

SECTION 32: Fighting in the Cause of Truth

243 Hast thou not considered those who went forth from their homes, and they were thousands, for fear of death. Then Allāh said to them, Die. Then He gave them life. Surely Allāh is Gracious to people, but most people are not grateful.^a

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ
وَهُمْ أَلْفٌ ثُمَّ إِذَا وَقَعُوا لِلْمَوْتِ كَفَرُوا
وَهُمْ كَانُوا إِتِّفَاقًا فَجَاءَ اللَّهُ بِمُوتُوا
أَنْفُسَهُمْ إِنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ اللَّهُ لَدُنْهُ
فَضْلٌ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٢٤٣﴾

244 And fight in the way of Allāh, and know that Allāh is Hearing, Knowing.^a

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٤﴾

245 Who is it that will offer to Allāh a goodly gift,^a so He multiplies it to

مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقْرِضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا

243a. *Ulūf* is plural either of *alf*, meaning *a thousand*, or *alif*, *a congregation* or *in a state of union* (LL). The thousands referred to in this verse are the Israelites who left Egypt with Moses, the whole body of the Israelites being called a congregation in the Torah, and the clear mention of *the Children of Israel after Moses* in v. 246 corroborates this. Here we have a people who left their homes for fear of death, and besides the Israelites' exodus from Egypt no incident in history answers to this description. In fact, the very word *kharajū* (*they went forth*) from *khurūj* (meaning *exodus*) contains a direct hint to the exodus of the Israelites. But in one respect, the Holy Qur'ān differs from the Bible. According to the latter, the number of the Israelites was over 600,000 when they left Egypt (Num. 1:46), but the Qur'ān says they were *thousands*, not hundreds of thousands. There is no doubt, too, that the Israelites left Egypt for fear of death, for death would surely have been their fate if they had not emigrated. Not only were orders given by Pharaoh for their male offspring to be killed, but they were also kept in a state of bondage which would soon have brought them to a state of intellectual and moral death (compare v. 49).

The next incident in the history of that nation as referred to here is the Divine commandment to them, to "die". This is more fully stated in 5:21–26. Moses told them to enter the Holy Land "which Allāh has ordained for you," but they refused and were made to wander about in the wilderness for forty years, so that that generation perished. This is also shown by their history as given in the Old Testament: "Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness ... doubtless ye shall not come into the land" (Num. 14:29, 30). This was their death. After that, we are told, *Allāh gave them life*. This refers to the next generation, which was made to inherit the promised land: "But your little ones ... they shall know the land which ye have despised" (Num. 14:31). The whole is meant as a warning for the Muslims, who are told that if they followed the footsteps of the Israelites, death must be their fate. This warning is made clear in the next verse: *And fight in the way of Allāh*.

244a. See 2:190; fighting in Allāh's way is equivalent to fighting in defence of faith.

245a. Commenting on this verse, LL says: "It means, according to AIs, the grammarian, *who is he who will offer unto God a good action or gift, or any thing for which a requital may be sought*; or, as Akh, one of the most famous grammarians says, *who will do a good action by following and obeying the command of God*"; and he adds:

him manifold? And Allāh receives and amplifies,^b and to Him you shall be returned.

246 Hast thou not thought of the leaders of the Children of Israel after Moses? When they said to a prophet of theirs: Raise up for us a king, that we may fight in the way of Allāh.^a He said: May it not be that you will not fight if fighting is ordained for you? They said: And what reason have we that we should not fight in Allāh's way and we have indeed been deprived of our homes and our children?^b But when fighting was ordained for them, they turned back, except a few of them. And Allāh is Knower of the wrongdoers.

247 And their prophet said to them: Surely Allāh has raised Saul to be a king over you.^a They said: How can he have kingdom over us while we have a greater right to kingdom than

يَضْعَفَهُ لَهٗ أَضْعَافًا كَثِيرَةً ۗ وَاللَّهُ
يَقْضِي وَيَبْصُرُ ۗ وَالْيَهُودُ تَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ
بَعْدِ مُوسَى إِذْ قَالُوا لِنَبِيِّهِمْ لَهُمْ ائْتِنَا
مَلِكًا نُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ هَلْ
عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ أَلَّا
تُقَاتِلُوا قَالُوا وَمَا لَنَا أَلَّا نُقَاتِلَ فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَقَدْ أَخْرَجْنَا مِنْ دِيَارِنَا
وَأَبْنَائِنَا قَالُوا قَاتِلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْقِتَالُ تَوَلَّوْا
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِمَّنْ هُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ بَعَثَ لَكُمْ
طَالُوتَ ۗ قَالُوا الَّذِي يَكُونُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ
عَلَيْنَا وَنَحْنُ أَحَقُّ بِالْمُلْكِ مِنْهُ وَلَمْ

^aThe Arabs say, *qad aqraḍta-ni qarḍ-an ḥasan-an*, which signifies *thou hast done to me a good deed which I am bound to requite*" (T, LL). According to Zj, *qarḍ* signifies *anything done on which a reward may be expected* (Rz).

^b245b. *Allāh receives and amplifies* means that Allāh receives the gift that is offered to Him and then amplifies it; in other words, any sacrifice made in the cause of Truth is amply rewarded by Allāh. Or, it is a general statement indicating that the tightening of the means of subsistence and their amplification are in the hands of Allāh, for *yaqbiḍu* also means *he straitens*.

^a246a. The prophet alluded to is Samuel: "Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us ... that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles" (1 Sam. 8:19, 20). In the history which follows, the Qur'ān does not show any important difference with the Bible narrative.

^b246b. 1 Sam. 15:33 shows that the Amalekites had killed the Children of Israel, while 1 Sam. 17:1 shows that they had taken lands which belonged to Judah.

^a247a. Saul is here called *Tālūt*, which is of the measure of *fa'lūt* from *ṭala* meaning *he or it was tall*, and he is so called on account of the tallness of his stature: "And when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people" (1 Sam. 10:23). The proper names used in the Holy Qur'ān, while differing slightly from the Hebrew originals, have a significance of their own.

he, and he has not been granted abundance of wealth?^b He said: Surely Allāh has chosen him above you, and has increased him abundantly in knowledge and physique.^c And Allāh grants His kingdom to whom He pleases. And Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing.

248 And their prophet said to them: Surely the sign of his kingdom is that there shall come to you the heart^a in which there is tranquillity from your Lord and the best^b of what the fol-

يُؤْتِ سَعَةً مِنَ الْمَالِ ط قَالَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
اصْطَفَاهُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَزَادَهُ بَسْطَةً فِي الْعِلْمِ
وَ الْجِسْمِ ط وَاللَّهُ يُؤْتِي مُلْكَهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ط
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٤٨﴾

وَقَالَ لَهُمْ نَبِيُّهُمْ إِنَّ آيَةَ مُلْكِهِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَكُمُ
التَّابُوتُ فِيهِ سَكِينَةٌ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَبَقِيَّةٌ
مِّمَّا تَرَكَ آلُ مُوسَىٰ وَآلُ هَارُونَ تَحْمِلُهُ

247b. The murmurings of the people on Saul's selection as king, as recorded in the Holy Qur'ān, have something corresponding to them in the Bible: "And Saul answered and said, Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?" (1 Sam. 9:21). And again: "But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents" (1 Sam. 10:27).

247c. Compare 1 Sam. 10:24: "And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?"

