His own self and Allah is kindhearted for His servants.

The Quran repeatedly emphasizes on the fact that only Allah will reign over the Day of Judgment and no one will be able to protect the people against his judgment (23: 16, 11: 43, 2: 165, 82: 19). The second important fact is that whatever the people are doing in the world, their acts are being recorded properly. (34: 21, 50: 4, 36: 12) In addition, the third and the last point is that people should be punished or rewarded according to their conducts. At the moment, when one will see the award of penalty for his bad actions he would long for a delay in execution of punishment. (43: 38)

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ

وَيَغْفِرَ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ^{٣١}

قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ، فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ

لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِينَ^{٣٢}

(31-32) Say, if you love Allah then follow me, Allah will love you too and will forgive your mistakes, and Allah is

extremely forgiving and merciful. (32) Say, obey Allah and the Apostle and if you will turn your backs, then note that Allah dislikes the disapprovers.

The love of God or of anyone is closely related to the obedience and honoring of his words and wishes. In these verses two different, but important terms have been used i.e., *ittebaa* and *ata'at*. The former means 'to follow the foot prints of a person' as a baby camel follows her mother, while the latter is used for 'compliance of orders'. The first term can be used for Holy Apostle, the second one for both Allah and the Apostle. The only sign of the love of God is to pursue the path of Holy Prophet, in return Allah starts loving the follower of Holy Prophet. Here I would like to give the translation of a couplet by Imam Jafar Sadiq: You disobey God, but express your love for him. I swear by my life, in practice it is a strange thing. If your love would have been true, you must have obeyed him, because the lover obeys his beloved person. [al-Mizan, 3: 163]

Allah is compassionate and merciful therefore, He forgives our sins and mistakes, the real obstacles between Allah and His servants. Imam Ali, in his famous supplication al-Komail, prays to God in these words: God, forgive my sins, which tear the shields. God, forgive my sins, which cause the shower of your wrath. God forgive my sins, which alter your bounties. God, forgive my mistakes, which hold the prayers from ascending to you. God pardon my sins, which cause sufferings and miseries. God forgive all my sins, which I have committed and all my mistakes, which I have done.

There is a very thought provoking tradition of Imam Zain al-Abedin (A.S) in which he has explained the phrases of this supplication. [Maani al-Akhbar, 256]

I have clarified the difference between the *prophet* and the *apostle*

at 2: 87 (Volume: 1). The appropriate translation of the Arabic word *Rasool* is the apostle, while 'prophet' is the correct translation of the Arabic word *Nabi*. Those who refuse to follow the Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) are considered as the infidels.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَ

نُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

ذُرِّيَّةً بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

(33-34) Verily, Allah made Adam, Noah, the House of Abraham and the House of Imran sovereign over the worlds.

(34) Offspring of one another and Allah is all hearing and omniscient.

Istefa ala, means to make sovereign, it does not simply mean to choose. Likewise, *Aal* and *Ahl* are two different words. *Ahl* has a wide sense and includes all those who are related to a person, but *Aal* is used for immediate family. *Dhuriat* is from *dhur*, which means tiny particles; it has been used here for the seed of the family.

Allah gave authority to Adam and Noah in the world. They both were Prophets of Allah and they enjoyed all the rights a prophet is endowed with by God. Adam was given preference over others. He was the first deputy of Allah on this earth (2: 30), he has kept open the door of repentance (20: 122), and he is the first man who received the Divine Law (20: 123).

Prophet Noah is called the "Second Adam," because the nations started growing after the deluge. He was the first prophet to receive the book from God (2: 213); God dignified him by saying salutations to him (37: 79)

House of Abraham includes the patriarchs and prophets from the

lineage of Prophet Abraham, the progeny of Ishmael and Isaac. There is much debate among the scholars for determining the meanings of the term *Aal Imran*. In the Bible, the father of Prophet Moses has been named as Imram and his sister has been named as Miriam. Quran does not mention the name of Moses' father, but calls Mariam (Mary) as the daughter of Imran and the sister of Haroon (19: 28). In view of these verses, some scholars have speculated that Quran has mistaken Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, as the mother of Jesus. Nevertheless, it is not true.

How do we know that Moses was the son of Amram (Exod, 11: 20) and Miriam was his sister? This claim is based only on the details contained in the Book of Genesis. I have already discussed the authenticity of the first five books of Hebrew Testament while discussing verses 124-127 of chapter 2 (first volume). Furthermore, the scholars are debating the historicity of Moses, they are not sure whether Moses existed in the history or not.

Here I would like to quote Peters' words concerning the authenticity of these books. He writes "The Genesis and evolution of this "tradition from the Father" is overgrown, like much else in the study of revelational religions, with claims of absolute antiquity: "from the Fathers" meant at base from Moses and so from God. All the historians can do is to note, that the claim for such was first advanced by the Pharisees, as both Josephus and the Gospels bear witness and that the claim was denied, explicitly by the Sadducees and, implicitly by the Essenes. [F.E. Peters. Children of Abraham: 75]

As a conclusion, we can very safely say that there is no ground to reject the statement of Quran regarding the Mary and her Father. The Bible is also silent about her brother, but Quran points out that the name of her brother was Haroon

(19: 28). There is no need to assume that this Haroon and, the brother of Moses are the same person.

إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ
مَا فِي بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي ۗ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ
إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا أُنْثَىٰ ۗ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ ۗ وَ
لَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ ۗ وَإِنِّي سَمَّيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ ۗ وَإِنِّي
أُعِيدُهَا بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٣٦﴾
فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ ۖ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا
حَسَنًا ۖ وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا ۖ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا
الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا ۖ قَالَ يَمْرِئُمُ آتِي
كَ هَذَا ۗ قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ
مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾

(35-37) When the wife of Imran said: Lord I pledge to devote the child in my abdomen totally for your service, so kindly accept it, surely you are all Hearing and all Knowing. (36) When she delivered, she said, "Lord, I delivered a baby girl. God knows what I have delivered and male is not like the female, I have named her Mariam, and I seek your refuge for her and her offspring against the accursed Satan. (37) Her Lord accepted her in the best way and brought her up in the best manner. Zechariah was made responsible for fostering her and whenever Zechariah happened to enter her sanctuary, he found some food with her and used to ask: from where you got it? She replied: It is from Allah; verily Allah provides the people, according to His wish, with sustenance and without limit.

According to some Muslim sources, Hannah was the mother of

·Mariam (Mary) who vowed to devote her child to the service of God. I think she pledged to make him Nazirite, the cult I have described at Chapter 2: 62. (V: 1) However, she gave birth to a daughter.

The Arabic word *Muhareran* means free from worldly work hence devoted for God and His service. Some Muslim scholars are of the opinion that *Mariam* means 'the maid of God' in their language. [Al-Mizan, 3: 173, Majma al- Bayan, 2: 218, Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 68] According to Biblical researchers the meanings are 'the fat one' [Dictionary of Bible, Eerdman] and according to some other sources the meanings are 'rebellious one' [Insight on the Scriptures, 2: 346], in view of some other researchers this word has been derived from Egyptian word *Marye*, which means: the beloved one. [New Biblical Dictionary, 746] *Mehrab* means 'sanctuary', or a room specified for worship of God or for religious rituals. (al-Mizan and Tafseer Qurtabi, Majma al-Bayan, on this verse, Mufradat Raghib) Catholic Encyclopedia has written two lengthy articles on Mary but these writings have no historical information. Mary is a very important figure in Roman Catholic theology, which we will discuss at some other place.

NAMING THE CHILD

Islam insists that the name of the child must be good in meaning and it should sound preferably good to the people. Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has directed us: "give your child a good name, since you will be called by your name on the Day of Judgment. [al-Wasail, 15: 123, 126, Abu Dawood, 2: 320] It has been reported that Holy Prophet used to change the bad names of people and places. [Behar al-Anwar, 104: 127] Holy Prophet has said that the best names are those, which express the grandeur of Allah and humbleness of His servant. [Behar al-Anwar, 104: 129] A companion of Imam Jafar Sadiq asked him: Is it good for us if we name our children after your and your ances-

tors' names? He replied, "Is religion other than love?" [Behar al-Anwar, 104: 130] Imam Ali (A.S) has said: "The child has some rights over his parents. The father has to give him good name, develop him in the best possible way and to give him the knowledge of Quran. [Nahj al- Balagha, 1274, saying No: 399, Muhadrat of Raghīb Isphahani, 157, Tiseer al-Matalib, 307]

UNUSUAL FOOD FROM ALLAH

Verse 37 reports a miraculous event that Mary, the mother of Jesus, used to receive the unseasoned fruits and food inside her sanctuary. And she claimed that the provision was from God. Miraculous provision of food to Banu Israel, in the desert of Sinai and to the followers of Jesus has been mentioned in Quran (7: 160, 5: 114). In the same way, Allah provided food for Mary as well. The famous commentator, Ibn Kathir, has written his remarks in these words, "This verse is a proof that Allah especially favors those who become "near and dear" to Him and in the life of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) there have been a number of such incidents.

One of Prophet's companions, Jabir, has reported that once the Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) could not even take a morsel of food for a few days. He was very hungry. Therefore, he visited the houses of his wives, one by one, in search of some food. But he found nothing with them. At last, he went to ask his daughter Fatima and she told her father that nothing has left with her. Prophet came out of her house and went home. In the meanwhile, some food was sent to Fatima, who felt the need to prefer her father to her own starving family. She sent Imam Hassan or Imam Hussain for him. Holy Prophet got to her home and asked: from where did you receive this food? She replied "from Allah." At that time, the Prophet said: you have become like Mary, 'the head of the ladies of Banu Israel'. Thereafter, Prophet sent some one for Ali and the wives of Prophet. They all took the food up to their satisfaction. The food became so

much that the remaining food was sent to the neighborhood.
[Ibn Kathir, 1: 287 by Sabooni]

هَذَا دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا

رَبِّهِ؛ قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً
طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَتَادَتْهُ الْمَلِكَةُ
وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ
بِغُلَامٍ مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَ
حَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ آتِنِي
يَكُونُ لِي عِلْمًا وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِيَ الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ
قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ
اجْعَلْ لِي آيَةً قَالَ آتَيْنَاكَ الْآيَةَ أَنْ تَكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ
ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمَزًا وَادْكُرْ رَبَّكَ كَثِيرًا وَ
سَبِّحْ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ ﴿٤١﴾

(38-41) At that time, Zechariah prayed to his Lord and said: Lord, favor me from your side; by bestowing on me the pious progeny, surely you hear the prayers. (39) When he was busy in worship in the sanctuary, he was informed by the angels "Allah gives you the good news of Yahya, he will confirm Allah's Logos, the leader, the self-controlling, the righteous Prophet. (40) He asked: God, should I have a child at approaching this old age and even that my wife has become barren? He gave the answer: Allah does, in this way, whatever He wishes. (41) He asked: Lord, vouchsafe a sign for me. God said: the sign would be that you should not speak to people for three days except by gestures, remember your Lord very often and glorify Him at the end of the day and early morning.

PROPHETS ZECHARIAH AND YAHYA

There are different spellings of the name, Zechariah, Zachariah and Zacharia. Catholic Encyclopedia has preferred "Zachary" meaning the Yahweh has remembered. He was the father of John, the Baptizer, and husband of Elizabeth, a relative of Mary, the mother of Jesus. He was a priest of the division of Abijah. The couple was pious but remained childless up to an advanced age. According to Gospels, Zechariah was busy in burning the incense in the temple when Gabriel appeared and enunciated the birth of John. Nevertheless, in the words of Quran, he was offering prayer at that time. According to Catholic Encyclopedia, it has been reported that some followers were standing "out side" the sanctuary, which suggests that it was an evening service. Gospels say that as a sign, Zechariah was made dumb until the birth of the child and he got his speaking power back when he wrote the name of the child on the paper. In the words of Quran, he was asked to remain silent for three days, until that, he was allowed to convey his messages through gestures. He was also asked to glorify his Lord day and night. For all these biblical details, see Luke, 1: 5-25, 57-80 and Catholic Encyclopedia, 14: 1107.

The historicity of this account is based on the authenticity of "infancy gospel" of Jesus, as it appears in the four gospels. Renee Bloch [D.B. Suppl: 5: 1263-81] and Laurentin have evaluated the infancy narrative. They both have agreed on the fact that 'it has deep imprints of Midrash', which means that the writers of the Gospels had tried to make the life accounts of both John and Jesus equal to the unusual births of Isaac and Moses. It means we cannot rely on the details given by the authors of these gospels. Ultimately we have to depend on the words of the Quran, which has survived unchanged through the centuries. Also, see Catholic Encyclopedia, 7: 499-500 and

Who was Elizabeth? This question is necessary to be answered because it may solve some problems. Elizabeth was a descendant of her old namesake, for she was the descendant of Aaron (Luke, 1: 5). She is designated as relative to Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke, 1: 36). According to the legend of the apocryphal "History of Hanna" Elizabeth's mother Sophia was the sister of Mary's mother Hanna, who was already advanced in age. When Herod ordered the murder of infants then she escaped from the town with her child and hid with her husband and child in a cavern, which had open up to receive them. While in the cave they were miraculously fed by the angels. [Protevangeleon of James, 22, Catholic Encyclopedia, 5: 280-281] Also, see discussion at 3: 33, 34 above. There are two protevangeleons discussing the birth and fostering of Mary. James has narrated this one and the other has been handed down by Matthew. Both are included in "*The lost Books of The Bible and the Forgotten books of Eden.*" [Meridian Books]

In the Gospels, Prophet "Yahya" is called John the Baptist. The Synoptic Gospels mention his name as a prophet who foretold the people about the 'coming of Jesus the Christ'. He was the precursor of Messiah. I wish to quote here some lines from the Gospel of Mark, historically the first Gospel. This gospel starts with these words: I send my messenger before you to prepare your way, a herald's voice in the desert crying "Make ready the way of the Lord, clear him a straight path" (see also Isaiah, 40: 3-4). Thus, it was John the Baptizer, who appeared in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance, which led to the forgiveness of sins. [Mark: 1: 1-3]. Matthew and Luke have also given the proclamation of the 'coming of Jesus' by John. (See, Mal, 3: 1 and Isa, 40: 3) The authentic biography of Prophet John is not available. However, there are some traces in the Bible. John always denied being the Elia or Expected

Prophet, or Messiah. (John, 1: 19-23) He was only the precursor of the Messiah. When he started his ministry a group of people gathered around him as his disciples (Matt, 11: 2, Luke, 7: 18-19) He taught the special way of prayer and fasting (Luke, 11: 1). Before joining Jesus, apostles John and Andrew were his disciples (John, 1: 35-40). There are evidences that the followers of both the John and Jesus were not in good terms with each other. They disputed over fasting (Matt, 9: 14) and the Baptism (John, 3: 25-18). We can see John asking his disciples to follow Jesus (Matt, 11: 2-6). In about 53 A.D, Paul met Apollos and some other 12 persons who have received baptism from John and they were living as a separate religious community distinct from the Christian church. [Catholic Encyclopedia, 7: 1031]

In those days, Herod Antipas (tetrarch), the governor, sinfully married Herodias, the wife of his half brother Herod Philip. John fearlessly denounced this marriage. In turn, Herodias instigated her daughter Solome to request Herod for John's death. For pleasing her daughter, Herod beheaded John though he knew that John was a religious and just man. (Matt, 14: 3, Mark, 6: 17-20) Jesus highly praised him with the depth of his heart (Matt, 11: 9-11, Luke, 7:18-28)

Some scholars think that Prophet John belonged to Qumran community. Though there are some similarities between his message and Qumran community's practices but the life of John was quite different from theirs. [Catholic Encyclopedia, 7: 1031] For a detailed discussion on the exact dates of birth of John and Jesus, see Jack Finegan's Handbook of Biblical Chronology [p.p. 274 to 329], which is a very good research work.

John, who wrote the fourth Gospel of New Testament, is other than Prophet John. (Compare: Quran 19: 15)

The Arabic word *Hosoor* is from *hsr*, which means to prevent, to arrest, to abstain. *Hosoor* means a person who does not marry or remains away from women. However, in the

wider sense it is used for a man who controls his desires and abstains from lusts. [al-Mizan, 3: 177, Majma al- Bayan, 2: 222, Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 77 and Ibn Kathir, 1: 288 by Sabooni, Kash'shaf, 1: 354, Kabir, 3: 212, Safwat al-Tafasir, 1: 181]

Kalemah min Allah (3: 39) means the Word of God, the Logos. Prophet Yahya declared the prophethood of Jesus the Christ, as I have mentioned above. The concept of kalamatullah in The Quran is quite different from its concept in Christianity.

In verse 41 Allah has asked Prophet Zechariah to do *tasbih* of God (glorify him). In Quran, there are a number of verses in which Allah has pointed out that everything in this world is doing his *tasbih*. (59: 1, 62: 1 and 17: 43-44) I will discuss this aspect of the universe at 17: 43-44. In Quran (50: 39-40), we are told to glorify Allah before the sunrise, before sunset, during night prayers and after daily prayers.

وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلِكَةُ

يَمْرَيْمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَاصْطَفَاكِ
 عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝ يَمْرَيْمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ
 وَاسْجُدِي وَارْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ۝ ذَلِكَ
 مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ ۚ وَمَا كُنْتَ
 لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَقُولُونَ أَقْلَامُهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ
 وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ۝ إِذْ قَالَتِ
 الْمَلِكَةُ يَمْرَيْمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ ۗ
 اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي
 الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ۗ وَيُكَلِّمُ
 النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۝

قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي
 بَشْرًا قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ
 أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٤٧﴾

(42-47) When the angels told Mary: Allah has chosen and purified you and has preferred you to the women of the worlds. (43) Mary, keep up the devotion to your Lord, prostrate and show humbleness along with those who do that. (44) This is one of the secret news, which we are revealing on you, despite the fact you were not present at the time they were casting javelins for deciding the guardian of Mary and when they were bickering with each other. (45) When the angels told Mary: verily Allah is blessing you with His Word (logos), his name would be Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, respectable in this world and the world to come and he will be from among the Nearer Ones. (46) He will speak to people while until in the cradle and will attain a mature age and he will be from the righteous ones. (47) She pleaded: Lord, how can I give birth to a son if no man has ever touched me? She received the reply: "This is the way Allah creates the things He wishes." When He decides something, He just says, "to be" and that is.

These verses show that Allah can send His messages to those who are not designated as Prophets and it is an exceptional favor of Allah to these people. [Ibn Kathir and Majma al-Bayan, 2: 220, Namoonah, 2: 322, Tafseer Kabir, 3: 217]

Allama Tabrasi has reported Imam Mohammad Baqir as saying: Holy Prophet has said "Khadija had superiority over the women of my nation as Mary had on the women of the worlds. Imam Baqir (A.S) says: The meanings of this verse (42) are "I have chosen you from the progeny of prophets and kept you safe from fornication and excelled you with the birth of Jesus without a father. [Majma al- Bayan, 2: 225]

The Arabic word *anba* is the plural of *nab'a*, which means news. And *wahi* means to say something secretly, or to give understanding of something, as God has said 'I revealed it on the Bee' (16: 68).

The phrase "au'ha Allah elai'hay" means Allah sent a messenger to him. It is also used for making gestures or pointing to something (19: 11) In Arabic poetry the word *wahi* has been used for 'writing' also, as the famous poet Raobah says "le qadren kana waho al-wahi" (definitely a writer has written it). [Asas al-Balagha, Jamharh Lughat al- Arab, 231,576, 1052] Allama Tabrasi says that this line is from Raobah, but the poet is Ajjaj [Ajjaj's works 2: 148, Lisan al- Arab, 3: 104, Kitab al-Aayn, 3: 320]

LOGOS: THE WORD OF GOD

In verse 45 Allah has called Prophet Jesus as His *kalemah* or "word" (Logos) and Maseeh or Messiah (compare 3: 59, 4: 171, 19: 17, 22). These two concepts have played an important role not only in the life of Prophet Jesus but also in the history and theology of Christianity.

The fourth Gospel (of John) starts with these words: In the beginning was the Word; the word was in God's presence and the Word was God. He was present to God in the beginning. Through him, all things came into being and apart from him, nothing came to be. Whatever came to be in him, found life, life for the light of men. [John 1: 1-4. The New American Bible] Gospel of John has a mystical aroma and it has played an imperative role in shaping the latter Christian beliefs. The creation of world through 'Logos', as explained by Athanasius, was accepted as official belief at the Council of Nicaea on May 20, 325 C.E. I wish to quote here the same:

" We believe in One God,
the Father Almighty,

maker of all things, visible and invisible,
 and in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
 the son of God,
 the only begotten of the Father,
 that is, of the substance of the Father,
 God from God,
 light from light,
 true God from true God,
 begotten not made,
 of one substance with the Father,
 through whom all things were made,
 those things that are in the Heaven and,
 those things that are on earth,
 who for us men and for our salvation,
 came down and was made man, suffered,
 rose again on the third day,
 ascended into the heavens and will come,
 for judging the living and the dead.
 And we believe in the Holy Spirit.

[A history of God, 111]

On the other hand, according to Qurān, Prophet Jesus was the Word of God in the sense that he was created on behest of Allah. Allah said, "to be" and Mary became pregnant with Jesus (21: 91). [See Majma al- Bayan, 2: 228, al- Mizan, 3: 189, Tibyan al-Quran by Allama Saeedi, 2: 161, Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 76 and Ibn Kathir, Kabir, 3: 221]

THE CONCEPT OF MESSIAH IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Most of the Muslim commentators of Quran are of the view that Arabic word *Maseeh* is from the root word *m s h*, which means 'to rub the hand on a surface'. The exegetes have explained this term in various ways such as he has been named as *maseeh* because he was a frequent traveler, he has been named

so because he used to rub the ailing persons with his hands for cure, *maseeh* means truthful, according to some scholars it means very beautiful and perfectly created. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 88, 89, Ibn Kathir, 1: 291 by Sabooni, Majma al- Bayan, 2: 228, al-Mizan, 3: 193-194]

In fact, the word *Maseeh* denotes the concept of *MESSIAH*, as it exists in Jewish and Christian theologies.

In Hebrew it is *masiah* and in Greek *Messias*, meanings the 'anointed one'. In its basic sense, the term "messiah" refers to a person who has been consecrated to a high office by ceremonial anointing with oil. It is an old practice, which can be traced back in 1 Kings, 19: 16 and Ps, 133: 2. The anointing to an office favors the person with high rank, sacredness, and religious authority.

In both Judaism and Christianity, the concept of Messiah is closely related to apocalypse or the End Time theories. In Judaism Prophet David was considered as Messiah. His history and teachings were saved for the generations to come. Later on, the expectation of a Messiah from David's descendants became a popular belief. In the apocalypse vision of Qumran and other unknown writers of Daniel, Enoch and apocrypha, a central figure of the end time is 'Messiah.' (Daniel, 7: 14, and Isa, 53: 10) This 'anointed one' _ Christos is simply the Greek translation of the word _ is a priest king of Davidic descent who will be God's instrument for restoration of peace and stability to the earth. Such hope has been demonstrated in even extra canonical Jewish literature i.e., Wisdom of Solomon, 1 & 2 Maccabees, Tobit and Baruch. In Dead Sea scrolls we find two types of Messiah (a) one who would be a military and political leader and (b) other from the descendants of Aaron as a spiritual leader (1QS 9: 11: C.D. 20: 1) Even the Persian King Cyrus has been called the Messiah

or Christ in the Old Testament (Chr, 45: 1)

Abraham Cohen has discussed the Jewish belief of Messiah in his book *Everyman's Talmud* [346-356]. A good conceptual account is also present in "Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought, edited by Arthur Cohen. [Essay on 'Messianism' by Zwi Werblowsky]

In the New Testament Jesus of Nazareth has been called the Christ or Messiah, the King of Jews. Jesus clearly claimed himself as the Messiah (Mark, 12: 35-37, Matt, 11: 3-6, 26: 63-64, Luke, 24: 27), by quoting Prophet Isaiah (Chapters 7 to 12). This was the reason the Jews put him on the torture stake. Book of Revelation, the last book of New Testament, prophesizes the Second Coming of the Christ and it has become the integral part of Christian belief. Christian idea of Messiah is based on the prophecies of the Old Testament. It has been used in Septuagint some 40 times.

The first Davidic promise came from the mouth of Prophet Nathan and the latter prophets confirmed it. The book of Isaiah has three oracles of the coming of Messiah. (7: 10-15, 8: 23 to 9: 6 and 11: 1-9) Amazingly, Isaiah has used the name of Jesus as 'Emmanuel' and has called the Mary "alma" which is 'batula' of Hebrew, for virgin girl. (Lev, 21: 14, Judges, 21: 12) A century later, when Babylonia had taken Assyrian's place as the scourge of Palestine, Prophet Jeremiah foresaw that Yahweh would raise a just shoot of David who will rule justly and wisely and will bear the prophetic name "The Lord, our Justice." (Jeremiah, 23: 5-6) There are four references to Messiah in Ezekiel; Zechariah also speaks about him (Zech, 9: 9-10). Moreover see: Micah, 4: 14 to 15: 1-5, Amos, 9: 11-12)

Catholic Encyclopedia has contributed a lengthy article on Messiah and Messianic concept. [9: 714-718]

For further detail of Messianic concept, see my book "Imam Mehdi and the traditions of Holy Prophet." (English and Urdu versions)

وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ۗ وَرَسُولًا
 إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ ۚ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ
 مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۚ إِنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطِّينِ كَهَيْئَةِ
 الطَّيْرِ فَانْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَ
 أُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ
 وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدْخِرُونَ ۚ فِي
 بُيُوتِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ
 مُؤْمِنِينَ ۗ

(48-49) And He has given him the knowledge of the law and acumen and Torah and Injil. (49) As an apostle to Bani Israel he told them: I have come to you with portents of your Lord, I would make a bird for you out of clay, then I would breathe in it, converting it in to the real bird by the leave of God. Moreover, I will cure the physically blind and the patients of Leukoderma and bring the dead to life with the permission of Allah. I can tell you what food you have taken and what is stored in your houses. In all these, there are evidences for you, if you care to believe.

WORDS DESCRIBED

Al-Kitab means, here, the law, because the other two previously revealed books, Torah and Injil, have been mentioned separately. The word Ayah means 'miracle' or super natural act. The word ak'mah means the blinds by birth. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 94, Rooh al-Maani, 2: 269, Ibn Kathir by Sabooni, 1: 292, Majma al- Bayan 2: 231, Kabir, 3: 229, Manhaj al-

Sadeqin, 2: 230 and Jalalain] Some other scholars have translated this word as "day blind" or "night blind," which is incorrect.

Almost all the translators of Quran have used the word Leprous, or leprosy for the Arabic word **bars** used in Quran, see M.H. Shakir, Abdullah Yousuf Ali, N.J. Dawood, Abdul Majid Daryabadi, Mir Ahmed Ali, Arberry, Pickthal and T.B. Irving. But "bars" is a disease in which color producing cells of the skin become dead, therefore, white patches on the normal skin start appearing. It may be congenital or develop in later life.

In the Bible the Hebrew word, used for this disease is *sara'at*, which is a broad generic term for eruptive skin diseases and disorders. Translations of the Bible did not use the word 'leper' as its equivalent (Hansen's Disease) until Middle Ages when it spread all over Europe. The Biblical description of the disease is not identical with the clinical condition of Hansen's disease. In the Hebrew Testament, we find the mention of 'leprosy in the garments and buildings' (Lev 13: 47-59; 14: 33-57), which means, most probably, filthy condition and state of sin.

Leprosy or Hansen's disease is a chronic infectious sickness caused by a rod-shaped Acid-fast Bacilli (AFB) Mycobacterium Leprae, was discovered by G.A. Hansen in Bergen, Norway in 1873. It chiefly affects the skin, mucus membranes of upper respiratory tract, eyes and certain peripheral nerves. Apart from indeterminate and borderline cases, the two main types are: (1) tuberculoid, having few bacilli, but with nerve involvement causing anesthesia, paralysis of some muscles and disintegration of toe and finger bones, these cases are called 'closed cases', these are non infectious cases and recovery is spontaneous; (2) lepromatous cases are characterized by lesions and swellings containing the numerous bacilli, especially on the face (leonine face) in the upper respiratory tract and vocal cords

with frequent eye involvement, these so called 'open' cases are infectious and lead the patients to death.

The leprologists have maintained that the symptoms of *sara'at* do not resemble those of Hansen's disease and its diagnostic symptoms like anesthesia, leonine face, hoarseness, blindness, mutilations, slow evolution and incurability are absent in Biblical narratives. According to dermatologists the symptoms of *sara'at*, as given in the Bible, correspond to different skin disorders like, Leucoderma, Vitiligo, Psoriasis, Eczema, Yaws, Sycosis or Tinea Barbae, Ringworms of the scalp, or Impetigo, as well as Fungi and molds. [Catholic Encyclopedia, 8: 668-669 and The Oxford Annotated Bible on Leviticus 13]

Lawrence O. Richards in his book "The Bible Readers Companion" has preferred the translation of the Hebrew word *sara'at* by King James Version as 'infectious skin disease'. [Page: 83] The description of a skin disease at 13: 40 may be understood as leucoderma. Jesus' healings of lepers are mentioned at Mat, 8: 2-4, Luke, 17: 12-19. See The Thompson chain-reference Study Bible. N.I.V, on Lev: 13.

The above statement of Quran may be compared with Prophet Jesus' statement at Mat, 11:5.

Restoring the vision of a congenital blind was a remarkable miracle of Prophet Jesus. Such incidents have been reported in different books of Greek Testament. Hebrew word for blindness, as used in the Bible, is '*iwwer*' and its cognates; its Greek equivalents are the noun '*typos*' and verb *typhloo*. Individual and collective healing of blindness has been reported at Mat, 11: 5; 12: 22; 15: 30; Luke, 7: 21. According to Bible, by doing so, Jesus was demonstrating that he is the Messiah designated in Isaiah 29: 18, 35: 5. Furthermore, it is believed, that Luke (4: 18) has referred to Isaiah, 61: 1-2.

Quran says that Jesus used to bring the dead to life with the leave of God. (See Quran, 5: 110) Quran does not mention the cases of resurrections but three cases have been reported in different Gospels: (1) Widow's son in Nain city is reported in Luke, 7: 11-17, (2) the daughter of Jairus appears on Matt, 9: 18-26, Luke, 8: 41-56 and Mark, 5: 22-43, (3) the case of Lazarus is mentioned at John, 11: 1-44. This last case is outstanding in nature and details of evidence. In Quran Allah says that Jesus resurrected the dead with the permission of God. But in case of the daughter of Jairus, Mark has quoted the Aramaic words of Jesus at the time of resurrection, these words have been given in slightly differing transliterations such as "talitha cumi" (K.J, Authorized Catholic version), "tal'I-tha cumi" (RSV, Oxford Annotated Bible), "Talitha, koum" (The New American Bible, Catholic translation), which means 'little girl get up'. Research scholars have agreed that these words are not of Jesus himself but have been maintained in its original language for showing the authenticity of the Mark. These words have no Magical Affect at all. [Five Gospels, translated by Funk and Hower, 62] The total number of the miracles of Jesus reported in the Old Testament is 35, out of which 17 miracles of cure are on record. I will write a separate article on the nature and significance of miracles in coming pages.

وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ مِنَ
التَّوْرَةِ وَإِلْحُلِّ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ
وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَ
أَطِيعُوا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۗ
هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ۗ فَلَبَّا أَحْسَ عِيسَى مِنْهُمْ
الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ

نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ أُمَّتًا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ۝
رَبَّنَا أُمَّتًا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتُبْنَا
مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ۝ وَمَكُرُوا وَمَكَرَ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرُ
الْبَاكِرِينَ ۝ إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يُعِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ كَفَرُوا
وَجَاعِلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ۚ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ
بَيْنَكُمْ فِي مَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ۝ فَأَمَّا
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَاعْدِبْهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فِي
الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ زَوَامًا لَهُمْ مِمَّنْ نَّصَرِينَا ۝ وَأَمَّا
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ۝

(50-57) I testify the Torah, which is in my hand and I will make a few things lawful for you, which were outlawed for you. In addition, I have come to you with miracle from your Lord, so be fearful of God and obey me. (51) Surely, Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore, worship Him, it is the straight path. (52) When Jesus sensed deception from them, he asked: Who would be my supporters in the cause of Allah? The crystal hearted said: We are the supporter of Allah, we have believed in Allah and bear witness that we are the Muslims. (53) Our Lord, we believed in what you have revealed and followed the Apostle, so count us among the testifiers. (54) They prepared a plan and Allah made a foiling plan; He is the best at managing. (55) When Allah said: Jesus, I will take you in custody and lift you up to me and save you from those who disbelieved; and that I will

give your followers superiority until the Day of Judgment, over those who disbelieved. After all your return is to Me and at that time, I will give my verdict on the matter of dispute among you. (56) And those who refused to accept, I will afflict them with the most severe torment, in this world and in the world to come and there will be no helper for them. (57) However, those who attained to believe and performed good deeds, I will give them the due reward; Allah does not like the unjust ones.

