

Surah 6. Al-An'am

6.1 ALL PRAISE is due to God, who has created the heavens and the earth, and brought into being deep darkness as well as light:¹ and yet, those who are bent on denying the truth regard other powers as their Sustainer's equals!

6.2 He it is who has created you out of clay, and then has decreed a term [for you] - a term known [only] to him.² And yet you doubt -

6.3 although He is God in the heavens and on earth, knowing all that you keep secret as well as all that you do openly, and knowing what you deserve.

6.4 Yet whenever any of their Sustainer's message comes unto them, they [who are bent on denying the truth] turn their backs upon it:³

6.5 and so they give the lie to this truth now that it has come unto them. In time, however, they will come to understand what it was that they were wont to deride.⁴

6.6 Do they not see how many a generation We have destroyed before their time - [people] whom We had given a [bountiful] place on earth, the like of which We never gave unto you, and upon whom We showered heavenly blessings abundant, and at whose feet We made running waters flow? And yet We destroyed them for their sins, and gave rise to other people in their stead.⁵

6.7 But even if We had sent down unto thee [O Prophet] a writing on paper, and they had touched it with their own hands - those who are bent on denying the truth would indeed have said, "This is clearly nothing but a deception!"

6.8 They are saying, too, "Why has not an angel [visibly] been sent down unto him?" But had We sent down an angel, all would indeed have been decided,⁶ and they would have been allowed no further respite [for repentance].

6.9 And [even] if We had appointed an angel as Our message-bearer,⁷ We would certainly have made him [appear as] a man - and thus We would only have confused them in the same way as they are now confusing themselves.⁸

6.10 And, indeed, [even] before thy time have apostles been derided - but those who scoffed at them were [in the end] overwhelmed by the very thing which they were wont to deride.⁹

6.11 Say: "Go all over the earth, and behold what happened in the end to those who gave the lie to the truth!"

6.12 Say: "Unto whom belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth?" Say: "Unto God, who has willed upon Himself the law of grace and mercy."¹⁰ He will assuredly gather you all together on the Day of Resurrection, [the coming of] which is beyond all doubt: yet those who have squandered their own selves - it is they who refuse to believe [in Him],

6.13 although His is all that dwells in the night and the day, and He alone is all-hearing, all-knowing.

6.14 Say: "Am I to take for my master anyone but God, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, when it is He who gives nourishment and Himself needs none?"¹¹ Say: "I am bidden to be foremost among those who surrender themselves unto God, and not to be¹² among those who ascribe divinity to aught beside Him."

6.15 Say: "Behold, I would dread, were I [thus] to rebel against my Sustainer, the suffering [which would befall me] on that awesome Day [of Judgment]."

6.16 Upon him who shall be spared on that Day, He will indeed have bestowed His grace: and this will be a manifest triumph.

6.17 And if God should touch thee with misfortune, there is none who could remove it but He; and if He should touch thee with good fortune - it is He who has the power to will anything:

6.18 for He alone holds sway over His creatures, and He alone is truly wise, all-aware.

6.19 Say: "What could most weightily bear witness to the truth?" Say: "God is witness between me and you; and this Qur'an has been revealed unto me so that on the strength thereof I might warn you and all whom it may reach." Could you in truth bear witness that there are other deities side by side with God? Say: "I bear no [such] witness!" Say: "He is the One God; and, behold, far be it from me to ascribe divinity, as you do, to aught beside Him!"¹³

6.20 They unto whom We have vouchsafed revelation aforetime know this¹⁴ as they know their own children; yet those [of them] who have squandered their own selves - it is they who refuse to believe.

6.21 And who could be more wicked than he who attributes his own lying inventions to God or gives the lie to His messages? Verily, such evildoers will never attain to a happy state:

6.22 for one Day We shall gather them all together, and then We shall say unto those who ascribed divinity to aught beside God: "Where, now, are those beings whom you imagined to have a share in God's divinity?"¹⁵

6.23 Whereupon, in their utter confusion, they will only [be able to] say: "By God, our Sustainer, we did not [mean to] ascribe divinity to aught beside Him!"¹⁶

6.24 Behold how they have lied to themselves¹⁷ - and [how] their false imagery has forsaken them!

6.25 And there are among them such as [seem to] listen to thee [O Prophet]: but over their hearts We have laid veils which prevent them from grasping the truth, and into their ears, deafness.¹⁸ And were they to see every sign [of the truth], they would still not believe in it - so much so that when they come unto thee to contend with thee, those who are bent on denying the truth say, "This is nothing but fables of ancient times!"

6.26 And they bar others therefrom, and go far away from it: but they destroy none but themselves, and perceive it not.

6.27 If thou couldst but see [them] when they will be made to stand before the fire and will say, "Oh, would that we were brought back [to life]: then we would not give the lie to our Sustainer's messages, but would be among the believers!"

6.28 But nay - [they will say this only because] the truth which they used to conceal [from themselves] in the past will have become obvious to them; and if they were brought back [to life], they would return to the very thing which was forbidden to them: for, behold, they are indeed liars!¹⁹

6.29 And some [of the unbelievers] say, "There is nothing beyond our life in this world, for We shall not be raised from the dead."

6.30 If thou couldst but see [them] when they shall be made to stand before their Sustainer [and] He will say, "Is not this the truth?" They will answer: "Yea, indeed, by our Sustainer!" [Whereupon] He will say: "Taste, then, the suffering that comes from²⁰ your having refused to acknowledge the truth!"

6.31 Lost indeed are they who consider it a lie that they will have to meet God - till the Last Hour suddenly comes upon them, [and] they cry, "Alas for us, that we disregarded it!" - for they shall bear on their backs the burden of their sins:²¹ oh, how evil the load with which they shall be burdened!

6.32 And nothing is the life of this world but a play and a passing delight; and the life in the hereafter is by far the better for all who are conscious of God. Will you not, then, use your reason?

6.33 Well do We know that what such people say²² grieves thee indeed: yet, behold, it is not thee to whom they give the lie, but God's messages do these evildoers deny.

6.34 And, indeed, [even] before thy time have apostles been given the lie, and they endured with patience all those charges of falsehood, and all the hurt done to them, till succour came unto them from Us: for there is no power that could alter [the outcome of] God's promises. And some of the histories of those apostles have already come within thy ken.²³

6.35 And if it distress thee that those who deny the truth²⁴ turn their backs on thee - why, then, if thou art able to go down deep into the earth or to ascend a ladder unto heaven²⁵ in order to bring them a [yet more convincing] message, [do so;] but [remember that] had God so willed, He would indeed have gathered them all unto [His] guidance. Do not, therefore, allow thyself to ignore [God's ways].²⁶

6.36 Only they who listen [with their hearts] can respond to a call; and as for the dead [of heart], God [alone] can raise them from the dead, whereupon unto Him they shall return.²⁷

6.37 And they say, "Why has no miraculous sign been bestowed on him²⁸ from on high by his Sustainer?" Say: "Behold, God has the power to bestow any sign from on high." Yet most human beings are unaware of this²⁹ -

6.38 although there is no beast that walks on earth and no bird that flies on its two wings which is not [God's] creature³⁰ like yourselves: no single thing have We neglected in Our decree. And once again:³¹ Unto their Sustainer shall they [all] be gathered.

6.39 And they who give the lie to Our messages are deaf and dumb, in darkness deep. Whomever God wills, He lets go astray; and whomever He wills, He places upon a straight way.³²

6.40 Say: "Can you see yourselves invoking any but God when God's chastisement befalls you [in this world], or the Last Hour comes upon you? [Tell me this,] if you are men of truth!

6.41 Nay, but it is Him alone that you will invoke - whereupon He may, if He so wills, remove that [ill] which caused you to call unto Him; and you will have forgotten all that to which you [now] ascribe divinity side by side with Him."

6.42 And, indeed, We sent Our messages unto people before thy time, [O Prophet,] and visited them with misfortune and hardship so that they might humble themselves:

6.43 yet when the misfortune decreed by Us befell them, they did not humble themselves, but rather their hearts grew hard, for Satan had made all their doings seem goodly to them.

6.44 Then, when they had forgotten all that they had been told to take to heart, We threw open to them the gates of all [good] things,³³ until - even as they were rejoicing in what they had been granted - We suddenly took them to task: and lo! they were broken in spirit;³⁴

6.45 and [in the end,] the last remnant of those folk who had been bent on evildoing was wiped out.³⁵ For all praise is due to God, the Sustainer of all the worlds.

6.46 Say: "What do you think? If God should take away your hearing and your sight and seal your hearts - what deity but God is there that could bring it all back to you?" Behold how many facets We give to Our messages - and yet they turn away in disdain!

6.47 Say: "Can you imagine what your condition will be³⁶ if God's chastisement befalls you, either suddenly or in a [gradually] perceptible manner? [But then -] will any but evildoing folk [ever] be destroyed?³⁷

6.48 And We send [Our] message-bearers only as heralds of glad tidings and as warners: hence, all who believe and live righteously - no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve;

6.49 whereas those who give the lie to Our messages - suffering will afflict them in result of all their sinful doings.

6.50 Say [O Prophet]: "I do not say unto you, 'God's treasures are with me'; nor [do I say], 'I know the things that are beyond the reach of human perception'; nor do I say unto you, 'Behold, I am an angel': I but follow what is revealed to me."³⁸ Say: "Can the blind and the seeing be deemed equal?³⁹ Will you not, then, take thought?"

6.51 And warn hereby those who fear lest they be gathered unto their Sustainer with none to protect them from Him or to intercede with Him, so that they might become [fully] conscious of Him.⁴⁰

6.52 Hence, repulse not [any of] those who at morn and evening invoke their Sustainer, seeking His countenance.⁴¹ Thou art in no wise accountable for them - iust as they are in no wise accountable for thee⁴² - and thou hast therefore no right to repulse them: for then thou wouldst be among the evildoers.⁴³

6.53 For it is in this way⁴⁴ that We try men through one another - to the end that they might ask, "Has God, then, bestowed His favour upon those others in preference to us?"⁴⁵ Does not God know best as to who is grateful [to Him]?