248a. The *tābūt* mentioned here has given rise to a number of stories, because of its twofold significance. It means a *chest* or a *box*, and it also signifies *the bosom* or *the heart* (LL). Taking the first significance, the reference is said to be to the *ark*, to which, however, it is objected that the ark was restored to the Israelites long before the time of Saul. But we cannot be so certain of the Bible narrative as to reject as untrue everything differing from it. I prefer, however, the latter significance, and the use of the word in that sense is well known. LL quotes the proverb, *mā auda'tu tābūtī shai-an faqadtu-hū*, i.e., *I have not deposited in my bosom anything of knowledge that I have lost*. R also says that *tābūt* denotes *qalb* or *the heart*, and he quotes 'Umar as speaking of IMsd, "a vessel filled up with knowledge," referring evidently to the heart. That the word is used in the Holy Qur'ān in this sense is clear from the description of it that follows. Tranquillity from the Lord is not a thing which is placed in boxes, but the heart is its real repository. On five other occasions the coming down of *sakinah*, or *tranquillity*, is mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān, and every time it is *the heart of the Prophet or the faithful* that is the recipient of it. For instance in 48:4 it is said: "He it is Who sent down tranquillity into the hearts of the believers that they might add faith to their faith". According to LA, *sakinah* means also *mercy*; and he quotes a saying of the Prophet: "There came down upon them *mercy* (Ar. *sakinah*), the angels bearing it."

By the coming of "*the heart in which there is tranquillity*" is meant the change which came over Saul when he was made king: "And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart" (1 Sam. 10:9). This exactly corresponds with the statement made in the Qur'ān. And further it is said: "And the Spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied" (1 Sam. 10:10). This is no doubt the best of what the true followers of Moses and Aaron left.

248b. The word *baqiyyah* means both *a residue* and *excellence* or *the best* of a thing (LL). You say *baqiyyat al-qaum* meaning *the best of the people* (LL). *Ulū baqiyyat-in* in

lowers of Moses and the followers of Aaron have left, the angels bearing it.^c Surely there is a sign in this for you if you are believers.

الْمَلَائِكَةُ طَائِرٌ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةٌ لِّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٤٠﴾

SECTION 33: Fighting in the Cause of Truth

249 So when Saul set out with the forces, he said: Surely Allāh will try you with a river. Whoever drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever tastes it not, he is surely of me, except he who takes a handful with his hand. But they drank of it save a few of them.^a So when he had crossed it, he and those who believed with him, they said: We have today no power against Goliath^b and his forces. Those who were sure that they would meet their Lord said: How often has a

فَلَمَّا صَلَ طَائِرُتُ بِالْجُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنْ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا الْإِطَاقَةُ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلْقَاوُا اللَّهَ كُفْرًا مِنْ فِتْنَةٍ قَلِيلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِتْنَةَ

the Holy Qurʾān (11:116) means *persons possessed of excellence*. And *baqiyyat-Allāh* (11:86) signifies *obedience*, or *the state of goodness that remains*. Hence *baqiyyah* in either sense signifies *the blessings of the earlier days*. And thus it became a proverb among the Israelites: “Is Saul also among the prophets?” (1 Sam. 10:12).

248c. The ark of 1 Samuel 4:4 was drawn by bullocks and not by angels, and since, according to the Holy Qurʾān, the bearers of the *tābūt* were angels, it is additional reason that by *tābūt* here is meant *the heart*. But see a saying of the Prophet quoted in 248a, from which it is clear that “it” in the verse may refer not to *tābūt* but to *sakinah* and *baqiyyah*, and the meaning would thus be that the tranquillity and inspiration were borne by the angels into the heart of Saul.

249a. “The story of Saul is here confounded with that of Gideon” says a Christian critic. All that the Qurʾān states is that Saul tried his forces by a river, and the Bible does not say anything about it. On the other hand, the Bible speaks of a trial of a somewhat similar nature by Gideon (Judges 7:1–6), while the Qurʾān does not speak of Gideon at all. The Qurʾān does not undertake to give a full and detailed history of the Israelites, and no Christian does, I think, hold the belief that the Bible gives a full and detailed record of the whole of the Israelite nation, so that it could not have omitted a single incident. Nor is there anything strange if Saul followed the example of Gideon. That these are two different incidents is made clear by the fact that while Gideon tried his forces by “the well of Harod” (Judges 7:1), Saul tried his forces by a river, as stated in the Qurʾān. It further appears from the Bible that the river Jordan was there: “Some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead” (1 Sam. 13:7).

249b. The Arabic word is *Jālūt*, of the same measure as *Tālūt*, meaning *he assailed* or *assaulted* in the battle (LL), and thus instead of Goliath the Holy Qurʾān has adopted a name which expresses his chief characteristic.

small party vanquished a numerous host by Allāh's permission! And Allāh is with the steadfast.^c

250 And when they went out against Goliath and his forces, they said: Our Lord, pour out patience on us and make our steps firm and help us against the disbelieving people.

251 So they put them to flight by Allāh's permission. And David slew Goliath, and Allāh gave him kingdom and wisdom,^a and taught him of what He pleased. And were it not for Allāh's repelling some men by others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder;^b but Allāh is Full of grace to the worlds.

252 These are the messages of Allāh — We recite them to thee with truth; and surely thou art of the messengers.

كثِيرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿٢٤٩﴾

وَلَمَّا بَرَزُوا لِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا
أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَ
انصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٥٠﴾

فَهَرَّوهُمْ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ
وَاتَّاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا
يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ
بِبَعْضٍ لَافْتَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ
ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٥١﴾

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَنْزَلُهَا عَلَيْكَ يَا مُحَمَّدٌ
وَرَأَيْتَ لَيْسَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٢٥٢﴾

Part 3

253 We have made some of these messengers to excel others.^a Among them are they to whom Allāh spoke, and some of them He exalted by

تِلْكَ الرُّسُلُ فَضَّلْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ م
مِنْهُمْ مَنْ كَلَّمَ اللَّهُ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَهُمْ دَرَجَاتٍ ط

249c. Compare 1 Sam. 14:6: "For there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few". And on one occasion only six hundred men were left with him (1 Sam.13:15).

251a. David was both a king and a prophet.

251b. Thus the Muslims are told that they have to fight to restore order and establish peace in the country.

253a. The principle is here recognized that some messengers excel others, and it contains, apparently, a reference to the excellence of the Prophet Muḥammad. The mention of David and Jesus in particular here is to show that, notwithstanding that these two prophets represented two different aspects of the advancement of the Israelite nation, David standing for their worldly eminence and Jesus for their spiritual eminence, they both sang praises of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad, and both spoke of his advent as the

(many) degrees of rank.^b And We gave clear arguments to Jesus son of Mary, and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. And if Allāh had pleased, those after them would not have fought one with another after clear arguments had come to them, but they disagreed; so some of them believed and some of them denied. And if Allāh had pleased they would not have fought one with another, but Allāh does what He intends.

وَإِنِّي بِنَا عِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيْتِ وَأَيَّدْتُهُ
بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ وَكُوشَاءَ اللَّهِ مَا فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ
مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
وَلَكِنْ اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِمْ مَنْ آمَنَ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَنْ كَفَرَ وَكُوشَاءَ اللَّهِ مَا اقْتَتَلُوا وَلَكِنَّ
اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿٥٤﴾

SECTION 34: Compulsion in Religion Forbidden

254 O you who believe, spend out of what We have given you^a before the day comes in which there is no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession. And the disbelievers — they are the wrongdoers.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا
خِلاَةَ وَلَا شَفَاعَةً وَالْكَافِرُونَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

255 Allāh — there is no god but He, the Ever-living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all subsist. Slumber overtakes Him not, nor sleep. To Him

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ
سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا
فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ

advent of God Himself, thus indicating that, looked at from both standpoints, the excellence of the Prophet over other prophets was so immeasurable as to have led two of the most eminent Israelite prophets to speak of his advent as the coming of the Lord.

Numerous verses of the Holy Qur'an bear testimony to the greatness of the Holy Prophet. He is repeatedly spoken of as being endowed with all those qualities of greatness in the highest degree which to others were given only partially and in a less degree. It is for this reason that the Prophet is declared to be a mercy to all nations (21:107), and his followers are called the best of the people (3:110), which shows that he is the greatest of the prophets.