In verse 50, 'ayah' means the miracles of Jesus, as I have elaborated before. Most of the scholars have translated the word *kufr*, in verse 50, as disbelief. In my opinion, it is related to the conspiracy of a disciple of Jesus against him, which I will describe in the following pages. Thus, I have translated the word 'kufr' as deception and conspiracy. The word 'kufr' encompasses these meanings as well. *Makar Allah* (V: 54) is expressing the God's plan to save the life of Prophet Jesus. In the following lines, I will prove that Jesus was not put on the torture stake, as believed by the Christians. In verse 55 the word *mutawaffika* is from the word *wafa*, which means to take the thing fully, taking someone fully is equal to taking in custody, the next important word, used in this verse is *mutaheroka min*, which means cleaning the blemish. In case of Jesus, the "blemish" was the plan of the Jews to kill him. Hence, "cleansing from this blemish," means saving his life. In this verse, the word *bainakum* (between you) stands for Jews and Christians.

In the Gospel of Matthew, we read Jesus as saying: Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets. I have come, not to abolish them, but to fulfill them. Of this much, I assure you: until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, shall be done away with until it all comes true. (Chapter 5: 17-18) These words prove the statement of Quran as truth.

The Quran (3: 50) says that Jesus changed some laws of Torah; some restrictions were imposed on Jews due to their transgression, as mentioned at 4: 160 in Quran. Jesus' teachings have been mentioned in Matt, 5: 17 to the end of chapter 7. In these verses he tells the people about Mosaic Law and then preaches his own. The parallels to these teachings are found, sporadically, in first five books of Old Testament and the books of New Testament.

Today, the Christians are busy in worshiping Jesus as the Son of God; this is the concept, which Islam condemns very strongly. Verse 51 is speaking about the real teaching of Jesus, that he invited the people to worship God, his own Lord and the Lord of the folks. Compare Quran, 4: 117. I have discussed the concept of the Son of God at 2: 116-117 (Vol: 1).

From verse 52 onward, the so-called crucifixion of Jesus is the topic. Quran says that Prophet Jesus sensed that the people were conspiring against him and his life was in danger. The statement of Matthew reads thus: When it grew dark, he reclined at table with the twelve. In the course of the meal he said, "I assure you, one of you is about to betray me." Distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another, "Surely it is not I, Lord?" He replied: "The man who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will hand me over. The Son of Man is departing, as scripture says of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. Better for him if he had never been born. Then Judas, his betrayer, spoke: "Surely it is not I" Rabbi? Jesus answered, "It is you who have said it." (Matthew, 26: 20-24; Mark, 14: 18-21; Luke, 22: 21-23; John 17: 12)

WAS THE JESUS CRUCIFIED?

It is a popular belief of the Christians, since last 2000 years, that Prophet Jesus was crucified and on the third day, his

resurrection took place. The statement of Quran is quite different from this belief. According to Quran, Prophet Jesus was not crucified but they mistakenly put someone else on torture stake. It was the arrangement of God for saving Jesus. (4: 157)

Let me explain what the Gospels say in this regard:

1. One of the disciples of Jesus, Judas, betrayed the Prophet Jesus, as quoted above.
2. Those who came to arrest him did not recognize Jesus; it was Judas, who identified him by kissing and embracing him. (Matt, 26: 47-56; Mark, 14: 43-56, 66-72; Luke, 22: 47-53; John, 18: 2-12) They were Romans.
3. The procurator's soldiers took Jesus inside the praetorium and collected the whole cohort around him. (Mark, 15: 16-20, Math, 27: 27, John, 19: 21). It means the soldiers took him for the final execution and they were not fully aware of Jesus and his person.
4. For recognizing the Jesus, they stripped off his clothes and wrapped him in scarlet military cloak. (Reference as at No 3, above)
5. On the way to Golgotha, where they led him to crucify, they again changed his clothes and he was given his own clothes to put on. (Math, 27: 31) After putting on his own clothes, it was hard for the soldiers to identify him among the folks.
6. At the time they started walking to Golgotha they gave the cross in the hands of Jesus, as it was necessary for the condemned one to hold his own cross. (John, 19: 17) After changing the clothes, 'the cross in hand' was the only mark

of his identification.

7. Matthew says: On their way out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon. They pressed this man into service to carry the cross. (27: 32, Mark, 15: 21, Luke, 23: 36) It clearly shows that they wiped off all the signs of identification of Jesus. They did not recognize him, they dressed him in the ordinary clothes, stripped off the dress of the 'condemned ones', they put the cross on the shoulders of Simon and the Simon appeared to them as the 'condemned one'. This was the arrangement of Allah for saving the Jesus.
8. Finally, they crucified the person who was carrying the cross.
9. Some people may argue that Jews must be present over there because they instigated the death of Jesus and they did recognize Jesus very well. However, it is not the case. It all happened in Jerusalem where the Jews used to speak and write Hebrew. The last words of the person on cross have been reported as thus: "Eli, Eli, Lema sabachthani" (Mathew, 27: 46) or "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani" (Mark, 15: 34). This phrase has been translated in these words 'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?' The first word of this phrase, Eli or Eloi, is Hebrew word for God and a Hebrew man cannot take it for Elijah, the Prophet. It has been reported in all accounts that the people in surrounding took it for Elijah, which clearly depicts that they were not Jews. (Mark, 15: 35, Math, 27: 47)

Now read the verse of Quran, it says: And they say "we slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of God- yet they did not slay him, neither crucified him, only a likeness of that was shown to them. (4: 156, Arberry)

In verses 56-57, Allah is declaring the fate of those who

disbelieved and those who believed and passed their life in conformity with the Holy Law. The first group, infidels, will receive the worst punishment in this world and in the world to come and they will lose all the supporters. On the other hand, the believers and pious persons will receive their due reward from Allah, because He is "the just."

ذَلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ

مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ الْحَكِيمِ ۝ إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَى
 عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ
 لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۝ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ
 الْمُمْتَرِينَ ۝ فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا
 جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَ
 أَبْنَاءَكُمْ وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا
 وَنَفْسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَنْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِينَ ۝
 إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ ۚ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا
 اللَّهُ ۗ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ۝ فَإِنْ
 تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِم بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ۙ

(58-63) It is what I read out for you, verses and the reasonable mentioning. (59) In the sight of Allah, the birth of Jesus is like Adam's, Allah created him out of dust and said, "to be", and he was. (60) The truth is from your Lord; so do not be among the unconvinced ones. (61) If someone argues with you on this matter, after you have received the knowledge, then say to them: Come on, let us call our sons and you call your sons, we call our women and you call yours, we call our souls and you call yours, thereafter we earnestly pray for the curse of Allah on the liars. (62) Definitely, it is among the true events, there is no

god but Allah, and Allah is surely the Powerful, the Wise. (63)
If they turn their backs, then God knows the miscreants well.

THE MUBAHELAH

These verses are related to the argument of some Christians from Najran, who came to argue with the Prophet concerning the birth of Jesus. They asked: If Jesus is not the Son of God, then who is His father? Allah says: Look! Adam was created even without a mother; he was created out of dust merely by the order of Allah. Likewise, He created Jesus by his order and Mary became pregnant with him. Thereafter, Prophet asked them to accept Islam, but they refused to do so. In the end, Holy Prophet asked them to do Mubahelah.

The word Mubahelah is from the root word *bhl*, which means invoking the curse, or to curse someone. *Mubahelah* means to invoke the curse for each other. According to historical record, collections of traditions, and the commentaries of Quran: “after the revelation of these verses Holy Prophet invited the delegation from Najran for *mubahelah*. Prophet came out of his house as Hussain was in his arms, Hassan was holding his hand, Fatima was just behind the Prophet and Ali was behind Fatima. Prophet told them to say ‘Amen’ just after prayer is end. When the pontiff saw Holy Prophet with these personalities, he said to his colleagues “I can see the faces if they would ask God to remove the mountains from their places then God will certainly do that. Therefore, do not be brave to invoke the curse through them; otherwise, God will not spare even a single Christian on this earth. They abstained from *Mubahelah* and agreed to pay *jizyah*. Holy Prophet said: The wrath of Allah was near to them and they would have certainly been inflicted by it, if they had agreed to do *mubahelah*. [Allama Wahedi, al-Waseet, 1: 444; al-Mustadrak, 2: 594; Tirmizi, 426; Tafseer Tabari, 6: 482-478; al-Durr al-Manthur, 2: 38-39; Kanz al-Ummal, 2: 380; Majma al-Bayan, 2: 239, 240, al-Mizan, 3: 222]

Allama Qurtabi says: According to a large number of scholars this verse proves that Imam Hassan and Imam Hussain (r.a) were the Sons of Holy Prophet, it is special feature of the both, since Prophet called them as his sons and not anyone else. And this verse proves that the sons of daughters are also the real sons. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 104, Rooh al-Maani, 2: 301, Ibn Kathir, 1: 297] Imam Razi has not only reported the whole event but also refers to the merit of "Five Holy Personalities," which is evident from this Ayah. In addition to it, he has quoted that Ayah Tat'heer (Ahzab 33: 33) was revealed in favor of these five persons. [Tafseer Kabir, 3: 247; Safwat al-Tafasir, 1: 188]

Jabir says, "In this verse 'our sons' mean Hassan and Hussain and 'our women' means 'Fatima', while the words "our souls" stands for Holy Prophet and Ali. (Ibn Kathir, on this verse, Mustadrak Hakim, as quoted above)

This event resulted in a treaty between Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and Christians of Najran, which has been reproduced by Baladhuri in Futuh al-Buldan. [Pages: 87-88] See Mohammad Hamidullah's Documents Sur La Diplomatie Muselmane, pp. 47-48; Yasin Istanbuli, Diplomacy and Diplomatic Practice in the Early Islamic Era, 44.

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ
 أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ
 بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا
 فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

(64) Say: People of The Book, come to a common teaching among us, that we should worship nothing but Allah and we should not take compeers of Him and we should not hold some of us 'as our Lords', besides Allah. If they turn their backs then

say: Bear witness that we are the Muslims.

After preaching the truth to the Christians, Prophet is now inviting the Jews towards 'oneness of God' and is refraining them from polytheism. Here arises a very serious question: Do the Jews believe in Oneness of God and are they against the polytheism?

Before proceeding towards the actual belief of Jews concerning the oneness of Allah, it is necessary to note here that there are three phases of Judaism, (a) Pre-exile, (b) Post-exile, and (c) Rabbinic. Being the descendants of Abraham and Jacob they were required to believe in Oneness of God. Their original belief in monotheism is evident in some passages of Old Testament. It affirms that Yahweh has universal power and wisdom, and that his being is uniquely "non-originated" and eternal. Genesis 1, for instance, describes God's creative activity in absolute terms. Distinguishing him from nature and cosmos, and leaving no room for existence of other beings of his stature, it subverts the polytheism of Babylonia and Canaan. It becomes clear from Exodus 1-15, that He has power over history and natural forces. The Psalms and Book of Job tell us that God has power over evil forces also and implicitly exclude the possibility of dualism in theology. (Isaiah, 46: 7) In the Old Testament, one can find a different irreverent vocabulary for the false gods of the area.

However, later on the monotheism changed into polytheism, idol worship and anthropomorphism. There are hundreds of references in the Bible concerning this issue. I have discussed this practice of Jews in the first volume; here I would like to quote a few lines from Prophet Jeremiah: The prophets prophesied by Baal and went after useless idols. Therefore, I will yet accuse you, says the Lord and even your children's children I will accuse. (Jeremiah, 2: 8-10) And in chapter 23, Jeremiah says: Among Samaria's prophets I saw unseemly deeds: they proph-

esied by Baal and led my people Israel astray. (V: 13)
 Not only polytheism but also anthropomorphism penetrated in
 Old Testament Theology. God appeared to Adam (Gen, 3: 8-
 21) and to Abraham (Gen, 17:1, 18: 2-33). He wrestled with
 Jacob at Peniel (Gen, 32:30), and He came down to condole
 the death of Abraham with Isaac. (Gen: 8: 18). God also buried
 Moses secretly and no one knows his grave. (Deut, 34: 6, Gen,
 8: 18 and Sota 9b) For further details, see Aspects of Rabbinic
 Theology by Rabbi Solomon Schechter, page 37.

In this verse, Quran is inviting the Jews to accept the Oneness
 of God as the common belief of both the religions.

يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ

لِمَ تَحَاجُّونَ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَا أُنزِلَتِ التَّوْرَةُ
 وَالْإِنْجِيلَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾
 هَآأَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ حَآجِّجْتُمْ فِيمَا لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ
 تَحَآجُّونَ فِيمَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَ
 أَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ يَهُودِيًّا
 وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا
 كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ
 لَلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
 وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

(65-68) People of the Book, why are you debating about
 Abraham, Torah and Injil were not revealed but after his death,
 do you not use the sense? (66) Oh' you are those who argued
 on the matter about which you had some knowledge, but why
 are you making arguments on the matter you are ignorant about?
 Allah knows, but you do not know. (67) Abraham was neither

a Jew nor a Christian, rather he was 'resolute and submissive', further he was not a polytheist. (68) The closest to Abraham are those who followed him, This Prophet and those who believed; Allah is the patron of the believers.

Jews claim that Abraham was a Jew; on the other hand, Christians claim that he was a Christian. Historically both are wrong, because Judaism started with the revelation of Torah on Moses and Christianity began with Jesus. Any sensible person can understand this fact very easily.

First of all the Jews and Christians disputed with Prophet on different theological issues, including the birth of Jesus and the status of Torah and Injil. They knew very well that the teachings of Quran are bit by bit different from their existing scriptures. But it was not possible for them to know whether these teachings correspond to the teaching of Abraham or not, since they did not have the Scripture of Abraham.

ABRAHAM'S BOOKS

Two books have been ascribed to Abraham: (a) "Apocalypse of Abraham" is a pseudepigraphal Jewish work of probably 80-100 A.D. It exists in only old Slavic Version; the original language was Hebrew or Aramaic. This work is a "midrash" (rabbinic interpretation) on Gen. 15: 9-17, relating Abraham's conversion from polytheism to monotheism (Chapters: 1-8). In this book, he receives apocalyptic vision of the future of his descendants (Chapters: 9-32). It is believed that the Christians had interpolated in chapter 29 and this interpretation is considerably different from the New Testament. (b) The second book is known as the "Testament of Abraham" which is a Jewish writing of 1st century A.D. It is available in different languages, but the original one is until missing. According to this account, Michael comes to Abraham for obtaining his soul but the prophet does not allow him unless he would see the created world.

Michael fulfills his demand (Chapters: 1-14). Chapters 15-20 relate Abraham's return to home and again he refuses to die. This time the death comes to him in the form of an angel and deceives Abraham to die. [For details see: Charlesworth's Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament and the New Testament, volume 1:681 and 871]

The Quran has also mentioned the scripture of Abraham and his visit to the heavens and earth. (6: 75; 87: 19)

In verse 67, Allah makes it clear that Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian and definitely not a polytheist, but he was *Hanif* and Muslim.

The word *hanif* is from *hnf*, which means both the 'bending or leaning towards anything' and 'steadfastness'. *Rajul ahanf* means a person whose toes are bent inwardly facing the fingers of each other, *Rajul al-hanif* is a person who is inclined to the Truth, or is resolute about his own faith. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 2: 140, Safwat al-Tafasir, 1: 87, Kash'shaf, 1: 193]

Here in this verse *hanif* means 'resolute' and 'steadfast' man. In addition to that, Quran argues, Abraham cannot be a Jew or Christian because he was not a polytheist, while you people have adopted such beliefs, which are against the monotheism of Abraham. I have discussed it above.

In verse 68, Allah says that you, the Jews and Christians, are not near to Abraham, owing to your religion, but his near and dear would be a person who would follow his teachings. (Compare 14: 36) This is what Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) was preaching i.e., the teachings of Prophet Abraham. Islam gives much importance to the religion of Abraham. In 22: 78, we read: And strive in his cause, as ye ought to strive, (with sincerity and discipline). He has chosen you and has imposed difficulties on

you regarding religion; it is the cult of your father Abraham. It is He who has named you Muslims in the past, and in this revelation; that the apostles may be a witness for you and ye are witness for humankind! So establish regular prayer, give regular charity and hold fast to Allah! He is your Protector—the best to protect and the best to help. [Abdullah Yousuf Ali]. Those who give up the religion of Abraham are called fools (2: 130), his religion is designated as the best religion (4: 125) and the right path, and right religion (6:161) his life is worthy of emulating (60: 4). Quran says, being the follower of the religion of Abraham, the Holy Prophet, and his believers are more near to Abraham than you are.

Here I would like to quote a saying of Imam Ali (A.S) from Nahj al- Balagha. He says: The persons most near to the Prophets are those who have more knowledge about the “message”, then he recited this verse of Quran (3: 68) and said “the friend of Mohammad is he who obeys Allah, even if he is not his kinfolk and the enemy of Prophet, Mohammad, is he who disobeys Allah, even if he is a close relative of him. [Nahjul Balagha, saying 96, also see Majma al- Bayan, 2: 246, Behar al-Anwar, 48: 84, Ghurar al- Hikam, 90, Tanbih al- Khatir, Maleki, 17] Imam Mohammad Taqi (A.S) has said: In this Ummah only our Shiah follow the ‘religion of Abraham. (Behar, 68: 85, H. 5) And in a saying of Imam Jafer Sadiq (A.S) we read: Whoever holds the rope of someone else other than us and asserts that he is a Shiah, he is a liar. [Sifat al-Shia by Sadooq, 3] Imam Jafar Sadiq has further said: One who asserts with his tongue, but does opposite to our character and teachings is not a Shiah. Surely, my Shiahs are those, who agree with us by tongue and by heart, those who follow our footprints and do what we do, they are our true Shiah. [Behar, 68: 164, H.13]

Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S) said to Jabir: Is it enough for a person to merely embellish oneself as a Shiah (follower) by

professing love for us, Ahlul Bayt? Nay! By Allah, a person is not our follower except the one who fears Allah and obeys Him. Jabir, our followers are not recognized save by modesty, fasting and prayers; filial devotion; attending to the poor, needy, debtors and orphans who live near him; saying the truth; reciting the Quran; withholding the tongue from people except for benediction; and being trustworthy for relatives in all affairs. [al-Kafi, 2: 74]

وَدَّتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْ

أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوِ يُضِلُّوكُمْ وَمَا يُضِلُّونَ إِلَّا
 أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ
 تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾ يَا أَهْلَ
 الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ
 وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

(69-71) A group of the People of Book yearns to move you away, they are misguiding only themselves, but they do not have enough sense. (70) People of the Book! Why are you spurning the verses of Allah, despite you are observing them. (71) People of the Book, why do you cover up the Truth with Untruth and conceal the Truth despite knowing it?

It was really a strong desire amidst Jews and Christians to budge the Prophet and the believers away from the right path whatever they did to accomplish their task, it did not harm the believers, but its harm returned back to them. One who tries to deviate anyone from the right path, he incurs only the wrath of Allah. People of the book did know that Quran is a revealed book but they used to deny it out of envy and stubbornness. Verse 71 is regarding the misreading of the auguries of Torah and Gospels about the coming of Last Prophet. The Jews and Christians usually used to conceal such prophecies or wrongly interpret them.

وَقَالَتْ طَّائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ

الْكِتَابِ آمَنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ عَلَيَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَجَاءَهُ
النَّهَارُ وَكَفَرُوا الْآخِرَةَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَلَا تَتُومِنُوا
إِلَّا لِمَن تَبِعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْهُدَىٰ هُدَىٰ اللَّهِ
أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ أَحَدًا مِّثْلَ مَا أُوتِيْتُمْ أَوْ يُحَاجُّكُمْ
عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن
يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَن
يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

(72-74) And, a faction of the People of the Book said: In early morning, pretend that you believe in what has been revealed on the 'believers', but deny it in the evening, hopefully they would return. (73) Do not trust in anyone except the follower of your religion. (Prophet) Say: Guidance is only from God, which has been given to one, as it was given to you, or will you argue with your Lord? Say: the favor rests in the hand of Allah; He confers it on those He wishes. Surely, Allah has the vast knowledge. (74) He singles out anyone for His mercy, and Allah is of enormous favor.

The verse (73) is one of the most difficult verses of this chapter (3). After going through the authentic commentaries of Quran and the traditions of Infallibles, I am convinced that my translation is right and the nearest to the spirit of Quran. From *qalat* up to *deen o kum* is the statement of Jews. Thereafter begins the counter statement of Holy Prophet. Muslim commentators have given a number of grammatical probabilities of this verse, but I think there is no need of this gabfest.

Verse 72 was revealed in connection with the activities of some

Jews like Kaab bin Ashraf and Malik bin al-Saff and some others, who planned to create doubts in the hearts of Muslims regarding the credibility of Quran. They asked Jews of Madina to show their 'belief' in the new message in the first part of the day, in order to please the Muslims, but in the evening, the miscreants went and told the people that the message is not true. They thought that this attitude will create doubts in the hearts and some of them would come back to their old religion.

In my opinion *amanoo le* (73) means 'to entrust' and not 'to believe', as almost all the translators have rendered it. This phrase is related to the coming one (75). In those days, as a common practice, Jews used to entrust their things to the Muslims and vice versa. The Jews of Chamber advised their fellows, from Aarina city, to take care in this regard and avoid entrusting their things to non- Jews.

In verses 73,74, Allah has made it clear that the true guidance is the guidance from Him; He favored Jews with it in the past and gave the 'same', in the form of Quran, to Prophet Mohammad (S.A.A.W). It is only the mercy and favor of Allah and only He knows the eligible person for this post. His knowledge is infinite and likewise His favor is unlimited.

وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ
 وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَّا يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا
 مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا
 فِي الْأُمِّينَ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ
 يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

(75) Some People of the Book are those who will return back your wealth if you would entrust them with it and some are those who would deny to pay back to you even a penny, if you

happen to deposit it unto them, except you dunned him constantly. It is just because they say, "we have no duty regarding the Gentiles." They are foisting on Allah a lie, consciously.

Here God is appreciating the trustworthiness of some Jews who were honest in dealing with the others, regardless of their beliefs. However, there were some dishonest persons among them. They claimed that ingesting the wealth of non-Jews was allowed under the Torah. Allah says that they are telling a lie.

THE PROOF FROM THE BIBLE

The Bible proves that the statement of Quran is true. According to the Biblical scholars, the 10th commandment encompasses all sorts of dishonesty and cheating. Not only in the Old Testament but also in Talmud, honesty has been appreciated and dishonesty has been condemned severely. When a person would be brought before the tribunal, after death, the first question put to him would be: "Have you been honest in transactions?" (Shab, 31 a) In the Book of Leviticus (6: 1-5), we read an important statement, which reads as thus: the Lord said to Moses, "if any one sins and commits a breach of faith against the Lord by deceiving his neighbor in a matter of deposit or security, or through robbery, or if he has oppressed his neighbor, or has found what was lost and lied about it, swearing falsely – in any of all the things which men do and sin therein, when one has sinned and become guilty, he shall restore what he took by robbery, or what he got by oppression, or the deposit which was committed to him, or the lost thing, which he found, or anything about which he has sworn falsely; he shall restore it in full and shall add a fifth to it and give it to whom it belongs, on the day of his guilt offering.

These lines are very clear and support the statement of Quran that dishonesty is not allowed in the Torah. As a counterstatement to Jew's claim that we have no duty concerning the rights of non

Jews I would refer the reader to these lines: When a stranger sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus, 19: 33-34) The Bible considers dishonesty as the 'abomination to the Lord' (Deut, 25: 16). Psalms advise us not to set eyes on 'extortion' (Ps, 62: 10) and in Proverbs there is instruction 'Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due' (Pro, 3:27). There is a sweet saying regarding this sort of acts in the Proverbs, "Bread gained by deceit is sweet to a man, but afterward his mouth will be full of gravel." (20: 17) For Rabbinic descriptions, see Everyman's Talmud, by Abraham Cohen. [Chapter on Honesty, pp. 227-228]

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَىٰ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ

يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ

وَآيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي

الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ

الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝

(76-77) But that who keeps his pledge and is pious, then God loves those who have His fear. (77) Those who sell out the covenants made with God and also their own oaths, for a paltry price, no share lies for them in the life hereafter, God will neither address them, nor look to them on the Day of Judgment and they will not be counted as righteous by Allah and for them would be a painful castigation.

The Quran lays great emphasis on keeping the promises and pledges and condemns those who fail to honor their promises; this is the central idea of these two verses too. (Compare: 2: 100, 177; 17: 35; 16: 92) Quran counts it among the virtues of the

believers (23: 8; 70: 32) The Holy Prophet said: There are three signs of a hypocrite, when he talks he lies, when he makes a promise he violates it and when something is entrusted to him, he embezzles it. [al-Kafi, 2: 221; Riaz al-Salehin, 302. Chp: 86] It has been reported from Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S) that: God has not given any concession in three matters: (1) Returning entrusted things to the owner, whether he is good fellow or bad; (b) keeping the promise, irrespective of it being made to a good person or a bad one; and (3) good behavior and hospitality with the parents, whether they are good or bad. [al-Kafi, 2: 129 and al-Khisal, 1: 123]

Quran has strongly denounced those who are careless about keeping promises, pledges, covenants, and the deposits of the others. There existed a group of Jews, at the time of Holy Prophet, which used to pile up the wealth by extortion, bribe and by confiscating the wealth of orphans and the destitute. Such people still exist even among the Muslims. Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has disapproved those heinous practices by which people try to shake down other's wealth. Some people even bear false oath for annexing the wealth of other Muslim Brothers into their own. Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: One who deprives a Muslim of his right by taking false oath, or swearing falsely, God has destined for him the 'fire' and forbidden for him Jannah. His companion asked: Prophet, even if it is a valueless thing? The Prophet said: Yes, even if it is a piece of straw. In another tradition, reported by Hadrami, the Prophet declared: One who takes false oath for grabbing other's wealth, he will meet the God annoyed at him. [Sahih Bukhari, 2: 987; Tafseer Tabari, 3: 228, Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 120, Ibn Kathir by Sabooni, 1: 301, reported from Musnad Ahmad and Nesai, Rooh al-Maani, 2: 325]

An important phrase has been repeated here, i.e., *wala yuzakkihim*, (See, 2: 174). In my view, its meanings are "God will not count them among the righteous persons." Holy Prophet

has said that three people will receive this treatment from Allah, the adulterous of good mature age, a liar leader, and an arrogant poor. [Muslim, 1: 71, Majma al-Bayan, 2: 253, Tafseer Qurtabi]

وَأَنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلُونِ السَّنْتَهِمُ بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ
 مِنْ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ
 عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
 الْكِذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝

(78) There is a group of them, which twists the language of the Book, so that you deem it a part of the Book, while it is not part of the Book. And they claim it to be from 'Allah', while it is not from Him; but they are fabricating a lie against Allah knowingly.

I have discussed the contortion of and interpolation in the scriptures on 2: 75 and 79 (Vol: 1). Here in this verse a different type of distortion of the text is being pointed out: 'distortion by twisting the tongue for speaking a word different from the actual word used in the Book'. Its ultimate result is the 'change of language'.

The Arabic word used here is *yalona*, which means twisting of hand or tongue or rope. [al-Mufradat by Raghib Isphahani, 457; Tafseer Tabari, 3: 231; Majma al-Bayan, 2: 253, 54; Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 121, Kabir, 3: 267, Kash'shaf, 1: 369] One can easily change a word with another word of similar pronunciation but of different meanings, called homonyms. For instance take this sentence: He showed to the people his difference / deference. The meanings of second word are 'respect'. What a great difference is between the two words of similar pronunciation? It is true in the case of other languages also. The Quran is pointing out this sort of changes, which Jews did at the

time of Holy Prophet.

مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ

اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَ وَالنَّبُوءَةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ

كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّيْنَ

بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَمِمَّا كُنْتُمْ تُدْرَسُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَلَائِكَةَ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ أَرْبَابًا

أَيُّكُمْ بِالْكَفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

(79-80) It is not expected from a man that Allah gave him the Book, the wisdom and prophetic office and he would say to people: Serve me in spite of Allah; rather he would say: Be the Godly people, since you teach and interpret the Book. (80) He will not ask you to take the angels and the prophets as your 'Lords'. Should he ask you to deviate after you have become a Muslim?

In verse 79, two words need some explanation, i.e., *Rabbani'yin* and *Tadrosoun*. The first word is plural of "rabbani" derived from *rab*, the Lord, the God. Rabbani means a person who spends his life in full conformity with the law of God and remains righteous and pious. Keeping in view all these meanings, I have translated it as 'Godly one'. The second word is from Hebrew word *daras*, which means to seek, to investigate, explain in detail. The rabbinic commentary of the Torah is called *madras*, commonly known as 'Midrash'. The word used in Quran 'tadrosoun' is derived from the same Hebrew *daras*, it is used in Arabic too.

At 2: 62 (Vol: 1) I have discussed that Sabians were the worshippers of Angels. There are some other cults, which worship them.

WHO ARE THE ANGELS?

At 2: 62, (vol. 1) I have explained that Sabians were the worshippers of angels. There are some other cults, which see the angel worship essential.

The Angel or Arabic *Malak*, or Hebrew *Mal'akh* means "the messenger." The English word Angel is derived from the Greek **aggelos**, which is used in the same meanings. In Semitic theologies, angels are the ministers of God who execute His orders in the world and help the people in different ways. The Quran has used only one word *malak*, plural *malaikah*, for them but in Hebrew Scriptures we find different interesting expressions, like: **abbirim**, the mighty (Ps, 77: 25), **elohim**, gods (Ps, 8: 6), **ben'elohim**, (Job:1: 6, 2: 1) and **bene elim**, sons of God (Ps, 88: 7, 28: 1), **masartim**, ministers (Ps, 102: 21), **abadin**, servants (Job, 4: 18), **qadosim**, holy ones (Ps, 88: 6,8, Job, 5: 1, 15: 15, Dan, 8: 13), Aramaic word **ir**, watchers (Dan, 4: 10, 14, 20), **saba**, hosts (3 Kings, 22: 19, 2 Ch, 18: 18, Neh, 9: 6, Ps, 148: 2). The angelology in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam will be discussed latter on at 35: 1. See Catholic Encyclopedia, 1: 506-515.

In the days of Holy Prophet, there existed a group of people, who believed that the Angels were the daughters of God, see, 37: 149; 52: 39; 53: 21, 27 and 17: 40. Even the Jews used to name them as the sons of God (see above).

The devotion to angels has been common in Assyrians, Persians and Egyptians. In Accadians / Akkadians the protective angel is called *karibu*, but there is no identity between these pagan deities and the Hebrew *kerubin*. The Old Testament offers some manifestations of Angelic cults.e.g, by Balaam (Numb, 22: 21-35), Tobit, (Tb, 12: 6) and Daniel (10: 9). St. Paul implicitly

taught veneration of angels at 1 Cor, 11: 10, Gal, 4: 14). Apostle John was rebuked and corrected for offering excessive veneration to an angel (Apocalypse, 22: 8-9). The acceptance of the angelology of Pseudo-Dionysus (5-6 century) is largely responsible for angelic cults becoming universally established in the Church. [PG, 3: 119-370, Celestial Hierarchy].

Devotion to the angels has been perpetuated in various ways in the last two centuries, but in particular through: (a) associations and societies, such as Archon fraternity of St. Michael Archangel, formerly established by Leo xiii (1878) and Episcopally approved association of Philangeli (Friends of Angels) founded in England in 1950 by Mary Angela Jeeves, (b) patronage under the titles of Holy and Guardian Angels in general and St. Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, in particular, (c) publications on the importance and nature of angels, (d) variety of liturgical and non-liturgical rites or practices—Masses, Divine Offices in honor of Guardian Angels and Archangels mentioned above. Prayers to the angels can be found in different “collections” available at bookstores and libraries. For further detail see the following books: A.A.Bialas. The Patronage of St. Michael, the archangel [Chicago, 1954], J. Danielu. The angels and their mission [translation, Westminster. M.D.1957], P. Parente. The angels [St. Meinard, Indiana 1958], J.W. Moran. St. Paul’s doctrine of Angels, American Ecclesiastical Review 132 (1955) [pp. 374-384]. Worship of Jesus as God is the ample proof of ‘Prophet worship’.