6.54 And when those who believe in Our messages come unto thee, say: "Peace be upon you. Your Sustainer has willed upon Himself the law of grace and mercy⁴⁶ - so that if any of you does a bad deed out of ignorance, and thereafter repents and lives righteously, He shall be [found] much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace."

6.55 And thus clearly do We spell out Our messages: and [We do it] so that the path of those who are lost in sin might be distinct [from that of the righteous].

6.56 SAY [to the deniers of the truth]: "Behold, I have been forbidden to worship those [beings] whom you invoke instead of God." Say: "I do not follow your errant views - or else I should have gone astray, and should not be among those who have found the right path."

6.57 Say: "Behold, I take my stand on a clear evidence from my Sustainer - and [so] it is to Him that you are giving the lie! Not in my power is that which [in your ignorance] you so hastily demand:⁴⁷ judgment rests with none but God. He shall declare the truth, since it is He who is the best judge between truth and falsehood."

6.58 Say: "If that which you so hastily demand were in my power, everything would indeed have been decided between me and you.⁴⁸ But God knows best as to who is doing wrong."

6.59 For, with Him are the keys to the things that are beyond the reach of a created being's perception: none knows them but He. And He knows all that is on land and in the sea; and not a leaf falls but He knows it; and neither is there a grain in the earth's deep darkness, nor anything living or dead,⁴⁹ but is recorded in [His] clear decree.

6.60 And He it is who causes you to be [like] dead⁵⁰ at night, and knows what you work in daytime; and He brings you back to life each day⁵¹ in order that a term set [by Him] be fulfilled. In the end, unto Him you must return: and then He will make you understand all that you were doing [in life].

6.61 And He alone holds sway over His servants. And He sends forth heavenly forces to watch over you⁵² until, when death approaches any of you, Our messengers cause him to die: and they do not overlook [anyone].

6.62 And they [who have died] are thereupon brought before God,⁵³ their true Lord Supreme. Oh, verily, His alone is all judgment: and He is the swiftest of all reckoners!

6.63 Say: "Who is it that saves you from the dark dangers⁵⁴ of land and sea [when] you call unto Him humbly, and in the secrecy of your hearts, 'If He will but save us from this [distress], we shall most certainly be among the grateful?'"

6.64 Say: "God [alone] can save you from this and from every distress - and still you ascribe divinity to other powers beside Him!"

6.65 Say: "It is He alone who has the power to let loose upon you suffering from above you or from beneath your feet,⁵⁵ or to confound you with mutual discord and let you taste the fear of one another."⁵⁶ Behold how many facets We give to these messages, so that they might understand the truth;

6.66 and yet, to all this thy people⁵⁷ have given the lie, although it is the truth. Say [then]: "I am not responsible for your conduct.

6.67 Every tiding [from God] has a term set for its fulfilment: and in time you will come to know [the truth]."

6.68 NOW, whenever thou meet such as indulge in [blasphemous] talk about Our messages, turn thy back upon them until they begin to talk of other things;⁵⁸ and if Satan should ever cause thee to forget [thyself], remain not, after recollection, in the company of such evildoing folk,

6.69 for whom those who are conscious of God are in no wise accountable. Theirs, however, is the duty to admonish [the sinners],⁵⁹ so that they might become conscious of God.

6.70 And leave to themselves all those who, beguiled by the life of this world, have made play and passing delights their religion;⁶⁰ but remind [them] herewith that [in the life to come] every human being shall be held in pledge for whatever wrong he has done, and shall have none to protect him from God, and none to intercede for him; and though he offer any conceivable ransom,⁶¹ it shall not be accepted from him. It is [people such as] these that shall be held in pledge for the wrong they have done; for them there is [in the life to come] a draught of burning despair,⁶² and grievous suffering awaits them because of their persistent refusal to acknowledge the truth.

6.71 SAY: "Shall we invoke, instead of God, something that can neither benefit us nor harm us, and [thus] turn around on our heels after God has guided us aright? - like one whom the satans have enticed into blundering after earthly lusts, the while his companions, trying to guide him, call out unto him [from afar],⁶³ 'Come thou to us!'" Say: "Verily, God's guidance is the only guidance: and so we have been bidden to surrender ourselves unto the Sustainer of all the worlds,

6.72 and to be constant in prayer and conscious of Him: for it is He unto whom you all shall be gathered."

6.73 And He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with [an inner] truth⁶⁴ - and whenever He says, "Be," His word comes true; and His will be the dominion on the Day when the trumpet [of resurrection] is blown. He knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being's perception, as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature's senses or mind.⁶⁵ for He alone is truly wise, all-aware.

6.74 AND, LO, [thus] spoke Abraham unto his father Azar:⁶⁶ "Takest thou idols for gods? Verily, I see that thou and thy people have obviously gone astray!"

6.75 And thus We gave Abraham [his first] insight into [God's] mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth - and [this] to the end that he might become one of those who are inwardly sure.

6.76 Then, when the night overshadowed him with its darkness, he beheld a star; [and] he exclaimed, "This is my Sustainer!" - but when it went down, he said, "I love not the things that go down."

6.77 Then, when he beheld the moon rising, he said, "This is my Sustainer!" - but when it went down, he said, "Indeed, if my Sustainer guide me not, I will most certainly become one of the people who go astray!"

6.78 Then, when he beheld the sun rising, he said, "This is my Sustainer! This one is the greatest [of all]!" - but when it [too] went down, he exclaimed: "O my people! Behold, far be it from me to ascribe divinity, as you do, to aught beside God!

6.79 Behold, unto Him who brought into being the heavens and the earth have I turned my face, having turned away from all that is false; and I am not of those who ascribe divinity to aught beside Him."

6.80 And his people argued with him. He said: "Do you argue with me about God, when it is He who has guided me? But I do not fear anything to which you ascribe divinity side by side with Him, [for no evil can befall me] unless my Sustainer so wills.⁶⁷ All things does my Sustainer embrace within His knowledge; will you not, then, keep this in mind?

6.81 And why should I fear anything that you worship side by side with Him, seeing that you are not afraid of ascribing divinity to other powers beside God without His ever having bestowed upon you from on high any warrant therefor? [Tell me,] then, which of the two parties has a better right to feel secure - if you happen to know [the answer]?

6.82 Those who have attained to faith, and who have not obscured their faith by wrongdoing - it is they who shall be secure, since it is they who have found the right path!"

6.83 And this was Our argument⁶⁸ which We vouchsafed unto Abraham against his people: [for] We do raise by degrees whom We will.⁶⁹ Verily, thy Sustainer is wise, all-knowing.

6.84 And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob; and We guided each of them as We had guided Noah aforetime. And out of his offspring, [We bestowed prophethood upon] David, and Solomon, and Job, and Joseph, and Moses, and Aaron: for thus do We reward the doers of good;

6.85 and [upon] Zachariah, and John, and Jesus, and Elijah: every one of them was of the righteous;

6.86 and [upon] Ishmael, and Elisha, and Jonah, and Lot.⁷⁰ And every one of them did We favour above other people;

6.87 and [We exalted likewise] some of their forefathers and their offspring and their brethren: We elected them [all], and guided them onto a straight way.

6.88 Such is God's guidance: He guides therewith whomever He wills of His servants. And had they ascribed divinity to aught beside Him - in vain, indeed, would have been all [the good] that they ever did:

6.89 [but] it was to them that We vouchsafed, revelation, and sound judgment, and prophethood. And now, although the unbelievers may choose to deny these truths,⁷¹ [know that] We have entrusted them to people who will never refuse to acknowledge them -

6.90 to those whom God has guided. Follow, then, their guidance, [and] say: "No reward do I ask of you for this [truth]: behold, it is but an admonition unto all mankind!"

6.91 For, no true understanding of God have they when they say, "Never has God revealed anything unto man." Say: "Who has bestowed from on high the divine writ which Moses brought unto men as a light and a guidance, [and] which you treat as⁷² [mere] leaves of paper, making a show of them the while you conceal [so] much - although you have been taught [by it] what neither you nor your forefathers had ever known?"⁷³ Say: "God [has revealed that divine writ]!" - and then leave them to play at their vain talk.

6.92 And this, too, is a divine writ which We have bestowed from on high - blessed, confirming the truth of whatever there still remains [of earlier revelations]⁷⁴ - and [this] in order that thou mayest warn the foremost of all cities and all who dwell around it.⁷⁵ And those who believe in the life to come do believe in this [warning]; and it is they who are ever-mindful of their prayers.

6.93 And who could be more wicked than he who invents a lie about God,⁷⁶ or says, "This has been revealed unto me," the while nothing has been revealed to him? - or he who says, "I, too, can bestow from on high the like of what God has bestowed?"⁷⁷ If thou couldst but see [how it will be] when these evildoers find themselves in the agonies of death, and the angels stretch forth their hands [and call]: "Give up your souls! Today you shall be requited with the suffering of humiliation for having attributed to God something that is not true, and for having persistently scorned His messages in your arrogance!"

6.94 [And God shall say:] "And now, indeed, you have come unto Us in a lonely state, even as We created you in the first instance; and you have left behind you all that We bestowed on you [in your lifetime]. And

We do not see with you those intercessors of yours whom you supposed to have a share in God's divinity with regard to yourselves!⁷⁸ Indeed, all the bonds between you [and your earthly life] are now severed, and all your former fancies have forsaken you!"⁷⁹

6.95 VERILY, God is the One who cleaves the grain and the fruit-kernel asunder, bringing forth the living out of that which is dead, and He is the One who brings forth the dead out of that which is alive. This, then, is God: and yet, how perverted are your minds!⁸⁰

6.96 [He is] the One who causes the dawn to break; and He has made the night to be [a source of] stillness, and the sun and the moon to run their appointed courses:⁸¹ [all] this is laid down by the will of the Almighty, the All-Knowing.