^{253b} Allāh spoke to all, but there were some who were exalted above others by many degrees. Compare this with v. 87: "And some (of the prophets) you gave the lie to and others you would slay", whereas those whom they tried to kill were also called liars.

^{254a} The carrying on of the struggle for existence against the numerous enemies of Islām required in the first place the raising of funds and other acts of self-sacrifice; hence the repeated exhortations to spend. The subject is dealt with at length in the two sections that follow the next.

belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His permission?^a He knows what is before them and what is behind them. And they encompass nothing of His knowledge except what He pleases. His knowledge^b extends over the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of them both tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Great.^c

256 There is no compulsion in religion^a — the right way is indeed clearly distinct from error. So whoever disbelieves in the devil^b and believes

إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ط يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا
خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا
بِمَا شَاءَ ۗ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿٢٥٦﴾

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۚ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ
الْغَيِّ ۚ فَمَن يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ

255a. The twofold significance of intercession has been explained in 48b. The principle is here recognized that there may be intercession with Divine permission. It is true that Islām does not recognize the doctrine that man stands in need of any mediator to reconcile him with God, and therefore, mediation or intercession in the sense in which the Christian doctrine is held is unknown to Islām. But there is another aspect of it. The Prophet, to whom the Divine will is revealed, is the Model for his people. He is perfect and by pointing out a way enables others to attain to perfection. In this sense he is called a *shafī* or an *intercessor*. Those who take the Prophet for their model may thus attain to perfection. But as all men are not equally gifted, nor have all equal occasion to attain to a state of perfection, though they exert themselves to their utmost, Divine mercy takes them by the hand and amends are made for such defects through the intercession of the Prophet. It is in this sense that Islām recognizes the doctrine of intercession in the life after death.

255b. *Kursī* means *knowledge*. Ibn Jubair said: “His *Kursī* is *His Knowledge*” (B. 65:ii, 44). It also means *chair* or *throne*, but the word is freely used in Arabic to indicate *knowledge* or *learning*, and a learned man is called *ahl al-kursī*. There is an Arabic proverb, *khair al-nāsi al-karāsī*, which means that *the best of men are the men of learning*. See further 7:54b, where the meaning of *arsh* is explained.

255c. This is a very well-known verse which goes under the name of *āyat al-kursī*, or *the verse of knowledge*, because it deals with the all-comprehensive knowledge of Allāh.

256a. To all the nonsense which is being talked about the Prophet offering Islām or the sword as alternatives to the pagan Arabs, this verse is a sufficient answer. Being assured of success, the Muslims are told that when they hold the power in their hand their guiding principle should be that there should be no compulsion in the matter of religion. The presumption that this passage was directed to the early converts and that it was abrogated later on is utterly baseless.

256b. *Tāghūt* is derived from *taḡhā*, meaning *he was inordinate* or *exorbitant*, and is variously explained as meaning “*the exorbitant in pride* or *corruptness* or *disbelief*, of *the people of the Scriptures*, or *any head or leader of error*, or *he who turns from the*

in Allāh, he indeed lays hold on the firmest handle which shall never break. And Allāh is Hearing, Knowing.

فَقَدْ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ
لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾

257 Allāh is the Friend of those who believe — He brings them out of darkness into light.^a And those who disbelieve, their friends are the devils who take them out of light into darkness. They are the companions of the Fire; therein they abide.

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ
الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
أَوْلِيَهُمُ الظُّلُمَاتُ يُخْرِجُوهُمْ مِّنَ
النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

SECTION 35: How Dead Nations are Raised to Life

258 Hast thou not thought of him who disputed with Abraham about his Lord, because Allāh had given him kingdom?^a When Abraham said, My Lord is He Who gives life and causes to die, he said: I give life and cause death.^b Abraham said: Surely

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِي حَاجَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ فِي رَبِّهِ أَنْ
أَنَّ اللَّهَ الْمَلِكُ لِذَلِكَ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّيَ الَّذِي
يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ قَالَ أَنَا أُحْيِي وَأُمِيتُ قَالَ
إِبْرَاهِيمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْتِي بِالسَّمْسِ مِنَ
الشَّرْقِ

*good, or the idols, or whatever is worshipped to the exclusion of God, or the devil” (LL). As the word *devil* is freely used for most of the significances of *taghūt* given above, I have adopted it as the significance throughout this translation. But it is not a proper name, as it accepts the definite article *al*. It is used as a plural here, though it has a separate plural form *tawāghit*.*

^{257a} Faith is here spoken of as *light* and disbelief as *darkness*. The contrast is brought out to the best advantage in 24:35–40.

^{258a} The words “because Allāh had given him kingdom” are taken by the majority of commentators to refer to Abraham’s opponent whose name is given as Nimrod (Gen. 10:8, 9), but the view of the minority that the personal pronoun *him* in the above quotation refers to Abraham is preferable. It is corroborated by 4:54: “We have given to Abraham’s children the Book and the Wisdom and We have given them a grand kingdom”. Even in Genesis the promised land is spoken of as being given to Abraham: “I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it” (Gen. 15:7). The words *ā-tā-hu-llāhu* would in this case mean *Allāh had promised to give him*.

The Muslims are here told that just as a promise is given to them that they will be raised to great eminence from the state of insignificance in which they were, which is equivalent to raising the dead to life, a similar promise was given to Abraham, that promise being in fact the basis of the present promise to the Prophet: see 124a.

^{258b} It is not stated what it was to which the giving of life or bringing of death relates, but as the discussion arose out of the promise given to Abraham that his descendants would be made a great nation, it is clear that the reference here is to the life and

Allāh causes the sun to rise from the East, so do thou make it rise from the West.^c Thus he who disbelieved was confounded. And Allāh guides not the unjust people.

259 Or like him who passed by a town, and it had fallen in upon its roofs. He said: When will Allāh give it life after its death? So Allāh caused him to die for a hundred years, then raised him. He said: How long hast thou tarried? He said: I have tarried a day, or part of a day. He said: Nay, thou hast tarried a hundred years; but look at thy food and drink — years have not passed over it! And look at thy ass! And that We may make thee a sign to men. And look at the bones, how We set them together then clothe them with flesh. So when it became clear to him, he said: I know that Allāh is Possessor of power over all things.^a

قَاتٍ بِهَا مِنَ الْمُعْرَبِ فَبَدَّتِ الذَّنْبِيُّ كَفَرًا
وَ اللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٥٩﴾

أَوْ كَالَّذِي مَرَّ عَلَى قَرْيَةٍ وَ هِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ
عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا قَالَ أَنَّى يُحْيِي هَذِهِ اللَّهُ
بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا فَأَمَاتَهُ اللَّهُ مِائَةَ عَامٍ
ثُمَّ بَعَثَهُ ط قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُ قَالَ لَبِثْتُ
يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ط قَالَ بَلْ لَبِثْتُ مِائَةَ
عَامٍ فَأَنْظُرْ إِلَى طَعَامِكَ وَ شَرَابِكَ لَمْ
يَتَسَنَّهْ ٥ وَ أَنْظُرْ إِلَى حِمَارِكَ وَلِنَجْعَلَكَ
آيَةً لِلنَّاسِ وَ أَنْظُرْ إِلَى الْعِظَامِ كَيْفَ
نُنشِزُهَا ثُمَّ نَكْسُوهَا لَحْمًا ط فَلَمَّا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ
قَالَ أَعْلَمَنَّ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٥٩﴾

death of nations. It should be noted that the words *hayāt* and *maut*, literally *life* and *death*, are as well applicable to nations and places as to men, animals and vegetation. Thus *mātati-l-arḍu* signifies the *land became destitute of vegetation and inhabitants* (LL). What is stated here is further illustrated in the verse that follows by the Divine promise as to the rebuilding of Jerusalem, where the *desolation* of the sacred city is spoken of as its *death* and its *rebuilding* is called its *life*.