وَإِذَا خَدَّ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّنَ لِمَا اتَّيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ
 وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ
 لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ
 عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا

وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَمَنْ تَوَلَّى بَعْدَ
ذَلِكَ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ أَفَغَيْرِ دِينِ اللَّهِ
يَبْغُونَ وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
طَوْعًا وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٨٣﴾

(81-83) And when Allah took the "Covenant about Prophets": When the Books and Wisdom will be given to you, thereafter an Apostle will come and confirm what you already had, so you must believe in him and help him. Allah said: Did you agree and take this obligation? They replied, "yes we did agree." Allah said: Then bear witness and I am myself "a witness" along with you. (82) Those who will turn their backs, they will be the breakers (of covenant). (83) Are they seeking something other than the 'Religion of Allah'? While everything in the heavens and the earth has submitted itself to Him, willingly or unwillingly and to Him they should be drawn back.

The verse 81 is one of the difficult verses of Quran, because its language has different shades of meanings and the translators have become extremely confused therewith. I think all the 'reflective pronouns', used in this verse, are related to the people of the book. This plain translation is self-explanatory and does not require more words.

In verse 83 Allah is speaking about the folly of the people. We can clearly see that everything in this cosmos is bind to obey the Laws of Nature, set by Allah, then how can we seek a system other than what has been prescribed for us by God?

قُلْ أَمَّا بِاللَّهِ

وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ
وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ

وَعِيسَىٰ وَالتَّبِيَّوْنَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ سَلَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ
أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ
غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ ۗ وَهُوَ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا
كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَ
جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾
أُولَئِكَ جَزَاءُهُمْ أَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ
وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ
العَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ
بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

(84-89) Say: We believed in Allah and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants and what was handed over to Moses, Jesus and to other Prophets, by their Lord; and that we equally believe in them without any difference and we are committed to Him. (85) Whosoever will yearn a religion other than Islam, it would not be accepted from him and in life hereafter, he will suffer the loss. (86) How can Allah guide those people who committed heresy after showing their belief and they had testified that this prophet is truthful and they had watched the portents? Allah does not guide the unjust ones. (87) The punishment of such people would be the curse of Allah, Angels and of the whole humankind. (88) They will suffer from the curse forever, their torment should not be alleviated, and they should not be given any chance. (89) Except those who will repent and mend their ways; then Allah is the absolutely forgiving one and the merciful.

Islam demands from its followers to strongly believe in previously

revealed books and the prophets of the past. Muslims have to profess that all these books and prophets were from God, but their tenure is now over. Now they have to follow the Last Prophet, Mohammad (Peace is upon Him). They have to believe in and follow the last divine book al- Quran, which was revealed to the Last Prophet (S.A.A.W).

Verse 84 is about the Muslims, while verses 85-89 are about those non-Muslims, including Christians, who embraced Islam but after sometime they became renegades. Allah says that they should face a heavy curse from Allah, the Angels and the people, and they will face it forever.

The door of repentance is open and it is never closed; therefore, these people can come back into the fold of Islam. Allah accepts the repentance, and forgives the sinners, since he is merciful. The Holy Law for the apostates will be discussed at its proper place.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The above verses of Quran show that Allah gave the scriptures to different prophets. Quran tells us about Torah of Moses, Zaboor or Writings of David and Injil or Gospel of Jesus and the Scroll of Abraham. We do not certainly know the names of other books. The Bible in our hands (different versions) is claimed to be the *library* of Holy Books, as it literary means, which were inspired in or written by the prophets to whom these books are attributed. I have said enough on this topic earlier in the pages of this commentary. Here I would like to write a few lines on the arrangement of The Bible.

The Bible is a collection of books, which has been accepted by the Jews and Christians, through the centuries, as the authentic religious books of their religion. The Bible is divided into two main canons called The Old Testament or Hebrew Bible and the New Testament or Greek Testament, as both the Christians and

Jews prefer to call them. Let me discuss the Old Testament (O.T) first.

There are two main Jewish traditions in the matter, the Palestinian and the Alexandrian. After 70 A.D. the Jew Rabbis met at Jamnia, a town west of Jerusalem, to decide their canon, Johanan ben Zakkai was presiding the session. They accepted thirty-nine books (counted as twenty four). These thirty-nine books are called Palestinian Canon. The attitude of the Greek speaking Jews, living outside Jerusalem, can be seen in the practice of the rabbis in Alexandria. They accepted seven additional books (1 & 2 Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, Sirach, Wisdom and Baruch) and some additional parts of Daniel and Esther. Jewish scholars translated the Alexandrian canon into Greek and it became the "Scripture" commonly used by early Christian authors. Today the Jews and Protestants accept the Palestinian canon, while the Catholics follow the Alexandrian canon and thus include the additional books in The Bible. These additional books are called Deutrocanon. The Hebrew Canon was originally divided into three parts: The Law (Hebrew torah, or instructions), the Prophets (Hebrew Nebi'im) and the Writings (Hebrew ketubim). The Law or Torah is also called the Five Books of Moses, or Pentateuch: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. "The Prophets," in turn, are further divided into Former (Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings) and Latter Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve minor prophets, from Hosea to Malachi). The "Writings" consist of Ruth, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Daniel, Esther, Ezra and Nehemiah and 1-2 Chronicles—the sequence adopted in the Talmud. Most of the modern versions follow the order of book as set in Septuagint or Greek version.

The New Testament is divided into the Historical Books (four gospels of Matthew, Luke, Mark and John and also Acts of Apostles), the Prophetic Books (the Epistles) and the Apocalypse (Rev-

elations). The epistles are further divided into Major Pauline Letters (Romans, 1-2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1-2 Thessalonians), the so-called Prison Letters (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon), the Pastoral Letters (1-2 Timothy and Titus), Hebrews and the Catholic Letters (James, 1-2 Peter, 1,2,3 John and Jude).

According to Quran, Zaboor was revealed on Prophet Dawood or David (4: 163; 17: 55). *Zbr* means to write, hence the written document. (Taj al-Uroos) Some other scholars say that the root meaning of this word is "Piece, or a piece of paper or a plate of silver or gold (Baghvi, Maalim al-Tanzil 3: 52) According to Islamic traditions, David was not a singer or Musician, rather he was a true prophet of God and whenever he attained to praise the God, his melodic voice attracted a large number of people, jinns and birds.

The Jews do not accept David and his son Solomon as the prophets; rather for them, they were Kings. The scholars have shown that outside the Psalter, ancient songs of Israel are embedded in narrative texts describing Israel's formative period. Recent studies in Hebrew and comparative poetry of the ancient Near East have emphasized the antiquity of compositions such as the Song of the Sea (Exod, 15: 1- 18), the song of Moses (Deut, 32), The song of Deborah (Judges, 5) and the Song of Hannah (1 Sam, 2: 1-10). Evidence for early collections of Songs is found in quotations from The Book of Wars of the Lord (Number 21: 14) and "The Book of Jashar (Josh. 10: 13; 2 Sam, 1: 18) Psalms can easily be divided into five sections, (a) 1-41, (b) 42-72, (c) 73-89, (d) 90-106, (e) 107-150. Out of 150 Psalms, 73 Psalms have been ascribed to David. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say certainly that these pieces are the work of David. Famous scholar W. Graham Scroggie has said: "So that the process of compilation may have occupied seven hundred years, though some critics allow only three hundred years, from the fifth to the second century B.C. Probably Book I belongs to the early period of Jewish

Monarchy, Book II and III to middle period and Books IV and V to the post exilic period. In all likelihood, the first book was compiled by Solomon, the second and third books after many years by the men of Hezekiah (Prov 25: 1; 2 Chron. 29: 30) and the fourth and fifth books later until in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. [A Guide to the Psalms, Introduction. Page. 15]. This scholar has not ascribed any book to the David.

Verse 85 demands from the people to embrace Islam, because no other set of beliefs is acceptable in the sight of Allah. In Quran, Allah has cursed the people for different crimes like, telling lies (3: 61), injustice (7: 44; 11: 18), those who make false allegations on the chastity of innocent women (24: 7, 23), Allah has also cursed the nations of Pharaoh and Aad (11: 66, 99; 28: 42). The strong curse used here in verse 87 has been repeated in 2: 161. The Arabic word *laa'nah* means 'to cast away from the mercy', usually this word is translated by 'curse'. The Hebrew words, used for this expression, in the Old Testament are 'ala, 'arar, qalal.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ثُمَّ أَزْدَادُوا كُفْرًا لَنْ
تُقْبَلَ تَوْبَتُهُمْ، وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الضَّالُّونَ ۝ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْ
أَحَدِهِمْ مِلُّ الْأَرْضِ ذَهَبًا وَلَوْ افْتَدَى بِهِ ۗ
أُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ۝

(90-91) Those who adopted apostasy after believing, thereafter they advanced in defiance of Faith, their repentance should not be accepted and they are really the wrong ones. (91) Those who defected and died in this condition, no ransom even if it would be equal to gold filling the earth. For them is a painful chastisement and they will not have any helpers.

It appears that the verses 87- 89 and 90 are contradictory,

because in the former it has been declared that the repentance of infidels will be acceptable and the latter one denies the acceptance of repentance and ransom.

Scholars have presented a number of possibilities regarding the real meanings of these two verses. In my opinion, 'repentance' in verses 87-89 is related to the strong curse of Allah, the angels and the humankind. The repentance from these cursed people will be accepted and they will come out of the curse. The use of the word of 'exemption' (illa) also supports my point of view. However, in verse 90 it is related to punishment in the life hereafter. There is no contradiction between the two verses. I have briefly discussed the conditions of apostasy while explaining 2: 217; the legal implications of this act will be discussed at 4: 137. Also, see 5: 54.

APOSTASY IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

What are apostasy and its Nature? Apostasy is, in its religious sense, conversion from one religion to another religion. Contemporary scholars have argued that conversion and commitment are discrete acts that may occur at different times, so that one may convert to a new religion before one has fully committed to the groups doctrine and beliefs. [Rosabeth Kanter, *Commitment and Community*. Cambridge 1972] Allen F. Segal puts the matter this way: Conversion most often precedes commitment, so that the phenomenon of commitment includes more aspects than merely conversion. Conversion merely begins the process of commitment to the group. Segal also says, "the central aspect of conversion is a decision to reconstruct reality. [Paul the convert: The apostolate and apostasy of Paul the Pharisee. New Haven. London 1990. P. 75, 76]

According to Thomas Finn, "They denote a turning towards, from, away, return... The Hebrew root is shub, the Greek

strephein and the Latin converter. All three point directly to a physical or material move or change; yet indirectly, to a change of spirit or mind, specifically to a change of conviction and way of life. [From *death to Rebirth: Rituals and Conversion in Antiquity*. N.Y. 1977. PP. 19-20]

In Judaism the apostasy is a capital crime, it is so heinous that whole city of the 'scoundrels' (certain base fellows, Oxford Bible) should be put to sword, along with its cattle. Later on it should be put on fire. "Let it be heap of ruins forever, never to be rebuilt," says The Bible. (See Deuteronomy 13: 13-18) In Isaiah 65: 11-12 we are told: But you who forsake the Lord, who forget my holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny; I will destine you to the sword and all of you shall bow down to the slaughter; because when I called, you did not answer, when I spoke, you did not listen, but you did what was evil in my eyes and chose what I did not delight in.

According to rabbinic literature, "whole Israel has a share in the world to come, but these apostates do not have a share in life to come; whoever says there is no resurrection of the dead in the Torah and there is no Torah from heaven and the Epicurean (San: 10: 1). Compare Psalm, 44: 18-19, Zeph, 1: 4-6. The example of Amaziah has been cited at 2 Ch, 25: 14, 27.

In Christianity, apostasy is a gravely sinful act by which one totally abandons, inwardly and outwardly (Rom, 10: 10), the catholic faith in which he has been baptized and which he has heretofore professed (St. Thomas Aquinas). Complete and massive disbelief is the immediate term for such an apostasy from the catholic faith. In order to have the sin of apostasy it is not required that the defector find a surrogate for the Christian faith, which he has entirely forsworn, in a non-Christian religion, such as Judaism, Islam or paganism, much less that he starts a

new non-Christian religion of his own devising. Even if he remains alienated from religious belief of any kind and lead an entirely irreligious life, he is an apostate from the faith. In concrete pastoral sense an apostate differs notably from a heretic in that (1) unlike the heretic who "retains" the name of Christian, he abjures and discards that name completely and (2) while he may pass over to a non-Christian religion he does not form a rival Christian communion, as heretics often have done. [Catholic Encyclopedia, 1: 679]

The New Testament speaks very clearly against the apostasy and apostates. The punishment for such persons has been described at Hebrews, 10: 25-31, and 2 Peter, 2: 17, 20-22) It is important to note that an edict of 383 C.E, explicitly mentions Manichaeism in the same context as pagan temples and Jewish rights. Christians simply carried on the persecution of Manicheans started by Diocletian in 297 C.E. These teachers were to be punished, the attendants of their assemblies to become infamous, and their houses and habitations in which the doctrine was taught to be expropriated by the government. [Encyclopedia of Religions, 1: 353-54]



PART FOUR YOU SHALL NEVER ATAIN THE GOODNESS

The Fourth Part of the Quran *lan tanaloo al-birr* (You shall Never Attain the Goodness) starts from verse 92 of chapter three and ends at 23rd verse of chapter four "The Women", thus consisting 132 verses.

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تَحِبُّونَ ۗ
وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ۙ

(92) You can never attain goodness, unless you spend out of which you like the most. And whatever you spend, God knows it very well.

There is a vast discussion on the meanings of Arabic word *birr*, which has been used in this verse. The famous Linguistic, Allama Murtaza Zabidi, has described this term in these words: The meanings of *birr* are reward and taking care of relatives and fellow beings (60: 8; 3: 92). Abu Mansoor has said that *birr* means the goodness of this world and the hereafter, whatever Allah has bestowed on us in this world is the 'goodness' of it, and whatever we will be favored with in the end that would be the 'goodness' of that everlasting world. Holy Prophet has said: You have to stay at 'truth', since it leads to goodness, and goodness takes you to paradise. My teacher says that *birr* means the 'wideness and the open space' in the same sense the earth is called *berr*. Then people started using this word in the sense of vast goodness. Mujaddad al-Din Firozabadi says, in Basayr, that *birr* means "the goodness that cannot be measured." When it is used in reference with God, it means 'the reward from Him and His bounties.' On the other hand, it is used in the sense of conviction and obedience, in reference of

men (2: 177). Holy Prophet was asked to describe the *birr* and he recited the verse referred above. [Taj a-Uroos, 3: 36, 37, Egypt, also see, Majma al-Bayan, 2: 263-65]. The tradition of Holy Prophet, quoted by Allama Zabidi, is also present in Tafseer Qurtabi [4: 133]. See also Safwat al-Tafasir, 1: 198.

In this verse, the other point of discussion is *tunfeqoo mimma*. For some scholars, word *min* is for limiting the expenditure, it means, "you have to expend a portion of your beloved things and not the whole." On the other hand, some scholars take it as 'descriptive word' and include in it everything that one likes. It appears from the traditions of Holy Prophet that the first view is much sound.

This verse prepares the people for sacrificing their lives and properties in the name of Allah, as well as for the welfare of kinfolk and fellow beings. The last phrase of the verse is very important. Allah asks the people to expend the most beloved things out of their possession. One may give away something, which is less dearly to him than the other items, but he may pretend that he is sacrificing the most beloved thing. Allah says whatever you expend, I know its quality very well and I know whether you are expending it out of my love or doing it unwillingly.

كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ
 إِسْرَائِيلُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ
 قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِالتَّوْرَةِ فَاتْلُوهَا إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾
 فَمَنْ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ
 فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾

(93-94) Every food was allowed for Israelites, save what Israel had forbade to himself, before the revelation of 'law'. Say:

Bring Torah and read it out, if you are truthful. (94) Those who will foist lie on Allah, after this moment, they will surely be the unjust ones.

According to Muslim sources, Jews once came to Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and asked: Why do you eat camel, despite the fact it has been forbidden in Torah. The verse 93 was revealed to Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) as rejoinder to Jews. Let us see what The Bible says about it: "Nevertheless among those that chew the cud or part the hoof, you shall not eat these: The camel, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof is unclean for you". (Leviticus, 11: 4)

THE CAMEL is from Greek word kamelos, which is called "gamal" in Hebrew and "Jamal" in Arabic language. It is divided into two species, (a) camelus dromedarius the dromedary (Isa, 66: 20). Here in this verse, the Hebrew word kirkaroi has been used, which means 'the swift beast' (KJ), while at Isa, 60: 6, the Hebrew word 'beger' has been used for the camel having one hump, (b) camelu bactrianus, or two humped camel. The oldest trace of the camel in Egypt goes back to 3000. B.C. In the Old Testament, we find Prophet Abraham possessing this animal (Gen, 12: 16), he is said to have given a number of camel to his steward in his trip to Paddan-aram (Gen, 24: 10). Later on, his grand son Jacob (Israel) acquired them in Mesopotamia (30: 43); later on, he took them to Palestine (31: 17). Egyptians, Ishmaelite, and other tribes had their own herds of camels. Not a single example of the use of camel as food exists in the scriptures. However, history of Prophets and Patriarchal age tells us that camel was a general food item. The verse under discussion tells us that Prophet Jacob made a vow to avoid it. Until that time there were no 'divine instructions' regarding this issue. However, sometimes later the Jews made it 'unclean' for themselves, without any authority.

In the same verse, the word 'torah' has been used twice. The context shows that at first place, it has been used for 'divine law', but at second place, it is for "Revealed Book Torah." People of Torah were not asked to avoid camel as food, but they themselves made it a law. This verse also shows that at the time of Holy Prophet the commands, referred above, were not the part of Torah and were interpolated at later stage. The Jews were transgressors; therefore, Allah imposed some restrictions on them regarding edible foods (4: 160) as punishment.

Jacob did not commit any sin by pledging to avoid camel as food because God had not revealed any instructions in this regard. Allama Razi has said: When a person vows to abstain from something it becomes an obligation on him, it was the case of Prophet Jacob concerning the consumption of camel meat. [Kabir, 3: 293] Also, compare The Quran, 4: 160.

There is a fine difference between *kazeba aalayh* and *kazeba laho*. The former is used for expressing one's distrust on other's statement, but the latter is used for negation. In verse 94, the former expression is more appropriate.

قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ تَ قَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

(95) Say: Allah told the truth, therefore, follow the religion of Abraham, the righteous one and he was not a polytheist.

These three verses are strong proofs of the truth of Quran. If these instructions, mentioned in previous verses, would not have been present at the time of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) in Torah, the Jews must have shown up with it, but it did not happen. Therefore, Allah says: follow the religion of Abraham, his teachings were the right one and he himself was the devout and

sworn believer of the oneness of Allah.

The word *Millah* means 'set of beliefs' or religion and *Itteba* means following the footprints of a person. The Muslims are required to follow the Holy Prophet whose religion is the religion of Abraham.

إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي
بِبَكَّةَ مُبْرَكًا وَهُدًى لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ فِيهِ آيَةٌ
لِّلْبَيْتِ مَقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۗ وَمَن دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا
وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ
سَبِيلًا ۗ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

(96-97) The first "House of Worship," built for men at Bakkah, is a blessed site and a mark of guidance for worlds. (97) In it are the clear portents and the station of Abraham. One who would enter in it will remain in peace. For the sake of Allah is ordained on people the pilgrimage of the House, if he can afford it; and one who refuses it, thus the God needs no one in the world.

The word *Bakkah* is derived from *al-Bak*, which means a big crowd of people. The place is called *Bakkah* because a large number of people come to visit the sanctuary. The famous name of this city is *Makkah*, which is from *Makk* and it means the scarcity and dearth of something. *Makkah* had not sufficient water for the residents and pilgrims; this is the reason behind its name [Majma al-Bayan, 2:267; al-Mizan, 3: 350; Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 138]. According to some scholars, the site of Kaabah is *Bakkah* but the rest of the city is *Makkah*. [Ibn Kathir by Sabooni, 1: 308]

I have discussed the history of Kaabah in the first volume

while discussing 2: 125, 146.

There are a number of traditions of Holy Prophet highlighting the importance and sanctity of Kaabah and Mecca. Ibn Abbas says: On the day of the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet said "Allah has declared this city as 'sacred', its thorns will not be cut, its animals will not be caused to run and that no one will pick up anything from its surface, which he finds unattended". [Bukhari, 1: 216, also 180] Jabir says, "Prophet has said that carrying arms to Makkah is not allowed for anyone."

Kaaba has been sacred for different religions through the centuries. Some Hindus believe that the soul of their third god, Siva, entered into the 'Black Stone' when he visited the shrine with his wife. For the Sabians of Iran and Chaldea, Kaabah was one of the seven most sacred places in the world; some of them believe that it is the House of Saturn. For some Jews it is sacred because Prophet Abraham completed its construction. Before Holy Prophet, there were images of Prophets Abraham and Ishmael in it, with spears in their hands. For a short period, the Christians also kept the images of Virgin Mary and Jesus in the Kaabah. Among the Arabs, its sanctity had been out of question since remote past. [al-Mizan, 3: 362]

We can rely on the statement of Allama Tabatabai, but he has not given his source of information. Also, see, "Muhammad" by Martin Lings (P. 4). *Tarikh al-Makkah* by Mohammad Abd al-Maabood is a lengthy book (2 Volumes) but, unfortunately, not sound historically.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There is a debate among the scholars about Kaabah as a place of peace. Abu Hanifa and his followers say that anyone who

commits a crime and comes inside the Kaabah for refuge, he cannot be punished as long as he remains inside. [Abu Bakar Jassas, Ahkam al-Quran, 2: 21] Imam Ibn Jarir al-Tabari has given some traditions of the same implication [Tafseer Tabari, 4: 9, 10]. Tafseer Qurtabi has reported that Prophet (S.A.A.W) ordered to kill Ibn Khatal while he was holding the top-cover of Kaabah after committing the crime [Tafseer Qurtabi, 4:141]. Allama Qurtabi says that most of the Scholars are of the opinion that the criminal will be arrested from the precincts of Kaaba and punished duly. [Previous reference] Allama Tabrasi has given the same opinion. [Majma al-Bayan, 2: 269] Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S) says: One who enters it with honoring all its dues, he will be in peace and rest on the Day of Judgment. [Majma al-Bayan, 2: 478, Namoonah, 3: 34, Manhaj al-Sadeqin, 2: 380] Allama Qurtabi has quoted almost the same words from Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S). See 4: 142. Imam Malik, Shafa'i and Imam Ahmed have said that the criminal should be punished even if he takes refuge in Kaabah. [See Jassas, 2: 21]

THE ELIGIBLE PILGRIMES

The person who comes up to the standard given below is eligible for performing the Haj.

1. Adult, Haj is not obligatory on minors.
2. Performing Haj is compulsory only on mentally healthy people.
3. The "intended pilgrim" must not have another obligation more important than Haj, such as attending a terminally ill person.
4. Only those can perform Haj who can afford its necessary expenditures.

5. There must not be any potential threat to their lives or properties.
6. Physical ability to perform the Haj is an unavoidable condition.
7. The intended pilgrim must have enough time to reach Makkah and perform Haj easily.
8. He must leave behind the sustenance for those who are under his care.
9. He must have a regular source of income, so that he should not face any hardship on returning home. [Jawwad Maghniah, Fiqh al-Sadiq, 2: 138-147, Imam Khomenie, Tahrir al-Wasilah, 1: 370-388]

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ۗ
وَاللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝١٥٠ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ
الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَن أَمَنَ
تَبِعُونَهَا عِوَجًا ۗ وَأَنتُمْ شُهَدَاءُ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ
بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ۝١٥١ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
إِن تَطِيعُوا فَرِيقًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ يَرُدُّوكُم
بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ كَافِرِينَ ۝١٥٢ وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَ
أَنتُمْ تَتْلُوا عَلَيكُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ ۗ
وَمَنْ يَعْتَصِمْ بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ
مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ۝١٥٣

(98-101) Say: People of the Book, why do you deny the verses of Allah, while Allah knows whatever you do? (99) Say: People of the Book, why do you want to block the way of Allah for those who yielded to believe and wish them to deviate? You yourself are the witnesses and Allah is not oblivious of your activities. (100) Believers, if you should obey a group of the People of the Book, they will convert you as infidels, after you had believed. (101) And how can you become apostate, when the verses of Allah are being recited before you and his apostle is present between you; one who would hold Allah firmly, he would get the guidance to the right path.

In verse 98, 'the verses of Allah' mean the orders and teachings of Allah and *shaheed* means, in Arabic, a person who knows anything by observation and is a witness to it. The word *ewaj* mean a crooked wall.

According to some commentators the verse 100 was revealed when the event of Shas bin Qais took place. Shas was a Jew and he tried to ignite the cinders of war between tribes of Aus and Khizraj, who were formerly the Jews. However, Prophet (S.A.A.W) poured water on the flames of war and both the tribes refrained from battle. [Tabari, 4: 16; al-Mizan, 3: 364; al-Manar, 4 and Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 155, Safwat al-Tafasir, 1: 200]

The verse 101 is a key to success for those Muslims who have strong desire to remain on the right path. Allah says how you can swerve from the right path when the revelation of Quran is pouring in, and the Apostle of Allah is alive among you. We believe that Prophet is still alive in his grave and Quran is a living book in the society. They both are the main sources of knowledge and inspiration for Muslims of the world.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ

تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَاعْتَصِمُوا

بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا ۗ وَاذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ

اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ كُنْتُمْ أَعْدَاءً فَأَلَّفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوبِكُمْ

فَأَصْبَحْتُمْ بِنِعْمَتِهِ إِخْوَانًا ۗ وَكُنْتُمْ عَلَى شَفَا حُفْرَةٍ

مِّنَ النَّارِ فَأَنْقَذَكُمْ مِنْهَا ۗ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ

آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

(102-103) Believers, fear Allah duly and do not die but as Muslims. (103) Hold the 'link to God' collectively and do not be scattered. Call to mind the favor of God to you; at the time you were enemies to each other He brought your hearts closer and you became brothers with His grace. Moreover, you were at the brim of "pit of fire" but He pulled you out of it. In this manner, Allah clarifies His instructions for you, so that you may have guidance.

MEANINGS OF TAQWA

Taqwa is one of the most important terms of Islamic Ethics and theological system. This is from the root word *wqa*, which means to protect by keeping away; *taqwa* has both the shades of meaning, the fear, protection, and awesomeness. One who would have the fear of Allah; he would obviously protect himself against the wrath and punishment of Allah by keeping away from disobedience and practicing His teachings as much as possible. Therefore, *taqwa* means fear from disobedience and love for obedience of Allah. This concept encompasses all the necessary teachings and force of practice.

In Quran, we read the following blessings, which have been

promised to those who decorate themselves with this virtue: (1) Allah will give them ability to distinguish between right and wrong (8: 29); (2) *taqwa* is the best possession (2: 197); (3) *taqwa* is one of the best attributes (3: 186); (4) *taqwa* protects from the intrigues of the enemies (3: 120); (5) *taqwa* brings the people closer to God (16: 128); (6) *taqwa* protects from hell fire (19: 71, 72; 27: 53; 39: 61); (7) *taqwa* leads to paradise (3: 133); (8) Allah helps out those who have *taqwa* of Allah and feeds them from sources beyond their imagination (65: 2, 3); (9) *taqwa* ensures the forgiveness of our sins by God (49: 3; 65: 5); (10) *taqwa* leads us to good deeds (33: 70, 71); (11) God loves those who have *taqwa* (9: 4, 7); (12) the best persons in the sight of Allah are those who excel in *taqwa* (49: 13); (13) Allah accepts the deeds of only those who have *taqwa* (5: 27); (14) beatitudes of the goodness of this world and the hereafter are for those who have *taqwa* (10: 63, 64; 20: 132); (15) only those receive the blessings of Allah who have *taqwa* (7: 96); (16) *muttaqin* will not be accountable before God as the others would be (6: 69).

There are a large number of traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and Imams (S.A.A.W) describing the importance and excellence of this virtue. In one of the traditions of Holy Prophet, we read: Neither Arabs are superior, nor the non-Arabs to each other, except by the way of *taqwa*. [Kanz al-Ummal, H No, 5655] The pious ones are the chiefs [Behar, 70: 290]. In his sermon on the eve of Hajjatul Wadaa, Prophet said: Know that you are the children of Adam and he was made out of dust, the best person in the eyes of Allah is the most pious among you. [Behar, 70: 288] Imam Ali says: One who has the fear of God; Allah will remove all his concerns and pull him out of difficulties. [Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 198. Subhi Saleh; Ghurar al-Hikam] He further said: *Taqwa* is a medicine for your sick hearts, blind minds,

ill bodies, ailing breasts and it washes away your dirty souls and enlightens your vision. [Behar al-Anwar, 77: 236]

ISLAM AND BROTHERLINESS

The verse 103 is about the unity, integrity, and brotherliness among Muslims. The first and foremost step towards the creation of brotherliness among the Muslims is that everyone should hold the 'link between Allah and the servant'. What is that link? Most of the commentators have said that 'Quran' is the link between the creator and the creatures. [Tafseer Tabari, 4: 195] But Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) himself has explained the meanings of this phrase. Imam Tirmizi has reported: Zaid bin Arqam says "Holy Prophet said: I am leaving among you something, if you will hold it you will never go astray. One of them is greater than the other one, i.e., the book of God is a 'link' from heaven to earth and, my progeny, the household. They both will remain with each other, until both will come to see me on the "pond of kauser." Be cautious about your behavior with both of them. [Sunan Tirmizi, 541] Quran and Ahlal Bayt are the source of rescue for the Muslims.

Islam emphasizes on the followers to remain united and live together as the "real brothers." Holy Prophet has said: The relationship between one believer and another is like between different parts of a building; one strengthens another. Then he inserted the fingers of both hands into each other for expressing the idea. [Riaz al-Salehin, 82, Quote from Bukhari and Muslim] In a lengthy tradition, quoted by both Bukhari and Muslim, the Holy Prophet says: Be not envious of each other, do not make fictitious bids at auctions, bear no grudge, do not turn away from each other, do not offer your price against the price offered by a Muslim (except if their deal is not settled). Servants of Allah, become brothers of each other, a Muslim is a brother of other Muslim, he does no wrong with him, neither humiliate nor disgrace him. Piety is here (he pointed to the chest); he

repeated it three times. It is enough evil for a person that he should look down upon his Muslim Brother. Everything of a Muslim is forbidden to a Muslim, his blood, his property, and his honor. [Sahih Muslim and Tirmizi. Riaz al-Salehin, 84]

Imam Ali says: Some of your brothers are not the offspring of your mother. [Ghurar] It means that your fellow believers are like your real brothers. "Piety is the standard of love between the two brothers" Imam Ali has told us. [Behar al-Anwar, 78: 33] At one occasion, Imam Jafar Sadiq said: Accursed is he who avoids a truce with his brother who has taken initiative for it. [Behar al-Anwar, 74: 272]

Allah says that it is a special favor and blessing that he has made you brothers to each other (3: 103). Therefore, disputing, fighting, killing, and murdering will lead the Muslims to hell fire; therefore, forging unity and peace among the Muslim is like pulling them out of hell fire.

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ

يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ

عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

(104) There must be a group, from among you, that will invite the people to goodness, enjoin the rightness, and forbid them the wrong doings; they are really the successful people.

This is one of the most important verses of Quran. Enjoining the goodness and forbidding the evil is the basis of Prophethood and Imamat, therefore, Quran, Holy Prophet and Ahlal Bayt have given special importance to this institution.

In Quran, *amr bil maaroof* and *nahi aanil munkar* has been mentioned about 24 times. One of the features of Holy Prophet was that he enjoined the goodness, and prevented

from bad deeds (7: 157). The Quran says: you were the best of nations, who came out for the people, you enjoined the goodness, and interdicted the wrong doings (3: 110, also see 3: 114). It is one of the attributes of the believers and a sign of friendship among them, that they request each other to do well and avoid the evil (9: 71). Those who avoided this duty from Bani Israel were accursed by Allah from the mouth of prophets David and Jesus. (5: 78, 79).