6.97 And He it is who has set up for you the stars so that you might be guided by them in the midst of the deep darkness of land and sea: clearly, indeed, have We spelled out these messages unto people of [innate] knowledge!

6.98 And He it is who has brought you [all] into being out of one living entity,⁸² and [has appointed for each of you] a time-limit [on earth] and a resting-place [after death].⁸³ clearly, indeed, have We spelled out these messages unto people who can grasp the truth!

6.99 And He it is who has caused waters to come down from the sky; and by this means have We brought forth all living growth, and out of this have We brought forth verdure.⁸⁴ Out of this do We bring forth close-growing grain; and out of the spathe of the palm tree, dates in thick clusters; and gardens of vines, and the olive tree, and the pomegranate: [all] so alike, and yet so different!⁸⁵ Behold their fruit when it comes to fruition and ripens! Verily, in all this there are messages indeed for people who will believe!

6.100 And yet, some [people] have come to attribute to all manner of invisible beings⁸⁶ a place side by side with God - although it is He who has created them [all]; and in their ignorance they have invented for Him sons and daughters!⁸⁷ Limitless is He is His glory, and sublimely exalted above anything that men may devise by way of definition.⁸⁸

6.101 the Originator of the heavens and the earth! How could it be that He should have a child without there ever having been a mate for Him - since it is He who has created everything, and He alone knows everything?

6.102 Such is God, your Sustainer: there is no deity save Him, the Creator of everything: worship, then, Him alone - for it is He who has everything in His care.

6.103 No human vision can encompass Him, whereas He encompasses all human vision: for He alone is unfathomable, all-aware.⁸⁹

6.104 Means of insight have now come unto you from your Sustainer [through this divine writ]. Whoever, therefore, chooses to see, does so for his own good; and whoever chooses to remain blind, does so to his own hurt. And [say unto the blind of heart]: "I am not your keeper."

6.105 And thus do We give many facets to Our messages. And to the end that they might say, "Thou hast taken [all this] well to heart,"⁹⁰ and that We might make it clear unto people of [innate] knowledge,

6.106 follow thou what has been revealed unto thee by thy Sustainer - save whom there is no deity - and turn thy back upon all who ascribe divinity to aught beside Him.

6.107 Yet if God had so willed, they would not have ascribed divinity to aught beside Him,⁹¹ hence, We have not made thee their keeper, and neither art thou responsible for their conduct.

6.108 But do not revile those [beings] whom they invoke instead of God,⁹² lest they revile God out of spite, and in ignorance: for, goodly indeed have We made their own doings appear unto every community.⁹³ In time, [however,] unto their Sustainer they must return: and then He will make them [truly] understand all that they were doing.

6.109 Now they swear by God with their most solemn oaths that if a miracle were shown to them, they would indeed believe in this [divine writ]. Say: "Miracles are in the power of God alone."⁹⁴ And for all you know, even if one should be shown to them, they would not believe

6.110 so long as We keep their hearts and their eyes turned [away from the truth],⁹⁵ even as they did not believe in it in the first instance: and [so] We shall leave them in their overweening arrogance, blindly stumbling to and fro.

6.111 And even if We were to send down angels unto them, and if the dead were to speak unto them,⁹⁶ and [even if] We were to assemble before them, face to face, all the things [that can prove the truth], they would still not believe unless God so willed.⁹⁷ But [of this] most of them are entirely unaware.

6.112 AND THUS it is that against every prophet We have set up as enemies the evil forces from among humans as well as from among invisible beings that whisper unto one another glittering half-truths meant to delude the mind.⁹⁸ But they could not do this unless thy Sustainer had so willed: stand, therefore, aloof from them and from all their false imagery!

6.113 Yet, to the end that the hearts of those who do not believe in the life to come might incline towards Him, and that in Him they might find contentment, and that they might earn whatever they can earn [of merit] -

6.114 [say thou:] "Am I, then, to look unto anyone but God for judgment⁹⁹ [as to what is right and wrong], when it is He who has bestowed upon you from on high this divine writ, clearly spelling out the truth?"¹⁰⁰

And those unto whom We have vouchsafed revelation aforetime know that this one, too, has been bestowed from on high, step by step, by thy Sustainer.¹⁰¹ Be not, then, among the doubters-

6.115 for, truly and justly has thy Sustainer's promise been fulfilled.¹⁰² There is no power that could alter [the fulfilment of] His promises: and He alone is all-hearing, all-knowing.

6.116 Now if thou pay heed unto the majority of those [who live] on earth, they will but lead thee astray from the path of God: they follow but [other people's] conjectures, and they themselves do nothing but guess.¹⁰³

6.117 Verily, thy Sustainer knows best as to who strays from His path, and best knows He as to who are the right-guided.

6.118 EAT, then, of that over which God's name has been pronounced, if you truly believe in His messages.¹⁰⁴

6.119 And why should you not eat of that over which God's name has been pronounced, seeing that He has so clearly spelled out to you what He has forbidden you [to eat] unless you are compelled [to do so]? But, behold, [it is precisely in such matters that] many people lead others astray by their own errant views, without [having any real] knowledge. Verily, thy Sustainer is fully aware of those who transgress the bounds of what is right.

6.120 But abstain from sinning,¹⁰⁵ be it open or secret - for, behold, those who commit sins shall be requited for all that they have earned.

6.121 Hence, eat not of that over which God's name has not been pronounced: for this would be sinful conduct indeed. And, verily, the evil impulses [within men's hearts] whisper unto those who have made them their own¹⁰⁶ that they should involve you in argument [as to what is and what is not a sin]; and if you pay heed unto them, lo! you will become [like] those who ascribe divinity to other beings or forces beside God.¹⁰⁷

6.122 IS THEN HE who was dead [in spirit] and whom We thereupon gave life, and for whom We set up a light whereby he might see his way among men¹⁰⁸ - [is then he] like one [who is lost] in darkness deep, out of which he cannot emerge? [But] thus it is: goodly seem all their own doings to those who deny the truth.

6.123 And it is in this way that We cause the great ones in every land to become its [greatest] evildoers,¹⁰⁹ there to weave their schemes: yet it is only against themselves that they scheme - and they perceive it not.

6.124 And whenever a [divine] message comes to them, they say, "We shall not believe unless we are given the like of what God's apostles were given!"¹¹⁰ [But] God knows best upon whom to bestow His message. Abasement in the sight of God will befall those who have become guilty of evildoing, and suffering severe for all the schemes which they were wont to weave.

6.125 And whomsoever God wills to guide, his bosom He opens wide with willingness towards self-surrender [unto Him]; and whomsoever He wills to let go astray, his bosom He causes to be tight and constricted, as if he were climbing unto the skies: it is thus that God inflicts horror upon those who will not believe.

6.126 And undeviating is this thy Sustainer's way.¹¹¹ Clearly, indeed, have We spelled out these messages unto people who [are willing to] take them to heart!

6.127 Theirs shall be an abode of peace with their Sustainer; and He shall be near unto them in result of what they have been doing.

6.128 AND ON THE DAY when He shall gather them [all] together, [He will say:] "O you who have lived in close communion with [evil] invisible beings! A great many [other] human beings have you ensnared!"¹¹²

And those of the humans who were close to them¹¹³ will say: "O our Sustainer! We did enjoy one another's fellowship [in life]; but [now that] we have reached the end of our term - the term which Thou hast laid down for us - [we see the error of our ways]!" [But] He will say: "The fire shall be your abode, therein to abide - unless God wills it otherwise."¹¹⁴ Verily, thy Sustainer is wise, all-knowing.

6.129 And in this manner do We cause evildoers to seduce one another¹¹⁵ by means of their [evil] doings.

6.130 [And thus will God continue:] "O you who have lived in close communion with [evil] invisible beings and [like-minded] humans! Have there not come unto you apostles from among yourselves, who conveyed unto you My messages and warned you of the coming of this your Day [of Judgment]?" They will answer: "We do bear witness against ourselves!" - for the life of this world had beguiled them: and so they will bear witness against themselves that they had been denying the truth.

6.131 And so it is that thy Sustainer would never destroy a community¹¹⁶ for its wrongdoing so long as its people are still unaware [of the meaning of right and wrong]:

6.132 for all shall be judged according to their [conscious] deeds¹¹⁷ - and thy Sustainer is not unaware of what they do.

6.133 And thy Sustainer alone is self-sufficient, limitless in His grace. If He so wills, He may put an end to you and thereafter cause whom He wills to succeed you - even as He has brought you into being out of other people's seed.

6.134 Verily, that [reckoning] which you are promised is bound to come, and you cannot elude it!

6.135 Say: "O my [unbelieving] people! Do yet all that may be within your power, [while] I, behold, shall labour [in God's way]; and in time you will come to know to whom the future belongs.¹¹⁸ Verily, never will evildoers attain to a happy state!"

6.136 AND OUT OF whatever He has created of the fruits of the field and the cattle, they assign unto God a portion, saying, "This belongs to God" - or so they [falsely] claim¹¹⁹ - "and this is for those beings who, we are convinced, have a share in God's divinity."¹²⁰ But that which is assigned to the beings associated in their minds with God does not bring [them] closer to God - whereas that which is assigned to God brings [them but] closer to those beings to whom they ascribe a share in His divinity.¹²¹ Bad, indeed, is their judgment!

6.137 And, likewise, their belief in beings or powers that are supposed to have a share in God's divinity makes¹²² [even] the slaying of their children seem goodly to many of those who ascribe divinity to aught beside God, thus bringing them to ruin and confusing them in their faith.¹²³ Yet, unless God had so willed, they would not be doing all this:¹²⁴ stand, therefore, aloof from them and all their false imagery!