258c. The disputant belonged to a race of sun-worshippers, and therefore when he claimed that he could give life and cause death, Abraham advanced an argument which quite confounded his adversary. If he could give life and cause death he could control even his deity, the sun, for to give life and cause death were the work of the deity and not of the devotee, and hence he could make it rise from the opposite direction. The adversary was confounded, because he saw that he had made an assertion which was opposed to his own avowed belief.

259a. An illustration is afforded here from later Israelite history, as to how dead nations are raised to life. By “the town which had fallen in upon its roofs” is meant Jerusalem (Rz, AH), as it was left after its desolation by Nebuchadnezzar in 599 B.C.

The words “look at the bones, how We set them together, then clothe them with flesh”, undoubtedly refer to Ezekiel’s vision as related in Ezekiel, ch. 37. The first part of ch. 37 relates how Ezekiel was taken (in a vision) “in the midst of the valley which was full of bones,” and asked, “Son of man, can these bones live?” After a Divine assurance, Ezekiel is made to witness the scene which is narrated here in the words — *Look*

260 And when Abraham said, My Lord, show me how Thou givest life to the dead, He said: Dost thou not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease. He said: Then take four birds, then tame them to

وَرَادُ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ أَرِنِي كَيْفَ تُنْجِي
الْمَوْتَى قَالَ أَوْكُمُ نُؤْمِنُ قَالَ بَلَىٰ وَلَكِنَّ
يُبْطِلِينَ قَلْبِي قَالَ فَخُذْ أَرْبَعَةً مِّنَ الطَّيْرِ

at the bones, how We set them together: “The bones came together, bone to his bone,” and “the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above,” and then “the breath came into them, and they lived” (Ezek. 37:1–10). That what is narrated in Ezekiel, ch. 37, is a vision is clear from the introductory words of that chapter: “The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord”. What follows the incident makes it still more clear, for verse 11 (Ezekiel, ch. 37) goes on to say: “Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: Behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost”; while verse 12 gives them the Divine promise, “Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel”. This shows conclusively that the bones were only a symbol of the fallen condition of *the whole house of Israel*. I lay stress upon the word *whole* in Ezekiel 37:11, because the actual bones were only of the very few among them who were put to the sword, by far the greater number being in captivity or held in a slavish condition in subjugation to the Babylonians.

The identical incident related in v. 259 is also a vision. The Qur’an usually dispenses with words showing an incident to be a vision when either the context or the nature of the incident or a reference to earlier history makes it clear that it is a vision. Compare the words in which Joseph narrated his vision to his father in 12:4: “O my father, I saw eleven stars and the sun and the moon — I saw them making obeisance to me,” not making any mention at all that he had seen this in a vision. In the verse under discussion, however, it is not only its identity with Ezekiel 37:1–10 that shows the incident to be a vision, but the insertion of a *kāf*, signifying *likeness*, before the whole is a further indication of the same. If the incident had been a real one, as in the previous verse, the verse should have commenced with the words *or him* instead of *or like him*, the insertion of the *kāf* giving the incident the colour of a parable or a vision.

The causing the prophet to die for a hundred years is also an incident of the vision which, though not narrated in the Bible, is corroborated by facts, standing symbolically for the death of the Jewish nation, a death of disgrace and sorrow, or the desolation of Jerusalem, which covered a period of almost a hundred years. Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar in 599 B.C. (2 Kings 24:10); Cyrus gave permission to rebuild the temple in 537 B.C. (Ezra 1:2), the house being eventually finished in 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:15). The Bible does not give us the history of the period from 515 B.C., and even if we are not allowed to conjecture that another fifteen years may have been taken by the Israelites to settle back in Jerusalem and to rebuild the city itself for their own habitation, the period from 599 to 515 B.C. covers almost fully the whole of the sixth century B.C., and hence the hundred years of the prophet’s death in this vision represent the hundred years of the death of the Israelite nation.

The reference to the food and drink of the prophet, which did not show any influence of years, and to his ass, which was still standing by, only proves that the hundred years’ death which the prophet underwent was only a vision. The mention of the bones has been taken by some commentators to refer to the ass, but this is an obvious error, for the two statements are separated by a sentence: “And that We may make thee a sign to men”; and there is also a pause after the word *ass*, separating what follows from that which has preceded.

How was Ezekiel a sign to the people? Because the vision made him a symbol of the whole Jewish nation, and his symbolic death for a hundred years represented the

incline to thee, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to thee flying; and know that Allāh is Mighty, Wise.^a

فَصْرُوهُنَّ إِلَيْكَ ثُمَّ اجْعَلْ عَلَى كُلِّ جَبَلٍ مِّنْهُنَّ جُزْءًا نَّمًّا اُدْعُهُنَّ يَأْتِيَنَّكَ سَعْيًا
وَاعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٥٠﴾

sorrows and afflictions of Israel for a similar period, after which they were once more to be restored to life.

The word *yatasannah* (*sanah, a year*) means *the thing underwent the lapse of years*. The word applied to food and drink carries a similar significance, meaning *it became altered (for the worse) by the lapse of years* (LA, LL). Rz explains the lapse of years to be the real meaning of the word, for his explanation is *the years did not pass over it*. This shows that actually there was no lapse of years, and it is simply a vision.

260a. This verse is a natural sequel to v. 258, which speaks of the manifestation of Allāh's power in the life and death of nations. Verse 259, as already noted, has been interposed to afford a proof of the assertion made in v. 258. In Gen. 15:8 Abraham is made to say, after receiving a promise of the land of Canaan: "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" The Quranic parallel to this is: "My Lord, show me how Thou givest life to the dead." He believed in the Divine promise, and was so sure of it that he had even contended with and overcome an adversary on this point. But it is not strange that out of his seed should arise a nation that should supplant the powerful nations that ruled the land? The sign given to Abraham according to Gen. 15:9-11 is quite meaningless, not making it clear how Abraham's seed was to inherit the land. He is told to take "a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon"; he "divided them in the midst." "And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abraham drove them away." How this was a sign of Abraham inheriting the land of Canaan is a mystery. It only shows that the text here has been tampered with.

The answer to Abraham's *how* as given in the Qur'ān is a perfectly intelligible parable. If he should take four birds and tame them, they would obey his call and fly to him even from the distant mountains. If the birds, then, obey his call, he being neither their master nor the author of their existence, would not nations submit to the call of their Divine Master and the Author of their existence? Or if the birds, being only tamed for a short time by a man who had otherwise no control over them, become so obedient to their tamer, has not Allāh the power to control all those causes which govern the life and death of nations? Whenever He wishes to destroy a people He brings about the causes of their decline and evil fortune overtakes them; and when He wishes to make a people prosperous He brings about causes which result in their rise and progress. That the word *fā'ir* (plural *ṭair* is used here) which signifies *a bird*, also signifies *the cause of good and evil, or misery or happiness* (T, LL), in which sense the word is used in 7:131 and elsewhere in the Holy Qur'ān, is a further indication of the significance of the parable of the *birds*, through which Abraham is made to realize how the Almighty controls the fortunes of nations. It is an error to suppose that Abraham actually took four birds and tamed them. The Qur'ān does not say so. It only makes Abraham realize the wonderful manifestation of Divine power by a parable.

The lexicologists are all agreed that the word *ṣur*, used here, is the imperative form of *ṣāra*, which means *he made it to incline* (LL), and *ṣur-hunna ilaika* means *amill-hunna, or make them incline, wa ajmi'-hunna, and gather them to thee* (LA). It is only in this sense that the word is followed by *ilā* as here. *Cutting into pieces* is not the significance of these words. Further, the words *place a part (juz')* of *them* can only mean *one each of the four birds*. The commentators who introduce the story of *cutting the birds into pieces*, not traceable to any reliable authority, assert that the words *ḥunma qaṭṭi'-hunna* (then cut them into pieces) are omitted here after *ṣur hunna* or *tame them* which is absurd on the face of it.