Similarly, there are numerous traditions, which speak about the merit of this important duty of the Muslims on the whole, as well as on individual level. Allama Ibn Kathir says: It is compulsory on Muslims on the basis of a tradition of Holy Prophet in which he says: One who sees an evil deed, on him is ordained to change it by power, if he cannot do that then he would try to change it by advice. In addition, if even it is not possible for him then he would feel bad about this matter in his heart and this is the feeblest status of belief. [Ibn Kathir and Muslim, 1: 51] Imams Ahmad, Tirmizi, Ibn Majah all have quoted this tradition of Holy Prophet: I swear by God in whose hand is my life, you have to keep enjoining goodness and forbidding the evil, otherwise Allah will inflict you with his wrath, at that time your supplications will not be answered. [Ibn Kathir by Sabooni, 1: 314, quote from Tirmizi, Ahmed, Ibn Majah, Riaz al-Salehin, 72] Holy Prophet has declared: One who is not merciful to the younger ones, respectful for the elders, does not order goodness and does not ask the people to avoid evil, he is not from among us. [Hafiz Munzari, Al-Tarhib wa al-Tarhib, 3: 223-243, quotes from Musnad Ahmad, Tirmizi and Sahih of Ibn Hebban]

As I have said, “enjoining goodness and forbidding evil” is such an important duty that it is the purpose of prophethood. Holy Prophet has said: One who orders for goodness and prevents the people from committing wrong, he is the deputy of Allah

and his Prophet on this earth. [Mirza Hussain Noori, Mustadrak al-Wasail, 2: 358; Kanz al-Ummal, hadith: 5563] In another tradition, we read: Allah dislikes the believer who has lost his deen. Companions asked: What do you mean by that? "He is the person who does not forbid from evil," the Prophet said. [Hurr al-Ameli, Wasail al-Shiah, 11:399]

In our days, people have indulged themselves in wrong practices, they have no fear of Allah, namesake scholars are distorting the real teachings of Islam, and they have no courage to say even a word, or show their resentment against the wrong practices of the society. Evil has taken the place of virtue. I pray God to give me courage to fight against these elements.

وَلَا تَكُونُوا

كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ
 الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾ يَوْمَ
 تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهٌ وَتَسْوَدُّ وُجُوهٌ ، فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ
 اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَ كَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ
 فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَ أَمَّا
 الَّذِينَ ابْيَضَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَفِي رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ
 هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا
 عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾

(105-108) And, do not be like those who made divisions and disputed among themselves after receiving the glowing signs; and for them would be awful torment. (106) On the day when some faces will be shining and some others will

be blemished; those, with the blemished faces will be asked: Did you disavow after professing the belief? So, experience the scourge for what you recanted. In addition, those with immaculate faces will be, under the mercy of Allah, for good. (107) These are the verses of Allah we recite on you, truly. Allah does not intend injustice for the people of the world.

These verses are not only about the People of the Book, the apostates, and the hypocrites, but they also address the Muslims. The revelation of Book to a nation is the greatest favor of Allah for the people, so they should not spoil this opportunity by creating differences among themselves. Those who will try to distort the real teachings of Islam; they will be brought forth with black faces on the Day of Judgment. On the other hand, the true followers will come up with "glowing faces" under the perpetual mercy of Allah.

In Quran, there are some other verses of the same implication, see 39: 60, 10: 26, 80: 38-41, 75: 22-25, 83: 24 and 55: 41. It has been reported in Sahih Bukhari (Kitab al-Hawz): Holy Prophet has said that on the Pond of Kauthar some of my companions will be shown to me and I will ask angels to bring them close to me. The angels would reply: "you do not know what they did with the religion after you passed away. They went back on their heels." Allama Qurtabi says that there are a number of traditions in this regard. Anyone who makes changes in *deen* or introduces innovations in the religion of Allah without His permission and will, he would be kept away from the Pond of Kauthar. [Tafseer Qurtabi, 4: 168, Sahih Muslim, 1: 126 and Ashraf Ali Thanvi, Hifz al-Iman, 17] Allama Ibn Qutaibah Denwari has reported this tradition in his book with necessary explanations. [Tawil Mukhtalef al-Hadith, 158]

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ
تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ۝۱۰۹

(109) To Allah belongs what exists in the heavens and the earth and to Him will go back all the matters.

This verse speaks about the power and magnificence of Allah; He is the creator of this universe and to Him belongs every thing. On the Day of Resurrection, every thing will go back to Him.

Quran has repeatedly reminded us of the fact that everything, which exists in this universe belongs to Allah, for instance 2: 284; 4: 131 and 170; 5: 120; 6: 12; 10: 55, 66; 24: 64; 31: 26; 34: 1; 42: 49; 57: 1; 59: 1; 61: 1; 62: 1; 63: 1. Allah says that he is the Lord of the East and the West (2: 142; and 55: 17). Allah is the ruler of this cosmos and no one has any authority over anything without the permission of Allah. On the Day of Judgment, he will be the ruler alone. See 3: 154; 13: 31; 18: 44; 30: 4; 40: 12, 16 and 82: 19. Foolish is the person who commits mistakes and sins in hope of intercession of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) or Infallible Imams.

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ اُمَّةٍ اُخْرِجَتْ

لِلنَّاسِ تَامُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّٰهِ ۗ وَلَوْ اٰمَنَ اَهْلُ الْكِتٰبِ لَكَانَ
خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَاكْثَرُهُمُ الْفٰسِقُونَ ۝۱۰۹
لَنْ يَصُرُوْكُمْ اِلَّا اَذًى ۗ وَاِنْ يُقَاتِلُوْكُمْ يُوَلُّوْكُمْ
الْاَدْبَارَ ثُمَّ لَا يُنصِرُوْنَ ۝۱۰۹ ضَرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ
الدِّالَةُ اَيْنَ مَا تَقِفُوْا اِلَّا بِحَبْلِ مِّنْ اللّٰهِ وَحَبْلِ

مِّنَ النَّاسِ وَبَاءٌ وَبَعْضٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَصُرِبَتْ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ
بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ذَلِكَ
بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾

(110-112) You are the best group brought forth for the people since you enjoin the goodness, forbid the evil, and have belief in Allah. If the people of the book had believed, it would have been better for them. Some of them have become believers, but most of them are the transgressors. (111) They cannot harm you except by teasing and if they will fight with you, surely they will turn their backs; additionally they will not be helped. (112) Ignominy is destined for them wherever they happened to be, save if they have covenant with Allah and his people; they incurred the wrath of Allah and humility has been set for them. This is all due to their disbelief in the verses of Allah and that they used to kill the Prophets unjustly. The reason for these acts was that they disobeyed and they used to break the rules.

Allah makes sure to the Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and the believers that the People of the Book are unable to harm you seriously; they cannot resist you even in a battle, so do not worry about them. As far as your opponents from the People of The Book are concerned, they would be humiliated and subdued because they have validated themselves for the wrath of Allah. If they will make an agreement with God and his believers then they will be protected.

The fact that Jews used to murder the Prophets has been discussed previously.

لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِنْ

أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ أَنْاءَ
الَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ
الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَنْ يُكْفَرُوهُ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾

(113-115) All of them are not equal. Among the people of the book is a group on true religion, they recite the verses of Allah the whole night, and they prostrate. (114) They believe in Allah and the Day of Judgment, enjoin goodness and prohibit the abominable. They are quick in doing good and are upright ones. (115) What good they should do, they will not be denied the reward and God knows the pious ones.

In previous verses, Allah was condemning the common Jews for their mischief and corruption. God declared that they should incur the wrath of Allah, and will be humiliated in the world. In these three verses, Allah is appreciating a group of them for their devotion to the true religious practices. The Quran is mentioning their nine qualities: (1) They are on the right religion, (2) they used to recite the verses of Allah the whole night, (3) they prostrate before God, (4) they have belief in Allah, (5) they believe in the Day of Judgment, (6) they used to enjoin goodness and forbid the abominable, (7) they are quick in doing good, (8) they are the upright ones, (9) they are the pious ones.

After enumerating their attributes, God promises the reward for their good deeds and conviction.

Most of the Muslim commentators of Quran have said that these verses were revealed for those Jews who embraced Islam in the days of Holy Prophet, like Abdullah bin Salam, Thalaba bin Saeed, Usaid bin Saeed and Asad bin Ubaid. [Tafseer Qurtabi, Ibn Kathir, Mizan, Majmaul Bayan, Tabari, 4: 35] In my opinion, it is not true, because Quran had never used the term "people of the book" for those who embraced Islam after leaving their old faiths.

There may be some people of Qumran Community called Essenes in Mecca and Madina, but this opinion cannot be substantiated with historical record. These verses only prove that there were some upright Jews existing at that time. [For details about Qumran Community kindly, see "The complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English" by Geza Vermes.]

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ

تُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ

شَيْئًا وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾

مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ

رِيحٍ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا

أَنْفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكَتُهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَكِنْ

أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾

(116-117) Those who have rejected the faith, neither their wealth nor their progeny can give them any protection against Allah. They are the people of the fire and there they will abide forever. (117) What they spend in this world is like

a gale, which smites and burns the crop of those who did injustice to their souls. Allah did not mistreat them, but they victimized themselves.

In verse 117, the word *Sirr* has been used. All the English translators have taken it, like the Arabic commentators, in the sense of strong cold wind. In fact, *sirr* means a strong voice or cry. The sound of strong wind, whether cold or hot, is called *sirr* [Tafseer Qurtabi and Majmaul Bayan]. Both very cold and very hot winds equally burn the crops standing in the field. In translation of this phrase, I have chosen the words of wider sense.

According to Quran, on the Day of Judgment nothing will give benefit to the people except their obedience to Allah and His teachings. Men usually depend on their wealth, riches and strong progeny or clan. Allah says that on the Day of Judgment nothing will protect them against the scourge of Allah. In chapter 26 we read: The day, neither wealth nor sons will be beneficial (v. 91). Allah says: Your riches and progeny cannot bring you closer to me (34: 37). Also, compare 3: 91, 24: 39 and 25: 23.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا
 بَطَانَةَ مَن دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأْلُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا ۖ وَدُوا
 مَا عَنَيْتُمْ ۚ قَدْ بَدَاتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِنْ أَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۚ
 وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ ۚ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ
 الْآيَاتِ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ هَآءِنتُمْ أَوْلَاءِ
 تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمْ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ
 كُلِّهِ ۚ وَإِذُ الْقَوُومُ قَالُوا آمَنَّا ۚ وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَصَوْا
 عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ إِلَّا نَامِلًا مِّنَ الْغَيْظِ ۚ قُلْ مُوتُوا بِغَيْظِكُمْ ۚ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ۝ إِنَّ تَمَسُّكُمْ
 حَسَنَةٌ تَسُوهُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ تَصِيبْكُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا
 بِهَا وَإِنْ تَصِيرُوا تَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ
 شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ۝

(118-120) Believers, do not take people, other than you, as your intimates, they will not spare anything in harming you. They love, whatever you hate. Their enmity is apparent from their words, and their hearts conceal the bigger one. We have made the 'signs' clear for you, if you can understand. (119) You love them, but they do not, though you believe in the whole law; when they meet you, they say, "we believe" and when they leave you, they bite their nails out of choler over you. Say: Die in your rage, God knows your innermost thoughts. (120) Your good fortune grieves them, while they are pleased at any misfortune, which strikes you. If you stay at your faith and observe piety, then their designs will not harm you anyway. Allah has control over their activities.

The Arabic word *betanah* means the under garment or lining of a dress, because it remains close to the skin, hence this word is used for very close and intimate friend. The word *kitab* has been used here in the sense of law or "the divine teachings." Biting one's nail is a common sign of rage and fury.

Some Muslim scholars have explained this verse out of context. In their opinion, Allah has asked the Muslims to remain away from the members of all communities other than their own. According to other some scholars, this restriction is only about the infidels [Majmaul Bayan, 2: 287], while some others say it is about the hypocrites. Still some believe that, these verses are related to the Jews. [Tafseer Tabari, 4: 40] Allama Qurtabi is of the view that all the people other than

Muslims are included in it. According to Ibn Kathir, the infidels and hypocrites are intended here.

I think these verses should be considered in the light of special circumstances of that period and should not be generalized. The Jews and Christians of that time were sworn enemies of Islam and Muslims, like the other rejecters and polytheists. We are living in quite different conditions and there is continuous interaction between the followers of different religions and denominations. Peoples are very closely knitted in society and religious prejudice has become extinct. Where there is prejudice and hatred in a single person or in a group of people, especial care is needed for the protection of civil rights.

I will refer the readers to verses 8 and 9 of chapter 60 of Quran in which Allah has given the permission to be friendly with all those nations who did not fight with the Muslims.

In verse 120 Allah has promised the Muslims that adherence to faith and piety will result into the favor of Allah and it provides protection against the intrigues of the enemies. Also, compare The Quran, 65: 23.

وَإِذْ عَدَوْتَ

مِنْ أَهْلِكَ تُبَوِّئُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقَاعِدَ لِلْقِتَالِ ۗ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِذْ هَبَّتْ طَائِفَتَيْنِ مِنْكُمْ
أَنْ تَفْشَلَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّهُمَا ۗ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ ۗ
أَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ ۗ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾
إِذْ تَقُولُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَلَنْ يَكْفِيَكُمْ أَنْ يُبَدِّدَكُمْ

رَبِّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آلْفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنَزَّلِينَ ﴿١٢١﴾
 بَلَىٰ ۚ إِن تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ
 هَذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آلْفٍ مِّنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ
 مُسَوِّمِينَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرًا لَّكُمْ
 وَالتَّطْمِينِ قُلُوبِكُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَمَا النَّصْرُ إِلَّا مِّن
 عِنْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١٢٣﴾ لِيَقْطَعَ طَرَفًا مِّنَ
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْبِتَهُمْ فَيَنْقَلِبُوا خَائِبِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾
 لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ
 يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ
 وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ يَغْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَيُعَذِّبُ
 مَن يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢٦﴾

(121-129) When you came out, from your household, early in the morning for deploying the believers at battle-posts, Allah is all hearing and all knowing. (122) Two groups of your people became faint-hearted, but Allah was their supporter, on Allah depend all the believers. (123) Allah helped you at Badr while your position was extremely weak, have the fear of Allah so that you may be grateful to Him. (124) At that time, you were asking the believers "Is it not sufficient for you that your Lord is supporting you with three thousand angels, which have come down?" (125) Okay, if you remain firm and fear Allah, then in case of sudden assault, Allah will help you with five thousand identified angels. (126) Allah did it only for your pleasure and for appeasing your hearts therewith, the help comes only from Allah, the Exalted and Wise. (127) This happened for weeding

out some of the infidels or causing their heads down, so that they will go back without any achievement. (128) You have nothing to do with them; it is up to Him, whether He will accept their repentance, or scourge them, indeed they are unjust people. (129) To Allah belongs what exists in the heavens and the earth; He forgives and punishes whom He likes. Allah is oft forgiving and most merciful.

BATTLES OF BADR AND UHAD

This group of nine verses speaks about Allah's help in the battles of Badr and Uhad. The brief account of the battle of Badr has been given at 3: 13. In addition to it, Allah sent down the help of three thousand, or some five thousand, angels in this battle. Commentators of The Quran have different opinion on whether the angels took part in the battle and killed the opponents or they just gave moral support to the believers.

Those who believe that the angels really took part in the battle of Badr from Muslim's side include Imam Fakhar al-Din Razi [Tafseer Kabir, 3: 45], Allama Qurtabi [Tafseer, 4: 194, 195], Baidawi [235], Pir Karam Shah al-Azhari [Ziaul Quran, 2: 134], Allama Shabir Ahmad Usmani [On Marginal Notes], Allama Fatehullah Kashani [Manhaj al-Sadeqin, 4: 168], Allama Tabrasi [Majmaul Bayan, 2: 294], Allama Tabatabai [al-Mizan, 4: 10]. The Battle of Badr and fighting of angels has been reported in many reliable collections of Traditions and in the books on the life of Holy Prophet such as: [Sahih Bukhari, 3: 750, Sahih Muslim, 2: 93, Bayhaqi, Dalail al-Naboowat, 3: 81, Al-Waqidi, Maghazi, 1: 75-81, Ibn Hisham, al-Sirah, 1: 633.]

Some other academics believe that the angels were sent for the moral support of the believers and they did not fight by the swords. They are: Allama Tabari [Tafseer Tabari, 4: 50-53], Mufti Mohammad Abdoho [al-Manar, 4: 112-115], Allama Aloosi [Rooh al-Maani, 9: 174, 187], Abul Hayyan Andulesi

[al-Bahr al-Muheet, 5: 285], Abul Aala Maududi [Tafhim al-Quran, 2: 134], Mufti Mohammad Shafi [Maarif al-Quran, 4: 174 and 197], Ayatollah Nasir Makaram Shirazi [Tafseer Namoonah, 7: 104-105]

In my opinion the words *nasarakum Allah* (verse 123), *yumiddakum Rabbukum* (verse 124), *yumdidkum Rabbukum* (verse 125), clearly show that Allah miraculously helped the Muslims and angels fought from Muslim's side.

Allama Abdul Fattah has described the battle of Badr in these words: Badr was a complete success, though Abu Sufyan and some others remained unharmed, but Muslims fought with great bravery. In this battle, Imam Ali killed Hanzalah; son of Abu Sufyan, however, Ziad was arrested. Ali also killed some fighters from Banu Abd al-Shams (Abu Sufyan's clan) and their in-laws from Abd al-Dar. It is a sheer chance that all those who lost their lives by Ali's sword were from this tribe, or were their relatives from one side or other. History has recorded some names as: Hanzalah bin Abu Sufyan, Aas bin Saeed bin Umayyah, Walid bin Utbah (brother of Hind), Uqbah bin Abi Mu'eet (Othman's maternal brother) and some other confederates of this tribe. [Hashim Maroof Hasani, *The Lives of Twelve Imams*, 1: 225]

The second important battle, Uhad, was fought on 7th Shawwal, 3 A.H. (Jan, 625). Here I would like to quote William Muir for describing the whole situation: Twelve months after the battle of Badr, when the third year of the Prophet's stay at Madina was drawing to a close, there burst out storm of unprecedented violence. After exceedingly elaborate preparations, the Quraish commenced their march, 3000 strong; 700 were mailed warriors and 200 well mounted cavalry: the remainder rode on camels. The chiefs of Quraish all joined the force ... Women were allowed to accompany them ... Taking timbrels in their hands,

they sang to their wild cadence songs of vengeance for kinsmen slain at Badr [The life of Mohammad, 253]. The Muslim army, all told, was 1000 and the holy commander had no more than one horse, beside his own, in his whole army. And then at dawn, while columns of the enemy were in sight and while the Muslim army, led by the Holy Prophet prostrated itself in worship; Abdullah bin Obayy at this moment wheeled suddenly round and, deserting the army with his 300 followers took the road back to city. [Muir, The Life of Mohammad, page 275]

According to history, Holy Prophet appointed some 50 archers, under the command of Abdullah bin Jubair, at the opening of Uhad and advised them to stay there in all circumstances. The Muslims fought very valiantly and the enemies started running from the battlefield. However, unfortunately, the archers left the opening and started looting the booty. Khalid bin Walid, an infidel yet, observed the situation and waged a deadly assault on Muslims from the back. Muslims were taken aback by this unexpected fatal attack. In a state of chaos and confusion, their own fellows killed many believers. MUSAAB bin UMAYR had close resemblance with Holy Prophet. He was martyred during this utter confusion. The infidels announced, "we have killed Mohammad, he is no more alive" this announcement fainted the hearts of the believers, and some of them ran away from the field. However, Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) was alive and some brave companions were shielding him from the arrows and swords. Imam Ali (A.S) was the one who used his sword so proficiently in defense of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W), which is beyond imagination. Imam Ali got 70 wounds on different parts of his body. It was the adamant belief and love for Allah and his Prophet that Imam Ali, along with some other companions, including Abu Dujanah, turned the defeat into victory, after all. Holy Prophet bestowed his

own sword 'Zulfiqar' on Imam Ali in this battle. [Majma al-Bayan, 2: 292]

The two groups, mentioned in verse 122, were Banu Haresah (from Aus) and Banu Salma (from Khizraj). [Bayhaqi, Dalail al-Naboowat, 3: 209] The cave in which Holy Prophet took refuge during the battle of Uhad was Mehras. Those who protected the Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W), along with Imam Ali (A.S) were Abu Talha, Talha bin Ubaidullah, Zubair bin Al-Awam. In this battle, one of the front teeth (lower right) of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) was partially damaged due to an arrow fired by Utbah bin abi Waqqas, and it was Abdullah bin Shahab who struck his sword on the iron head-cover of Holy Prophet and injured him. [Ibn Hisham, 2: 55, chapter 111 and Qastalani's Mawaheb Laduniah, 2: 354 and after] Also, see Madarij al-Naboowat by Allama Abd al-Haq Muhaddith. I would mention here Nasibah bint Kaab al-Mazniah; she was the medical nurse of Holy Prophet. She very bravely protected Holy Prophet and sustained injuries at her chest and breasts; she received numerous wounds but survived. [al-Mizan, 4: 13, quote from Tafseer Qummi]

The verses 128-129 clearly speak about the power of Allah. Only Allah can accept the repentance of anyone or reject it, because he is the Lord of the universe.

According to some traditions, while Holy Prophet was injured in Uhad, he said: How that nation can attain success, which has injured the face of the prophet. On this occasion, the prophet wished to curse these people, but Goad revealed these two verses. [Bukhari, 2: 582]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ

أَمْوَالًا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا أَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً وَاتَّقُوا

اللَّهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ
لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

(130-132) Believers-do not live on usury, compounding it to double and quadruple, have fear of Allah so that you may be successful. (131) Guard yourselves against the fire, which is ready for the rejecters. (132) Obey Allah and the Prophet, then you will receive mercy.

I have discussed the issue of interest and usury at 2: 275. This verse, 130, is about compound interest and *riba bil fadl*, which means receiving additional quantity in barter of the same thing. Holy Prophet has said: Sell gold for gold, silver for silver, wheat for wheat, barley for barley, dates for dates and salt for salt, in equal quantities and hand-to-hand. If the commodity is different then you are free to sell according to mutual agreement, provided it is hand-to-hand transaction. [Muslim, 1587, Tirmizi, 124, Abu Dawood, 3349, Nisai, 4575, Ibn Majah, 2254, Sunan Darimi, 2541, Musnad Abu Yula, 5690, Musannaf Abdul Razzaq, 14193, Sahih of Ibn Hibban, 5018, Dar Qutni, 3: 24, Musnad Ahmad, 5: 320, Ibn Abi Shaibah, 7: 103-104, Sunan Kubra Bayhaqi, 5: 277-282] In Sahih Bukhari, [2027], Ibn Majah, [2253], Tabrani's Mujam Al-Kabir, [1017], the narrator of tradition is Caliph Omar, but there is no mention of 'silver' in it.

Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: The worst gain is from usury and interest [Wasail, 12: 423. Iran], also reported from Imam Mohammad Baqir, [Wasail, 18: 117. Beirut]. Allah has cursed those who swallow interest, who pay interest, who write the document regarding interest and those who become witness to it. [Kanz al-Ummal, part 76: 364, Wasail, 18: 127. Beirut] It has been reported from two Imams, Mohammad Baqir and Jafar Sadiq (A.S), that Allah has forbidden interest and usury, so that people should keep

on favoring the others. [Wasail, 18: 118, Behar al-Anwar, 72: 201, Wasail, 12: 425] In one of the traditions, Imam Reza (A.S) has been reported as saying: Allah has prevented the people from receiving interest because it results in 'corruption of wealth'. When a person sells one *dirham* against two *dirhams*, in this case, one *dirham* is equivalent to one *Dirham* and the remaining one is 'unclean'. Therefore, the transaction of interest and usury is a loss and depreciation for both the parties. Allah has forbidden it for the safety of wealth. [Behar al-Anwar, 103: 119] Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has declared: Allah will fill with fire the belly of that person who takes interest money; and if he will make some money with it, Allah will not accept his works and he will remain under the curse of Allah and the angels up to the moment he would possess even a penny from this money. [Behar al-Anwar, 71: 364]

وَسَارِعُوا إِلَى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ
وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ ۖ أُعِدَّتْ
لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ۝ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَ
الضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَاطِبِينَ الْغِيظَ وَالْعَافِينَ
عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۝ وَالَّذِينَ
إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا
اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۖ وَمَن يَغْفِرَ
اللَّهُ لِدُنُوبِهِ إِلَّا اللَّهُ ثُمَّ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا
وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ۝ أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاءُ وَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ
مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّتْ تَجْرِي مِّن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ وَنِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَمِلِينَ ۝

(133-136) Proceed briskly towards forgiveness from your

Lord and the paradise, which is spread over the area equal to heaven and earth and has been prepared to receive the pious ones. (134) Those who spend both in good and hard days, and those who arrest their anger and over look the mistakes of the people. Allah loves those who do well. (135) They are who remember Allah and implore His forgiveness for their sins, when they commit any indecent act or do wrong to their souls. Who can forgive the sins except Allah? And those who do not persevere at their misdemeanors knowingly, (136) their reward is forgiveness from their Lord and paradise with flowing streams, in which they shall abide forever. How excellent recompense is it for those who did well?

This group of three verses is a moral code for the believers and in these verses, Allah is teaching us how to behave in case of committing any sin or mistake. Verse 133 is advising us to implore the mercy and forgiveness of Allah as soon as we can, because He alone can forgive us, accepts our repentance, as mentioned in verse 135. Only those people are pardonable who do not insist on their misdeeds, but instantaneously repent to God and remember Him frequently, as mentioned in v.135. Verses 133 and 136 speak about the recompense of those who confess their sins and disobedience and seek pardon of Allah for their behavior.

In verse 134, three characteristics of good people have been reported, that is, they spend for the welfare of people in both good and bad times of their own, they arrest their anger and over look the mistakes of the people.

THE MERIT OF SPENDING IN THE NAME OF Allah

Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: Only two persons are worthy of being envied; a person to whom Allah has given

wealth and has enabled him to spend in the right cause; and a person whom Allah has favored with wisdom by which he takes decisions and teaches others [Bukhari and Muslim, Riaz al-Salehin: 169 chapter 60]. Holy Prophet says: Shield yourself against the fire, even by giving half a date in charity. [Bukhari and Muslim, Riaz al-Salehin, 169] Imam Ali (A.S) says: Blessed is he who spends the additional money and abstains from 'unnecessary talk'. [Behar al-Anwar, 96: 117] Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) says: accursed is the person to whom Allah has given the wealth and he does not make any charity. [Behar al-Anwar, 96: 115] Compare: 2: Quran, 273-274 and 34: 40.

THE MERIT OF CLEMENCY AND OVERLOOKING

In his will to Imam Ali (A.S), the Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: Ali, do not be angry, if you become angry, then sit down at that time and contemplate on power of Lord on His servants, yet He treats them leniently. If someone says to you, "Have fear of Allah" you shall try to relinquish your rage and cling to your feeling of clemency. [Tuhaf al-Uqool, 18] Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has been reported as saying: One who controls his anger, despite the fact that he can impose it and overlooks the mistake, God will give him the reward equal to the reward of a martyr. [Wasail, 12: 178. Chp. 114] In a sermon, reported by Imam Sadiq (A.S), Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) said: Should I not tell you about the best of attributes of this world and the world to come? Forgive those who oppress you, join those who have cut relation from you, do well to those who have wronged you and give to those who have not favored you. [al-Kafi, 2: 87, Musnad Ahmad bin Hambal, 4: 148] 'Anger' is really a black spot on ones personality; it is the mother of all bad traits. [Behar al-Anwar, 73: 266, quote from Imam Jafar Sadiq]. It has been reported from Imam Ali (A.S) that Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) said: If anyone of you unintentionally commits a sin, makes

wuzu and then offers prayer of two standings and implores pardon of God, Allah forgives him. [Musnad Abu Dawood, 1: 213] This tradition is also present in Tirmizi, Ibn Majah, Musnad Ahmad, Nesai and Tafseer Tabari.

THE MERIT OF ASTAGHFAR

Doing “Astaghfar” is one of the most important teachings of Islam, it invokes the mercy of Allah on His servant, and Allah off loads the sin from his shoulders. Holy Prophet says: The best way of entreating is to say *Astaghfirullah*. [Kanz al-Ummal, 2085]

There are countless traditions of holy Infallibles concerning the merit of Astaghfar, but here I would like to quote a few lines from Imam Ali (A.S). Once he heard someone saying *Astaghfirullah* (I seek Allah’s forgiveness), on this He said: Your mother may lose you! Do you know what does it mean? This is meant for people of lofty ranks. There are six prerequisites of saying *Astaghfirullah*. The first is to repent over the past; the second is to be determined for not reverting to it again; the third is to discharge all rights of people so that you may meet Allah quite clean with nothing to be accounted for; the fourth is to fulfill every obligation, which you ignored in the past so that you may now do justice to it; the fifth is to aim at the flesh grown from unlawful earning, so that you may melt it by grief and repentance until the skin touches the bone, and a new flesh grows between them; and the sixth is to make the body taste the pain of obedience as you previously had made it taste the sweetness of disobedience. After doing all this, you may say *Astaghfir Allah*. [Nahjul Balagha, saying 417, Tuhaf al-Uqool, 138, al-Irshad of Sheikh Mufid, 47, Tafseer Kabir, 3: 47]

SOME BIBLICAL QUOTES

The discretion of man defers His anger and it is His glory to pass over a transgression. (Prov, 19: 11) Say not, I will do so to him as he had done to me: I will render to the man

according to his work. (Prov, 24: 29) If thine enemy were hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he were thirsty, give him water to drink. (Prov, 25: 21) If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. (Matt, 6: 14) Recompense to no man evil for evil. (Rom, 12: 17)

قَدْ خَلَّتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ ۖ فَنَظَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
 فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِّبِينَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ هَذَا
 بَيَانٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٨﴾
 وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا ۚ وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِن كُنْتُمْ
 مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ إِن يَمَسُّكُمْ قَرْحٌ فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ
 قَرْحٌ مِّثْلُهُ ۚ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۚ
 وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ ۗ
 وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
 آمَنُوا وَيُبْحَقَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا
 الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ
 وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ
 مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَلْقَوْهُ ۖ فَقَدْ رَآيْتُمُوهُ ۚ وَأَنْتُمْ
 تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿١٤٣﴾

(137-143) Many civilizations have gone before you, go around the world and see what happened to beliers. (138) This is a clear statement for people, guidance, and lesson for righteous persons. (139) Do not loose heart and do not be depressed and you will prevail if you are true believers. (140) If you sustained wounds, also they have sustained the same, we repeat history among the nations, so that Allah

may know those who have believed and adorn some of you with martyrdom. Allah does not like the unjust ones. (141) Allah's objective is to clean the believers from impurities and peter out the rejecters. (142) Do you think you will enter the paradise, and Allah has not witnessed the fighters among you and nor those who remained steadfast? (143) You used to desire martyrdom before natural death and you have experienced it before your eyes.

The Quran has repeatedly drawn our attention towards the nations of the past and their termination due to rejection of divine law. It is the way God behaved with these civilizations in history (33: 38). Allah has declared that He does not change his *sunnah* or behavior (35: 43, 40: 85), concerning the bad nations.

In verse 140, Allah wishes to witness martyrs in His cause, they are called *shuhada* (plural of shaheed). Why a person, who sacrifices his life in the cause of Allah, is called Shaheed? Scholars have given some explanation, such as: (1) Allah has borne witness that they will go to paradise, (2) They will be summoned, on the Day of Judgment, for bearing witness, (3) As soon as he is dead, he witnesses paradise, (4) According to Islamic theology the martyr remains alive and witnesses the bounties of Allah, (5) His sacrifice bears witness that his belief was very profound and strong.

SHAHADAH or martyrdom is one of the highest ranks a believer can achieve in the cause of Allah. About the martyrs The Quran says: "they are alive" (2: 154) and receiving their sustenance from Allah (3: 169), their mistakes will be wiped off (3: 195), they will have superior ranks near Allah (9: 20, 57: 10), goodness is waiting for them and they will be successful (9: 88), Allah has bought their souls at the price of paradise (9: 111), the fighters in the cause of Allah are superior to non-fighters and

they should be rewarded with great recompense (4: 95), for them are high ranks, mercy and pardon from Allah, the Almighty (4: 96).

Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: One good deed may be better than other goodness, until a person sacrifices his life for Allah (Behar al-Anwar, 100: 10). Imam Ali (A.S) says: a thousand inflictions of a sword on my head are better than my death on a bed. [Sheikh Mufid, al-Irshad, 127; Ibn Abi al-Hadid, Commentary on Nahjul Balagha, Vol, 20: 300]. Imam Zain al-Abedin (A.S) says: there are only two drops dearer to Allah: A drop of blood which is shed in the name of Allah and a drop of tear which comes out in the dark nights for the sake of Allah. [Behar, 100: 10] Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) has said: God wipes off mistakes of martyres in His cause. [Wasail, 11: 9]

وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ ۖ قَدْ خَلَتْ

مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ ۚ أَفَأَيْنِ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ

عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَئِنْ

بَيَضَرَ اللَّهُ شَيْئًا ۖ وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كَتَبْنَا

مُؤَجَّلًا ۚ وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا ۖ

وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا ۖ وَسَجِّزُهُ

الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

(144 –145) Mohammad is only a prophet, as some prophets have passed before him. 'Would you go back to your old religion if he will die, or will be killed? The one who will do that would not cause even a little harm to Allah, and Allah is going to reward the grateful ones. (145) No one can die except with

the writ of Allah, at a determined moment; one who longs for recompense in this world, we shall give him the same and who longs for reward in hereafter, we shall fulfill also his desire; and in near future we will reward the grateful ones.