6.138 And they say, "Such-and-such cattle and fruits of the field are sacred; none may eat thereof save those whom we will [to do so]" - so they [falsely] claim;¹²⁵ and [they declare that] it is forbidden to burden the backs of certain kinds of cattle; and there are cattle over which they do not pronounce God's name¹²⁶ - falsely attributing [the origin of these customs] to Him. [But] He will requite them for all their false imagery.

6.139 And they say, "All that is in the wombs of such-and-such cattle is reserved for our males and forbidden to our women; but if it be stillborn, then both may have their share thereof." [God] will requite them for all that they [falsely] attribute [to Him]: behold, He is wise, all-knowing.

6.140 Lost, indeed, are they who, in their weak-minded ignorance, slay their children and declare as forbidden that which God has provided for them as sustenance, falsely ascribing [such prohibitions] to God: they have gone astray and have not found the right path.

6.141 For it is He who has brought into being gardens - [both] the cultivated ones and those growing wild¹²⁷ - and the date-palm, and fields bearing multiform produce, and the olive tree, and the pomegranate: [all] resembling one another and yet so different!¹²⁸ Eat of their fruit when it comes to fruition, and give [unto the poor] their due on harvest day. And do not waste [God's bounties]: verily, He does not love the wasteful!

6.142 And of the cattle reared for work and for the sake of their flesh, eat whatever God has provided for you as sustenance, and follow not Satan's footsteps:¹²⁹ behold, he is your open foe!

6.143 [His followers would have it that, in certain cases, any of these] four kinds of cattle of either sex [is unlawful to man]: either of the two sexes of sheep and of goats.¹³⁰ Ask [them]: "Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Tell me what you know in this respect,¹³¹ if what you say is true."

6.144 And [likewise they declare as unlawful] either of the two sexes of camels and of bovine cattle.¹³² Ask [them]: "Is it the two males that He has forbidden, or the two females, or that which the wombs of the two females may contain? Is it, perchance, that you [yourselves] were witnesses when God enjoined [all] this upon you?" And who could be more wicked than he who, without any [real] knowledge, attributes his own lying inventions to God, and thus leads people astray?¹³³ Behold, God does not grace [such] evildoing folk with His guidance.

6.145 Say [O Prophet]: "In all that has been revealed unto me, I do not find anything forbidden to eat, if one wants to eat thereof,¹³⁴ unless it be carrion, or blood poured forth, or the flesh of swine - for that, behold, is loathsome - or a sinful offering¹³⁵ over which any name other than God's has been invoked. But if one is driven by necessity - neither coveting it nor exceeding his immediate need - then [know that], behold, thy Sustainer is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace."¹³⁶

6.146 And [only] unto those who followed the Jewish faith did We forbid all beasts that have claws;¹³⁷ and We forbade unto them the fat of both oxen and sheep, excepting that which is in their backs or entrails or that which is within the bone:¹³⁸ thus did We requite them for their evildoing - for, behold, We are true to Our word!"¹³⁹

6.147 And if they give thee the lie,¹⁴⁰ say: "Limitless is your Sustainer in His grace; but His punishment shall not be averted from people who are lost in sin."

6.148 THOSE who are bent on ascribing divinity to aught beside God will say, "Had God so willed, we would not have ascribed divinity to aught but Him, nor would our forefathers [have done so]; and neither would we have declared as forbidden anything [that He has allowed]." Even so did those who lived before them give the lie to the truth¹⁴¹ - until they came to taste Our punishment! Say: "Have you any [certain] knowledge which you could proffer to us?"¹⁴² You follow but [other people's] conjectures, and you yourselves do nothing but guess."

6.149 Say: "[Know,] then, that the final evidence [of all truth] rests with God alone; and had He so willed, He would have guided you all aright."¹⁴³

6.150 Say: "Bring forward your witnesses who could bear witness that God has forbidden [all] this!"¹⁴⁴ - and if they bear witness [falsely], do not bear witness with them; and do not follow the errant views of those who have given the lie to Our messages, nor of those who believe not in the life to come, and who regard other powers as their Sustainer's equals!¹⁴⁵

6.151 Say: "Come, let me convey unto you what God has [really] forbidden to you: "Do not ascribe divinity, in any way, to aught beside Him; and [do not offend against but, rather,] do good unto your parents,¹⁴⁶ and do not kill your children for fear of poverty - [for] it is We who shall provide sustenance for you as well as for them,¹⁴⁷ and do not commit any shameful deeds, be they open or secret; and do not take any human being's life - [the life] which God has declared to be sacred - otherwise than in [the pursuit of] justice: this has He enjoined upon you so that you might use your reason;¹⁴⁸

6.152 and do not touch the substance of an orphan - save to improve it - before he comes of age."¹⁴⁹ And [in all your dealings] give full measure and weight,¹⁵⁰ with equity: [however,] We do not burden any human being with more than he is well able to bear,¹⁵¹ and when you voice an opinion, be just, even though it be [against] one near of kin.¹⁵² And [always] observe your bond with God:¹⁵³ this has He enjoined upon you, so that you might keep it in mind.

6.153 And [know] that this is the way leading straight unto Me: follow it, then, and follow not other ways, lest they cause you to deviate¹⁵⁴ from His way. [All] this has He enjoined upon you, so that you might remain conscious of Him.

6.154 AND ONCE AGAIN:¹⁵⁵ We vouchsafed the divine writ unto Moses in fulfilment [of Our favour] upon those who persevered in doing good, clearly spelling out everything,¹⁵⁶ and [thus providing] guidance and grace, so that they might have faith in the [final] meeting with their Sustainer.

6.155 And this, too, is a divine writ which We have bestowed from on high, a blessed one: follow it, then, and be conscious of God, so that you might be graced with His mercy.

6.156 [It has been given to you] lest you say, "Only unto two groups of people, [both of them] before our time, has a divine writ been bestowed from on high¹⁵⁷ - and we were indeed unaware of their teachings";

6.157 or lest you say, "If a divine writ had been bestowed from on high upon us, we would surely have followed its guidance better than they did."¹⁵⁸ And so, a clear evidence of the truth has now come unto you from your Sustainer, and guidance, and grace. Who, then, could be more wicked than he who gives the lie to God's messages, and turns away from them in disdain? We shall requite those who turn away from Our messages in disdain with evil suffering for having thus turned away!

6.158 Do they, perchance, wait for the angels to appear unto them, or for thy Sustainer [Himself] to appear, or for some of thy Sustainer's [final] portents to appear?¹⁵⁹ [But] on the Day when thy Sustainer's [final] portents do appear, believing will be of no avail to any human being who did not believe before, or who, while believing, did no good works.¹⁶⁰ Say: "Wait, [then, for the Last Day, O unbelievers:] behold, we [believers] are waiting, too!"

6.159 VERILY, as for those who have broken the unity of their faith and have become sects - thou hast nothing to do with them.¹⁶¹ Behold, their case rests with God: and in time He will make them understand what they were doing.

6.160 Whoever shall come [before God] with a good deed will gain ten times the like thereof; but whoever shall come with an evil deed will be requited with no more than the like thereof; and none shall be wronged.¹⁶²

6.161 SAY: "Behold, my Sustainer has guided me onto a straight way through an ever-true faith - the way of Abraham, who turned away from all that is false, and was not of those who ascribe divinity to aught beside Him."

6.162 Say: "Behold, my prayer, and [all] my acts of worship, and my living and my dying are for God [alone], the Sustainer of all the worlds,

6.163 in whose divinity none has a share: for thus have I been bidden - and I shall [always] be foremost among those who surrender themselves unto Him."

6.164 Say: "Am I, then, to seek a sustainer other than God, when He is the Sustainer of all things?" And whatever [wrong] any human being commits rests upon himself alone; and no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another's burden.¹⁶³ And, in time, unto your Sustainer you all must return: and then He will make you [truly] understand all that on which you were wont to differ.¹⁶⁴

6.165 For, He it is who has made you inherit the earth,¹⁶⁵ and has raised some of you by degrees above others, so that He might try you by means of what He has bestowed upon you.¹⁶⁶ Verily, thy Sustainer is swift in retribution: yet, behold, He is indeed much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.

Author Comments

1 - Both "darkness" and "light" are used here in their spiritual connotation. As always in the Qur'an, "darkness" is spoken of in the plural (zulumat) in order to stress its intensity, and is best translated as "deep darkness" or "depths of darkness".

2 - Lit., "and a term is stated with Him" - i.e., known to Him alone (Manar VII, 298). Some of the authorities are of the opinion that the "term" refers to the end of the world and the subsequent resurrection, while others relate it to individual human lives. Other commentators, again, see in the first mention of this word a reference to individual lives, and in the second, to the Day of Resurrection; according to this latter interpretation, the concluding phrase might be rendered thus: "and there is [another] term...", etc. However, in view of several other occurrences of the expression ajal musamma in the Qur'an, it is best rendered here as "a term set [by Him]" or "known [to Him]", i.e., relating both to individual lives and to the world as a whole.

3 - Lit., "there has not come unto them a message of their Sustainer's messages without that they turned their backs upon it".

4 - Lit., "there will come to them information about that which they used to mock at" or "deride" - i.e., the continuation of life after death, in particular, and the Qur'anic message, in general.

5 - Lit., "a generation of others after them". However, in Qur'anic usage, the term qarn does not always denote "a generation", but - rather more frequently - "an epoch", or "people belonging to one particular epoch", as well as "a civilization" in the historical sense of this word.

6 - I.e., Judgment Day would have come - for it is only then that the forces described as angels will manifest themselves to man in their true form and become comprehensible to him. (Cf. a similar passage in [2:210](#).)

7 - Lit., "if We had made him an angel" - with the pronoun obviously referring to the bearer of God's message (Zamakhshari).