SECTION 36: Spending Money in the Cause of Truth

261 The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh^a is as the parable of a grain growing seven ears, in every ear a hundred grains. And Allāh multiplies (further) for whom He pleases. And Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing.^b

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلٍ
فِي كُلِّ سُنْبُلَةٍ مِائَةُ حَبَّةٍ وَاللَّهُ
يُضَاعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

262 Those who spend their wealth in the way of Allāh, then follow not up what they have spent with reproach or injury, their reward is with their Lord, and they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.^a

الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ ثُمَّ لَا يُتَّبِعُونَ مَا أَنْفَقُوا مَنًّا وَلَا
أَذَى لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا
خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

263 A kind word with forgiveness is better than charity followed by injury. And Allāh is Self-sufficient, Forbearing.

قَوْلٌ مَعْرُوفٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ صَدَقَةٍ
يَتَّبِعُهَا آذَى وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾

264 O you who believe, make not your charity worthless by reproach and injury, like him who spends his wealth to be seen of men and believes

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تُبْطِلُوا صَدَقَاتِكُمْ
بِالْمَنِّ وَالْأَذَى كَالَّذِي يُنْفِقُ مَالَهُ

261a. The primary object of this and the following section in exhorting the faithful to spend money is the advancement of the cause of Islām, though other objects of charity are also included. The primary significance of the words *fi sabil Allāh* (in the way of Allāh) is the cause of the Faith or the cause of Truth. This is made clear in 9:60, where *fi sabil Allāh* is a head of expenditure in addition to helping the needy, etc.

261b. The comparison of money spent in the cause of Truth to a grain yielding increase is to show: firstly, that the progress of Islām depended on the sacrifices which the individual members of the community made; and secondly, that the expenditure of money must be accompanied with hard labour, as a seed cast on ground unaccompanied by any labour would not grow. It is noteworthy that while the Qurʾān represents the increase to be seven-hundredfold, even multiples of it, Jesus, in a similar parable — the parable of the sower — promises thirty, sixty or a hundredfold increase (Matt.13:23; Mark 4:8).

262a. *Mann* is originally the conferring of a benefit or a favour upon one (LL), and is so used in the Holy Qurʾān frequently; it also has a secondary meaning, i.e., giving expression to the good done to anybody (Rz), or, reminding one of the favour done by way of reproach, and this is the meaning here. *Adhā* signifies harm or annoyance, by speaking evilly of one or inflicting slight injury. Gifts, whether given in the cause of national or individual suffering, must not be accompanied by any interested motives; hence the donor is forbidden even to mention them afterwards.

not in Allāh and the Last Day.^a So his parable is as the parable of a smooth rock with earth upon it, then heavy rain falls upon it, so it leaves it bare! They are not able to gain anything of that which they earn. And Allāh guides not the disbelieving people.^b

265 And the parable of those who spend their wealth to seek Allāh's pleasure and for the strengthening of their souls is as the parable of a garden on elevated ground, upon which heavy rain falls, so it brings forth its fruit twofold; but if heavy rain falls not on it, light rain (suffices). And Allāh is Seer of what you do.^a

266 Does one of you like to have a garden of palms and vines with streams flowing in it — he has therein all kinds of fruits — and old age has overtaken him and he has weak offspring; when (lo!) a whirlwind with fire in it smites it so it becomes blasted. Thus Allāh makes the messages clear to you that you may reflect.^a

رِجَاءِ النَّاسِ وَلَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ صَفْوَانٍ عَلَيْهِ
تُرَابٌ فَاصَابَهُ وَابِلٌ فَتَرَكَهُ صَلْدًا ط
لَا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ط وَاللَّهُ
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٦٥﴾

وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمُ ابْتِغَاءَ
مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَتَثْبِيثًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ كَمَثَلِ
جَنَّةٍ بَرْبُورَةٍ أَصَابَهَا وَابِلٌ فَآتَتْ أُكُلَهَا
ضِعْفَيْنِ فَإِن لَّمْ يُصِبْهَا وَابِلٌ فَطَلَّ ط
وَاللَّهُ سِيمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٦٦﴾

أَيُّودٌ أَحَدَكُمُ أَنْ تَكُونَ لَهُ جَنَّةٌ مِّنْ
نَّجِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ لَهُ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَ
أَصَابَهُ الْكِبَرُ وَلَهُ ذُرِّيَةٌ ضَعُفٌ فَاصَابَهَا
إِعْصَافٌ فِيهِ نَارٌ فَاحْتَرَقَتْ كَذَلِكَ
يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٦٦﴾

264a. The expression conveys a very strong disapproval of giving alms to be seen by men. It does not simply forbid the giving of alms “before men to be seen of them” (Matt. 6:1), but speaks of this as being the work of those “who believe not in Allāh and the Last Day,” by which are meant the disbelievers, thus making it utterly hateful in the sight of true believers.

264b. The concluding words of the parable show that the efforts of the disbelievers to deal a death-blow to Islām are meant here. They were spending their money to retard the advancement of Islām, but their efforts, they are told, would be fruitless; compare 8:36. The words *they are not able to gain anything of that which they earn* leave no doubt as to its purport.

265a. This is the parable of the believers who will reap the fruits of the sacrifices they make. They are spoken of as spending *to seek Allāh's pleasure*, because all their efforts were for the upholding of truth, and *for the strengthening of their souls*, every act of self-sacrifice being due to their certainty of the ultimate triumph of the Truth, which in its turn gave them strength to make still greater sacrifices. The word *tall* means *slight rain*, or *dew*.

266a. With great sacrifices during thirteen years at Makkah, the Muslims had built up a community to carry the message of the Truth to the world. But now when they had

SECTION 37: Spending in the Cause of Truth

267 O you who believe, spend of the good things that you earn and of that which We bring forth for you out of the earth, and aim not at the bad to spend thereof, while you would not take it yourselves unless you connive at it. And know that Allāh is Self-sufficient, Praiseworthy.^a

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ
مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الْحَيَاةَ مِنْهُ
تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ بِأَخِيَاهُ إِلَّا أَنْ
تُعْضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

268 The devil threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to be niggardly,^a and Allāh promises you forgiveness from Himself and abundance. And Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing:

الشَّيْطَانُ يَعِدُكُمُ الْفَقْرَ وَيَأْمُرُكُمْ
بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَاللَّهُ يَعِدُكُمْ مَغْفِرَةً مِنْهُ
وَفَضْلًا وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٨﴾

269 He grants wisdom to whom He pleases. And whoever is granted wisdom, he indeed is given a great good. And none mind but men of understanding.

يُرِي نَبِيَّ الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ
الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا
يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾

270 And whatever alms you give or (whatever) vow you vow, Allāh surely knows it. And the wrongdoers shall have no helpers.

وَمَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ مِنْ نَفَقَةٍ أَوْ نَذَرْتُمْ مِنْ
سَدَقَةٍ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَعْلَمَهُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّاطِلِينَ
مِنْ أَنْصَارِهِ ﴿٤٠﴾

271 If you manifest charity, how excellent it is! And if you hide it and

إِنْ تُبْدُوا الصَّدَقَاتِ فَنِعِمَّا هِيَ وَإِنْ

found a shelter at Madinah and were making good progress, they were being attacked by an enemy who aimed at destroying them altogether. The Muslims were, therefore, now called upon to make still greater sacrifices to save the garden of Islām from being blasted, and to put their whole strength, their lives as well as their wealth, into the cause.