In the light of context and traditions, these two verses are related to the false announcement of the death of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) at the eve of the battle of Uhad, "which caused many Muslims to abandon the fight and even brought some of them close to apostasy". [Allama Mohammad Asad, The Message of the Quran, 89] Allama Ibn Kathir has pointed out that the announcement of the death of Holy Prophet affected the Muslims very badly and they ran away from the battlefield of Uhad. [Part 4: 30, Sabooni, 1: 330] Allama Aloosi says: A few Muslims said: there is no prophet for us except Abdullah bin Ubai, he will get protection and security for us from Abu Sufyan, some of them gave up fighting and still some of them said: if Mohammad had died then go back to your previous religion. [Rooh al-Maani, 4: 114, Tafseer Kabir, 4: 376] See Saeed al-Din Mohammad bin Masood Gazarooni, Nehayah al-Mas'ool fi Riwayat al-Rasool, 1: 419 and Shibli Naomani, Sirat al-Nabi, 1:374 and after.

This couple of verses clearly shows that Holy Prophet was not eternal and he left the society one day. His personality is the "focal point" of our religion but the religion did not cease to exist with his death or murder. In fact, God has predetermined the time and moment of death of every living being. Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) died at his own time and we will die at ours.

Everyone will be rewarded for his deeds and conduct. Allah has said, in these verses, that He can recompense the people in this world and in the world to come, according to their own wishes.

وَكَأَيِّن مِّن نَّبِيٍّ قُتِلَ مَعَهُ
 رَبِّيُّونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي
 سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا وَاللَّهُ
 يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِلَّا أَن
 قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي
 أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ
 الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَآتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَ
 حَسَنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾

(146-148) How many have been the Prophets who fought along with many Rabbis and they did not show any desperation, or weakness and they never abased themselves, when they faced hardship in the cause of Allah. Moreover, Allah loves the steadfast ones. (147) They use to utter nothing but: Our Lord, undo our errors and consequences of our transgression in our matters, make us firm of foot and give us victory over unbelieving folk. (148) Allah bestowed on them the 'reward of this world and the best reward of the world to come'. Verily, Allah loves the well doers.

Most of the translators and commentators have taken the word "Ribbiyun" (Singular: Ribbi) as the group of people. However, in my opinion it is the Arabic diversion of the Hebrew word *rabbi*. In Hebrew, "rab" means 'great', later on, it came in use for respectable people. Thertefore, *Rabbi* means 'my great one'. By the time, it became a title for reverent people of clergy and the authorized teachers of the law. At a place, regarding the law of war, Josephus tells us: Lead an army pure and of chosen men, composed of all such as have extraordinary strength of

body and hardness of soul; but do you send away the timorous part, lest they run away in the time of action. [The Works of Josephus Translated by William Whiston, The Antiquities, 4: 8: 41, Page. 123]

The verses 147-148 contain the 'prayer' of such people, who seek the repentance and pardon of Allah against their sins and mistakes. They also ask from God the firmness in their belief and during the war. Allah is promising for them the goodness of this world and the hereafter.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
يُرَدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ بَلِ
اللَّهُ مُوَلِّكُم ۖ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾ سَأَلِقَىٰ فِي
قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرَّغْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِإِلَهِهِ
مَا لَمْ يَنْزِلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا ۖ وَمَا لَهُمُ النَّارُ ۖ وَ
بِئْسَ مَثْوَىٰ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ
وَعَدَا ۖ إِذْ تَحْسُونَهُمْ بِإِذْنِهِ ۖ فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُمْ وَ
تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُم مِّن بَعْدِ مَا
أَرَاكُمْ مَا تُحِبُّونَ ۖ وَمِنكُمْ مَّن يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَ
مِنكُمْ مَّن يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ۖ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ
لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ ۖ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۖ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ
عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ إِذْ تُصْعِدُونَ وَلَا تَلَوْن
عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ وَ الرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي أَخْرَابِكُمْ
فَأَنذَرْتُمْ كَثِيرًا مِّنكُمْ وَأَخْرَجَكُمْ مِّن دِيَارِكُمْ

وَلَا مَأْصَابَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ خَيْرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

(149-153) Believers, if you will comply with the infidels, they will turn you back on your heels and you all will become the losers. (150) But the God is your protector and He is the best of helpers. (151) In near future we will cast trepidation in the hearts of infidels because they committed polytheism against the God, without any evidence or support from heaven. Their abode will be the fire and there will be a very bad place for the unjust ones. (152) Definitely, Allah fulfilled His promise with you when you were killing them with His permission. The condition persisted until the time you started disputing each other on a matter and you disobeyed despite perceiving the desired results. Among you are those who desire for the 'world' and there are some others longing for 'hereafter'. God turned you away from them as a test and He forgave you. Verily, Allah is most gracious to the believers. (153) While you were ascending up the hill and you were not even looking towards anyone. The Prophet was calling you standing at the rear of army. He inflicted you with one discomfort after another, so that you would not feel grief over your loss or infliction and Allah knows whatever you do.

Verses 149 and 150 are conveying the recommendation of Allah: "That Muslims should not take heed of the suggestions of heathens to join them. Their way is wrong and they are deviated from the right path. If the Muslims shall follow the instructions of gentiles, they will drag them back to old religion." [al-Mizan, 4: 42, Manhaj al-Sadeqeen, 2: 363, Majmaul Bayan, 2: 518] See verses: 173-75 also.

Next three verses (151- 153) pertain to the battle of Uhad and Muslims' failure to comply with the orders of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W), which resulted in their discomfiture.

According to historical account and commentators' descriptions, the Muslims heard the good news of victory in battle of Uhad from the mouth of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). Nevertheless, in this battle the opponent defeated them due to disobedience of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). They left the Opening of Mount of Uhad and engaged themselves in looting the booty. Some important people ran away even from the battlefield. [Qurtabi, 4: 239, Tafseer Kabir, 3: 393] Allama Aloosi says that Prophet was calling the companions in these words: Servants of God, come hither, come hither, and those who will not run away will get Jannah. [Rooh al-Maani, 4: 143] I have discussed this issue at 3: 121-129, additionally; I would like to refer the readers to Tarikh Tabari [2: 87-213] and The Battle of Uhad by Mohammad Ahmad Bashamil.

The battle of Uhad taught many lessons to the Muslims. In the beginning, they were overpowering the rivals. In the middle of the battle, they violated the commands of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W), which resulted in their discomfiture. Muslims became faint hearted over defeat and losing the spoil of war, but the false announcement of the demise of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) was a heavy blow on their moral and faith. Abdullah ibn Masud, the companion of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W), says that I never thought that our colleagues are after wealth until the battle of Uhad exposed some of them to us. [Tarikh Tabari, 2: 193, Matbaa'tul Isteqamah Egypt]

ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمْنَةً نُبُوءًا
يَعْتَلِي طَائِفَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ ۖ وَطَائِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ
أَنْفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ
يَقُولُونَ هَلْ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنْ
الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ مَا كَا

يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ
 شَيْءٌ مَّا قَتَلْنَا هَهُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ
 لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَى مَضَاجِعِهِمْ
 وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُبَحِّصَ مَا
 فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١٥٤﴾
 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ ۖ
 إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا ۗ
 وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١٥٥﴾

(154- 155) Thereafter, your “grief” was replaced with the “peace.” Oblivion overpowered some of you and another group became involved in themselves, they were fancying the wrong notions about God, the fantasies of “the period of ignorance.” They ask: Do we have any right in this matter? Reply: Every matter is related to Allah. They are concealing in their hearts, what they are not disclosing on you. They are claiming that: had it been in our hands, we would not have been killed here at this place. Rejoin them: If you had been at your homes, those who were destined to be killed, they would have come out from their beds. God will definitely expose the contents of your heart and chest. Verily, Allah knows the contents of the breast. (155) Those who turned away from you on the day of confrontation between two groups, surely Satan led them astray out of their earning. However, Allah pardoned them and surely, Allah is most forgiving and forbearing.

These two verses are again related to the battle of Uhad and the aftermaths of the unexpected assault of Khalid bin Walid on Muslim army. In this battle, as already said, Muslims suffered heavy loss of life, which left profound affects on the mind of the

believers.

Here The Quran is talking about two different groups of people, one group became oblivious of circumstances, and the second became involved in its own matters. Most of the analysts have taken the word *nuaas* in its literal sense of 'doze' and they believe that a real state of doze overpowered a group of Muslims. Behaqi has reported some statements of the companions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) that they were overwhelmed by doze during the battle of Uhad. [Safwat al-Tafasir, 1: 216, Ibn Kathir by Sabooni, 1: 338] Allama Zemakh'shari says that the meanings of this word, in this verse, are "peace and tranquility." [Kash'shaf, 1: 419]

Allama Fakhr al-Din Razi says that: two types of people were on the side of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) i.e., the true believers and the hypocrites. The first group believed that Holy Prophet does not say even a word out of his own wish, but he only says what comes from Allah. They were mentally satisfied that they would win the battle. Therefore, they fought very bravely. The second group consisted over the hypocrites. They joined the Muslim army for receiving war-spoils and booty. Allama Razi is of the opinion that these two groups are intended here in this couple of verses. [Tafseer Kabir, 3: 393]

SLEEPING: MEDICAL NOTE

The vocabulary of Quran is rich in the words for sleep and its different conditions: *Naum*, *Haj'aa*, *Ruqad*, *Qailolah*, *Zajaa*, *Tahajjad*, *Nuaas*, *Senah* and *Subat*. These nine words have been used in different verses and chapters of the Holy Book. From medical point of view, there are two distinct phases of sleep, non-rapid eye movement sleep (NREM) and rapid eye movement sleep (REM). NREM sleep consists of four stages and its technical description is useless for the common reader. I would like to quote some words from internationally reliable

book on clinical diagnosis called "Current Medical Diagnosis." It states "there are two distinct states of sleep as shown on electroencephalographic studies: REM sleep, also called 'dream sleep', "D" state sleep and paradoxical sleep; and NREM sleep, which is also known as Slow delta wave sleep or "S" state sleep and is divided in stages 1, 2, 3, 4. Dreaming occurs in both REM and NREM sleeps. The stages of NREM sleep have been less well studied because of technical problems. [Current Medical Diagnosis 1986. chapter 17, page 674]

THE SLEEP IN QURAN

According to Arabic Language, there are fine differences between the nine words, which has been used in Quran for various stages and states of sleep. *Naum* is a state, which overpowers the mental faculties and deprives the sleeper of consciousness. *Ruqad* is applied on sleeping in the day or night. In view of some scholars, the word *ruqad* or *raqood* may only be used for night sleep. *Haj'aa* or *Hajoo*, is only night sleep, it is also used for lying on the bed. *Hajood* or *tahajjad* is applied on sleep in the night; it is also used for waking up after sleeping for sometime. *Nuas* is a state close to sleep and others can clearly feel its affects in the eyes, while *subat* is used for slight sleep; it is originally a state of "comfort." *Sennah* is the initial stage of sleep in which the victim starts feeling heaviness in the head and his head is dropped. *Qailoolah* is equal to taking rest during the day or in afternoon. *Zajaa* means taking rest on the bed, whether accompanied by sleep or not. [Also see: Allama thalabi's Fiqh al-Lughah, chapter 18, page 165]

For further study see: Mufradat Raghīb Asphahani, Kitāb al-Mutaradif wal Mutawarid by Sheikh Ibrahim al-Bazji] The most comprehensive book, as far as I know, on this topic is al-Ifsah fi fiqh al-Lughah by Hussain Yousuf Musa and Abdul Fattah Saaedi in two volumes.

In English language, we have some words for different stages of sleep and allied conditions. *Sleep* is the usual term used for the condition in which men and animals recuperate their powers after activity. *Slumber* is implied for sleeping quietly, while *drowse* suggests a dull, heavy condition of body and mind when one is falling asleep or is half asleep. *Doze* carries somewhat the same implications as *drowse* but the term often suggests a falling asleep, unintentionally or unnaturally without prior condition of drowsiness. *Nap* is applied on a short and brief sleep taken especially in daytime or during work break. *Catnap* is used for taking frequent and brief refreshment naps. *Snooze* can be used as a substitute for nap and drowsiness. The word *Somnolent* may be used in place of 'drowsy'; usually, however, it connotes the sluggishness or inertness rather than actual sleepy condition. For understanding the delicate differences between these words, the readers are advised to study Merriam-Webster's dictionary of synonyms and Reader Digest's Use the Right Word.

Keeping in view the correct concept of the word *Nuas*, I think *doze* is the closest word to it.

The Hypocrites thought that Prophet Mohammad (S.A.A.W) is responsible for the death of the people who were slew in the battle of Uhad due to disobedience of some of their colleagues. God is clarifying that "people are predestined to death", which they cannot avoid in any case. In Quran, there are many verses of the same implication. (3: 185) Every one will taste the death, and you will be rewarded fully on the day of resurrection. (4: 78) Death will approach you, even if you would be in cemented places. (21: 35) Every soul shall have a taste of death. (33:16) Say: "Running away will not profit you, if you are running away from death or slaughter; and even if you do escape, then you will be allowed to enjoy only a brief respite." (62: 8) Say: "The death from which you are fleeing will truly overtake you, then

you will be sent back to Him who knows everything, secret and open.

In verse 155 Allah is showing His pardon and forgiveness for those who ran away from the battlefield of Uhad. The commentators have generally accepted this generalized view, for which see, al-Mizan, 4: 51, Majma al-Bayan, 2: 524.

Some scholars have tried to clarify the reasons behind Hadrat Uthman's behavior in the battles of Badr and Uhad. [Tafseer Tabari, 4: 93-96, Tafseer Abu al-Laith Samarqandi, 1: 310, Sahih Bukhari, 2: 581-582]

For showing His forgiveness, God has used the phrase "aafa Allah'o aanhum." The word *aafa* means to give up, to abandon, and not to bring to account, to forsake, and to forgive. [Muheet, Taj al-Uroos, Mufradat al-Quran] Compare: 5: 95, 101; 9: 43; 42: 40.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَوْ
كَانُوا غُرَّةً لَوْ كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا وَمَا
قَتَلُوا لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَ
اللَّهُ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾
وَلَئِنْ قَتَلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مُتُّمْ لَمَغْفِرَةٌ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَلَئِنْ مُتُّمْ
أَوْ قَتَلْتُمْ لَا إِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾

(156-158) Believers, do not be like the infidels who said about their brothers, when they set out on a journey or for a battle: if they had been amidst us, they would never have

died or killed. Allah will make it “unfulfilled desire” of their hearts. God gives life and causes death and God observes whatever you do. (157) If you will be killed in the cause of Allah or die, then know that the forgiveness from Allah, and His mercy is far better than whatever you accumulate. (158) Whether you die, or be martyred, in both the cases, you will go back to Allah.

These verses are very clear in their meaning and contents. Life and death is in the hands of Allah. Those who sacrifice their lives in the cause of Allah, they will be blessed by the pardon and mercy of Allah in the life hereafter. This world is like a field in which one sows the seeds of his deeds and gets the results accordingly. In our days the man is after material benefits, people are busy in accumulating wealth but oblivious to hereafter. The best thing one can obtain is the favor and blessings of Allah, in this world and in the world to come.

فَبِمَا رَحْمَةٍ مِّنَ

اللَّهِ لِنَدْت لَهُمْ، وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ
 لَأَنْفَضْتَهُمْ مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ
 لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ، فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ
 عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾
 يَنْصُرْكُمْ اللَّهُ فَلاَ غَالِبَ لَكُمْ، وَإِنْ يَخُذْ لَكُمْ فَمَنْ
 ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرْكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ
 الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٦٠﴾

(159-160) Due to the mercy of Allah, you dealt with them leniently. Had you been stern and hard hearted they would have surely left your company. Therefore, pardon them; implore forgiveness for them and consult them in the affairs. When

you set your mind for something, and then trust fully on Allah, since Allah loves those who trust Him. (160) If God will help you, then no one will be able to subdue you. Furthermore, if He will leave you unassisted, then who will help you other than Him? So, on Allah depend all the believers.

Allah is the most gracious and ever merciful. He is the Lord of Universe. His last prophet Mohammad (S.A.A.W) is the shadow of His mercy and lordship. God has confirmed that Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) is at the highest rank of moral excellence and ethics. (68: 4) The excellence the prophet had, that was only by the blessing of Allah. Only he bestowed it on His Servant but He himself is praising the Servant. Compare 26: 215, 7: 199, 9: 128.

THE MORAL EXCELLENCE OF HOLY PROPHET (S.A.A.W).

Zurarah has reported Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S) as saying: That Jew woman, who had poisoned the goat for harming Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W), was brought to him.

He asked her: What convinced you to do all that?

She replied: I thought if you are a prophet then the posion will not cause any harm to you but if you are a king then people would feel peace by your demise.

Imam Baqir (A.S) says: Then Holy Prophet pardoned her.[Usool al-Kafi, chapter on Forgiveness, Hadith No: 9, Vol 2: 108; Behar al-Anwar, 16: 265]

Anas, the companion of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W), has reported: One day a Bedouin came near to Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and caught his robe. Bedouin pulled it so severely that produced a scar on Prophet's neck.

Thereafter, he said: Mohammad, give me some money out of what you have.

Prophet turned to him, laughed, and asked someone to give him some money. [Allama Tabrasi, Makarim al-Akhlaq, 15]

Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) says: A vulgar women passed by Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and at that time, he was busy in eating something.

She said: Mohammad you are eating like a slave and sitting in the same manner.

He replied: Woe unto you, who may be more like a servant (of Allah) than I am?

“O’ no”, she said, “give me a morsel from your food.”
Prophet took a morsel from the food and gave it to her.
Refusing this, she demanded “No, by God. I wish it from your mouth into my mouth.”

Imam Sadiq (A.S) said: Prophet took out the morsel from his mouth; she took it from his hand and swallowed.

Imam Jafar Sadiq says: She never uttered obscene words after this, until she departed from the world. [Behar al-Anwar]

A fellow from Ansar came to Holy Prophet for asking something. Then another person from the tribe of Thaqif came with his problem.

Prophet said: Brother from Thaqif, the Ansarite has come first with his problem; please sit down, so that I solve his problem before yours. [Behar al-Anwar, 2: 63, quote from Muniyah al-Murid] Thaqif is a branch of Hawazan Tribe. [Firozabadi, Qamoos, 3: 125]

Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) has said: Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) proceeded to Je'ranah for distributing the booty of the battle of Hunain among the believers.

People kept on demanding from him and pressed him to go under a tree:

Holy Prophet's woolen mantle was caught in the tree and he got some scratches at his back.

The pressure was so immense that pushed him again out of tree, but people kept on demanding from him.

The Prophet said: People give me back my mantle. By God if I had wealth equal to the trees of Tehamah, I would have distributed it among you. Moreover, you have not found me fainthearted or niggardly.

Then he went out of Je'ranah in the month of Zi'qaadah (11th month).

Imam Says: I have never seen this tree but ever green, as if it has been receiving water, since then, regularly. [Behar al-Anwar, 16: 226, quote from al-Khraj wal Jaraih of Qutub al-Din Ravendi]

The scholars have compiled exclusive books on moral and spiritual excellence of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). Allama Majlisi has devoted 276 pages of volume 16 of Behar al-Anwar for describing the highest moral character of Our Prophet (S.A.A.W). These two verses also speak about "consultation with others and trust on Allah." I will discuss these issues somewhere in this commentary.

Most of the academics are of the opinion that Holy Prophet is

being advised to “consult” his companions in the matters of war and not in the affairs of “religion and law.” [Rooh al-Maani, 4: 166-67, Kash’shaf, 1: 423, Qurtabi, 4: 250]

Allama Razi says: Scholars are agreed that Holy Prophet was not allowed to consult the companions on those matters about which he received the revelation from Allah. He was asked to have the opinion of his companions only about the matters of management. He was not bind to consult them in all of these matters, but it was only the part of his blessing. [Tafseer Kabir, 3: 409, 410, the gist]

The Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) took the views of his companions at various occasions including digging of a trench at the eve of the battle of Ahzab.

وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيِّ أَنْ يَغْلُظَ وَمَنْ
يَغْلُظْ يَأْتِ بِمَا غَلَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦١﴾

(161) It does not suit a prophet to purloin anything. The one, who will do that, will come up with the “theft” on the day of resurrection. Then everyone shall be given, what would be due for him against his “earning,” and there will be no injustice.

All the exegetes cohered on the point that this verse made the Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) free of the charges of stealing the spoils of Uhad and all other battles, which were framed against him by some hypocrites.

The basic meaning of the word *Ghal* is pilferage and secrecy. [Taj al-Uroos] According to scholars, it is used for dishonesty and for lifting things secretly. *Al-Ghalalah* is a type of under-

garment and *ghalal* is the water, which one pours at the root of a tree and consequently goes inside the earth. *Taghalal al-shay* means the hidden matter. [Tafseer Kabir, 3: 411, Qurtabi, 4: 255]

Ibn Abbas has reported that one cloth sheet of red color was missing from the booty of Badr. Some people said: Mohammad has taken it away. Therefore, Allah sent down this verse for narrating the excellence of his character. [Tafseer Tabari, 4: 102] In Sahih Muslim, there is a tradition narrated by Hadrat Omar, in which he says: We were talking about the martyrs of the battle of Khyber and we mentioned different companions. Regarding one person the Holy Prophet said: He is not from among the martyrs and I have seen him in hell since he has taken away a cloth sheet from the spoils. Thereafter, the Holy Prophet asked Hadrat Omar to announce among the people: "Only the believers should enter the paradise." Hadrat Omar announced the same among the believers. [Sahih Muslim, 1: 74]

DISTRIBUTION OF WAR SPOILS

A man asked from Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) about the distribution of plunder of war. The Imam replied: If they fought under the command of a man appointed by Imam, then there would be one fifth portion for Allah and the Prophet (S.A.A.W). The remaining four portions shall be distributed among the army. If they had the booty without fighting with the polytheists, then the whole spoil will go to Imam and will remain at his advantage. The jurists have divided the spoils of war into three categories: (1) the moveable property, like currency, animals, and other such things. First of all a portion of it would be allocated for Imam or his deputy. After that, the one-fifth portion will also go to him. The remaining four portions will be distributed among the participants. Even the neonatal should get a portion. One who had "horse," he should receive two portions, one for him

and the other for horse. The mules, donkeys and camels have no right in the booty, but there is a fixed portion for 'boat and ship'. (2) The 'captives of war' (women and children) shall receive their portion. According to Ayatullah Hassan Najafi, there is consensus among the scholars on this issue [Jawahir al-Kalam]. (3) There is consensus among the jurists that the captivated land is equally for all the participants. [Ayatullah Jawad Maghniah, al-Fiqh al-Sadiq, 2: 277]

The verse under discussion also shows that nothing can be taken secretly from the spoils of war, whether it is in small quantity or big one. The thieves, if killed, should not be rendered as 'martyrs'. The purloined thing will be returned back at any cost.

أَفَمِنْ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَ اللَّهِ كَمَنْ بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
وَمَا وَهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾ هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِندَ
اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بِصِيرٍ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾

(162-163) Nay! One who followed the "will" of Allah, might be like a man who incurred the "wrath" of Allah and hell would be his abode, the worst place for going back to? (163) They are at different ranks in the sight of God, and God is observant of their acts.

Imam Ali (A.S) says: The essence of "pleasure" of God is the good expectations from Allah and trust on Him. [Ghurar al-Hikam] In another saying of Imam Ali we read: One who tries to please the ruler with the thing which makes the God angry, he walks out of Religion. [Behar al-Anwar, 77: 161] The pleasure of Allah rests in the obedience of Allah. [Imam Ali, Ghurar al-Hikam] Imam Jafar Sadiq has declared: We are the people who agree with the pleasure of God even if it is against our desires and demands. [Behar al-Anwar, 82: 132]

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ

عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ

يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ

وَالْحِكْمَةَ، وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٣٤﴾

(164) Indeed, Allah conferred favor on the believers by appointing an apostle among them, who reads the verses of Allah for them, improves their personalities and instructs them in law and its understanding. For sure, they were in clear error before it.

This verse is to be read along with verses 2: 129 and 151 of the same implication. There is a debate among the scholars about true meanings of Arabic words *Tazkiyah* and *Hikmah* in this verse.

WHAT IS HIKMAH?

As understood in the Islamic Philosophical tradition, *hikmat* is not the name of one particular science or discipline but rather a generic noun representing several sciences. Here I would like to summarize the views of two great thinkers of Islamic world concerning this issue: Qutbuddin Shirazi and Mullah Sadra Shirazi.

In Qutbuddin's classification, *hikmah* is identified with the theoretical philosophical sciences comprising of metaphysics, mathematics, natural science and logic with the practical philosophical sciences comprising of ethics, economics and politics. Qutbuddin mentions two main characteristics of *hikmah*, which distinguish it from *non-hikmah*. The first concerns the timeless and universal nature of *hikmah*. In his philosophy, *Hikmah* refers to that form of knowledge, which

remains one and the same for all times and cultures. The second pertains to *hikmat*'s essentiality. As Qutbuiddin defines it, *hikmat* is to know the things "as they really are" as well as acting truthfully and correctly to the best of one's ability so that in realizing such knowledge and action the human soul attains its perfection. [Durrah al-Taj, 1/1/72]

Mullah Sadra defines this science as "coming to know the state of the essence of things as they are, to the extent of human capacity" or "a man's becoming an intellectual world (microcosm) corresponding to the objective world (macrocosm)," or to quote still another definition "the comprehension of universals and catharsis from the world of matter". [See the prologue of Asfar Arbaah and Iksir al-Arefin by Mullah Sadra, J. Muslih, Falsafih-e 'Ali ya Hikmat-e- Sadr, 1: 1-2]

The above definitions suggest that *hikmat* is a purely intellectual form of knowledge in which the knower himself undergoes a certain transformation in the process of knowing and his soul becomes a mirror in which the cosmic hierarchy is reflected.

According to my own understanding, the term *tazkiyah* includes all sorts of improvement in people of the community and the term *hikmah* encompasses the deeper understanding of the law and teachings, which facilitates the people to practice the law in its true spirit. In addition, through these two means people come to know the universe and its creator. These two faculties make the people compatible with the world and their personalities start reflecting the attributes of Allah.

According to late Ayatullah Khomeini, Prophet Mohammad is that very personality and he is the Grand Name of Allah in this universe. [Sharah Dua-e-Seher and Notes on Fusus al-Hikam of Ibn Arabi]

أَوْلَيْآ أَصَابَتْكُمْ مُّصِيبَةٌ قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مِّثْلَيْهَا ۚ
 قُلْتُمْ أَنَّى هَذَا ۗ قُلْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنفُسِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ
 اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ
 التَّقِي الْجَمْعِينَ فَبِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾
 وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا ۗ وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا
 قَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ ادْفَعُوا ۗ قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ
 قِتَالًا لَا تَبْعُنْكُمُ ۗ هُمْ لِلْكَفْرِ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ
 مِنْهُمْ لِلدِّمَانِ ۗ يَقُولُونَ يَا فَوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ
 فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ الَّذِينَ
 قَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قَتَلُوا
 قُلْ فَادْرَأُوا عَن أَنفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنْتُمْ

صِدْقِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾

(165-168) After inflicting the misery on your enemy, double to that which you faced, you asked: From where it came on us? Say: It is due to your own fault and Allah has power over all things. (166) Whatever happened to you on the day of battle between the two groups, it happened with the permission of Allah in order to know the true believers, (167) and the hypocrites. They were invited: come on, let us fight in the cause of Allah, or at least defend our city. However, they replied: Had we known that a war is going to take place, we would have followed you. On that day, they were more near to infidelity than to the "belief." They are saying against their hearts and God knows what they are hiding. (168) Those who stayed at home, they said about their brothers: Had they obeyed us, they would not have

been killed. Say to them: Avert your death if you are right.

Allama Fakhar al-Din Razi has said that most of the scholars believe that those who denied supporting the Muslims were indeed non-believers. [Tafseer Kabir, 3: 423, Kash'shaf, 1: 428, Safwat al-Tafasir, 1: 220] In view of some scholars, this verse shows the changing condition of people regarding their faith. Sometimes they are closer to "true belief" and some other times away from it. [Ibn Kathir by Sabooni, 1: 344, Namoonah, 3: 127]

وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْتَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾
فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ
بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ۗ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ يُسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِنِعْمَةِ
مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَفَضْلٍ ۗ وَآَنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧١﴾

(169-171) Do not think that the "slain in the way of Allah" are dead; they are alive and getting sustenance from their Lord. (170) They rejoice in the bounties of Allah, which He has provided them. They also feel pleasure for those who have not joined them yet and have left over, that they would have neither fear nor the sorrow. (171) Therefore, rejoicing the bliss of Allah and His favor, surely, Allah does not spoil the reward of the believers.

Compare chapter 2, verse: 154 (Vol: 1). I have briefly explained the meanings of "death" in Arabic Language over there.

IMPORTANCE OF MARTYRDOM IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

Martyrdom or sacrifice of human life in the way of Allah and religion has a significant importance in all three Semitic Religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

In Judaism, the believers are obliged to sacrifice even their lives for avoiding three major crimes. Here, I would like to quote Rabbi Solomon Schechter, who has elucidated this point in these words: The transgressions of which the most prominent of the rebels (especially the generation of the deluge and the people of Sodom and Gomorrah) were guilty are the three cardinal sins causing contamination and defilement which the Jew is bound to undergo martyrdom for rather than commit. These three things are: Idolatry, adultery and shedding the blood. [Some aspects of Rabbinic Theology, 222] See Sanhedrin, 74a and Graetz's *Geschichte de Judem*, 3: 156 and 431. *Torat Kohanim* (also called *Sifra*) edited with the commentary of R. Abraham b. David and I. H. Weiss 1862. Page: 81, Num. R. 7 # 10.

We read in the Psalm: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. (116: 15) In addition, in an explanatory note we have been told: Miracles were performed for our ancestors ... because they were ready to sacrifice their lives for the sanctification of God's name. [Talmud, Berakot 20 a] Six of the Torah's 613 commandments are present in Deuteronomy 6: 5-9. Talmud explains these commandments in these words: "You shall love the Lord your God," obligates a Jew to "cause God to become beloved through you" (Yoma 86 a). "With all your soul" is understood as obligating a Jew to be willing to give up his or her soul (i.e., life), if need be, on behalf of God, while "with all your might" means with all your possessions." [Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Wisdom*, 358-59] The martyrs in the cause and love of God have been praised very much in the

literature of all religions of the world.

In Christianity, the sacrifice of Lord Jesus has prime importance. The entire theology of Christianity is based on the meaning of Lord's sacrifice. In Matthew, we are told: Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew, 5: 11-12). Letter to Romans describes the matter in this way: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: For thy sake, we are being killed all the daylong; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. (Romans 8: 35-39) In the words of Karl H. Peschke: The suffering and death of so many Christians martyrs up to the present time in confession of their religion is the most eloquent witness to the conviction of the Church that the faith may never be denied. Against heretical denial of the duty to profess the faith even by martyrdom, the fathers of the Church refer precisely to this example of Christian Martyrs (Irenaeus, Tertullian, Augustine). [Christian Ethics, 31] The same writer explains: Martyrdom by which a man lays down his life for Christ and his brothers, as Christ did for us (1 Jn, 3: 16), is the highest proof of love. "Though few are presented with such an opportunity, nevertheless all must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross through the persecutions, which the Church will never fail to suffer (LG. 42). [Christian Ethics, 94]

Not only in Semitic religion, but also in unrevealed religions, like Hinduism and Sikhism, the importance of sacrifice and martyrdom in the cause of religion is not trivial. Hinduism tells us: The right attitude for the seeker of the truth on this lofty Path is, "Let my people look askance; let my wife and children forsake me; let men deride; let kings

punish; but I shall be steadfast, O' Supreme Deity; I shall serve and ever serve Thee with mind, speech, body and act; I shall not leave thy Law. [Kularnava Tantra, 2]

Likewise, in Sikhism we find great praise for those who are slain in the cause of religion.