8 - Lit., "We would have made confusing to them that which they are making confused". Since it is impossible for man to perceive angels as they really are, the hypothetical angelic message-bearer would have to assume the shape of a human being - and so their demand for a direct "verification" of the message would have remained unfulfilled, and their self-caused confusion unresolved.

9 - Lit., "that which they were wont to deride enfolded those who scoffed at them" (i.e., at the apostles): the meaning being that a derisive rejection of spiritual truths inexorably rebounds on the scoffers and has not only a disastrous effect on their individual lives after death but also - if persisted in by the majority within a community - destroys the moral basis of their society and, thus, their earthly happiness and sometimes even their physical existence.

10 - The expression "God has willed upon Himself as a law" (kataba 'ala nafsihi) occurs in the Qur'an only twice - here and in verse {54} of this surah - and in both instances with reference to His grace and mercy (rahmah); none of the other divine attributes has been similarly described. This exceptional quality of God's grace and mercy is further stressed in [7:156](#) - "My grace overspreads everything" - and finds an

echo in the authentic Tradition in which, according to the Prophet, God says of Himself, "Verily, My grace and mercy outstrips My wrath" (Bukhari and Muslim).

11 - Lit., "when it is He who feeds [others] and is not fed".

12 - Lit., "and be thou not" - an elliptic reference to the words in which this commandment has been expressed.

13 - Lit., "I am clear of that which you associate [with Him]."

14 - I.e., the truth of God's transcendental uniqueness and oneness, which is stressed in all authentic scriptures.

15 - Lit., "those [God-]partners of yours whom you supposed [to exist]". Whenever the term *shuraka'* (pl. of *sharik*) is used in the Qur'an with reference to beliefs, it invariably denotes real or imaginary beings or forces to whom one ascribes a share in God's divinity: consequently, this concept - and its utter condemnation in Islam - relates not merely to the worship of false deities but also to the attribution of semi-divine qualities and powers to saints (in the liturgical sense of this word), as well as to abstract notions like wealth, social status, power, nationality, etc., to which men so often ascribe an objective influence on human destinies.

16 - This refers to beliefs which undoubtedly imply shirk ("the ascribing of divinity or divine qualities to beings or forces other than God") in the objective sense of this concept, but which the person concerned does not subjectively visualize as denying God's oneness (Razi): for instance, the mystical dogma of the "Trinity" which, in the Christian view, does not conflict with the principle of God's oneness inasmuch as it is supposed to express a "threefold aspect" of the One Deity, or the attribution of divine or semi-divine qualities to saints as supposed "mediators" between man and God, and so forth. All such beliefs are, of course, emphatically rejected by the Qur'an.

17 - I.e., by allowing themselves to think, in their lifetime, that their beliefs did not offend against the principle of God's oneness (Razi). But see also [10:28](#) and the corresponding notes [45] and [46].

18 - Regarding the problem of God's "causing" this spiritual blindness and deafness, see [2:7](#) and the corresponding note, as well as note [4] on [14:4](#).

19 - I.e., their longing for a "second chance" is not dictated by love of truth for its own sake but rather, by their dread of the evil consequences of their doings; and "faith is useless unless it is desired for its own sake" (Razi).

20 - Lit., "the suffering [or "chastisement"] because of" or "in consequence of". The particle bi-ma expresses here a causal connection between the denial of the truth and the subsequent suffering, and is best rendered as above.

21 - Lit., "their burdens". My use of the words "the burden of their sins" rests on the interpretation given by Ibn 'Abbas, as quoted by Razi.

22 - Lit., "what they say" - i.e., about life after death (which they regard as a "fable") in particular, and about the Qur'anic message in general.

23 - Lit., "some of the information concerning the apostles has already come to thee": a reference to the fact that only a few of the earlier prophets and their histories have been specifically mentioned in the Qur'an (always in connection with a particular moral lesson), while the great majority of them are only alluded to in a general manner, in support of the divine statement that no community or civilization has been left without prophetic guidance.

24 - Lit., "that they".

25 - Lit., "to seek out an opening in the earth or a ladder to heaven".

26 - Lit., "be not, therefore, of the ignorant".

27 - Lit., "they shall be returned". Most of the classical commentators (e.g., Tabari, Zamakhshari, Razi, as well as the earlier authorities whom they quote) interpret this verse in the metaphorical sense in which it has been rendered by me. As is so often the case with Qur'anic diction, its elliptical meaning can only be brought out by means of interpolations.

28 - I.e., on Muhammad, to demonstrate that he is really a bearer of God's message.

29 - Lit., "most of them do not know", i.e., that God manifests Himself always - as the next verse points out - through the ever-recurring miracle of His creation.

30 - Lit., "but they are [God's] creatures (umam)". The word ummah (of which umam is the plural) primarily denotes a group of living beings having certain characteristics or circumstances in common. Thus, it is often synonymous with "community", "people", "nation", "genus" "generation", and so forth. Inasmuch as every such grouping is characterized by the basic fact that its constituents (whether human or animal) are endowed with life, the term ummah sometimes signifies "[God's] creatures" (Lisan al-'Arab, with particular reference to this very Qur'an-verse; also Lane I, 90). Thus, the meaning of the above passage is this: Man can detect God's "signs" or "miracles" in all the life-phenomena that surround him, and should, therefore, try to observe them with a view to better understanding "God's way" (sunnat Allah) - which is the Qur'anic term for what we call "laws of nature".

31 - The particle thumma is mostly used as a conjunction indicating a sequence in time or order ("then", "thereafter" or "thereupon"), and occasionally also as a simple conjunction equivalent to "and". But in yet another usage - of which there are frequent instances in the Qur'an as well as in pre-Islamic Arabian poetry - thumma has the significance of a repetitive stress, alluding to something that has already been stated and is now again emphasized. This particular usage of thumma is best rendered by the words "and once again", followed by a colon.

32 - See note [4] on [14:4](#).

33 - I.e., to test them by happiness after the test by misery.

34 - The verb ablasa signifies "he despaired of all hope" or "became broken in spirit". (For the linguistic connection of this word with the name of Iblis, the Fallen Angel, see surah {7}, note [10].)

35 - Lit., "cut off". The above passage illustrates a phenomenon well known in history: namely, the inevitable social and moral disintegration of communities which have lost sight of spiritual truths.

36 - Lit., "Can you see yourselves".

37 - I.e., the righteous will never be really "destroyed" - for, even if they should suffer physical destruction, they are bound to attain to spiritual bliss and cannot, therefore, be said to have been "destroyed" like the evildoers, who, by their actions, lose their happiness both in this world and in the life to come (Razi).

38 - This denial on the part of the Prophet of any claim to supernatural powers refers, primarily, to the demand of the unbelievers mentioned in verse {37} that he should prove his prophetic mission by causing a "miraculous sign" to be bestowed on him. Beyond this specific reference, however, the above passage is meant to prevent any deification of the Prophet and to make it clear that he - like all other prophets before

him - was but a mortal human being, a servant whom God had chosen to convey His message to mankind. See also [7:188](#).

39 - I.e., "Can those who remain blind and deaf to God's messages find their way through life equally well as those who have achieved a spiritual vision and guidance through God's revelation?"

40 - It is obvious from the context that this verse refers to followers of earlier scriptures - such as the Jews and the Christians - who share with the followers of the Qur'an the belief in life after death (Zamakhshari), as well as to agnostics who, without having definite beliefs on this point, admit the possibility of life after death.

41 - According to Traditions, this and the next verse were revealed when, several years before the Muslims' exodus to Medina, some of the pagan chieftains at Mecca expressed their willingness to consider accepting Islam on the condition that the Prophet would dissociate himself from the former slaves and other "lowly" persons among his followers - a demand which the Prophet, of course, rejected. This historical reference does not, however, provide a full explanation of the above passage. In accordance with the Qur'anic method, allusions to historical events - whether relating to contemporary occurrences or to earlier times - are always made with a view to expressing ethical teachings of a permanent nature; and the passage under consideration is no exception in this respect. As the wording shows, it relates not to "lowly" followers of Islam but to people who, while not being Muslims in the current sense of this word, believe in God and are always ("at morn and evening") "seeking His countenance" (i.e., His grace and acceptance): and thus, verses {52-53} connect logically with verse {51}. Although primarily addressed to the Prophet, the exhortation voiced in this passage is directed to all followers of the Qur'an: they are enjoined not to repulse anyone who believes in God - even though his beliefs may not fully answer to the demands of the Qur'an - but, on the contrary, to try to help him by means of a patient explanation of the Qur'anic teachings.

42 - I.e., for whatever in their beliefs or actions does not coincide with the teachings of the Qur'an, and vice-versa. In other words, all are accountable to God alone.

43 - Lit., "so that thou shouldst repulse them and thus be of the evildoers".

44 - I.e., by endowing man with the power of reasoning and thus, indirectly, giving rise to a multiplicity of faiths.

45 - Lit., "Is it those upon whom God has bestowed His favour from among us (min baynina)?" As mentioned by Zamakhshari, the expression min baynina is here equivalent to min dunina, which, in this context, may suitably be rendered as "in preference to us". This would seem to be an allusion to the sarcastic incredulity with which, as a rule, non-Muslims receive the claim of the Muslims that the Qur'an is the final formulation of God's message to man. The "trial" referred to above consists in the unwillingness of people of other faiths to accept this claim as valid, and so to renounce the prejudice against Islam to which their cultural and historical environment has made them, consciously or subconsciously, predisposed.

46 - See note [10] above. Regarding the word salam, which has been translated here as "peace", see surah {5}, note [29]. The "peace" referred to in the above expression - which occurs many times in the Qur'an and has become the standard form of Muslim greeting - has a spiritual connotation comprising the concepts of ethical soundness, security from all that is evil and, therefore, freedom from all moral conflict and disquiet.

47 - Lit., "not with me is that which you would hasten": a reference to the sarcastic demand of the unbelievers, mentioned in [8:32](#), that God should chastise them forthwith in proof of the Prophet's claim to be His message-bearer.