267a. The Muslims are here enjoined to support the cause of Truth by spending good things, things which they love, and not to even think of giving bad things, things which they themselves would not accept from others. Elsewhere it is said: "You cannot attain to righteousness unless you spend out of what you love" (3:92). They are thus told that half-hearted support brings no good either to the cause or to the helper of the cause; what is required is that they should exert themselves to their utmost and support the cause whole-heartedly.

268a. *Fahshā'* here signifies niggardliness or tenaciousness, being equivalent to *hukhl* (LL).

give it to the poor, it is good for you.^a And it will do away with some of your evil deeds; and Allāh is Aware of what you do.

272 Their guidance is not thy duty, but Allāh guides whom He pleases. And whatever good thing you spend, it is to your good. And you spend not but to seek Allāh's pleasure. And whatever good thing you spend, it will be paid back to you in full, and you will not be wronged.^a

273 (Charity) is for the poor who are confined in the way of Allāh,^a they cannot go about in the land;^b the

تُخَفُّوهُمَا وَتُؤْتُوهُمَا الْفُقَرَاءَ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنْكُمْ مِنْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَبْتَئِمُّ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَيْرٌ ﴿٢٧٢﴾

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ هُدَاهُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلَا يُنْسَفُ مِنْهُ وَمَا تُنْفِقُونَ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يُوَفِّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٧٣﴾

لِلْفُقَرَاءِ الَّذِينَ أُحْصِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ضَرْبًا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَحْسَبُهُمْ

271a. The manifesting of charity or giving alms openly is a thing quite different from giving them "to be seen of men", for which see v. 264. By the giving of charity openly is meant the giving of subscriptions for works of public utility or for national defence, or for the advancement of national or public welfare. The teaching of the Gospels (Matt. 6:1-4) lays all the stress upon private acts of charity, and makes no mention at all of subscriptions for works of public utility and for organized efforts for dealing with the poor, without which national growth is impossible. The rule laid down here takes into consideration the varying circumstances of human society and enjoins public as well as private acts of charity, mentioning public charity first, as that is of greatest importance.

272a. The opening words of the verse call attention to the special difficulties of Muslim society, which was required to repel its enemies in the interests of its existence. It shows that the Muslims did not fight to bring the disbelievers into the fold of Islām; for that, the Prophet is told in plain words, was not his responsibility. It was for the good of their people, the defence of the Muslim community that the Muslims were required to raise subscriptions. Hence what they spent was for Allāh's pleasure, because it was in the cause of truth. In the concluding words they are assured that for these deeds of sacrifice they will be fully rewarded.

As regards private charity, reports mentioned under this verse show that Muslim charity was exercised not only for the welfare of their own co-religionists but also for that of the disbelievers and that Islām did not allow the difference of religion to be a hindrance to the bestowal of charity upon a deserving person.

273a. The first qualification of those who deserve charity is that they are confined in the way of Allāh. Among these are included: (1) Those who had to fight in defence of Islām, but had no means of livelihood; (2) those who could not go forth to trade because of the insecurity of the roads and the constant raids of the enemy; (3) those who were wounded in the fighting (Rz).

273b. In translating *ḍarab-an fi-l-arḍ* as "knocking about in the land", Palmer has made a mistake. The unhappy similarity which he discovered between the colloquial English phrase "knock about", which means "to wander here and there in a rough,

ignorant man thinks them to be rich on account of (their) abstaining (from begging). Thou canst recognize them by their mark — they beg not of men importunately.^c And whatever good thing you spend, surely Allāh is Knower of it.

الْجَاهِلُ اغْنِيَاءَ مِنَ التَّعَفُّفِ تَعْرِفُهُمْ
بِسِيمِهِمْ لَا يَسْأَلُونَ النَّاسَ ائْتِئَاظًا وَفَا
تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلَيْهِمْ ۝

SECTION 38: Usury Prohibited

274 Those who spend their wealth by night and day, privately and publicly, their reward is with their Lord; and they have no fear, nor shall they grieve.^a

الَّذِينَ يَنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً فَالَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ۝

275 Those who swallow usury cannot arise except as he arises whom the devil prostrates by (his) touch.^a That is because they say, Trading is only like usury. And Allāh has allowed

الَّذِينَ يَأْكُلُونَ الرِّبَا لَا يَقُومُونَ إِلَّا كَمَا
يَقُومُ الَّذِي يَخْبِطُهُ الشَّيْطَانُ مِنَ الْمَسِّ ط
ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا الْبَيْعُ مِثْلُ الرِّبَا ۝

careless, and aimless way”, and one of the significances of the Arabic word *darb*, viz., *beating, striking, or smiting*, makes him draw the conclusion that the “language of the Qur’ān is really rude and rugged”. He would have been nearer the mark if he had said *beating the land*. As a matter of fact, the phrase here used means *he journeyed in the land, seeking sustenance and for the purpose of traffic* (LL).

273c. Here we have another qualification of those who deserve to be assisted by private acts of charity; these are the men who abstain from begging. This would show that the Holy Qur’ān does not countenance the practice of begging from door to door.

274a. It is a prophetic assurance to the Muslims that if they made sacrifices for the national welfare, the fear of annihilation under which the Muslim community then lived would be dispelled, and they would not grieve for what they spent, as it would yield abundant fruit. This is, in fact, a prophecy of their final triumph over their enemies, for the party that is victorious in a struggle does not grieve for the sacrifices that it makes while the vanquished party does.

275a. *Ribā* (literally, *an excess or addition*) means *an addition over and above the principal sum that is lent* (R, T, LL), and includes *usury* as well as *interest*. The subject is introduced here very appropriately, for as charity is the broad basis of human sympathy, usury annihilates all sympathetic affection and leads to the extreme of miserliness. Thus from one point of view the subject of usury stands in contrast with that of charity, while from another point of view the connection between these two subjects is, as pointed out in the two preceding sections and the verse with which this section opens, that, while the Muslims were promised great wealth and prosperity, they were warned against an inordinate desire for amassing wealth, to which usury would certainly have led them. Hence, those who devour usury are compared with those prostrated by the touch of the

trading and forbidden usury.^b To whomsoever then the admonition has come from his Lord, and he desists, he shall have what has already passed.^c And his affair is in the hands of Allāh. And whoever returns (to it) — these are the companions of the Fire: therein they will abide.

276 Allāh will blot out usury, and He causes charity to prosper. And Allāh loves not any ungrateful sinner.^d

وَاحْلَلَّ اللَّهُ الْبَيْعَ وَحَرَّمَ الرِّبَا فَمَنْ جَاءَهُ مَوْعِظَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِ فَانْتَهَى فَلَهُ مَا سَلَفَ وَأَمْرُهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَمَنْ عَادَ فَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٢٧٦﴾

يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُرْبِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ أَثِيمٍ ﴿٢٧٦﴾

devil, which in this case stands for Mammon. The prohibition of usury in Islām is a very wide subject, and cannot be discussed within the limits of a footnote. But it may be noted in passing that Islām adopts the golden mean in all cases. It does not go to the extreme of the socialistic idea which aims at the annihilation of all distinction of property rights, but it establishes institutions which give the poor a certain proportion of the riches of the wealthier members of society. Such is the institution of *zakāt*, according to which one-fortieth of the amassed wealth of every member of society is taken yearly to be distributed among the poor. Hence *zakāt* is particularly spoken of in connection with this subject in v. 277. In perfect accordance with that institution, Islām refused to allow the rich to grow richer by reducing the poor to still greater poverty, which is the real aim of usury. Usury, moreover, promotes habits of idleness; but its worst effect is on morals, as it causes man to be obsessed by love of wealth and selfishness; and this is, in fact, what is meant by the devil prostrating a devourer of usury.

It may also be mentioned in this connection that while Islām enjoins acts of sacrifice to carry on the struggle for national existence, it prohibits usurious dealings which are the basis of modern warfare. All wars are now carried on with the help of loans, interest on which ultimately is a source of ruin to both the conquerers and the conquered. A just war, a war in self-defence, would always lead a community to acts of sacrifice to which they would be impelled in the interest of their own existence, while an aggressive war can only be carried on by heavy loans whose burden is not felt at the time but which ultimately crush the community.