“Holy is the death of heroic men, /who lay down their lives in an approved cause. /Such alone may be called Heroes, as at the Divine Portal obtain true honor: Obtaining honor at Divine Portal, with honor they depart. In addition, in the hereafter, they suffer not. Such reward they shall obtain if on the sole Lord they meditate. [Adi Granth, Wadhans, Alahaniyan Dirges, M. I, 579]

I have discussed the importance of *shahadah* or martyrdom in Islam on 3: 140. Abu Basir says that I asked Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S): Where do the souls of the believers rest? Imam (A.S) said: They are in the rooms in paradise, where they take food and drink whatever is available. They also pray: Our Lord! Please cause to happen the Qayamah (Last day of the world). [Tafseer al-Burhan, 663] Imam Zain al-Abidin (A.S) has reported that Imam Hussain (A.S) told his companions, on the day of *Ashura*: Death in the way of Allah is nothing but like a bridge, which takes you from hardship of this world to the wide Paradise and its everlasting bounties. [Behar al-Anwar, 3: 134] Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has declared: Three people will be allowed intercession and their intercession will be accepted by God, i.e., prophets, scholars and martyrs. [Behar al-Anwar, 3: 299] There is a long sermon of Prophet Mohammad (S.A.A.W) in which he has described the excellence and merit of *Shu'hada*, for which see: Majma al-Bayan, 2: 538, Namoonah, 3: 131, Abul Futuh Razi, 1: 686 Maktaba Ayatullah Maraashi.

DISCUSSION ABOUT LIFE AND THE DEATH

“Death, the most dreaded of evils, is therefore of no concern to us, for while we exist death is not present and when death is present we no longer exist.” [Epicurus]

“To me death is sweeter than honey, if it is in the way of Allah.” [Ali al-Akbar, son of Imam Hussain (A.S)]

You can find some people who disbelieve in God's existence, but there is not a single person in the world who can deny death. However, we must realize that there are different beliefs about the soul's survival after death. Hindus, Tibetan Buddhists, and Neo-Platonists believe in the reincarnation. Taoist sages and numerous shamans have claimed that just a few advanced spirits survive. Jews, Christians and Muslims typically hold that we live a single life on earth but exist as souls in the afterlife. [Redfield and Murphy, *God and the Evolving Universe*, 183]

Life is a state of material complex of individual characterized by the capacity to perform certain functional activities, including metabolism, growth, reproduction and some form of responsiveness and adaptation. Life is further characterized by the presence of complex transformations of organic molecules and by the organization of such molecules into the successively larger units of protoplasm, cells, organs and organisms. Opinion concerning the essential nature of life has been historically between vita list and mechanistic concepts. Vita lists assert that the existence of some “vital force” that separates living from nonliving matter and forms life's underlying principle. Mechanism, on the other hand, asserts that the wondrous phenomena of life are merely processes and transformations obeying elementary chemical and physical laws and that a living system is ultimately reducible to its constituent, atoms, molecules, and nothing more. Hypothesis of the origin of life ranges from religious concepts of life's creation out of inanimate matter by a divine agency to the

more scientifically acceptable theory that life began on the early earth by a series of progressive chemical reactions. According to this hypothesis, which has been supported by recent laboratory experimentation, inorganic compounds such as methane, ammonia and water vapor that were plentiful at that time on the earth formed into simple organic molecules with the aid of atmospheric electric discharges and ultraviolet radiation as energy sources. The question of how the resulting simple amino acids eventually became the much more highly organized and self-replicating systems known as life is much more difficult to answer, however and is until far from being resolved. [Summarized from *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 7: 346-47]

Death is the total cessation of the life processes that eventually occurs in all-living organisms. The state of death has always been obscured by mystery and superstition. The precise definition of human death remains controversial and differs according to culture and legal system. The diagnosis of death in mammalian organism was long based on following easily established early criteria: the absence of peripheral pulse and heart beat, the absence of respiration, the lack of corneal reflex and the presence of bluish color (cyanosis) that results from lack of oxygen in the blood. The discoloration is seen most easily in the mucous membranes of the mouth and lips and in the nail beds. After the introduction of transplantation and so-called life support systems, the physicians are trying to redefine "medical death" and its criteria. Most prominent among new criteria for human death is: the absence of a functioning brainstem (that portion of the brain, whose activities are essential to the capacity for consciousness) and the irreversible cessation of unassisted breathing.

Many belief systems have tried to distinguish between physical and spiritual being. Despite the decomposition of the human body following death, the idea has persisted that

something of the individual person continues to survive the experience of dying. This belief occurs in virtually all religions, past and present and decisively conditions their evaluations of man and his place in the universe. [Summarized from Encyclopedia Britannica, 3: 941]

JEWISH POINT OF VIEW

The Jewish perspective of life and death is present in their sacred book called "Talmud." Judaic tradition gives prime importance to human life. "Whoever saves one life, it is as if he saved the entire world." [Mishna *Sanhedrin* 4: 5] The same words have been quoted in Quran (5: 32). In Midrash, we find the passages, which place the man on highest rank "therefore every individual is obliged to say, "For my sake was the world created." [ibid] Midrash tells us about the seven stages of human life and their characteristics: "The seven vanities which Ecclesiastes mentioned correspond to the seven worlds which a man experiences. At one year old he is like a king, placed in a covered litter and all embrace and kiss him. At two or three, he is like a pig, which pokes about the sewers. At ten, he jumps about like a kid. At twenty, he is like a neighing horse; he adorns his person and seeks a wife. Having married, he is like an ass (bearing a heavy burden). Then having become the father of children, he grows bold like a dog to procure sustenance for them. When finally he has grown old, he is bent like a monkey. [Ecclesiastes, 1: 2] This classification is neither good, nor appealing one. Rather it is contemptuous one. A better explanation has been given in an ethical treatise called "Aboth" (v. 4), in which we read: At five years the age is reached for the study of scripture; at ten for the study of Mishna; at thirteen for the fulfillment of commandments; at fifteen for the study of Talmud; at eighteen for marriage; at twenty for seeking a livelihood; at thirty for entering into one's full strength; at forty for understanding; at fifty for counsel; at sixty a man attains old age; at seventy the hoary head; at eighty the gift of especial strength; at ninety

he bends beneath the weight of his years; at hundred he is as if he were already dead and had passed away from the world.

On the other hand, the death is considered the result of one's sins and wrong deeds, and sinless person would necessarily be immortal. "There is no death without sin." [Shab, 55a] The ministering angels spake before the Holy one, blessed be he, "Why didst thou inflict the penalty of death upon Adam? He replied, "I imposed a light precept upon him but he transgressed it" (Shab. 55b). "If a man tells you that had Adam not sinned and eaten of the forbidden tree, he would have lived for ever, answer him that actually happened with Elijah." [Lev. Xxvii. 4]

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ

مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا
 مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرَ عَظِيمٍ ۝١٤٧
 النَّاسُ إِنْ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ
 فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا ۖ وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ۝١٤٨
 فَانْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَىٰ دِيَارِهِمْ لِيُحْكَمَ فِيهِمْ
 اللَّهُ مُضِلٌّ سُلُوبًا وَرَافِعٌ ۚ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ۝١٤٩
 إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ ۗ فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ
 وَخَافُوا إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝١٥٠ وَلَا يَحْزَنكَ
 الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا
 اللَّهَ شَيْئًا ۗ يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حَظًّا فِي
 الْآخِرَةِ ۗ وَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝١٥١

(172-176) Those who responded to the call of Allah and the Prophet, despite receiving wounds, for the well doers among them and the righteous one, is the big reward. (173) People told them: A great army has been gathered against you, therefore, be conscious of them. This news only enhanced their faith and they answered: God is sufficient for us and he is the best trustee. (174) They came back, by the grace and bounty of Allah, without receiving any harm, they strived for obtaining the "pleasure of Allah," and God is of great benevolence. (175) No one but Satan affrights you of his votaries. Therefore, do not be afraid of them, have my fear only if you are true believers. (176) Do not be grieved of those who are swift in disbelieving, they cannot harm Allah in anyway. Allah wants to deny them any share in hereafter; and for them would be a great chastisement. These verses are clear and unambiguous in their contents and meanings and, therefore, need no explanation. In these verses, Allah is admiring those believers who did not run away from the battlefield of Uhad though they received serious wounds in the war. Allama Tabtabai has given the names of seventy martyrs of Uhad in his commentary al-Mizan. (4: 74-76)

According to history, Abu Sufyan was on his way back to Mecca. When he reached at a place called Roha, he realized that he failed to eliminate the Muslims in the battle of Uhad. Therefore, he tried to wage a second assault on them. Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) was already expecting the new issue. The Prophet proceeded up to Hamra al-Asad and asked even his injured companions to join him. They responded to the call of Allah and his prophet and joined for a new combat with the infidels. Prophet (S.A.A.W) camped his followers at this place but no one from the enemy turned up. The Khuzaa tribe had not embraced Islam yet and had a soft corner for the Muslims and their Prophet (S.A.A.W). Their chief, Maabad al-Khuzai, went to see Abu Sufyan and told him that a very huge army of Muslims were pursuing him and that he will not be able

to fight them. After hearing this from Maabad, Abu Sufyan went back to his place.

In these verses, Allah is appreciating the injured companions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) for responding to his call. [Musnad Ahmad, 2: 84, Namoonah, 3: 133, Tafseer Tabari, 4: 117] Not even a single skirmish took place and the historians have wrongly called it as "Battle of Hamra al-Asad."

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا

الْكَفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا ۖ وَ لَهُمْ

عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ۝ وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا

نُنزِلُ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّا نَفْسِهِمْ ۗ إِنَّمَا نُنزِلُ لَهُمْ

لِيُزِدَادُوا إِثْمًا ۖ وَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ۝ مَا كَانَ

اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ

يَمَيِّزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ

عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِيٰ مِنْ رُّسُلِهِ مَنْ

يَشَاءُ ۖ فَآمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ۖ وَإِنْ تَوَمَّنُوا وَ

تَتَّقُوا فَلَكُمْ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ۝

(177-179) Those who purchased disbelief at the cost of belief, they cannot hurt Allah in anyway and for them is grievous punishment. (178) The infidels shall not imagine that the reprieve we have given to them is a favor for them. We have given the respite only for their increase in sins and for them would be despising chastisement. (179) Letting you at the present condition does not suit Allah, unless the good and the bad are distinguished from each other. It is not suitable for Allah to make all of you aware of the unseen,

but God chooses, for this kind of knowledge, some of His Prophets by His own will. Therefore, believe in Allah and His Prophets. If you will have faith and become pious, then for you will be a great reward.

Allah does not want to see the believers in bad or pathetic condition, because He is the creator of the world and extraordinarily merciful to those who have faith in him and pass their lives according to HIS PRECEPTS.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF UNSEEN

Verse 179 strongly supports the belief that some Prophets had “the knowledge of unseen” by the mercy and grace of Allah. The provision of this kind of knowledge solely depends on will and wish of Allah, who has absolute knowledge of everything existing in this world. Most of the Muslim scholars and exegetes have the same belief, except a small group of narrow-minded people.

According to Allama Fatehullah Kashani, not only the prophets but also Imams have the knowledge of “Unseen.” [Manhaj al-Sadeqeen, 2: 397, also see: 4: 79, Namoonah, 3: 142, Majmaul Bayan, 2: 545, Abul Futuh Razi, 1: 695] I would like to refer the readers to a couple of good books on this topic: (1) Kashf al-Asrar by Allama Mohammad Sibtain Sirsavi and (2) Uloom al-Mustafa by Allama Ahmad Reza Khan Bareilvi.

The following interpreters of Quran also believe that Allah has given the knowledge of Unseen to some of His prophets.

Allama Abu al-Laith Samarqandi, Tafseer, 1: 319.

Allama Wahedi Naishapuri, al-Waseet, 1: 526.

Allama Ibn Jauzi Hambali, Zad al-Maseer, 1: 511.

Imam Fakhr al-Din Razi, Tafseer Kabir, 3: 442.

Allama Qurtabi, 4: 289.

Allama Abul Hayyan Andulusi, al-Bahr al-Muheet, 3: 449.

Allama Aloosi, Rooh al-Maani, 4: 215.

Sheikh Mahmood al-Hassan Deobandi, marginal notes.

Ashraf Ali Thanvi Deobandi, marginal notes.

Mufti Mohammad Shafi Deobandi, Maaref al-Quran, 2: 248.

Ibn Kathir (Sabooni) 1: 350.

Ibn Kathir on this verse.

Safwat al-Tafasir, 1: 225.

In view of Allama Zemakh'shari, this verse shows that Allah gives the knowledge of unseen through revelation. Therefore, such knowledge of the prophets is not absolute, but is subject to God's revelations about different matters. [al-Kash'shaf, 1: 436]

Allama Tabari says: the best explanation of this verse would be that "God cannot give you knowledge of what the people have in their hearts, therefore you can distinguish between the true believers and the hypocrites. However, He can enable you to feel difference between the "test and affliction." [Tafseer Tabari, 7: 427]

A SERMON OF IMAM ALI (A.S)

In one of his sermons, Imam Ali (A.S) says: I can see some people whose faces are as if shields covered with rough-scraped skins. They dress themselves in silken and woolen clothes and hold dear excellent horses. Their killing and bloodshed shall take place freely until the wounded shall walk over the dead and the number of the fugitives will be lesser than the number of prisoners.

One of his companions said to him: O' Ameer al-Momenin, have you been given the knowledge of hidden things? Where-upon he laughed and said to that man from Bani Kalb: O' Brother of Kalb! This is not knowledge of hidden things; these matters have been acquired from him (Holy Prophet) who knew them. As regard, the knowledge of hidden things that means the knowledge of the Day of Judgment and the

things covered by Allah in the verse “Verily, Allah is He with whom is the knowledge of the hour. He sends down rain and knows what is in the wombs. No one knows what he is going to earn next day and equally no one knows the place of his death. Verily with Allah is full knowledge and He is acquainted with all things. (31: 34) Therefore, Allah alone knows what is there in the wombs, whether male or female, ugly or handsome, generous or miserly, mischievous or pious and who will be the fuel for hell and who will be in the company of Prophets in Paradise. This is the knowledge of the hidden things, which is not known to anyone save Allah. Allah passed on rest of the knowledge to his Prophet and he passed it on to me and prayed for me that my bosom may retain it and my ribs may hold it. [Nahj al-Balagha, sermon: 127] This is a part of a long sermon of Imam Ali (A.S), which he delivered at Basrah, on his way back from battle of Jamal. Allama Maisam Bahrani has quoted some fractions of this ‘presentation’ in his commentary on Nahjul Balagha (3: 15 and 138). The other parts of this sermon are: sermon 99, 100, 125 of Nahjul Balagha.

SOME IMPORTANT TRADITIONS

According to Muslim belief, Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) had the knowledge of ‘unseen’ by the grace and mercy of Allah. This belief has been founded on the following reliable traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W).

Abu Musa Ashari has related that some questions were asked from Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W), which he detested. On continuous questioning, the Prophet showed his resentment at that time and said to the people, “People, ask whatever question do you like.” A man asked, “What is the name of my father”? He is Huzafa. Another man put the same question and the prophet replied, “He is the free slave of Shaibah, his name

is Salim.” Hadrat Omar observed the signs of extreme resentment on the face of Holy Prophet and pleaded: Prophet, we repent to Allah for this courage. [Sahih Bukhari, Kitab al-Ilm, chapter 28, Hadith: 92, Vol: 1: 128. Quran Mahal Karachi] Allama Kirmani, in his commentary on this tradition, says: According to some scholars, this tradition shows that if a question about “unseen” matter was put before the prophet, then he was given its knowledge by Allah. [Vol 1, Part 2, page 83]

Imam Muslim has quoted this tradition from Abu Zaid, the companion of Holy Prophet: Prophet (S.A.A.W) led the Morning Prayer, and then ascended on the pulpit for delivering a sermon until the time of noon prayer (Zuhur). He again led the prayer and after completing the prayer, he addressed the people until the time of afternoon prayer (Asar) approached. The prophet led the prayer and again delivered a speech until the sunset. In this long sermon, he told us about “what happened in the past and what is going to happen in future. [Sahih Muslim, 4: 2217. Hadith: 2892, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiah] Imam Bukhari has reported this from the reference of Huzaifah, 2: 977.

In some traditions of Holy Prophet, we read that the knowledge of future was given to him. Sahih Bukhari, 1: 453, narrated by Omar, Sahih Muslim, 4: 2215-16, Sunan Abu Dawood, 4: 95, Hadith: 4252, Dalayl al-Nabowat, 6: 587, Musnad Ahmad, 5: 278, narrated by Sauban]

One tradition of Holy Prophet, narrated by Muaz bin Jabal, has been quoted in Jamay al-Sahi’yan, 5: 368-69, Hadith, 3235, Musnad Ahmad, 1: 368 and 4: 66, Al-Elal Al-Mutanahyah, 1: 20-21].

Please compare Quran 8: 7; 11: 49; 15: 94-96; 30: 1-6 (these verses contains the prediction about Rome); 48: 27; and 54: 44-45.

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ

يَتَخَلَّوْنَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ۗ

بَلْ هُوَ شَرٌّ لَّهُمْ ۗ سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخِلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ

الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مِيرَاثُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۗ وَ

اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٨٠﴾

(180) Those who behave niggardly about that what God has given them out of His blessing should not imagine that it is 'good' for them, rather it is worst for them. In addition, on the day of resurrection, their riches will be tied to their necks. For Allah are the heavens and the earth and He is well aware of your 'working'.

This verse of Quran is condemning the niggardliness, which is definitely a bad aspect of ones personality. Quran has reproved this bad habit at various occasions like: 4: 37; 17. 29; 57: 24; 104: 1-6.

In Quran we find the following words of almost same implication: *bukhl* 4: 37, *emsak* 17: 10, *waa'a* 70: 18, *akda'* 53: 34, *aqtara'* 25: 67, *dann* 81: 24, *shu'h* 59: 9; 22: 29, *ghall* 5: 64. *Bukhl*, means not to spend even at the moment of need, while *emsak* means to hold back anything in possession. *Waa'a* means to take care of valuable things and *akda'* means to spend but less than needed. *Aqtar* means not to spend on family and avoiding the needs of the family. *Dann* is the concealment of important information, while *shu'h* is the combination of stinginess and greed. *Maghlool* is a closefisted man, who cannot give anything to the others.

Describing the bad habit of niggardliness, Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: Men are divided into four kinds i.e., open

fisted, the noble, stingy and condemnable. Open fisted is a person who eats and shares it with others. Noble is a man who does not take food but feeds the others. Niggardly is a person who himself eats food but does not give it to others. And the condemnable is he, who neither spends on his own food, nor feeds the others. [Behar al-Anwar, 71: 356-357] In one of his sayings, Imam Ali (A.S) has described the condition of a stingy man in these words: I am surprised of niggardly he hastens himself to deprivation, which he wishes to avoid and he becomes deprived of well being for which he strives. He passes his life as the life of a poor, but will be brought to account as the rich man. Niggardliness is the jumble of all bad attributes and it is a steering, which leads to every mischief. [Allama Tabrasi, Makarem al-Akhlaq, 231-232, Allama Fadl Allah Hairi, Musnad Ahlal Bayt, 324]

Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) says: Stingy is a person who earns through illicit means and spends at wrong occasions. [Behar al-Anwar, 73: 305] Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has expressed the badness of the stinginess in these words: The food given by a generous person has a healing effect, while the food by a stingy man is a source of illness. [Makarem al- Akhlaq, 232] A very striking tradition has been reported from Imam Ali (A.S): The one, who is stingy about his possession, has not a good opinion about his creator. [Ghurar al-Hikam] Holy Prophet has said that those who do not discharge their duties and do not pay Zakat are stingy ones. [Behar al-Anwar, 73: 306 and 96: 16] Allama Fateh Allah Kashani has reported a tradition of Holy Prophet in these words: There may be a man who has riches but does not pay his dues and leaves it as legacy for his heirs, who discharges his duties regarding the wealth. On the Day of Judgment, his wealth will be weighed and the first possessor of wealth will be sent to the hell and the heir will be sent to paradise due to the wealth of other man. [Manhaj al-Sadeqin, 2: 400]

لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ

قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ ۖ
 سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ ۖ
 وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ
 أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ ۝
 الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عٰهَدَ إِلَيْنَا آلا نُوْمِنَ
 لِرَسُولٍ حَتَّىٰ يَأْتِيَنَا بِقُرْبَانٍ تَأْكُلُهُ النَّارُ ۗ قُلْ
 قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِي بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَبِالذِّكْرِ
 فَلْتَمَّ فَلِمَ قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ۝
 فَإِنْ كَذَّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ جَاءُوكَ
 بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَالزُّبُرِ ۗ وَالْكِتَابِ الْمُنِيرِ ۝ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ
 ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۗ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ
 فَمَنْ رُحِزَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ ۗ
 وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعٌ الْغُرُورِ ۝ كَتَبُوكَ
 فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَلَسَّمَعَنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ
 أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا
 أَذًى كَثِيرًا ۗ وَإِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ

مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ۝

(181-186) God has heard the words of those who say: Allah is indigent but we have sufficient; we will just note down their words and their act of killing the prophets unjustly. Thereafter,

we would say: Now taste the chastisements of inferno. (182) It is due to the deeds, which you have sent forward and God is not unjust unto his servants. (183) Those who said: God has taken a promise from us that we shall not believe in a prophet unless he presents a burnt offering. Rejoin them: Several messengers came before me with clear signs and with your present demand, then why did you kill them, if you are truthful? (184) If they call you false (then do not worry), so many other prophets who came in the past with veritable signs, scriptures and enlightening book, have been called by them as false. (185) Every soul should taste the death and in hereafter you should be paid your due reward. Therefore, the one who would be taken away from the 'fire' and would be entered into paradise, he will be the successful. This worldly life is nothing but a source of deception. (186) Surely, you will be tested with your wealth and life and you will hear a lot of hurting words from people of the book of the past and the polytheists. If you persevere patiently and remain righteous, then surely it is a matter of great resolution.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) sent Abu Bakr (R.A) with a letter to Banu Qainuqa, a Jew tribe, in which he demanded of them to say prayer and pay Zakat. Abu Bakr (R.A) called on them at their Study House (Bait al-Midrash). He handed over Prophet's letter to one of their most reputed scholars Phineas bin Azura. After reading the letter, he said in a satiric way: If your demands are right then God is indigent and we are rich. Had he not been poor he would not have demanded a loan from us. And according to Mohammad (S.A.A.W) Allah has prohibited us from taking 'interest' on money loans, on the other side he has promised an 'interest' on our spending in his name. (Compare Quran, 2: 276 and 57: 11) This event has been recorded in almost all the commentaries of Quran like Namoonah, 3: 145; Majmaul Bayan, 2: 547; Ibn Kathir by Sabooni, 1: 351; Kash'shaf, 1: 437; Rooh al-Maani, 4: 220;

Tafseer Tabari, 4: 129; Tafseer Kabir, 3: 446; Safwat al-Tafasir, 1: 226; Wahidi's Asbab al-Nazool, 76]

According to some other sources, Abu Bakr (R.A) slapped Phineas bin Azura after listening offensive words against God from him. When Phineas lodged a complaint against Abu Bakr (R.A), the latter explained the situation. However, Jew scholar denied the charges. [Tafseer Kabir and Tafseer Tabari] Allah is warning such people that they should face the chastisement of conflagration.

BURNT OFFERINGS

The Old Testament has no specific word for 'sacrifice'. Usually, the word *Qurban* has been used, which means the thing or act that brings the performer nearer to God. (A. V, renders single reference "*Corban*" Mark, 7: 11. The other word *isseh* may also be used in the same sense. In view of some scholars the use of this word is confined to burnt offering, but some other disagree on this issue. The other frequently used words describe particular kinds of offerings such as *zabah* has been used for 'slaughter of animal, *ola* is used for burnt offering since it goes upward, while *asam* has been used for guilt offering. The word *hatta't* has been used for sin offering. This word has also been used in Quran in context of Banu Israel's repentance at 2: 58 and 7: 161. For the difference between *Zabah* and *Ola*, see Dt, 12: 27 and Je, 7: 21] Different scholars have tried to find out the traces of the "concept of sacrifice" in civilizations contemporary to Old Testament period. These scholars have identified various Canaanite and Mesopotamian cults, which were absorbed in Jewish practices regarding the 'offerings and sacrifices'. [A. Cave, The scriptural doctrine of sacrifice and atonement; S. H. Hooke, The Origins of Early Semitic Rituals; I. Engnell, Studies in Divine Kingship in the ancient Near East; J. H Kurtz, The sacrificial worship

of the Old Testament]

Ola or burnt offering seems to have a better claim to be regarded as the typical Hebrew sacrifice than the *zebah* favored by the Wellhausen School. It is present from the beginning (Gen 4; 8: 20; 22: 2; Exodus, 10: 25; 18: 12; Judge, 6: 26; 13: 16). Later on, it became a regular ritual and was never missed on important occasions (1 King, 3: 4; Jos, 8: 31). Its dominant role has been retained to the latest times. (Ezek, 43: 18; Ezra, 3: 2-4) [R. Rendtorff, Studien zur Geschichte des opfers im alten Israel]

In the Bible, there is not a single evidence of the claims of the Jews of Madina that they were asked by God to accept only those apostles who do "burnt offering."

The Quran has repeatedly put the argument "Then why did you slay the prophets in the past?" I have discussed it previously. Verses 184-186, is a general statement consisting normal teachings of Islam.

وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ

الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا
تَكْتُمُونَهُ ۚ فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَاشْتَرَوْا بِهِ
ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۖ فَبِئْسَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ﴿١٨٤﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ
الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا آتَوْا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا
بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨٥﴾ وَ لِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٨٦﴾

(187-189) When we took promise from the 'people of the

book' to explain it for the general people and do not keep back any part of it from them. Nevertheless, they put this advice at their back and bartered it for a paltry price. How bad was their bargain! (188) Do not think that those who are happy with their acts and wish to be praised for what they have not done should escape the punishment. However, they should face a tormenting chastisement. (189) To Allah belongs the realm of Skies and the Earth and He has control over all things.

JEW TEXTS

People should know that Judaism is not only the set of beliefs and practices based on the Old Testament. In addition to Tanakh, (Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim) there are some other texts, which should be considered seriously when studying the Judaism and its theology, ethics and law. We are mentioning some important texts below:

Apocrypha: Apocrypha are the hidden books, which were not included in the main canon by the early rabbis. These books were written originally after the days of Ezra, the scribe. The apocrypha includes: 1 & 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, The rest of Esther, The wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, with the Epistle of Jeremiah, The Songs of the Three Holy Children, The History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, The prayer of Manasses and 1 & 2 Maccabees. These are fourteen books in total. Some other important texts are Babylonian Talmud and Torah Mishna. I will discuss the basic texts somewhere in this book.

ORAL AND WRITTEN LAW

Oral Law is called Torah She-Be-Al-Pehand, and the Written Law is called Torah She-Bikhtav in Hebrew Language.

The written Law is another name for Torah, the *first five books*

of Moses. The Oral law is a legal commentary on the Torah, explaining how its commandments are to be carried out. Today, the Oral Law is a Written Law, confined in Mishna and Talmud. There are two Talmuds: Babylonian Talmud and Palestinian Talmud. The Palestinian Talmud is called Mishna and it was Rabbi Judah the Prince who wrote it. In Jewish tradition, the Mishna and rabbinic discussions (Gemara) are collectively called Talmud and these terms are interchangeable. Later on, some Babylonian rabbis exhaustively studied the Mishna and extensively wrote the explanatory notes concerning the discussions. These deliberations went on for further three hundred years. In Jewish tradition, in our times, the term Talmud stands for this Babylonian version only.

Sixty-two books out of sixty-three books of Mishna are legal texts. For example, Brakhot (blessings), the Mishna's opening tractate, delineates the appropriate blessings for various occasions. The only exceptional tractate in this book is Pirkei Avot, or *Ethics of the fathers*. It transmits the favorite moral advice and insights of the leading rabbinic scholars of different generations.

In Talmud, one may find two types of discussions by the rabbis: Purely legal matters (Halakha) and ethical matters (Aggadata). Midrash means, literally, the explanation. Midrash on both legal and ethical matters is available.

Another important source of Jewish Law is Sulchan Arukh by Joseph Karo (1488-1575) and explanatory notes by Mose Isserles, known as Rama (1525-1572). This important and authentic code of law consists over four volumes. When the rabbis are asked to rule on a question of Jewish law, Sulchan Arukh is the first book they usually consult. As we all know that Jewish law is based on Torah, the Jew scholars continued answering the questions of the common Jews through out the

centuries. Therefore, these questions and answers are spread over thousands of volumes. This literature is called **SHEELOT VE-TESHUVOT**. In twelfth century, a rabbinic scholar and philosopher, Moses Maimonides compiled the first fully comprehensive code of Jewish Law. He called his fourteen-volume work the Mishneh Torah (a second Torah).

In the thirteenth century, a Spanish Rabbi Moses de Leon claimed that he has found the book of Zohar, which Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai wrote during his hiding period. This book is regarded as the basic work of Jewish mysticism called Kabala. People may be interested in knowing about the term Haggada. It is a small book, which is read aloud at the Passover Seder.

THE RELIGION OF ARABS

I have cast a glance over the explanatory Jewish literature in the above lines. Now the question arises, why the God has said, "do not conceal it"? I think this phrase is related to the existing condition of Jews of Arab at the time of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). The Jews of Madina and Mecca were not well aware of their religion and the basic teachings were made concealed by their rabbis. Their scholars were away from the practice of Jewish Law and they used to keep the people at a considerable distance from the book. The religion of the Twin Cities of Madina and Mecca was composite of different influences. Using the words of Hitti, in the History of Arabs, Al-Hirah, the Arab satellite of Persia, was the main channel through which not only Persian cultural influences but, later on, Aramaean Nestorian influences percolated into the Arabia of pre-Muhammadan days. As these Nestorians formed later the main link between Hellenism and nascent Islam, so now they acted as a medium for transmitting northern cultural ideas, Aramaic, Persian and Hellenistic, into the heart of pagan Arabia. [Part 1: 106] After three paragraphs Hitti has summed up the conclusion in these words: In summing up it may be safely stated that al-Hijaz in the century preceding the mission of Muhammad was

ringed about with influences, intellectual, religious and material, radiating from Byzantine, Syria (Aramaic), Persian and Abyssinian centers and conducted mainly through Ghassanid, Lakhanid and Yamenite channels. [Page.107] Professor Bernard Lewis has described Arab religion of those days in these words: The religion of southern Arabia was polytheistic and bears a general, though not detailed, resemblance to that of the other ancient Semitic peoples. [The Arabs in History, 25] Again, on page 30, he offers these remarks: The religion of nomads was a form of polydaemonism related to the paganism of the ancient Semites.

Describing the religion of that time, Allama Mohammad Abdul Maabod, says: Some of them were inclined to the worship of one God in different shapes and forms. Some of them converted into Jews under the influence of the Jews of Khaiber, Banu Quraizah and Banu Nazir. By the passage of time, Judaism became popular in Aus and Khizrij tribes. Most of the Ansar became Jew in the due course. [Sunan Abu Dawood, chapter on prisoners who are compelled to accept Islam, 2: 9] The following tribes were Jews at that time: Aaof, Najar, Harith, Saadah, Hasam, Aaos, Thalaba. [Ibn Hisham, 2: 149] Silsilah bin Braham from Banu Najar, Baeed bin Aasim from Bano Zariq, Kananah bin Sooria from Banu Haritha, Faroom bin Omar from Banu Amr bin Aaof were all Jews. [History of Madinah, 125. Urdu Edition]

These references clearly show that the Judaism and Christianity in Arabia were, in fact, the Ethiopian version of these religions, and it also had Nestorian influence on beliefs and practices.

ETHIOPIAN CANON

Here I would like to write a few lines about the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and its canon in order to clarify my point of

view regarding these matters. This independent church holds Monophysite doctrine, that is, that Christ has only one nature. Ethiopia was Christianized in the fourth century AD by two brothers from Tyre—St. Frumentius, later consecrated the first Ethiopian bishop and Aedisius; they won the confidence of Negus (king) Ezana at Aksum and were allowed to evangelize. Toward the end of the 5th century, nine monks from Syria, probably monophysites are said to have brought monasticism to Ethiopia and encouraged the translation of the scripture into Ge'ez language. Encyclopedia Britannica has described the nature of Ethiopian canon in these words: The Ethiopian canon of Scripture contains books apocryphal to other churches, among them are Shepherd of Hermas, the Ascension of Isaiah and the first book of Enoch. [4:581, 15th edition] The Ethiopian canon consists over: (1) Synods: It is the translation of the canons of apostles and apostolic constitution, which has been taken from Alexandrian Church. In addition, it comprises of the canons of ecumenical council of Nicaea I (324 AD). Six other synods of Ancyra, Neocaesarea, Gangres, Sardina, Antioch and Laedicea have also been included in it. (2) Didiskilia, is the translation of Didascalia Apostolorum. (3) Fetha Neghast, is the translation of Nome Canon, which is believed to have been done by Egyptian Canonist al-Asaad bin al-Asad (1236). (4) Metzhafe Kidan is the Ethiopic translation of Testament Domini and treated really as true book of God. [Catholic Encyclopedia, 5: 587]

Most of the Muslim commentators have quoted some traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) in which he has condemned those scholars who use to conceal the knowledge. Holy Prophet says: Fish in the sea and birds in the sky curse on those who hide the knowledge. [Kanz al-Ummal, 28997] In another tradition, the Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: One who conceals the knowledge, which has been made useful by God for the people; he would be strangled with the rope of fire on the Day of Judgment. [Ibn Majah, 1: 97] Imam Ali (A.S) says: Allah has not

made obligatory the seeking of knowledge on illiterates until He made obligatory on scholars not to hide the knowledge. See Behar al-Anwar, 2: 64; Tafseer Baghvi, 1: 383; Abu Sa'ood, 2: 125; Tafseer Kabir, 3: 456; Qurtabi, 4: 405; Sunan Abu Dawood, 3: 320; Musnad Abu Yuaa'la, 3: 94-95; Tabrani, al- Mujam al-Kabir, 11: 117. Compare Quran 2: 159 and 173.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
 لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۝ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ
 اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ
 فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ
 هَذَا بَاطِلًا ۗ سُبْحٰنَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ۝

(190-191) For prudent persons, there are signs of Allah in the creation of the heavens and the earth and in alternation of night and day. (191) There are some people, who remember Allah in all standing, sitting, and "lying on sides" positions. They also contemplate on creation of heavens and earth and say: Our Lord, you did not create that without purpose, glory be to you, therefore, save us from torment of fire.