48 - I.e., "you would have been convinced that I am really a bearer of God's message" - the implication being that a conviction based solely on a "miraculous" proof would have no spiritual value.

49 - Lit., "fresh or dry".

50 - For a full explanation of the verb tawaffa - lit., "he took [something] in full" - see note [44] on [39:42](#), which is the earliest instance of its use in the Qur'an.

51 - Lit., "therein" - referring to the daytime. The polarity of sleep and wakefulness contains an allusion to life and death cf. {78:9-11}.

52 - Lit., "sends forth guardians over you".

53 - Lit., "brought back [or "referred"] to God" - i.e., placed before Him for judgment.

54 - Lit., "the darkneses" or "the deep darkness".

55 - I.e., from any direction or by any means whatsoever.

56 - Or: "the violence of one against another" - inner disintegration, fear, violence and tyranny being the inevitable consequences of a society's departure from spiritual truths.

57 - I.e., the unbelieving compatriots of the Prophet and, by implication, all who deny the truth.

58 - Lit., "until they immerse themselves in talk other than this".

59 - This is a paraphrase of the elliptic expression wa-lakin dhikra ("however, an admonition").

60 - The phrase *attakhadhu dinahum la'iban wa-lahwan* can be understood in either of two ways: (1) "they have made their religion [an object of] play and fun", or (2) "they have made play and fun [or "passing delights"] their religion" - i.e., the main goal of their lives. To my mind, the latter reading is definitely preferable inasmuch as it brings out the fact that many of those who are "beguiled by the life of this world" devote themselves to the pursuit of what the Qur'an describes as "passing delights" - including the pleasures which money and power can provide - with something akin to religious fervour: an attitude of mind which causes them to lose sight of all spiritual and moral values.

61 - Lit., "though he might [try to] ransom himself with all ransom" - i.e., though he might proffer, after resurrection, any atonement whatever for his past sins.

62 - Among the various meanings attributable to the word *hamim* are the concepts of intense heat as well as of painful cold (Qamus, *Taj al-'Arus*). In the eschatology of the Qur'an it invariably refers to the suffering of the sinners in the life to come, and since all Qur'anic references to life after death are, necessarily, allegorical, the term *hamim* may be rendered as "burning despair".

63 - Lit., "whom the satans have enticed with lusts on earth, [rendering him] bewildered, [while] he has companions who call him unto guidance". See in this connection note [10] on [2:14](#), as well as note [31] on [14:22](#) and note [16] on [15:17](#).

64 - See surah {10}, note [11].

65 - The term *ash-shahadah* (lit., "that which is [or "can be"] witnessed") is used in this and similar contexts as the exact antithesis of *al-ghayb* ("that which is beyond the reach of a created being's perception"). Thus, it circumscribes those aspects of reality which can be sensually or conceptually grasped by a created being.

66 - The subsequent passage (verses {74} ff.) continues, by way of narrative, the exposition of God's oneness and uniqueness. - In the Bible, the name of Abraham's father is given not as Azar but as Terah

(the Tarah or Tarakh of the early Muslim genealogists). However, he seems to have been known by other names (or designations) as well, all of them obscure as to origin and meaning. Thus, in various Talmudic stories he is called Zarah, while Eusebius Pamphili (the ecclesiastical historian who lived towards the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century of the Christian era) gives his name as Athar. Although neither the Talmud nor Eusebius can be regarded as authorities for the purposes of a Qur'an-commentary, it is not impossible that the designation Azar (which occurs in the Qur'an only once) is the pre-Islamic, Arabicized form of Athar or Zarah.

67 - Lit., "unless my Sustainer wills a thing".

68 - The description of Abraham's reasoning as God's own argument implies that it was divinely inspired, and is therefore valid for the followers of the Qur'an as well.

69 - This is evidently an allusion to Abraham's gradual grasp of the truth, symbolized by his intuitive progress from an adoration of celestial bodies - stars, moon and sun - to a full realization of God's transcendental, all-embracing existence. Alternatively, the expression "by degrees" may be taken to mean "by many degrees", signifying the great spiritual dignity to which this forerunner of a long line of prophets was ultimately raised see [4:125](#).

70 - Although Lot was not a "descendant" of Abraham since he was his brother's son, his name is included here for two reasons: firstly, because he followed Abraham from his earliest youth as a son follows his father, and, secondly, because in ancient Arabian usage a paternal uncle is often described as "father" and, conversely, a nephew as "son".- For the Hebrew prophets Elijah (Ilyas) and Elisha (Al-Yasa'), see note [48] on [37:123](#).

71 - Lit., "if these deny them" - i.e., the manifestations of God's oneness and of the revelation of His will through the prophets.

72 - Lit., "which you make into": but it should be remembered that the verb ja'lahu has also the abstract meaning of "he considered it to be" or "regarded it as" or "treated it as" (Jawhari, Raghib, et al.): a significance often met with in the Qur'an.

73 - This passage is obviously addressed to those followers of the Bible who pay lip-service to its sacred character as a revealed scripture but, in reality, treat it as "mere leaves of paper" - that is, as something that is of little consequence to their own conduct: for, although they pretend to admire the moral truths which it contains, they conceal from themselves the fact that their own lives have remained empty of those truths.

74 - See surah {3}, note [3].

75 - "The foremost of all cities" (lit., "the mother of all towns") is an epithet applied in the Qur'an to Mecca because it is the place where the first temple ever dedicated to the One God was built cf. [3:96](#) and subsequently became the qiblah (direction of prayer) of all believers. The expression "all who dwell around it" denotes all mankind (Tabari, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas; Razi).

76 - In this context, the "lie" would seem to refer to the denial, spoken of in verse {91}, of the fact of divine revelation as such.

77 - Implying, in a sarcastic manner, that the purported revelation has in reality been composed by a human being and that, therefore, the like of it can be produced by other men.

78 - Lit., "whom you supposed to be [God's] partners with regard to you" - i.e., being able, in result of their alleged "share in God's divinity", to protect or help you. See note [15] on verse {22} of this surah.

79 - Lit., "all that you were wont to assert [or "to suppose"] has gone away from you" - i.e., all the imaginary intercessors or mediators between man and God.

80 - See surah {5}, note [90].

81 - Lit., "to be [according to] a definite reckoning".

82 - See surah {4}, note [1].

83 - The commentators differ widely as to the meaning of the terms *mustaqarr* and *mustawda'* in this context. However, taking into account the primary meaning of *mustaqarr* as "the limit of a course" - i.e., the point at which a thing reaches its fulfilment or end - and of *mustawda'* as "a place of consignment" or "repository", we arrive at the rendering adopted by me above. This rendering finds, moreover, strong support in [11:6](#), where God is spoken of as providing sustenance for every living being and knowing "its time-limit [on earth] and its resting-place [after death]" (*mustaqarraha wa-mustawda'aha*), as well as in verse {67} of the present surah, where *mustaqarr* is used in the sense of "a term set for the fulfilment [of God's tiding]".

84 - In contrast with its sequence, which is governed by the present tense, the whole of the above sentence is expressed in the past tense - thus indicating, obliquely, the original, basic aspect of God's creating life "out of water". cf. [21:30](#) and the corresponding note [39].

85 - I.e., all so alike in the basic principles of their life and growth, and yet so different in physiology, appearance and taste.

86 - The plural noun *jinn* (popularly, but incorrectly, taken to denote "genii" or "demons") is derived from the verb *janna*, "he was [or "became"] concealed" or "veiled from sight", thus, the veiling darkness of night is called *jinn* (Jawhari). According to Arab philologists, the term *jinn* signifies, primarily, "beings that are concealed from [man's] senses" (Qamus, Lisan al-'Arab, Raghīb), and is thus applicable to all kinds of invisible beings or forces. For a further discussion of this term and of its wider implications, see Appendix III.

87 - Lit., "they have invented for Him [or "falsely attributed to Him"] sons and daughters without [having any] knowledge": a reference to the beliefs of the pre-Islamic Arabs who regarded the angels as "God's daughters" (a designation which they also applied to certain of their goddesses), as well as to the Christian view of Jesus as "the son of God". See also [19:92](#) and the corresponding note [77].

88 - I.e., utterly remote is He from all imperfection and from the incompleteness which is implied in the concept of having progeny. The very concept of "definition" implies the possibility of a comparison or correlation of an object with other objects; God, however, is unique, there being "nothing like unto Him" ([42:11](#)) and, therefore, "nothing that could be compared with Him" ([112:4](#)) - with the result that any attempt at defining Him or His "attributes" is a logical impossibility and, from the ethical point of view, a sin. The fact that He is undefinable makes it clear that the "attributes" (sifat) of God mentioned in the Qur'an do not circumscribe His reality but, rather, the perceptible effect of His activity on and within the universe created by Him.

89 - The term *latif* denotes something that is extremely subtle in quality, and therefore intangible and unfathomable. Whenever this term occurs in the Qur'an with reference to God in conjunction with the adjective *khabir* ("all-aware"), it is invariably used to express the idea of His inaccessibility to human perception, imagination or comprehension, as contrasted with His Own all-awareness (see, apart from the above verse, also [22:63](#), [31:16](#), [33:34](#) and [67:14](#)). In the two instances where the combination of *latif* and *khabir* carries the definite article *al* ([6:103](#) and [67:14](#)), the expression *huwa 'l-latif* has the meaning of "He alone is unfathomable" - implying that this quality of His is unique and absolute.

90 - Lit., "thou hast learned [it well]" - i.e., God's message.

91 - I.e., no mortal has it in his power to cause another person to believe unless God graces that person with His guidance.

92 - This prohibition of reviling anything that other people hold sacred - even in contravention of the principle of God's oneness - is expressed in the plural and is, therefore, addressed to all believers. Thus, while Muslims are expected to argue against the false beliefs of others, they are not allowed to abuse the objects of those beliefs and to hurt thereby the feelings of their erring fellow-men.