275b. The Qurʾān draws a distinction between trading and usury. In trade the capitalist takes the risk of loss along with the hope of profit, but in lending money on usury the whole of the loss is suffered by the man who uses his labour, while the capitalist may count upon his profit even in the case of loss in the actual concern. Hence trading stands on quite a different footing from usury. It may be added that in the great struggle between capital and labour, Islām sides with labour. If labour does not bring profit, the capitalist should suffer along with the labourer.

275c. Here is a prohibition to receive any interest on money lent, but if anyone had actually received any interest before the prohibition he was not required to pay it back.

276a. *Maḥaqa* signifies *he took away the blessing thereof* or *he diminished it* (R). It also signifies the *blotting out* or *annihilating* of a thing. Usury is here condemned, while charitable deeds are commended as being the real source of the prosperity of a nation or of humanity in general. It is a prophetic reference to the general tendency in the growth of civilization to lessening rates of interest, so much so that usurious dealings, in the

277 Those who believe and do good deeds and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate — their reward is with their Lord; and they have no fear, nor shall they grieve.

رَأَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَ
 أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
 عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
 هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٢٧٧﴾

278 O you who believe, keep your duty to Allāh and relinquish what remains (due) from usury, if you are believers.^a

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَذَرُوا مَا
 بَقِيَ مِنَ الرِّبَا إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٧٨﴾

279 But if you do (it) not, then be apprised of war from Allāh and His Messenger;^a and if you repent, then you shall have your capital. Wrong not, and you shall not be wronged.^b

فَإِن لَّمْ تَفْعَلُوا فَأْذَنُوا بِحَرْبٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ
 وَرَسُولِهِ وَإِن تُبْدُوا إِلَيْهِمْ
 رَأْسَ بَعْضِ الرِّبَا الَّذِي كُنتُمْ تُبْذَرُونَ
 فَاصْبِرُوا لَهُ وَلَا تَكُنُوا مِنَ الْمُنْكَرِينَ ﴿٢٧٩﴾

280 And if (the debtor) is in straitness, let there be postponement till (he is in) ease. And that you remit (it) as alms is better for you, if you only knew.^a

وَإِن كَانَ ذُو عُسْرَةٍ فَنَظِرَةٌ إِلَىٰ مَيْسَرَةٍ
 وَأَن تَصَدَّقُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨٠﴾

281 And guard yourselves against a day in which you will be returned to Allāh. Then every soul will be paid in full what it has earned, and they will not be wronged.

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا تُرْجَعُونَ فِيهِ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ
 تُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٨١﴾

proper sense of the word, are becoming almost extinct, while the tendency for public charity or personal sacrifice in the interests of a community, or even humanity in general, is daily gaining ground.

278a. The balance of interest which might be due at the time when the prohibition was made known must be given up.

279a. Going directly against the commandments of Allāh is here described as a war with Allāh and His Messenger. The money received as bank interest may be spent in the cause of Allāh and His Messenger or for the propagation of Islām, and thus from a war with Allāh and His Messenger it would be converted into a war for Allāh and His Messenger. In fact the Divine purpose in the prohibition of interest is fulfilled if interest is changed into charity.

279b. The meaning is that the debtor shall not be made to pay more than the sum lent.

280a. This indicates the kind of sympathy Islām demands. The poor man is not to be prosecuted and thrown into prison, and payment of debt must be postponed till the debtor is able to pay, or, better still, the whole may be remitted as charity.

SECTION 39: Contracts and Evidence

282 O you who believe, when you contract a debt for a fixed time, write it down.^a And let a scribe write it down between you with fairness; nor should the scribe refuse to write as Allāh has taught him, so let him write. And let him who owes the debt dictate, and he should observe his duty to Allāh, his Lord, and not diminish anything from it. But if he who owes the debt is unsound in understanding or weak, or (if) he is not able to dictate himself, let his guardian dictate with fairness.^b And call to witness from among your men two witnesses; but if there are not two men, then one man and two women^c from among those whom you choose to be witnesses, so that if one of the two errs, the one may remind the other.^d And the witnesses must not refuse when they are summoned. And

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا تَدَايَنْتُمْ بِدِينٍ
إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى فَاصْتُبُوهُ ۗ وَلَا يَكْتُبُ
بَيْنَكُمْ كَاتِبٌ بِالْعَدْلِ وَلَا يَأْبُ 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
يُمْلِلَ هُوَ فَلْيُمْلِلْ وَلِيُّهُ بِالْعَدْلِ ۗ
وَاسْتَشْهِدُوا شَهِيدَيْنِ مِنْ رِجَالِكُمْ
فَإِنْ لَمْ يَكُونَا رَجُلَيْنِ فَرَجُلٌ وَامْرَأَتَانِ
مِمَّنْ تَرْضَوْنَ مِنَ الشُّهَدَاءِ أَنْ تَضِلَّ
إِحْدَاهُمَا فَتُذَكِّرَ إِحْدَاهُمَا الْأُخْرَىٰ ۗ
وَلَا يَأْبُ الشُّهَدَاءُ إِذَا مَا دُعُوا ۗ وَلَا
تَسْمَعُوا أَنْ تَكْتُبُوهُ صَغِيرًا أَوْ كَبِيرًا إِلَىٰ

282a. The subject of usury, which is connected with the lending and borrowing of money and trading in general, brings us to the subject of contracts. If Islām enjoins charity and prohibits usury, it requires at the same time that the greatest precautions must be taken for safeguarding property rights. A noteworthy thing about this is that the Arabs were quite an ignorant people, among whom writing was very rare. Even then they were required to put down all their transactions, great or small, in writing, except in hand-to-hand dealings.

282b. These words form the basis of the guardian and ward law, as they point out when a guardian may be appointed for one who is not able to manage his own property. The word which I have translated as *weak* really signifies *one too young* (i.e. a minor) or *one too old* (Bd). Thus a guardian may be appointed not only when the owner is a minor, but also when his understanding is not sound on account of age or any other reason.

282c. As women did not take much part in business, and were therefore unable to understand the transaction, two women are required instead of one man.

282d. The personal pronoun *humā* may refer either to the testimony of the *two witnesses* or the *two women*. *Reminding* here stands for *making up* the deficiency of the other's memory.

The Holy Qur'ān does not say that no case should be decided except on the testimony of two witnesses, but requires ordinarily the calling of two witnesses at the time of the transaction, so that the deficiency of one may be rectified by the other. Cases may be

be not averse to writing it whether it is small or large along with the time of its falling due. This is more equitable in the sight of Allāh and makes testimony surer and the best way to keep away from doubts. But when it is ready merchandise which you give and take among yourselves from hand to hand, there is no blame on you in not writing it down. And have witnesses when you sell one to another. And let no harm be done to the scribe or to the witnesses.^e And if you do (it), then surely it is a transgression on your part. And keep your duty to Allāh. And Allāh teaches you. And Allāh is Knower of all things.

283 And if you are on a journey and you cannot find a scribe, a security may be taken into possession.^a But if one of you trusts another, then he who is trusted should deliver his trust, and let him keep his duty to Allāh, his Lord. And conceal not testimony. And whoever conceals it, his heart is surely sinful. And Allāh is Knower of what you do.