THE SKIES AND THE EARTH

It may be mentioned here that in The Quran, most of the time, Allah has mentioned the word *Smawat*, heavens, in plural form. In Arabic language, the singular of this word is *Sama*, which means a high place, heaven and firmament. I personally believe that, sometime, as in this case, the atmospheric layers have been called seven heavens.

The first atmospheric layer is 7 miles (11 km) thick, thereafter starts stratosphere, which goes up to 30 miles (48 km). In this

lies the ozone layer. From 35 miles (56 km) up to 52 miles (83 km) is called 'D' layer. From 52 miles up to 95 miles (153 km) is called 'E' sphere. From this point up to 250 miles (402 km) goes 'F' layer. The atmospheric layer above this point goes up to 435 miles or 700 km. Exosphere lies above this level. The temperature on all these levels varies from each other.

The most widely accepted explanation of the formation of the solar system (and thus of the Earth) is the protoplanet hypothesis. About 10 to 15 billion years ago, according to this theory, a gas cloud (nebula) began to form. About 5 to 6 billion years ago, shock waves (possibly from a nearby stellar explosion, called a supernova) caused the large aggregation of spinning gases and dust to collapse and spin. The spinning clouds flattened and material began to fall toward the cloud's center, creating the protosun (the precursor of present sun).

Turbulence within the outer cloud caused particles to clump together (accrete) and form planetoids, which broke apart reformed numerous times. These forming planetoids acted accreting into a small number of protoplanets. As pressure and temperatures increased at the center of the collapsing cloud, thermonuclear reactions eventually ignited the Sun. A short time later, the protoplanets evolved into true planets. As planetoids accepted to form the Earth, they melted and began to stratify by density. About 4.56 billion years ago, high density materials, such as iron, had sunk to the planet's center, while lighter materials, such as silica, has risen toward the surface. This stratification formed the Earth's central iron core, multilayered mantle and hardened outer crust. The planet's surface was extremely active, with volcanoes emitting water vapors and gases into space. This created a primitive atmosphere and contributed water and gases to the ocean and atmosphere. Between about 3.8 and 4 billion

years ago, the inner solar system planets experienced a developmental stage called the 'Late Heavy Bombardment', in which larger planetoids (chunks of rocks leftover from the formation of the planets) affected the planets and satellites of the inner solar system. On earth, such a bombardment may have opened cracks in the crust, contributing more gases to the atmosphere. On the moon, the bombardment created many of the mares (or dark seas) seen today.

Life on the earth apparently appeared in the Earth's Oceans about 3.8 billion years ago. About 600 million years ago, Earth experienced an explosion of life in its oceans, starting during the part of geological time known as Late Precambrian. It is unknown why this explosion of life occurred on the earth. [The New York Public Library Science Desk Reference, 368]

For full awareness about the nature of universe and how it came into existence, the readers are requested to study Stephen Hawking's *A Short History of Time and Universe in a Nutshell*. Kitty Ferguson has written a good book on this topic: *Stephen Hawking: Quest for a Theory of Everything*, Bentam Books.

THE DAY AND THE NIGHT

Because the Earth does not rotate uniformly and its orbital plane is not in line with the plane of the planet's rotation at the equator, the solar day—the period from sunrise to sunset—varies in length. A *mean solar day* is the solar day averaged out to eliminate the Earth's rotational and orbital irregularities. Thus, the mean solar day is the average of all solar days in the orbital year, or 24 hours (or 24 hours, 3 minutes and 56.55 seconds in sidereal time). The time between one sunset to next sunrise is called the night. [Science Desk Reference, 71]

In the traditions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and Imams, we

can find that the worship is obligatory in all the three positions, which have been mentioned in verse 191. [Sahih Bukhari, 1: 339, Abu Dawood, 952, Tirmizi, 373, Ibn Majah, 1323; Dar Qutni, 1: 380; Behaqi, 2: 304; Musnad Ahmad, 4: 426; Allama Murghinani, al-Hidayah, 1: 161; Tahrir al-Wasilah, 1: 163; Jawad Maghnyah, 1: 175-76; Jamay al-Madarik, 1: 330].

Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) has said: The right thing is to offer prayer in standing and sitting position. The sick can perform it while sitting and those who are weaker than the sick people may offer prayer in "lying on side" position. [Wasail, Chapters on standing, chapter 10, H No: 2-4]

God has spread this wonderful universe, these innumerable and unlimited galaxies, millions of suns and billions of planets as leading signs of their creator. It is impossible for a sensible man to look at this eye-catching and breath-taking universe and pass by without pondering over it. The world under the oceans has its own lure and the countless but colorful worlds of various species of animals and birds have their own charm, which compel the researchers to spend their lives in inexhaustible research. We are still unable to do justice with understanding this Universe, the beautiful, complex and ever evolving creation of Allah. In the words of the great sage Rumi:

There is a force within that gives you life——

Seek That.

In your body, there lies a priceless jewel——

Seek That.

Oh, wandering Sufi,

If you are in search of the greatest treasure,

Do not look outside,

Look within and seek That.

رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تَدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْرَيْتَهُ ، وَمَا
 لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ ۝ رَبَّنَا إِنَّنا سَمِعنا مُنَادِيًا
 يُنَادِي لِلإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا ۗ رَبَّنَا
 فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا
 مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ ۗ رَبَّنَا وَآتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَى رُسُلِكَ
 وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ۝
 فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ
 عَامِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّمَّنْ ذَكَرَ أَوْ أُنْشِيَ ، بَعْضُكُمْ مِّنْ
 بَعْضٍ ، فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
 وَأُودُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقَاتَلُوا وَقُتِلُوا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ
 عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
 تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ثَوَابًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ، وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ

حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ۝

(192-195) Our Lord, surely, the one whom you admitted to the fire, you had definitely punished him and there are no supporters of unjust ones. (193) Our Lord, we heard a man calling us, "Believe in your Lord," so, we came to believe. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, cancel the affects of our mistakes, and take us among the righteous ones. (194) Our Lord, favor us with the promises, which you made to us through your prophets and do not punish us on the Day of Judgment. Verily, you never break the promise. (195) Their Lord answered their supplications: I do not deny the reward of the deeds of males and females from among you; you are alike. Therefore, those who migrated were drawn out of

their dwellings and were castigated in my cause; they fought and were slain, I will blot out the affect of their mistakes. Surely I will admit them into paradise, wherein are flowing waters. It would be bliss from Allah and the best of blessings are with Allah only.

In this group of verses the words *akh'zai taho* and *tukh'zena*, are from the root word *kh za ya*. Most of the translators have rendered it in the sense of 'humiliation and abasement.' In fact, this word has been used, in The Quran, in four different senses, such as, killing (2: 85 and 114), chastisement and castigation (3: 192, 194; 11: 66; 26: 87), humiliation and abasement (10: 98; 16: 27; and 59: 5), causing defamation and earning bad name for someone (11: 78; 15: 69). [Abul Fadl Hubaish bin Ebrahim Taflisi, *Wojuh al-Quran*, 84-85] In my opinion, the second meanings are appropriate for both the places referred to above.

There is no doubt that the verse 193 is speaking about the call of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). In addition to it, these three verses (193-195) are evident that only believing in Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) is not sufficient for salvation of men, but people are required to practice the precepts of Islam in their true form and manners. According to the teachings of Islam, men and women would equally deserve the blessings and mercy of Allah if they would practice His instructions in their daily lives. Compare Quran: 40: 40; 16: 97.

لَا يَغْرَبُكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ

كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ۗ مَتَاءٌ قَلِيلٌ ۖ ثُمَّ مَا وَلَّهُمْ

جَهَنَّمَ ۗ وَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ۗ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ

لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ

فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ
 لِلدَّابِّرِينَ ﴿١٩٦﴾ وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ
 وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ ۚ
 لَا يَشْتُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ
 أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩٧﴾
 يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اصْبِرُوا وَصَابِرُوا وَرَابِطُوا
 وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

(196-200) Do not be fascinated by those who disbelieved in the city, when they strut about the land. (197) Their enjoyment is for a short while, thereafter, their abode will be hell. What a bad abode it is! (198) Those who have fear of their Lord, for them would be paradise, with flowing waters beneath. They will reside there for good, as the guests of Allah. The best one is what lies with God for the righteous ones. (199) From among the people of the book are those who have belief in Allah and what has been revealed to you and what has been revealed to them. They show humbleness to Allah, and do not sell the verses of Allah at trifling price. Their reward is with their Lord and Allah is swift in reckoning. (200) Believers, be patient, show patience, remain ready against the enemy, and have fear of Allah in order to become successful.

This last statement is the final decision of Allah in favor of believers and against the disbelievers. Every one shall be rewarded for his good or bad deeds without any exemption.

In the last verse (200), Allah has used the word *rabetoo*, which means, according to scholars, preparation against the enemies

of Islam and Muslims. Allah is asking the Muslims to be patient and resolute in His cause and strengthen themselves against the foes. [Manhaj al-Sadeqin, 2: 421; Namoonah, 3: 174; Majmaul Bayan, 2: 562; Abul Futuh, 1: 713; Abu Saood, 2: 136; Baghvi, 1: 388; Ibn Kathir by Sabooni, 1: 360; Kash'shaf, 1: 449; Rooh al-Maani, 4: 273; Tafseer Kabir, 3: 473; Qurtabi, 4: 323; Safwat al-Tafaseer, 1: 232]

In view of Allama Tabatabai, it means to endeavor for strengthening the society. [al-Mizan, 4: 92]

THE PERSEVERANCE AND PATIENCE

The perseverance and patience are those attributes of man, which have been appreciated in all major religions of the world and almost all writers of Ethics and moral values have devoted exclusive chapters for appreciating these noble virtues. Here are some quotes from the Holy Books of different religions:

“Once when the Master was standing by a stream, he said: “Could one but go on and on like this, never ceasing day or night. [Confucianism, Analects 9.16] The Talmud, Jewish Law, tells us “Perseverance prevails even against heaven.” [Sanhedrin 105a] In another Talmudic book we read: Scripture credits with performance not him who begins a task, but him who completes it. [Sota 13b] In the words of Jesus (A.S): “He who endures to the end will be saved” [Mark, 13: 13]. Traditional African Religion has explained the situation in these words:

Life is like hill.

Mawu, the creator made it steep and slippery,
To right and left deep waters surround it,
You cannot turn back once you start to climb.
You must climb with a load on your head.
A man's arms will not help him, for it's a trial,
The world is a place of trial.

[Fong Song—Benin]

In Quran, Allah has said: Allah loves the patient ones. (3: 146) In another verse, we have been enjoined: Be patient, since Allah is with the patient ones. (8: 46)

Here I would like to cite some examples of Holy Prophet's patience and character.

THE PROPHET AND A JEW

The Leader of the Believers, Imam Ali (A.S) has said: Once the Holy Prophet owed some money to a Jew. When Jew asked the Prophet to pay it back, he told him that he had no money and he would pay it back later on. However, the Jew continued pressing the Prophet and said: I will not leave you until you return the money.

Holy Prophet said: Then I will stay here with you. The Prophet remained with him for such a long time that he offered Zohar, Aasr, Maghrib, Esha, Tahajjud and then Morning prayers at the same place.

During this period, the companions of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) started using warnings and threats to that Jew.

Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) looked at them and said: How are you behaving with him?

They replied: He is a Jew and he has 'confined' you to this place.

Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) told them: My Lord, the High and Graceful, has not appointed me to oppress anyone who is in treaty with us, or anyone else.

As the morning became bright, the Jew said: I bear witness that there is no god, but Allah; and Mohammad is His servant and His prophet. Half of my wealth is charity in the name of Allah.

“Whatever I did with you,” added the Jew, “it was just for confirming your praise in Torah.”

I have read in the Torah: “Mohammad son of Abdullah, Mecca would be his native city and to Madina he will migrate. He will not be a ‘dry’ person, or the harsh one; he will be a polite speaker, will never use bad or obscene language. Therefore, I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and you are the Prophet.

Here is my wealth, impose the order of Allah about it. This Jew was a very wealthy man. [Amali of Sheikh Sadooq, Behar al-Anwar, 16: 127 and 216]

HOLY PROPHET AND A BEDOUIN

The companion of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) Anas has reported: One day a Bedouin came near to Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and caught his robe and then Bedouin pulled it so severely that produced a scar on Prophet’s neck.

Thereafter, he said: Mohammad, give me some money out of what you have.

Prophet turned to him, laughed and asked someone to give him some money. [Allama Tabrasi, Makarim al-Akhlaq, 15]



THE WOMEN

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION

This chapter, the fourth, is closely related to the previous one. Its name is al-Nisa, which means *The Women*. It has taken its name from the word Nisa, which has occurred 17 times in the whole Surah, including the first one.

This surah consists of over 177 verses including Bismillah. Out of them 24 verses are included in Part 4 (including Bismillah). The period of its revelation, as it appears from its contents, seems to be from the end of Hijra 3 to the end of Hijra 6.

It can be divided into two main parts according to its subject matter: (1) that dealing with women, orphans and destitute. Some verses deal with the problems of inheritance, marriage and family rights, generally. (2) The second part of it deals with the indomitable figures of the family and community, with special reference to the community of Madina.

The three years of Hijrah (3 to Hijrah 5) were very critical for the newly developing state of Muslims at Madina. Muslims, obviously, needed their own family laws, moral code, and regulations for dealing with the other communities living in the state's limits. In this surah, we can find the details of these instructions concerning family and community affairs. Though the surah mainly deals with the social reforms, it also lays down the foundation for the propagation of Islam. We find in the Surah, the superior moral and cultural values of Islam conspicuously mentioned by way of comparison with and criticism of the wrong religious conceptions of the People of the Book, hypocrites and the Polytheists.

(١٢٠)
(١٢١)
(١٢٢)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ
نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا
رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً، وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ
بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا ①

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent and the Merciful.

(1) People, have fear of your Lord who created you out of a single soul and created its spouse out of it. Then He did spread, out of both of them, multitude of men and women. Have fear of Allah with whose reference you plead with each other and take care of relations with kinfolks. God is really watching you.

According to exegetes of Quran, *nafs wahidah* means Adam (A.S) and *zawjaha* means *Hawwa*, his spouse. [Namoona, 3: 182, al-Mizan, 4: 135, Manhaj al-Sadeqin, 2: 424, Majmaul Bayan, 3: 2-3, Baghvi, 1: 389, Qurtabi, 5: 2, Safwat al-Tafasir, 1: 236, Tafseer Kabir, 3: 477, Rooh al-Maani, 4: 283-84, Kash'shaf, 1: 451-2, Sabooni's Ibn Kathir, 1: 364, Abu Saood, 2: 139, Madarik, 1: 285, Makhdoom Mahaimi, Tabsir al-Rahman, 1: 139, Farra, Maani al-Quran, 1: 252] Among the commentators, only Ayatullah Mahmood Taleqani, as far as I know, has taken these words, *nafs wahedah*, in the sense of 'single cell'. [Parto az Quran, 6: 15] Prof. Ahmad Ali has also translated this verse in the same sense. [al-Quran, a contemporary translation by Ahmed Ali, 74] Despite the consensus of scholars on this point, the second explanation is also agreeable in view of the words of Quran.

WHAT IS SINGLE CELL?

Now the science has proved that human life starts from a single cell (X or Y chromosome), which multiplies for the development of human body. Classical geneticists recognized that genes are located on rod-shaped structures in the body's cells. These structures can be observed only by staining a cell that is about to divide. Because the structures become colored by the stain, they are called chromosomes. Most organisms have pairs of chromosomes, although sometimes there are four matched chromosomes or another type of grouping. Humans have 23 pairs of chromosomes, or 46 individual chromosomes. Within each pair of human chromosomes—except for one pair in males—the same genes appear in the same order in each structure. The exception to pairing of chromosomes is the pair that controls the sex of an individual. In general, each member of the pair in male humans is very different from the other, with a sex chromosome called X and a small one called Y; female humans have two X chromosomes.

The third chapter of Quran ended with the instruction “have fear of Allah in order to become successful.” The fourth chapter is starting with the same instruction.

The word *taqwa* is a very vast term comprising both the fear and obedience to Allah. *Taqwa* refrains the individual from disobedience to Allah and cultivates positive qualities in him. Here The Quran is pointing out the very beginning and nature of human life on earth. Human life on this planet started from that moment in history when God created Adam, an intellectual, on the earth. He was the first living being on the earth capable of thinking and making inferences. I do not feel any reason to believe that human life started on this planet with the creation of Adam, the prophet and there was no human-like species before *Homo sapiens* on this earth. Adam was the first prophet and first human being with mental capacities.

TAKING CARE OF RELATIVES

The meanings of the phrase, "*Wattaqo Allah allazi tasaloona behi wal-arham*" needs a little more consideration. It was customary to Arab people to ask from the others in the name of God and the kinfolk or relatives. The other interpretation of this phrase is that the word *wal-arham* is related to the verb *wattaqoo*. Hence, the meanings would be "Have fear of Allah regarding the matters of relatives and kinfolks." The second explanation is better than the previous one, because Islam has given special emphasis on discharging the duties concerning the relatives. Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: One who cuts himself off from relatives; he will not enter the paradise. [Bukhari, H NO. 5984, Muslim, H NO. 2556 and Tirmizi, H NO. 1909] In another saying of Holy Prophet we read: One who wishes to live a long life, have a progress in sustenance and avoid the bad death, he must have fear of Allah and good treatment to relatives. [Kashf al-Astar Aan zawaid Musand al-Bazzaz, 2: 374, al-Mujam al-Awsat, 6: 291, and Behar al-Anwar, 74: 89] The care of relatives is so important that it cannot be denied even to the non-Muslim relatives. [Bukhari, 2: 884, Kitab al-Adab, chapter on care of polytheist parents, Muslim, 1: 324, Kitab al-Zakat, Abu Dawood, 2: 127, Kitab al-Zakat, Musnad Ahmad, 6: 344] A man asked from Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S): Some of my relatives are from other religion, do they have any right on me? Imam replied: Yes, care of relatives cannot be denied due to any reason. If they were sharing the same faith, then they would have double right, the one because of relationship and second due to being a fellow Muslim. [Behar al-Anwar, 74: 131, from Al-Kafi]

وَأَتُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ أَمْوَالَهُمْ وَلَا تَتَبَدَّلُوا الْخَبِيثَ
بِالطَّيِّبِ سِوَا مَا كَلَّمُوا أَمْوَالَهُمْ إِلَىٰ أَمْوَالِكُمْ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ حُبًّا كَبِيرًا ۝

(2) Handover orphan's wealth to them and do not exchange what is good for you with what is bad for you. In addition, do

not mix their wealth with yours, for spending out of it, because it is a grievous crime.

Here the word *Hoob* has been used, which means “a condemned sin” [Abu Hilal al-Askari, al-Furooq al-Lughawiyah, 193; Abu Mansoor al-Azhari, Tehzib al-Lughah, part 5: 171-172; Imam Muhammad bin Abubakr al-Razi, Mukhtar al-Sahah, 160]. According to Quffal; *Hoob* is a sin, which reflects pain and punishment to one who commits it. [Tafseer Kabir, 3: 484] Most of the commentators have explained that it means a ‘major sin’ and it has been used as an adjective for showing its magnitude and severity. [As above]

This verse of Quran consists three important precepts pertaining to the wealth of orphans: (a) Their wealth should be handed over to them at the age of adolescence, (b) Their “good wealth” becomes “bad” for you at the moment you try to devour it. It is also prohibited to exchange the good part of the belonging of the orphan with bad part of one’s own property. (c) This verse also prohibits the people from mixing their wealth into the wealth of the orphans for consumption. Compare, Quran 2: 220, 6: 52 and 17: 34. I have given some details of this order while describing 2: 220. [Quran: A comparative Study, 1: 277-78]

وَأِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَقْسُطُوا
فِي الْيَتَامَىٰ فَانكِحُوا مَا طَابَ لَكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ مَثْنَىٰ
وَتِلْكَ وَرُبْعًا ۚ فَإِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا فَوَاحِدَةً
أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ۚ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَلَّا تَعُولُوا ۝

(3) If you fear injustice from your side concerning the marriage with orphan girls, then marry with two, three, or four women of your own choice. If you fear that you will not be able to do justice among them, in such case marry only one woman, or the maidservants, which you have. It

will be the best for you to avoid injustice.

Here the word *yatama* stands for orphan girls. In pre-Islam Arab, some people used to marry the orphan girls in order to devour their wealth unjustly. In the statement under consideration, Allah is warning such people to refrain from this atrocious practice. Allah is strongly suggesting that if anyone fears injustice from his side in this regard, then it is better for him to avoid marrying 'orphan girls'. Instead, one can marry other women of choice. Islam allows polygamy in the society, but with maintenance of complete justice among wives. (Compare 4: 127) A Muslim may have four wives at a time, but not more than that. It must be taken in mind that polygamy is a 'provision under the law' and not the order.

THE MEANING OF JUSTICE

One who wishes to have more than one wife (polygamy) he has to maintain justice among all of his wives, whether they are two, three or four in number. What does it mean? Almost all the jurists and commentators have consensus that in this verse the "justice" means equal physical and social rights and not the equality in 'natural love or affections', since it is beyond human control. [Namoona, 3: 189, Parto az Quran, 6: 17, Manhaj al-Sadeqin, 2: 430, Qurtabi, 5: 20, Abu Saood, 2: 143, Safwat, 1: 237, Tabsir al-Rahman, 1: 141]

According to the teachings of Islam, the justice between wives is compulsory; they cannot be denied of their social and family rights. [Jawad Maghniah, Fiqh al-Sadiq, 5: 205; Tahrir al-Wasilah, 2: 304]

MARRIAGE BETWEEN SYEDS AND NON-SYEDS

The Quran has used the conjunctive pronoun 'ma', which includes all the women from Muslim community, except

“ghalis” and “nasibis.” All Muslim women and men are equal in the eyes of Allah. Some people think that a Hashmi (Syed) woman cannot be married to a non-Hashmi Muslim. People should know that it is completely baseless thinking. [Fiqh al-Sadiq, 5: 216, Tahrir al-Wasilah, 2: 286-287, Ayatullah Seestani, Minhaj al-Salehin] Allama Muhammad Hassan Najafi, in Jawahir al-Kalam, has quoted the same opinion from Sheikh Toosi (al-Nehayah 463, Sharh-e-Lumaah, 2: 84, Sheikh Mufid, Banu Zuhra and Allama Hilli. [Fiqh al-Sadiq, 5: 217]

Imam Shafai and Imam Malik were of the opinion that “kafa’t” is not a necessary condition for marriage. [Mughni Ibn Qudamah, 7: 26, Sahnoun bin Saeed Tanookhi, al-Mudawwanah al-Kubra, 2: 144-145, Imam Shafai, Kitab al-Um, 5: 15, Yahya bin Sharaf al-Navavi, Rawzah al-Talebin, 7: 84]

وَأَتُوا النِّسَاءَ صَدُقَاتِهِنَّ نِحْلَةً فَإِنْ طِبْنَ لَكُمْ عَنْ
شَيْءٍ مِّنْهُ نَفْسًا فَكُلُوهُ هَنِيئًا مَّرِيئًا ۝

(4) Pay the wives their dowers willingly, but if they willfully waive from you something out of it, then you can enjoy it.

Scholars have differently described the word *Nehlah* in this verse. In view of some scholars, *nehlah* means gift or present. [Madarik 1: 286, Qurtabi 5: 25, Safwah 1: 237, Kash'shaf 1: 459, Farra, 1: 256, Tabsir al-Rahman, 1: 140, Fazil Miqdad, Kanz al-Irfan, 532; al-Mizan 4: 169, Manhaj al-Sadeqin 2: 432, Parto 6: 14, Majmaul Bayan 3: 6] While according to some other scholars it means an obligatory amount, which should be paid religiously. [Tafseer Kabir 3: 498, Rooh al-Maani 4: 310, Ibn Kathir by Sabooni 1: 367, Baghvi 1: 392, Abu Saood 2: 142] However, this word is used in both the senses, but the second sense is more preferable in this verse,

because dower is one of the essential conditions of Marriage Contract.

Allama Syed Murtaza has given a logical explanation of the use of this word having double meanings. He says: Dower amount is a gift of God for the women and at the same time, obligatory on the husbands. The word *Nahalah* covers both the meaning. [Haqaiq al-Taweel, 313; al-Azhari 5: 42]

وَلَا تُؤْتُوا السُّفَهَاءَ أَمْوَالَكُمُ الَّتِي جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ قِيَامًا
وَأَرْزُقُوهُمْ فِيهَا وَاكْسُوهُمْ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا
مَعْرُوفًا ۝

(5) Do not hand over your property to the silly people that Allah has made a source of establishment for you, but feed and clothe them out of it and behave with them nicely.

Whatever one earns or inherits is the source of strength and establishment of that person. Allah is advising us to avoid handing it over to the silly people. [Tafseer Tabari 4: 165, Ibn Kathir by Sabooni 1: 368, Kash'shaf, 1: 462]

Who are the silly (safih) people? Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S) has said: Everyone who drinks the wine or any intoxicant is a safih (low witted). [Behar al-Anwar 103: 85, from Tafseer Ayashi, 1: 246, al-Burhan, 2: 168] Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) has said: The silly people are the drunkards and one who goes on his own way. [Majmaul Bayan 3: 8]

In view of most of the commentators, the silly orphans are intended here in this verse, because they are not mentally capable of managing their affairs.

In Arabic language, the word *sufha'a* (sing. Safah) means, "Low witted people," or the people who do not know where

to spend the money. [al-Efsah, 1: 163] It simply means that if the orphans under your custody are incapable of managing their matters then you have the right to hold their wealth in your hand. Nevertheless, you have to provide them the necessities of life, along with speaking with them softly. [Namoonah 3: 197, al-Mizan 4: 170, Qurtabi, 5: 27, Madarik 1: 289, Abu Saood 2: 144, Tafseer Kabir 3: 494, Rooh al-Maani 4: 314, Safwah, 1: 237] Allama Baghvi has mentioned both the opinions without assigning preference to any one. [Baghvi 's Tafseer 1: 393]

Here I would like to highlight an important point. Allah has used, in this verse, the word '*amwalakum*,' which means, literally, your property. It shows that the verse is not referring to the property or wealth of the 'orphans' but this injunction is related to one's own property and wealth. In addition to it, the orphans, poor and destitute, because of being the members of humankind, have rights in our possessions and riches.

IN ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

According to Islamic Fiqh, or Jurisprudence, the silly (*safih*) is an adult with low wit. He or she is different from a 'mad' person, since the *safih* had some sense. The intellectual capacities of a silly are low and slow, but he is not mad or foolish totally. *Safih* is a person who simply does not know, or cannot comprehend the money matters. You may have seen, or heard about a person who donates all his wealth for a certain cause and neglects the consequences of this act on his family and on his own life. Such a person is *Safih*, or silly in the eyes of Allah. In the under consideration verse of Quran, Allah is prohibiting the wise men from handing over the money matters to such a simple persons. In Fiqh, it is called al-Hijr. All the transactions and agreements made by such persons are "ineffective" in the eyes of Islam. The *tahjir* is not dependant on issuance of order from a 'Judge,' or any authority. [Fiqh al-Sadiq 5: 97-99, Jamay

al-Madarik 3: 368, Tahrir al-Wasilah 2: 15-17, Ayatullah Seestani, Minhaj al-Salehin, 2: 299] See also Dur al-Mukhtar wa Radd al-Mukhtar 5: 89-93]

وَابْتَلُوا الْيَتَامَىٰ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا بَلَغُوا النِّكَاحَ ۚ فَإِنْ
 أَنْتُمْ مِنْهُمْ رُشْدًا فَادْفَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ ۚ وَلَا
 تَأْكُلُوهَا إِسْرَافًا وَبِدَارًا أَنْ يَكْبَرُوا ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ
 غَنِيًّا فَلْيَسْتَعْفِفْ ۚ وَمَنْ كَانَ فَقِيرًا فَلْيَأْكُلْ
 بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ فَإِذَا دَفَعْتُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ أَمْوَالَهُمْ
 فَأَشْهَدُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ حَسِيبًا ۝

(6) Keep on testing the wit of orphans, until they attain the marriageable age. Hand over to them their property if you feel that they have become mature. Do not eat up their wealth by squandering or consuming voraciously in fear of 'their' coming up to maturity. As far as the guardians are concerned, the rich ones will abstain from sharing in it, but the needy ones can take reasonable portion out of it. When you happen to hand over their property to them, do it in presence of some witnesses. Moreover, Allah is enough for reckoning.

The age of *Rushd* or maturity is not the age of adolescence, but it means the age of mental maturity, at which stage a man becomes able to handle his affairs properly. In Quran, this word has been used for common sense also (11: 78). In case of Prophet Abraham, it has been used for 'guidance.' (21: 51), in instance of Prophet Moses it occurs in Quran in the sense of 'knowledge.' (16: 66) In fact, this word is used for "intellect," and "wisdom." Different people may attain the stage of *Rushd* at different ages.

The guardians of the 'orphans' may be poor or rich. In this

verse, Allah is allowing the poor guardians that they can take a reasonable amount from orphan's property as 'services charges,' but from wealthy guardians, Allah has asked to refrain from consuming the belongings of 'orphans.

لِلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ ۖ
 لِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ
 مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ ۖ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ۝ وَإِذَا
 حَضَرَ الْقِسْمَةَ أُولُو الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينُ
 فَأَرْزُقُوهُمْ مِنْهُ وَقُولُوا لَهُمْ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ۝
 وَلْيَخْشَ الَّذِينَ لَوْ تَرَكَوْا مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ ذُرِّيَةً ضَعِيفًا
 خَافُوا عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ فَلْيَتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْيَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ۝

(7-9) Men shall get their portion from the inheritance of their parents and near ones. Likewise, women shall have their portion from inheritance of their parents and near ones. No matter, may it be small legacy or big one; they all should have their prescribed portions. (8) If at the time of division of legacy, come over the near relatives, orphans, or poor ones, then give something to them and speak with them politely. (9) Let those guardians have the same concern in their minds as they would have for their own, if they had left weak offspring behind. So let them have fear of Allah and speak the right word.

It was customary among the pagans and polytheists of Arabia that only 'men' can inherit the property of deceased persons. Therefore, the widows and children have had no share in legacy. Aus bin Thabit Ansari, a companion of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) died, leaving behind a widow (Um Kuhlal / Kahah / Kajjah) and some small kids. The cousins of Aus bin Thabit, Khalid or Swaid and Arfatah, deprived them of the inheritance and

divided the lot among them. The widow came for lodging a complaint with Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W). These verses were revealed as an answer to this social problem. [Namoonah 3: 202, Manhaj al-Sadeqin 2: 442, Abu Saood 2: 147, Baghvi 1: 396, Ibn Hajr, Al-Esabah 13: 271-273, Kash'shaf 1: 466, Rooh al-Maani 4: 329, Tafseer Kabir 3: 502, Qurtabi 5: 46]

Allama Qurtabi says: Our scholars have described that this verse contains three principal points, (1) Reason of inheritance, that is, kinship, (2) No specification regarding relatives, (3) a brief mention of the law of inheritance. [5: 46]

Allah is the fosterer of the worlds; therefore, He takes care of all creatures. A person leaving this world may have two types of relatives: (1) those who will inherit the "left over" under the divine law and (2) those who cannot inherit the property of deceased, but they are deserving members of the 'family,' such as orphans, extremely poor and deprived ones. In these verses, Allah is advising us to take care of these people also. They will be favored with something necessary for maintaining their lives.

IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

In the Old Testament, there are two basic roots for inheritance, *nahal* and *yaras*. In both the cases, the emphasis is on 'possession' rather than succession. These words more frequently occur in Numbers and Deuteronomy than in Genesis and Exodus. According to law, the land belonged to the family and not to the individuals. The eldest son received the double portion, but rest of the members had equal portions. If a man died leaving no son, the whole property goes to the daughter. In such cases, she is bind to marry inside the family, in order to retain it. (Num 36: 6) If the demised person is not survived by any daughter, then the property will go to his brothers, if no brothers exist then to his father's brothers, if no father's brother, then to the next of kin. (Num 27: 8-11) Wills were unknown in Israel before the time of Herod.

Before the giving of the law, the Patriarchs were free to ignore the elder son and favor the younger instead; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were all younger sons.

There is a surprising law in Judaism and Christianity, according to which, if a man dies childless, his brother has to marry his widow. (Gen 38: 8-9, Deut 25: 5-10, Matt 22: 23-25) The first born of this union was regarded as the first born of deceased brother. It was equally possible for a person to avoid marrying the widow of his brother and then right of inheritance went to the nearest relative. (Ruth 2: 20, 3: 9-13; 4: 1-12)

In the New Testament, the Greek word for inheritance is *kleronomos* and its cognates. The Christian Law of inheritance is same as the Jewish law, which has been described in Talmud's Tractate Baba Bathra. I will discuss this law at proper place.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ الْيَتَامَىٰ ظُلْمًا إِنَّمَا
يَأْكُلُونَ فِي بُطُونِهِمْ نَارًا وَسَيَصْلَوْنَ سَعِيرًا ٥

(10) Those who unjustly devour the wealth of orphans, they fill nothing but fire in their bellies. In near future they will be burnt in blazing fire.

All the oppressed classes, orphans, poor, destitute and needy people have special importance in the sight of Allah and the divine law. Allah has given special instructions concerning the protection of orphans and their properties. (Compare 2: 83 and 177)

In the sayings of Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) and Imams, we can find extraordinary emphasis on the rights of "orphans." Imam Ali (A.S) has reported Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) as saying: One who fosters an orphan and makes him self-dependant, Allah has ordained "paradise" for him as he has ordained

hell for those who swallow up orphan's property. [Froo Al-Kafi, 7: 51] The same tradition has been reported by Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) [Behar al-Anwar 75: 4] Imam Baqir (A.S) has reported from Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W): On the Day of Judgment some people will be resurrected from their graves and the fire will be welling out of their mouth. One of his companions asked: Who will they be? Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) replied: Those who eat up orphan's property. [Behar al-Anwar 75: 10, Tafseer Ayashi, 1: 251]

يُوصِيكُمُ اللَّهُ فِي أَوْلَادِكُمْ لِلذَّكَرِ مِثْلُ حَظِّ
 الْأُنثِيَيْنِ ۖ فَإِن كُنَّ نِسَاءً فَوْقَ اثْنَتَيْنِ فَلَهُنَّ
 ثُلُثَا مَا تَرَكَ ۖ وَإِن كَانَتْ وَاحِدَةً فَلَهَا النِّصْفُ ۗ
 وَلَا يُؤْتِيهِ لِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ مِمَّا تَرَكَ
 إِن كَانَ لَهُ وَلَدٌ ۚ فَإِن لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَلَدٌ وَوَرِثَتُهُ
 أَبَوُهُ فَلِلْأُمِّهِ الثُّلُثُ ۚ فَإِن كَانَ لَهُ إِخْوَةٌ فَلِلْأُمِّهِ
 السُّدُسُ ۚ مِن بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِي بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ ۗ
 آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ لَا تَدْرُونَ أَيُّهُمْ أَقْرَبُ لَكُمْ
 نَفْعًا ۚ فَرِيضَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۗ إِن كَانَ عَلَيَّآ
 حَكِيمًا ۝ ١١ ۖ وَلَكُمْ نِصْفُ مَا تَرَكَ أَزْوَاجُكُمْ إِن لَّمْ
 يَكُن لَّهُنَّ وَلَدٌ ۚ فَإِن كَانَ لهنَّ وَلَدٌ فَلَكُمْ
 الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ مِن بَعْدِ وَصِيَّةٍ يُوصِينَ بِهَا
 أَوْ دَيْنٍ ۗ وَلِلْهُنَّ الرُّبْعُ مِمَّا تَرَكَنَّ إِن لَّمْ يَكُنْ لَكُمْ
 وَلَدٌ ۚ فَإِن كَانَ لَكُمْ وَلَدٌ فَلِلْهُنَّ الثُّمُنُ مِمَّا

تَرَكَتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ وَصِيَّتِ تَوْصُونَ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ ۗ وَ
 إِنْ كَانَ رَجُلٌ يُورَثُ كَلَلَةً أَوْ امْرَأَةً وَلَهُ أَخٌ
 أَوْ أُخْتٌ فَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا السُّدُسُ ۚ فَإِنْ كَانُوا
 أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ فَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فِي الثُّلُثِ مِنْ بَعْدِ
 وَصِيَّتِ يُوْصَىٰ بِهَا أَوْ دَيْنٍ ۚ غَيْرِ مُضَارٍّ ۚ وَصِيَّةُ
 مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ تِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ ۗ
 وَمَنْ يُطِعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
 تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾
 وَمَنْ يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَيَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَهُ
 يُدْخِلْهُ نَارًا خَالِدًا فِيهَا ۚ وَلَهُ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿١٣﴾

(11-14) Regarding the inheritance for your children, God is advising you thus: For male wards is double of female wards and if there are two daughters or more, for them is two third of the whole, but if there is only one daughter then she will get half of the inheritance. If both the parents of deceased are alive and he leaves children, then the parents will receive one sixth each. In case, the deceased is childless and the heirs are only the parents, then the mother will get one-third portion. If there are brothers and sisters of the deceased, then the mother will receive sixth portion after paying off the debts and fulfilling his will. You do not know, whether your parents or children, who is more useful for you. Surely, Allah is Omniscient and Wise. (12) For you is the half, if they do not have wards, of what your wives leave over. If they have wards, then after paying off their debts and fulfilling their wills, for you is one fourth of inherited property. If you do not have any ward, then your wives will receive one-fourth portion of what you leave

over. However, if you have wards, then they will get, after payment of debts and fulfilling the wills, eighth portion of legacy. If there is a *kalalah* (having no parents and no children, but one brother or sister) to receive his inheritance, or there is a woman, with one brother and one sister, to receive the inheritance, then each one of them will get sixth part of the whole. If brothers and sisters are from mother's side, then they should get third portion equally, after the payment of debts and fulfilling the wills. It is a harmless distribution, proposed by Allah, Allah knows all and He is most forbearing one. (13) These are the set limits from Allah. One who obeys Allah and His Prophet, he will be entered into paradise, wherein flow the streams and they will stay here forever. And it is a great achievement. (14) Moreover, whosoever will disobey Allah and His prophet, he will be entered into hell, and wherein he will stay forever and for him will be a disgracing chastisement.

Allah has used, in these verses, a specific term *kalalah*. Scholars have different opinions on its meanings. Allama Zemakh'shari has said that this term is used for expressing three senses: One who does not leave behind any parent or offspring, one who is not the parent or offspring of the deceased and those persons who are not relative from father's side or from the side of children. [Kash'shaf, 1: 475] However, Quran has clarified the meanings of this term in verse 177 of this surah, that is, a person who has only one sister or brother to receive the legacy. [Namoona, 3: 217, Abul Futuh, 1: 730, Majmaul Bayan, 3: 17, Manhaj al-Sadeqin, 2: 453, Allama Taleqani, 6: 21] Allama Tabatabai has not tried to determine its meaning. [al-Mizan, 4: 212]

This verse tells us that if only one brother and one sister are the heirs of the deceased person, each of them will get one-sixth part of the inheritance. If the person is survived by more than one brother and sister, then they will get one-third por-

tion of whole legacy.

SOME IMPORTANT POINTS

These verses speak about the brothers and sisters from mother's side only.

The last verse of this surah (chapter) speaks about the brothers and sisters from father's side.

This group of people inherits the property in absence of first group, as described in 8: 75.

If the brothers and sisters from mother's side are more than one, they will get equal share in one-third portion of the whole property.

One cannot endanger the interest of his heirs by making will in favor of one and divesting the others.

According to an agreed opinion of non-Shia scholars, *kalalah* is a person who is not survived by his either father or offspring. [Allama Mohammad bin Khalfah Maleki, *Ekmal al-Kamal*, 5: 565] Allama Ibn Kathir has claimed consensus of Scholars on this meaning since it is the opinion of Abu Bakr ®. [Ibn Kathir by Sabooni, 1: 375, Abu Saood 2: 151, Tafseer Kabir, 3: 521, Qurtabi, 5: 76, Baghvi, 1: 403, Rooh al-Maani, 4: 358, Madarik, 1: 296, Safwat, 1: 241, Farra, 1: 257, Jassas, 2: 86 and after]

THE LAW OF INHERITANCE

This group of four verses deals with the instructions about inheritance in Islamic Law. Three groups of people, based on relationship, inherit the property of the deceased.

The first group consists of the dead person's father, mother, and

children, and in the absence of children, the children's children and other descendants in the same line. Whoever from among them is nearer to the dead person, inherits his property and so long as even one person out of this group is present, people belonging to the second group do not inherit anything.

The second group consists of paternal grandfather, paternal grandmother, sisters, brothers, and in the absence of sisters and brothers, their children. Whoever from among them is nearer to the dead person inherits from him, and so long as even one person out of this group is alive, people belonging to the third group do not inherit.

The third group consists of paternal uncles, paternal aunts, maternal uncles, maternal aunts, and their descendants. Moreover, so long as even a single person is alive from this group, their children do not inherit legally. However, if the paternal step uncle and the son of real paternal uncle are alive, the son of the dead person's real paternal uncle will inherit from him to the exclusion of the paternal uncle. [Ayatullah Khoei, Articles of Islamic acts, 212, Articles of Islamic act by Ayatullah Sistani, P 612]

The Islamic law of inheritance is a unique set of precepts, which has been appreciated by some non-Muslims authorities also. For instance, Macnaughten, has offered his remarks in these words (Principles and precedents of Mohammadan Law): In these provisions we find ample attention paid to the interest of all those whom nature places in the first rank of our affections; and indeed it is difficult to conceive any system containing rules more strictly just and equitable. Likewise, Rumney, the annotator of *Sirajiah*, has given his observations in these words: The Mohammadan Law of Inheritance comprises beyond question the most refined and elaborate system of rules for the devolution of property that is known to the civilized world. [Mahmudullah, The Muslim Law of Inheritance, Preface, p. I: Allahabad, 1934, Tafseer Majdi 1: 306]

For getting an overall view of the reforms, which Islam brought to uncivilized society of the Arab, readers are requested to study Montgomery Watt's book: *Mohammad at Medina*, chapter 8 [Oxford University Press, Karachi]. Granting that the author is very biased, but he has given a good detail of such reforms.

وَالَّتِي يَأْتِينَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مِنْ نِسَائِكُمْ فَاسْتَشْهِدُوا
 عَلَيْهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنْكُمْ، فَإِنْ شَهِدُوا فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ
 فِي الْبُيُوتِ حَتَّى يَتَوَقَّعَهُنَّ الْمَوْتُ أَوْ يَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ
 لَهُنَّ سَبِيلًا ۖ وَالَّذِينَ يَأْتِيَنَّهَا مِنْكُمْ فَادُّوهُنَّ
 فَإِنْ تَابَا وَأَصْلَحَا فَأَعْرِضُوا عَنْهُمَا ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 كَانَ تَوَّابًا رَّحِيمًا ۝

(15-16) If any of your women commit some sexual offence, demand four witnesses, from among you, on this act. If they testify, keep the women arrested in the houses until they die, or God makes another way for them. (16) If two, (men and women) from among you, come to you with same offence, trounce them both. If they repent and amend their ways, then leave them alone. For sure, God is acceptor of repentance and provider of grace.

In this verse, the Arabic word *Faheshah* has been used. In The Quran this word has been used in four different meanings: (a) disobedience, e.g., 7: 28; (b) fornication and adultery, e.g., 4: 15, 7: 33; 33: 30; (c) homosexuality, e.g., 27: 54; 29: 28; and (d) creating bad circumstances for wives, 4: 19; 65: 1. [Taflisi, *Wojuh al-Quran*, 214] All the scholars are agreed that in this verse the word *faheshah* means fornication and adultery. It may be noted here that both the verses (15 and 16) are concerned with fornication. Furthermore, these verses have

not been abrogated by Allah. In verse 15, Allah has expressed the possibility of new injunctions regarding commitment of adultery in near future.

ADULTERY AND SOCIETY

Adultery means illicit sexual relations of a married person with someone other than the spouse. Prohibitions or taboos against adultery, written or customary, constitute part of the marriage code of virtually every society. Indeed, adultery seems to be as common as marriage.

The code of Hammurabi (18th century BC) in Babylonia, suggests a punishment of death by drowning for adultery. In ancient Greece and in Roman law, the offending female spouse could be killed, but men were not severely punished. The Judaism and Christianity also categorically condemn the act of adultery. The culpability of men as well as women is more explicitly mentioned in the Old Testament and Talmud, than in New Testament.

Different cultures had different attitudes towards the fornicators. Some cultures had very hostile rules against this crime, while some others had soft corner. Whereas the traditional Senufo (Senoufo) and Bambara of West Africa, for instance, tacitly condone the honor crime of killing the adulterous female spouse and her companion, among the Kaka, in Cameron, a man may have illicit relations with the wives of certain relatives with impunity. "Wife-lending" has been the part of tradition of a large number of tribes in Arabia and Eskimos, as a gesture of hospitality. Non-incestuous adultery is permitted, many South Sea Island peoples and among certain Pueblo Indian societies adultery is so common that it is tolerated if the act is kept secret. Under ancient Hindu Law, marriage was an indissoluble sacrament and not even a wife's adultery could sever the legal ties and dissolve the marriage act. In the modern Hindu Code,

divorce will be granted to either offended party, but not for occasional violations; the spouse must actually be living in adultery with another. [Britannica, 1: 111]

CONDEMNATION IN HOLY BOOKS

Here I would like to cite some quotes from Sacred Books of different religions in condemnation of adultery and fornication: Do not approach thy neighbor's wife or house cleaners. [Taoism, Tractate of the Quite Way]

He who commits adultery is punished both here and hereafter, for his days in the world are cut short and when dead he falls into hell. [Hinduism, Vishnu Purana 3: 11]

Offering presents to a woman, romping with her, touching her ornaments and dress, sitting with her on a bed, all these are considered adulterous acts. [Hinduism, Laws of Manu 8: 357] Whosoever has illicit relations with the wives of his relatives or friends, either by force or through mutual consent, he is to be known as outcast. [Buddhism, Sutta Nipata 123]

Four misfortunes befall a careless man who commits adultery: acquisition of demerit, disturbed sleep, blame, and a state of woe. [Buddhism, Dhammapada 309-10]

Immorality in the house is like a worm in vegetables. [Judaism, Talmud Sota 3b]

We find that to every sin God is long-suffering, except to the sin of promiscuity. Rabbi Azariah said, "All things can God overlook save lewdness." [Judaism, Midrash, Leviticus Rabbah, 23: 9]

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks, glancing wantonly with their eyes, mincing along

as they go, tinkling with their feet; the Lord will smite them with a scab, the heads of the daughters of Zion and the Lord will lay bare their secret parts. [Judaism and Christianity, Isaiah 3: 16-17]

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. [Judaism and Christianity, Leviticus 18: 22]

God gave them up to dishonorable passions. Their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in their own persons the due penalty for their error. [Christianity, Romans 1: 26-27]

Here I would like to refer the readers to the verses of Proverbs 5: 3-23, which beautifully express the condemnation of fornication.

FOUR WITNESSES

The verse 15 is a clear statement that 'fornication cannot be proved without having four witnesses on this act. Compare Quran 24: 13. According to Fiqh Hanafi, Maleki and Hambali, only the evidence of four male eyewitnesses is acceptable in case of adultery. A slave cannot be a witness in this case. The witnesses must be **just, and reliable Muslim**, a non-Muslim cannot be a witness in this case. It is necessary for the witnesses to describe the event in detail in front of the concerned authority. Most of the scholars believe that witnesses are required to give evidence in a single sitting and at once. [al-Mughni 10: 175-177, Hidayah 2: 507, Sharh Waqayah 2: 318, Alamgiri 3: 255, 270] Shafais are of the opinion that the better way is to make the evidences of all the four witnesses separately. [Jaziri 5: 124]

In view of Fiqh Jafariah, the crime of adultery can be proved with the evidence of four male witnesses, or three male and two female witnesses. The witnesses should confess that they have witnessed 'proper sexual intercourse'. Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S) has reported that in the reign of Imam Ali (A.S) three persons came as witnesses of adultery. Imam asked from them: Where is the fourth one? They replied, "He is coming soon." Imam Ali (A.S) ordered flogging of three witnesses. The evidence must be in clear and unambiguous words describing the process of true sexual intercourse. The witnesses will testify the qualification and all other aspects of the event without any difference in their statement. The husband can be a witness against his wife. The adultery amounting to stoning to death or flogging can only be proved by producing four male or three male and two female witnesses. The commitment of fornication, punishable to flogging, can be proved by producing two men and four women as witnesses. In Fiqh Jafariah, if a judge or authorized person seizes a couple committing adultery, he can punish sinners without any witness. [For details see: Sharay al-Islam 244; Al-Kafi, 2: 288; Tehzib 10: 26; Sheikh Sadooq, al-Faqih 4: 15-16; Estabsar 4: 217; Wasail al-Shia 18, chapters: 12, 13, 32; Fiqh al-Sadiq 6: 261-63; al-Fiqh al-Estadrili 3: 279; Tahrir al-Wasilah 2: 461]

A MEDICAL NOTE

There are some diseases which one can transfer to others or catch from his / her partner during sexual relations. I would like to mention some of them briefly. *Chlamydia* is caused by the bacterium *Chlamydia* and is transmitted by sexual contact. Symptoms in women include green vaginal discharge, but in some cases, it goes on unnoticed, until the patient feels internal pain. It may lead to infertility. *Gonorrhoea* is transferable through sexual intercourse with an infected partner. In males, it causes continuous burning of urethra, before, during, or after urination. In females, there may be a burning sensation of internal parts

and a milky discharge from vagina. Those who suffer from this disease may develop arthritis, conjunctivitis, and *endocarditis* (inflammation of heart). *Human papillomavirus* (HPV) or genital warts are also called *condylomata acuminata* or venereal warts. These warts appear after the exposure of genitals to the infected partner. In women, the warts may appear inside and around the private parts, around the anus and on cervix. In males, warts may appear on the tip of penis and the shaft. The warts may appear on the mouth of a person who had oral sex. Genital warts in women may develop into cervical cancer. Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) is the inflammation of the upper reproductive system of the women, including the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes and nearby structures. It often leads to infertility in long standing cases. *Syphilis* is an infectious disease contracted from an infected partner during sexual intercourse. An infected mother can infect her unborn child during the later stage of pregnancy. Its bacteria affect the whole body. Untreated cases allow the bacterium to invade organs and tissues of the body, which may lead to serious complications. The last stage of syphilis is characterized by rubbery growths anywhere in the body, including membranes of nose, throat, in the liver, lungs, or stomach. Syphilis can lead to a number of conditions, including heart diseases, inflammation of the bones, degeneration of the spinal cord, blindness and in later stages, mental illness. In women, it can cause infertility. Another infectious disease, which is transferable to others by sexual intercourse, is *trichomoniasis*. Trech is not a serious disease, but it may lead to a chain of other serious infections. In women, the symptoms include painful urination, vaginal discharge, abdominal pain and itching in private organs. Men experience painful urination and an unusual whitish discharge from the penis.

I would refer the readers to gain more and more knowledge

about 'sexually transferable diseases' including the AIDS, in order to understand devastating effects of 'freedom for sex' in European and American societies.

VIEWS OF A PHILOSOPHER

In order to avoid detailed discussion on the bad effects of "free sex," I would like to quote a few lines from famous historian, sociologist, and philosopher, Will Durant. He says: Even our young neolaters will understand, when they grow up, that since the life of the group depends upon the quality of the race and the careful nature of children; our sexual ambitions must submit to certain moral limitations. After a few lines, this learned writer again expresses his concerns in these words: Let us begin at the beginning and examine that flame of love, which breaks through moral code, consuming the individual and preserving the race. Let us study the character of the sexes and see the nature of those two strange organisms—man and woman— whose mutual attraction hostility generate, the problem of sexual morality. Let us observe for a while, the emancipated woman and consider the influence of her sudden liberation upon the morals of our time and the future of mankind. [The Pleasure of Philosophy, 98-99]

إِنَّمَا التَّوْبَةُ عَلَى اللَّهِ لِلَّذِينَ
 يَعْمَلُونَ السُّوءَ بِجَهَالَةٍ ثُمَّ يَتُوبُونَ مِنْ قَرِيبٍ
 فَأُولَئِكَ يَتُوبُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ
 عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ٥٠ وَكَانَتِ التَّوْبَةُ لِلَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ
 السَّيِّئَاتِ حَتَّى إِذَا حَضَرَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ
 إِنِّي تُبْتُ إِلَانَ وَلَا الَّذِينَ يَمُوتُونَ وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ
 أُولَئِكَ أَعْتَدْنَا لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ٥١

(17-18) Allah will accept the repentance of only those who commit sin out of ignorance and then repent shortly after that. Allah shows mercy on them and Allah is All Knowing and Wise. (18) Of no benefit is the repentance of those who go on doing evil until the time of one's death, at that moment, he says: Now I repent indeed; and nor for those who die as infidels. For them we have prepared a tormenting punishment.

These two verses are speaking about some conditions of repentance and Allah's relenting and mercy towards His servants. Allah accepts the repentance of only those who commit a sin by ignorance and not intentionally. Allah will not accept the repentance of those who show their regret at the time of death, or die as disbelievers. Compare Quran 10: 90-91 and 2: 161, 217, 3: 91, 47: 34. I have already discussed the matter of *tawbah* and *estaghfar* while explaining verses 133-136 of third chapter of Quran.

In Dua Abu Hamzah Thamali, Imam Zain al-Abidin (A.S) says: O' Allah, when I committed a mistake it was neither due to the rejection of your Lordship, nor because of considering your order worthless. I did not commit it by taking your admonition lightly or considering it negligible. Nevertheless, it was just a mistake, which I committed because my desires made it 'beautiful' to my eyes and the lusts overpowered me.

REPENTANCE IN DIVINE RELIGIONS

Repentance is one of the most important concepts of divine religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In Old Testament, two words, *naham* and *sub*, have frequently been translated as "repent and repentance." The first word, *naham*, means, "be sorry, change one's mind," and the second word, *sub* or *schub*, means to turn back, or return. *Naham* has been used infrequently for man (Exodus 13: 17, Job 42: 6), but regularly for God, where it is often said that 'God re-

pents of evil' proposed or initiated. In the teaching of Old Testament, we find the possibility of repentance and its acceptance by God even at the last minute. The sinner will find the God of forgiveness and not of justice in front of him. (Je. 18: 8; 26: 3, 13, 19; Jon. 3: 9) God, in other words, is 'who repents of evil.' (Exodus. 32: 14, Dt. 32: 36, Jdg. 2: 18, 1 Ch. 21: 15) In the New Testament, the words translated 'repent' are *metanoeo* and *metamelomai*. In Greek they usually mean, "To change one's mind," and so also "to regret, feel remorse." The New Testament usage is much more influenced by Old Testament's word *sub*; that is, repentance not just as feeling sorry, or changing one's mind, but as a turning round, a complete alteration of the basic motivation and direction of one's life. That is why the best word for this concept is "to convert and conversion." [O. Michael, *Metamelomai*, TDNT 4, pp. 626-29, J. P. Ramseyer, in J.J. von Allmen (ed) *A Vocabulary of the Bible*, 1958, pp. 357-359, G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 4: 629] The Old Testament leads the sinners to atonement for their sins and prepares the way to conversion by various forms of cultic-ritual repentance. There were fasting (1 Sam 7: 6; 2 Sam 12: 16; Jonah 3: 7), wearing of sackcloth and sitting in ashes (2 King 19: 1; Is 22: 12; 58: 5; Jonah 3: 5-8), washings (Num 8: 7; 19: 7-10) and other expiatory rites, which have been mentioned in Leviticus 4; 16: 20. Here I would like to refer the readers to Miserere (Psalm 51), which is considered as the perfect example of prophetic teaching about repentance.

REPENTANCE IN ISLAM

In Islam, the concept of repentance has special significance. The Islamic literature is rich in the explanation of *tawbah* and its different aspects. The Hebrew word *sub* or *schub*, most probably, is the father of Arabic word *taub*, or *taubah*, which means 'to turn back' from something. [Ibn Faris,

Mu'ajam Al-Maqayis, 175] Allama Mehdi Naraqī, in his book Jamay al-Saadat, has explained it in a beautiful way, which I would like to summarize for the readers. He says, “*Tawbah* is, in its real sense, to turn back from sins related to tongue, action and thought. In other words, it is purification of heart from sin and turning away from “destination” towards “the nearness of Allah.” [3: 51] The knowledge, being remorseful, and ones firmness of abandoning the sin in present and future, along with compensation to the sins of the past, all these aspects are included in the concept of *tawbah*. [3: 52] *Tawbah* or repentance is from three types of sins: (1) for not performing what Allah has ordained on his servants, like prayers for five times, fasting of Ramadan, Zakat etc. In these cases, the repentance means performing the lapsed obligations, (2) repentance for committing those acts, which have been forbidden by Allah, like drinking wine, playing music, lying, fornication. Repentance for these acts is feeling ashamed of these acts and deciding not to commit them again, (3) repentance from the sins related to other fellow beings, which are known as ‘human rights.’ The repentance for these acts is the ‘true compensation’ of the loss of every kind. [3: 72] For further explanation, readers are advised to study Ehya al-Uloom by Imam Ghazali and al-Anwar al-Naumaniyah (Vol 3) by Allama Naymat Allah al-Jazairi]

SOME TRADITIONS

Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) has said: there is no intercessor better than ‘repentance’. [Behar al-Anwar, 6: 19] Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) says: “There is no man or women dearer to Allah than a repenting believer.” [Behar al-Anwar 6: 21] Prophet has pointed out the signs of repenting persons i.e., he keeps eye on Allah in his deeds, abandons ungodly acts, clings to the “truth,” and is keen to do well. [Tuhaf al-Uqool, 22] Ibn Masud ® has reported that Holy Prophet (S.A.A.W) said to him: Do not

hasten to the wrong and do not put off repentance, but hasten for repentance and defer the sin. [Behar al-Anwar 77: 104] Imam Ali (A.S) has said: The repentance brings the fruit of mercy of God. [Mustadrak al-Wasail 2: 348] For revealing the excellence of repentance, Imam Ali (A.S) says: "Repentance purifies the heart and washes out the sins." [Ghurur al-Hikam]

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَرِثُوا النِّسَاءَ
 كَرْهًا وَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ لِنَدَاهِبُوا بِبَعْضِ مَا
 آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبِينَةٍ ۗ
 وَعَاشِرُوهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ فَإِنْ كَرِهْتُمُوهُنَّ
 فَعَسَى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ خَيْرًا
 كَثِيرًا ۝ (19) وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ اسْتِبْدَالَ زَوْجٍ مَكَانَ
 زَوْجٍ ۖ وَآتَيْتُمْ إِحْدَاهُنَّ قَنطَارًا فَلَا تَأْخُذُوا مِنْهُ
 شَيْئًا ۚ أَتَأْخُذُونَهُ بُهْتَانًا وَإِثْمًا مُّبِينًا ۝ (20) وَكَيْفَ
 تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَ
 أَخَذَنَ مِنْكُمْ مَيْثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ۝ (21)

(19-21) Believers, you are not allowed to inherit something from women by force and do not keep them for grabbing a portion of what you have given to them, except if they come up with manifest lewdness. Socialize with them normally. If you dislike them, may it be that you dislike something, but Allah may have placed 'a big deal of goodness' in it. (20) If you want to have a wife in place of a wife and you have given them 'money', then do not take back anything from it. Do you want to take it back by calumny and manifest Sin? (21) How you can take it, while you have freely been consorting

with each other and the wives have taken firm pledges from you?

The verse 19 has been interpreted in two different senses. A group of scholars believes that Allah is prohibiting the people from taking the widows as heritage of the deceased person, as it was customary among the pagan Arabs and in some other civilizations like Greek and Roman. [Ibn Kathir by Sabooni 1: 378, Madarik 1: 300, Kash'shaf 1: 480, Baghvi, 1: 480, Baidawi 106, Jalalain 72, Abu Saood 2: 157, Tafseer Kabir 4: 11, Qurtabi 5: 94, Rooh al-Maani, 4: 376, Jassas 2: 109, Safwat 1: 244, Tafseer Maraghi 4: 212, Mufti Hasnain al-Makhloof, Safwat al-Bayan 111, Parto 6: 40, Majmaul Bayan 3: 24]

In my opinion, this interpretation is not correct, because Allah has used the word *karh'an*, which means 'by force'. If we suppose that, the verse is speaking about restriction on taking the widows by force, as heritage, then their volunteering would be lawful. Not a single Muslim scholar believes in this meaning of the verse. Therefore, in my opinion, this verse is imposing restriction on getting something from widows by force as heritage. [al-Mizan 4: 254, Manhaj al-Sadeqin 2: 465, Namoonah 3: 232, Abul Futuh 1: 740]

In these verses, The Quran is also asking the people to give up the money or any property, which they have handed over to their wives in the past.

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا مَا نَكَحَ آبَاؤُكُمْ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ
إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَمَقْتًا وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٧﴾
حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ
وَعَمَّاتُكُمْ وَخَالَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخْتِ وَ

أُمَّهَاتِكُمُ الَّتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتِكُمْ مِّنَ الرِّضَاعَةِ
وَأُمَّهَاتُ نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبَائِبِكُمُ الَّتِي فِي حُجُورِكُمْ
مِّنْ نِّسَائِكُمُ الَّتِي دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ رِفَاقًا لَّئِمَّ تَكُونُوا
دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَاجِنَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ زَوْحَلَّالِيلُ أَبْنَائِكُمْ
الَّذِينَ مِّنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَنْ تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ
إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ٢٣

(22-23) Do not marry those women, to whom your ancestors had married, except what had happened in the past. It was an open indecency, an odious and abominable custom indeed. (23) Marrying with these persons is strictly forbidden: Your mothers, daughters, sisters, sisters of your fathers, sisters of your mothers, daughters of your brothers and sisters, your foster mothers, who have suckled you and your foster sister, sharing the milk, your mothers in law, the daughters of your consummated wives, which are under your guardianship; if you did not have sex with them, then there is no harm, and the wives of your real sons (daughters in law). Forbidden is for you to have two real sisters in your marriage at a time, except that what happened in the past. Verily, Allah is most forgiving and most merciful.

These two verses are clear in their contents and advices. Here I would like to explain the conditions under which a woman becomes 'foster mother' or 'foster sister'. These conditions are as given below:

- 1) The milk must be the result of legitimate marriage. In case, therefore, the milk of an illegitimate child is given to another child the latter will not become the *mehram* of anyone.

- 2) The feeding must be from breasts.
- 3) The child must be under two years of age.
- 4) The milk must be free of any addition.
- 5) The suckling must be for fifteen times, in continuation in day and night and not less than that.
- 6) The feeding must be from one woman only. If the child suckles from different women, the it is of no use.
- 7) Child must be depending solely on woman's milk and not on other food.
- 8) The suckling woman must be alive; feeding from a dead woman is not valid.[al-Fiqh al-Estadlali 2: 335-36; Tahreer al-Wasilah 1: 265; Jamay al-Madarik 4: 192; Fiqh al- Sadiq 5: 219-228; Ayatullah Koie's Articles of Islamic Acts 193; Ayatullah Seestani's Articles of Islamic Acts 544-46]

BIBLICAL INSTRUCTIONS

There are almost the same instructions in the Bible regarding prohibited marriages. In the book of Leviticus, (18: 7-18) we find that a man cannot marry the following women: Mother, father's wives, sisters from father's side and mother's side, grand daughters from son's and daughter's sides, daughters of father's wife, paternal and maternal aunts, daughter in law, brother's wife, one cannot marry a woman and her daughter at a time, daughter of her son and her daughter's daughter and two sisters at a time. These instructions were strictly followed by the Jews and Christians in their normal social life.

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