93 - Lit., "thus goodly have We made ...", etc., implying that it is in the nature of man to regard the beliefs which have been implanted in him from childhood, and which he now shares with his social environment, as the only true and possible ones - with the result that a polemic against those beliefs often tends to provoke a hostile psychological reaction.

94 - Lit.. "Miracles are only with God." It is to be noted that the Qur'anic term *ayah* denotes not only a "miracle" (in the sense of a happening that goes beyond the usual - that is, commonly observable - course of nature), but also a "sign" or "message": and the last-mentioned significance is the one which is by far the most frequently met with in the Qur'an. Thus, what is commonly described as a "miracle" constitutes, in fact, an unusual message from God, indicating - sometimes in a symbolic manner - a spiritual truth which would otherwise have remained hidden from man's intellect. But even such extraordinary, "miraculous" messages cannot be regarded as "supernatural": for the so-called "laws of nature" are only a perceptible manifestation of "God's way" (*sunnat Allah*) in respect of His creation - and, consequently, everything that exists and happens, or could conceivably exist or happen, is "natural" in the innermost sense of this word irrespective of whether it conforms to the ordinary course of events or goes beyond it. Now since the extraordinary messages referred to manifest themselves, as a rule, through the instrumentality of those specially gifted and divinely elected personalities known as "prophets", these are sometimes spoken of as "performing miracles" - a misconception which the Qur'an removes by the words, "Miracles are in the power of God alone". (See also [17:59](#) and the corresponding note [71].)

95 - I.e., so long as they remain blind to the truth in consequence of their unwillingness to acknowledge it - and this in accordance with the law of cause and effect which God has imposed on His creation (see surah {2}, note [7]).

96 - Sc., of the fact that there is life after death.

97 - See note [95] above.

98 - Lit., "embellished speech" or "varnished falsehood" (Lane III, 1223) "by way of delusion" - i.e., half-truths which entice man by their deceptive attractiveness and cause him to overlook all real spiritual values (see also {25:30-31}). - Regarding my rendering of *jinn* as "invisible beings", see note [86] above and

Appendix III. The term shayatin (lit., "satans"), on the other hand, is often used in the Qur'an in the sense of evil forces inherent in man as well as in the spiritual world (cf. [2:14](#), and the corresponding note). According to several well-authenticated Traditions, quoted by Tabari, the Prophet was asked, "Are there satans from among men?" - and he replied, "Yes, and they are more evil than the satans from among the invisible beings (al-jinn)." Thus, the meaning of the above verse is that every prophet has had to contend against the spiritual - and often physical - enmity of the evil ones who, for whatever reason, refuse to listen to the voice of truth and try to lead others astray.

99 - Lit., "to seek a judge other than God".

100 - The expression mufassalan could also be rendered as "in a manner that brings out the distinction (fasl) between truth and falsehood" (Zamakhshari). The use of the plural "you" indicates that the divine writ is addressed to all who may come to know it.

101 - See [2:146](#), and the corresponding note. The pronoun "it" may refer either to the earlier divine writ - the Bible - and to its prediction of the advent of a prophet descended from Abraham, or, more probably, to the Qur'an: in which case it must be rendered as "this one, too". In either case, the above phrase seems to allude to the instinctive (perhaps only subconscious) awareness of some of the followers of the Bible that the Qur'an is, in truth, an outcome of divine revelation.

102 - When related to God, the term kalimah (lit., "word") is often used in the Qur'an in the sense of "promise". In this instance it obviously refers to the Biblical promise (Deuteronomy xviii, 15 and 18) that God would raise up a prophet "like unto Moses" among the Arabs see surah {2}, note [33].

103 - I.e., regarding the true nature of human life and its ultimate destiny, the problem of revelation, the relationship between God and man, the meaning of good and evil, etc. Apart from leading man astray from spiritual truths, such guesswork gives rise to the arbitrary rules of conduct and self-imposed inhibitions to which the Qur'an alludes, by way of example, in verses {118} and {119}.

104 - The purpose of this and the following verse is not, as might appear at first glance, a repetition of already-promulgated food laws but, rather, a reminder that the observance of such laws should not be

made an end in itself and an object of ritual: and this is the reason why these two verses have been placed in the midst of a discourse on God's transcendental unity and the ways of man's faith. The "errant views" spoken of in verse {119} are such as lay stress on artificial rituals and taboos rather than on spiritual values.

105 - This injunction connects with verse {118}, thus: "Eat, then, of that over which God's name has been pronounced ..., but abstain from sinning" - i.e., "do not go beyond that which God has made lawful to you".

106 - Lit., "the satans whisper unto those who are near to them (ila awliya'ihim)". For my above rendering of shayatin as "evil impulses", see note [10] on [2:14](#) and note [31] on [14:22](#).

107 - I.e., "your own evil impulses are trying to draw you into argument as to what does and what does not constitute a sin in order to make you lose sight of God's clear ordinances in this respect; and if you follow their arbitrary, deceptive reasoning, you will elevate them, as it were, to the position of moral law-givers, and thus ascribe to them a right that belongs to God alone."

108 - Lit., "whereby he walks among men". All the commentators agree in that the expression "he who was dead" is metaphorical, and that it refers to people who become spiritually alive through faith and are thereupon able to pursue their way through life unerringly.

109 - Because the consciousness of their importance makes them more or less impervious to criticism, the "great ones" are, as a rule, rather less inclined than other people to question the moral aspects of their own behaviour: and the resulting self-righteousness only too often causes them to commit grave misdeeds.

110 - I.e., direct revelation.

111 - Lit., "and this thy Sustainer's way is straight" - i.e., unchanging in its application of the law of cause and effect to man's inner life as well. - The term *rijs* occurring in the preceding sentence, and rendered by me as "horror", signifies anything that is intrinsically loathsome, horrible or abominable; in this case, it would seem to denote that awesome feeling of utter futility which, sooner or later, overcomes everyone who does not believe that life has meaning and purpose.

112 - According to most of the commentators, the invisible beings (*al-jinn*) referred to here are the "evil forces" (*shayatin*) among them, such as are spoken of in verse {112} of this surah. It is generally assumed that these very beings or forces are addressed here; but the primary meaning of the term *ma'shar* appearing in this context warrants, in my opinion, a different conclusion. It is true that this term is often used to denote a group or community or genus of sentient beings which have certain characteristics in common: a conventional - and undoubtedly justifiable - use based on the verb *'asharahu*, "he consorted [or "was on intimate terms"] with him" or "lived in close communion with him". But it is precisely this verbal origin of the term *ma'shar* which gives us a clue as to what is really meant here. Since, in its primary significance, a person's *ma'shar* denotes those who are on intimate terms or in close communion with him (cf. *Lisan al-'Arab*: "A man's *ma'shar* is his family"), we may well assume that it has a similar significance in the above Qur'anic phrase. Thus, to my mind, the allocution *ya ma'shar al-jinn* does not denote, "O you community of [evil] invisible beings" but, rather, "O you who are [or "have lived"] in close communion with [evil] invisible beings": in other words, it is addressed to the misguided human beings who have been seduced by "glittering half-truths meant to delude the mind" {verse 112}. This interpretation is reinforced by the words, "Have there not come unto you apostles from among yourselves", occurring in verse {130} below: for the Qur'an speaks always only of apostles who belonged to the human race, and never of apostles from among the *jinn*. (As regards the wide significance of this latter term, see Appendix III.)

113 - I.e., close to the evil invisible beings. It is to be remembered that the primary meaning of *wali* (of which *awliya'* is the plural) is "one who is close [to another]".

114 - I.e., unless He graces them with His mercy (see verse {12} of this surah, and the corresponding note). Some of the great Muslim theologians conclude from the above and from the similar phrase occurring in [11:107](#) (as well as from several well-authenticated sayings of the Prophet) that - contrary to the bliss of paradise, which will be of unlimited duration - the suffering of the sinners in the life to come will be limited by God's mercy. (See in this connection the hadith quoted in note [10] on [40:12](#).)

115 - Lit., "to be close to one another", or "get hold of one another". The expression "in this manner" (*kadhaliqa*), which introduces the above sentence, is an obvious allusion to the manner in which the evil ones "whisper unto one another glittering half-truths meant to delude the mind" verse {112} of this surah.

116 - Lit., "communities". The term qaryah (lit., "town", "village" or "land") denotes also the people of a town or land - in short, a "community" - and it is in this sense that this term is mostly, though not always, used in the Qur'an.

117 - Lit., "all shall have grades out of what they did", i.e., consciously - since God does not take people to task for any wrong they may have committed unless it was done in conscious contravention of a moral law already made clear to them by the prophets.

118 - Lit., "to whom the [happy] end of the abode shall belong". The term "abode" (dar) is used in the Qur'an with reference to both the life of this world (dar ad-dunya) and the life to come (dar al-akhirah). Most of the commentators are of the opinion that it refers here to the life to come; Zamakhshari, however, relates it to life on earth. Since either of these interpretations is agreeable with the text, I have chosen the above rendering which comprises both.

119 - Falsely - because everything that exists belongs, in the last resort, to God alone.

120 - Lit., "for our [God-]partners" - i.e., "those whom we consider to be associated with God". For an explanation of the term sharik, see note [15] on verse {22} of this surah. The pre-Islamic Arabs used to dedicate a part of their agricultural produce and cattle to some of their deities, and a part to God, whom they regarded as one - albeit the greatest - of them. In consonance, however, with the method of the Qur'an, the above verse does not allude merely to this historical aspect of pre-Islamic Arabian life but has a wider, more general implication as well: that is, it refers not only to the apportioning of devotional "shares" between God and the imaginary deities, but also to the attribution of any share in His creative powers to anyone or anything beside Him.