أَجَلِهِ ذُرِّيَّتِكُمْ أَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأَقْوَمُ لِلشَّهَادَةِ
وَأَدْنَىٰ أَكَّا تَرْتَابُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ تِجَارَةً
حَاضِرَةً تُدِيرُونَهَا بَيْنَكُمْ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ
جُنَاحٌ إِلَّا تَكْتُبُوهَا وَأَشْهَدُوا إِذَا تَبَايَعْتُمْ
وَلَا يُضَارَّ كَاتِبٌ وَلَا شَهِيدٌ وَإِنْ
تَفَعَّلُوا فَإِنَّهُ مُسَوِّمٌ بِكُمْ وَالنَّقْوَاءُ لِلَّهِ
وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ اللَّهُ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٣﴾

وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ وَلَمْ تَجِدُوا كَاتِبًا
فَرِهْنِ مَقْبُوضَةً فَإِنْ أَمِنَ بَعْضُكُمْ
بَعْضًا فَلْيُؤَدِّ الَّذِي أُؤْتِنَ أَمَانَتَهُ وَلْيَتَّقِ
اللَّهَ رَبَّهُ ط وَلَا تَكْتُمُوا الشَّهَادَةَ وَمَنْ
يَكْتُمْهَا فَإِنَّهُ إِثْمٌ قَلْبُهُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا
تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨٤﴾

decided on circumstantial evidence as well, which is sometimes stronger than the evidence of witnesses. The Holy Qur'ān itself speaks of Joseph's innocence being established on circumstantial evidence (12:26, 27).

282e. They must not be made to suffer loss in their own business. In other words, their convenience must be kept in view, and they should be paid.

283a. This does not mean that a security cannot be taken in any other case. On the other hand, the words that follow show that security may be taken when the lender does not trust the debtor.

It further shows that advantage can be derived by the lender from the movable or immovable property which has been given into his possession as a security for the debt. Thus land mortgaged for a debt may be cultivated, or house-property may be rented or used. This is made clear in a saying of the Prophet: "The mortgaged animal may be used for riding, when it is mortgaged, on account of what is spent on it, and the milk of the milch animal may be drunk when it is mortgaged, and the expenditure shall be borne by him who rides (the animal) and drinks the milk" (B. 48:4).

SECTION 40: Muslims Shall be Made Victorious

284 To Allāh belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth. And whether you manifest what is in your minds or hide it, Allāh will call you to account according to it. So He forgives whom He pleases and chastises whom He pleases. And Allāh is Possessor of power over all things.^a

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَرَٓٔىۤ اَنْ يُبَدِّلَ مَا فِيۤ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَوْ تَخْفُوۤا بِمَا سَبَّحْتُمْ بِهٖ اللّٰهُ فَيَعْلَمُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيُعَدِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيۡرٌ ﴿٢٨٤﴾

285 The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers. They all believe in Allāh and His angels and His Books and His messengers. We make no difference between any of His messengers.^a And they say: We hear and obey; our Lord, Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual course.

اٰمَنَ الرَّسُوْلُ بِمَا اُنزِلَ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۗ وَالْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ كُلُّ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَلٰٓئِكَتِهٖ وَكُتُبِهٖ وَرُسُلِهٖ ۗ قَدَّ لَا نُفْرِقُ بَيْنَ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رُّسُلِهٖ ۗ قَالُوۡا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا ۗ غُفْرٰنَكَ رَبَّنَا ۗ اِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيۡرُ ﴿٢٨٥﴾

286 Allāh imposes not on any soul a duty beyond its scope. For it, is that which it earns (of good), and against it that which it works (of evil). Our Lord, punish us not if we forget or make a mistake. Our Lord, do not lay

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللّٰهُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۗ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اَكْتَسَبَت ۗ رَبَّنَا لَا تُوَاخِذْنَا اِنْ نَسِيۡنَا ۗ اَوْ اَخْطَاۡنَا ۗ رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا اِصْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ

284a. This verse has generally been misunderstood. It does not signify "Allāh will call you to account for it", but that "He will call you to account *according to it*"; so that he who hides (i.e. keeps under control) his evil inclinations and he who manifests (i.e. gives vent to them) shall not be dealt with in the same manner, but according to their deserts. Almost the same statement is contained in 3:29, where it is said: "Say: Whether you hide what is in your hearts or manifest it, Allāh knows it". Evil thoughts are not unpunishable; but evil inclinations which a man keeps suppressed, and which therefore gradually disappear, cannot be included in the category of evil thoughts; it is these that are meant here.

285a. The breadth of the Muslim faith, which has been dealt with on several occasions in this chapter, is again mentioned in reference to the triumph of the Muslims; for even if the Muslims were triumphant, their religion could not triumph over other religions unless established on very broad principles which should commend themselves to all. The triumph of the Muslim religion, it is hinted, would not be due to political supremacy but to the excellence and breadth of its principles. Hence, even in these days of Muslim political decadence, Islām is making spiritual conquests. This is no doubt due to the breadth of its principles.

on us a burden as Thou didst lay on those before us. Our Lord, impose not on us (afflictions) which we have not the strength to bear. And pardon us! And grant us protection! And have mercy on us! Thou art our Patron, so grant us victory over the disbelieving people.^a

عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا
مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَرَحْمَةً
وَاعْفُ لَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا
فَاَنْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

286a. Some of the words in which these prayers are addressed require to be explained. *Iṣr* means a burden which restrains one from motion, and, therefore, the burden of sin, as sin hampers the spiritual progress of man and restrains him from advancing spiritually. *U'fu* is from 'afw, which means effacing or obliteration (R), and generally indicates the the effacing or pardoning of sins. *Ighfir* is from *ghafir*, which means covering with that which protects a thing from dirt (R). In religious terminology, the word *ghafir* is used, as Barmāwī explains in *Qaṣṭalānī* (commentary of *Bukhārī*), as meaning protection which, he says, is of two kinds, protecting man from the commission of sin or protecting him from the punishment of a sin that he has committed. This is in accordance with what is said in the *Nihāyah* where the Divine attributes *Ghāfir* and *Ghāfir* are explained as meaning *One Who protects men from the commission of sins and faults* and *One Who passes over their sins and faults* — *Al-Sātiru li-dhunūbi 'ibādī-hi wa 'uyūbi-him al-mutajāwizu 'an khaṭāyā-hum wa dhunūbi-him*.

It may be noted here that as a preliminary to the prayer for victory over the disbelievers, there is one set of three petitions in the first part of the verse and another set of three petitions in the second part. The first three petitions made to God are *punish us not, lay not on us the burden of sins, impose not on us afflictions which we have not the strength to bear*. Corresponding to these three petitions respectively are the three petitions in the second part, *pardon us, grant us protection, have mercy on us*. Thus corresponding to the desire to be saved from punishment is the petition that God may pardon His servant whatever faults he has committed; corresponding to the desire that one may not be burdened with sins is the petition that one may be granted protection from the commission of sins; and corresponding to the desire to be saved from afflictions which one has not the strength to bear is the petition for the mercy of God.

It is further necessary to remember that the two words 'afw and *ghafir* and their derivatives, and the two corresponding Divine attributes 'Ufuww and *Ghāfir*, are of very frequent occurrence in the Holy Qur'ān, and they are generally taken as meaning *pardoning* and *forgiving*, but there is really a fine distinction between the significance of the two, as pointed out above. And when the two words are used together as here, 'afw always implies the pardoning of sins so that one may be saved from the punishment which the commission of sin brings and *ghafir* protection from the commission of sin. *Istighfār* is thus really a prayer for sinlessness.

This, the concluding prayer of this chapter, is given very great importance in the Prophet's sayings. According to the ḥadīth, "whoever prays as taught in the last two verses of the *Baqarah*, they are sufficient for him" (B. 64:12).

It is noteworthy that if the Muslims are taught to pray for victory over disbelievers, they are at the same time taught to be humble and forgiving. What a spirit of humility does the Holy Word breathe even in the hour of triumph! The aspiration of the soul to be led to the promised victory is still subjected to the holier yearnings of the soul.

The end of the chapter shows that the triumph of Islām is its real object, and this is plainly outlined in the opening and closing sections of the chapter.