121 - I.e., the fact that they assign a "share" of their devotions to God does not strengthen their belief in Him but, rather, implies a negation of His transcendental uniqueness and, thus, makes them more and more dependent on imaginary divine or semi-divine "mediators".

122 - Lit., "their [God-]partners make". As pointed out by Razi, some early commentators were of the opinion that the expression shuraka'uhum (lit., "their associates") denotes here the "evil beings" or "forces" (shayatin) from among men and jinn referred to in verses {112}, {121}, {128} and {130} of this surah. It seems to me, however, that what is meant here - as in the preceding verse - is the belief in the existence of anything that could be "associated" with God; hence my rendering of the above phrase as "their belief in beings or powers that are supposed...", etc.

123 - This is a reference to the custom prevalent among the pre-Islamic Arabs of burying alive some of their unwanted children, mainly girls, and also to the occasional offering of a boy-child in sacrifice to one or another of their idols (Zamakhshari). Apart from this historical reference, the above Qur'an-verse seems to point out, by implication, the psychological fact that an attribution of divinity to anyone or anything but God brings with it an ever-growing dependence on all kinds of imaginary powers which must be "propitiated" by formal and often absurd and cruel rites: and this, in turn, leads to the loss of all spiritual freedom and to moral self-destruction.

124 - I.e., He allows them to behave as they do because He wants them to make use of their reason and of the free will with which He has endowed man.

125 - The pre-Islamic Arabs falsely claimed that these taboos were ordained by God, as is made clear in the last part of this verse. One of these supposed, arbitrary "ordinances" laid down that only the priests of the particular idol and some men belonging to the tribe could eat the flesh of such dedicated animals, while women were not allowed to do so (Zamakhshari).

126 - I.e., while sacrificing them to their idols (see also [5:103](#) and the corresponding note). It would seem from this allusion that, as a rule, the pagan Arabs did pronounce the name of God - whom they regarded as the supreme deity - over the animals which they slaughtered; in the abovementioned exceptional cases, however, they refrained from doing so in the belief that God Himself had forbidden it.

127 - This is the generally-accepted explanation of the term ma'rushat and ghayr ma'rushat (lit., "those which are and those which are not provided with trellises"). The mention of "gardens" serves here to illustrate the doctrine that everything living and growing - like everything else in the universe - owes its existence to God alone, and that it is, therefore, blasphemous to connect it causally or devotionally with any other power, be it real or imaginary.

128 - See note [85] on verse {99} of this surah.

129 - I.e., by superstitiously declaring as forbidden what God has made lawful to man. All the references to pre-Islamic taboos given in verses {138-140} as well as {142-144} are meant to stress the lawfulness of any food (and, by implication, of any other physical enjoyment) which God has not expressly forbidden through revelation.

130 - Lit., "eight [in] pairs - of sheep two and of goats two" (the two other pairs are mentioned in the next verse). This is an outstanding example of the ellipticism often employed in the Qur'an: a mode of expression which cannot be correctly rendered in any other language without the use of explanatory interpolations. The term *zawj* denotes a pair of things as well as each of the two constituents of a pair: hence my rendering of *thamaniyat azwaj* (lit., "eight [in] pairs") as "four kinds of cattle of either sex". The particular superstition to which this and the next verse refer is probably identical with the one mentioned in [5:103](#).

131 - Lit., "tell me with knowledge" - i.e., not on the basis of guesswork but of knowledge acquired through authentic revelation. The preceding and subsequent ironical questions are meant to bring out the vagueness and inconsistency which characterizes all such superstitious, self-imposed prohibitions.

132 - Lit., "and of camels two, and of bovine cattle two" - thus completing the enumeration of the "eight kinds [i.e., four pairs] of cattle".

133 - Lit., "[thus] to lead people astray". However, the conjunction *li* prefixed to the verb *yudill* ("he leads astray") does not denote here - as is usually the case - an intent ("in order that") but, rather, a logical sequel ("and thus..."): a use which is described by the grammarians as *lam al-'aqibah*, "the letter lam signifying a causal sequence".

134 - Lit., "forbidden to an eater to eat thereof".

135 - Lit., "a sinful deed" (fisq) - here signifying an idolatrous offering.

136 - Cf. [2:173](#) and [5:3](#).

137 - The construction of the above sentence makes it clear that this prohibition was imposed specifically on the Jews, to the exclusion of believers of later times (Razi).

138 - Cf. Leviticus vii, 23 (where, however, "all manner" of fat of ox, sheep or goat is declared forbidden).

139 - See [3:93](#).

140 - I.e., regarding the Qur'anic statement in verse {145} that God forbids only a few, clearly-defined categories of food. The pronoun "they" refers to the Jews as well as to the pagan Arabs spoken of in the preceding verses - both of whom claim that God has imposed on man various complicated restrictions in the matter of food. According to the Qur'an, the Jews are wrong in their claim inasmuch as they overlook the fact that the severe Mosaic food laws were a punishment for their past misdeeds see [3:93](#) and, therefore, intended for them alone; and the pagan Arabs are wrong because their taboos have no divine basis whatsoever and are due to mere superstition.

141 - I.e., the truth that God has endowed man with the ability to choose between right and wrong. The above verse constitutes a categorical rejection of the doctrine of "predestination" in the commonly-accepted sense of this term.

142 - I.e., knowledge regarding "predestination".

143 - In other words, the real relationship between God's knowledge of the future (and therefore the ineluctability of what is to happen in the future) on the one side, and man's free will, on the other - two propositions which, on the face of it, seem to contradict one another - is beyond man's comprehension; but since both are postulated by God, both must be true. The very concept of "God" presupposes His omniscience; and the very concept of morality and moral responsibility presupposes free will on man's part. Had God so willed, every human being would have been forced to live righteously; but this would have amounted to depriving man of his free will, and morality of all its meaning.

144 - A reference to the arbitrary prohibitions mentioned in the preceding passages.

145 - Lit., "make [others] equal to their Sustainer": i.e., attribute divine or almost-divine qualities to certain ill-defined natural powers - e.g., believe in "spontaneous" creative evolution, or in a "self-created" universe, or in a mysterious, impersonal elan vital that supposedly underlies all existence, etc.

146 - In the consensus of all the commentators, the phrase interpolated by me between brackets is clearly implied in the above commandment, since it is mentioned among the things which God has forbidden - and being good towards one's parents is not only not forbidden but, on the contrary, enjoined over and over in the Qur'an.

147 - This may possibly refer to abortions dictated by economic considerations.

148 - Sc., "and not resort to brute force whenever your private interests are involved". The expression "otherwise than in [the pursuit of] justice" refers to the execution of a legal punishment or to killing in a just - that is, defensive - war, or to individual, legitimate self-defence.

149 - I.e., after the orphan in one's charge has come of age, the former guardian may "touch" his property, legally, by borrowing from it or otherwise utilizing it with the owner's consent. The phrase rendered by me as "save to improve it" reads, literally, "in a manner that is best", which implies the intent of bettering it.

150 - This refers metonymically to all dealings between men and not only to commercial transactions: hence my interpolation of "in all your dealings".

151 - The meaning is that God does not expect man to behave with "mathematical" equity - which, in view of the many intangible factors involved, is rarely attainable in human dealings - but expects him to do his best towards achieving this ideal.

152 - According to Razi, the phrase "when you voice an opinion" (lit., "when you speak") applies to expressing an opinion on any subject, whether it concerns one personally or not; but the subsequent reference to one's "near of kin" makes it probable that the above injunction relates, in particular, to the giving of evidence in cases under dispute.

153 - See surah {2}, note [19].

154 - Lit., "to become scattered".

155 - See note [31] on the last paragraph of verse {38} of this surah. In this instance, the stress implied in the use of thumma seems to point to verse {91} of this surah.

156 - I.e., everything that they needed by way of laws and injunctions appropriate to their time and the stage of their development (Razi). See in this connection the phrase, "Unto every one of you have We appointed a [different] law and way of life", occurring in [5:48](#), and the corresponding note [66].

157 - I.e., to the Jews and the Christians, who were the only two communities known to the Arabs as possessing revealed scriptures.

158 - Although this passage refers, in the first instance, to the Arabian contemporaries of the Prophet, its message is not restricted to them but relates to all people, at all times, who refuse to believe in revelation unless they themselves are its direct recipients.

159 - I.e., the signs announcing the Day of Judgment.

160 - Lit., "or [did not] earn good in his faith": thus, faith without good works is here declared to be equivalent to having no faith at all (Zamakhshari).

161 - A reference, primarily, to the Jews and the Christians, who have departed from the fundamental religious principles which they had originally shared in their entirety, and have gone different ways in respect of doctrine and ethics (cf. [3:105](#)). Beyond this "primary" reference, however, the above verse connects logically with verse {153} above, "this is the way leading straight unto Me: follow it, then, and follow not other ways, lest they cause you to deviate from His way" - and thus relates prophetically to the followers of the Qur'an as well: in other words it expresses a condemnation of all sectarianism arising out of people's intolerant, mutually-exclusive claims to being "the only true exponents" of the Qur'anic teachings. Thus, when asked about the implications of this verse, the Prophet's Companion Abu Hurayrah is reported to have answered "It has been revealed with reference to this [our] community" (Tabari).

162 - Lit., "and they shall not be wronged". See in this connection the statement that God "has willed upon Himself the law of grace and mercy", occurring in verse {12} of this surah, and the corresponding note [10].

163 - This statement - which is also found in [17:15](#), [35:18](#), [39:7](#) and [53:38](#) - constitutes a categorical rejection of the Christian doctrines of "original sin" and "vicarious atonement". For the wider ethical

implications of this statement, {see 53:38}, where it occurs for the first time in the chronological order of revelation.

164 - See surah {2}, note [95].

165 - See 2.30, and the corresponding note [22].

166 - I.e., by way of character, strength, knowledge, social position, wealth, etc.

[View Page](#)

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