

197. And complete the Hajj and the 'Umrah for the sake of Allah: but ^aif you are kept back, then *make* whatever offering is easily available; and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination. And whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head, should make an expiation either by fasting or almsgiving or a sacrifice. But when you are safe, then he, who would avail himself of the 'Umrah together with the Hajj, should make whatever offering is easily

وَاتِمُّوا الْحَجَّ وَالْعُمْرَةَ لِلَّهِ ^ط فَإِنْ
أُحْصِرْتُمْ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ^ج
وَلَا تَحْلِقُوا رُءُوسَكُمْ حَتَّىٰ يَبْلُغَ
الْهَدْيُ مَحَلَّهُ ^ط فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مَّرِيضًا
أَوْ بِإِذَىٰ مِنْ رَأْسِهِ فَفِدْيَةٌ مِنْ صِيَامٍ
أَوْ صَدَقَةٍ أَوْ نُسُكٍ ^ج فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ ^{وقفه}
فَمَنْ تَمَتَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا
اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ ^ج فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ
فَصِيَامًا ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةً إِذَا

^a48:26.

their faith may be conducted with efficiency.

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

The clause, *and do good, surely Allah loves those who do good*, may

have four meanings: (1) Either it means, do not spend money yourselves only but give it to your proper brethren also so that they too may be able to take part in the war. (2) Or it means, do not be unjust or cruel to your enemies in your eagerness to bring the war to a speedy end, for Allah loves those who are good to others. Elsewhere the Quran says: Let not the enmity of a people incite you to be unjust. Be just (to all) for that is nearer righteousness, (3) Or it means, think well of your Lord, i.e. do not think that if you spend your money under God's commandment, He will suffer you to come to ruin thereby. Or (4) it means, perform your duties well and fulfill your obligations faithfully and efficiently. The latter two meanings are

obtainable. But such of you as cannot find an offering should fast three days during the Pilgrimage, and seven when you return home; these are ten complete. This is for him whose family does not reside near the Sacred Mosque. And fear Allah and know that Allah is severe in punishing.²⁰³

رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ ذَٰلِكَ
لِمَنْ لَّمْ يَكُنْ أَهْلُهُ حَاضِرِي الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ
شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٠٣﴾

supported by the saying of the Companions of the Holy Prophet also (Jarīr).

203. Commentary:

From this verse begin commandments relating to حج or the Pilgrimage. The Pilgrimage is performed in the following manner: The would-be pilgrim enters into a state of احرام (*Ihrām*) on reaching the ميقات i.e. certain prescribed places slightly varying in distance in different directions, but in all cases outside حرم (the Sacred Territory). In the state of احرام the pilgrim is forbidden sexual intercourse, the use of scent or perfumed oil, the wearing of sewn garments, hunting and the like. The male pilgrim discards ordinary clothes, putting on white unsewn sheets and keeping the head uncovered. The female pilgrim may put on ordinary but simple clothes and should ordinarily keep her face uncovered. The pilgrim (male or female) is required to repeat the following words as often as possible: *Labbaik, Allāhumma labbaik, Labbaik. Lā sharīka laka labbaik. Innal-ḥamda wanni'mata laka wal*

mulka lā sharīka laka..." i.e. "My Lord! I am at Thy service. There is no equal or partner with Thee. So I am at Thy service alone. All praise belongs to Thee and all blessings are from Thee and all authority rests in Thee. I say again, there is no equal or partner with Thee. So I am at Thy service alone."

At Mecca the first thing the pilgrim does, preferably after having a bath, is to perform seven circuits round the Ka'bah then he briskly walks or runs between the Ṣafā and the Marwah (see 2:159) seven times. On the eighth day of *Dhul-Hijjah* (the month of Pilgrimage) he goes in the morning from Mecca to *Minā*, which is about three miles from Mecca, where he halts to perform, at their appointed time, the five daily Prayers, beginning from the midday Prayer. Next morning (i.e. the 9th) he starts from *Minā* and passing through, or by, *Mash'arul-Harām*, which is about six miles from Mecca, he goes on to the great plain at *'Arafāt*, three miles further ahead, where, before he actually enters *'Arafāt*, he says the midday and the afternoon Prayers

together; and when all the pilgrims have entered 'Arafāt, the Imām delivers a sermon, while the pilgrims do nothing but silently pray and stand still. Thereafter the pilgrim returns after sunset to *Muzdalifah* or *Mash'ar* where he says the evening and the night Prayers together and spends most of his time in prayer and meditation. Next day (i.e. the 10th) after offering his morning Prayer at *Mash'arul-Harām* he starts back early for *Minā*, where he casts pebbles (seven in number) at the three appointed pillars beginning with the *Jamratul-'Aqabah*, repeating this each day that he stays at *Minā*. The same day, i.e. the 10th, the pilgrim offers his sacrifice (goat, sheep, ram, cow, camel, etc.), gets his head shaved, takes a bath and puts on his ordinary clothes. Thereafter he proceeds to Mecca and again performs the circuit of the Ka'bah seven times and then returns to *Minā* if he should so desire. The stay at *Minā* may last from part of a day to three or four days known as أيام معدودات (i.e. the numbered days) with which the *Hajj* is completed. All this time the pilgrim should repeat, as many times as possible, the above mentioned prayer.

عمرة or the Lesser Pilgrimage consists in entering into a state of احرام (*Ihrām*) in the way described above, circuiting the Ka'bah seven times, running between the *Şafā* and the *Marwah* and offering a sacrifice which, however, is not obligatory. 'Umrah may be performed at any time of the year, whereas the *Hajj* or the Greater Pilgrimage is performed

only during the month of *Dhul-Hijjah*. For the literal meanings of the words *Hajj* and 'Umrah see note on 2:159.

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

The clause, *should make an expiation either by fasting or almsgiving or a sacrifice*, relates to such people as cannot shave their heads owing to some ailment. The alternatives mentioned are meant to suit different grades of people. Fasting is meant for the poor; feeding the needy for the pilgrims of the

middle class; and the offering of a sacrifice for the rich. The Quran does not fix the number of days for which one is to fast, or the number of the poor whom one is to feed or the kind of animal which one is to sacrifice. The Holy Prophet is reported to have once prescribed fasting for three days (i.e. three one-day fasts), and the feeding of six poor men and the offering of a goat as a sacrifice (Bukhārī).

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

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

The second way is that a man should make up his mind to perform the 'Umrah and Hajj simultaneously. He should, in this case, enter into the state of *Ihrām* with that intention and should remain in that state till the end of the Pilgrimage. This combination

of Hajj and 'Umrah is called *قران (Qirān)* which literally means, "the putting together of two things". In both *Tamattu'* and *Qirān* it is obligatory to offer the sacrifice, while in the case of Hajj alone or in the case of 'Umrah alone, the offering of the sacrifice is not obligatory. In the verse under comment the word *تمتع* is not used in the technical sense and covers *قران* also.

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

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

The final clause, *fear Allah and know that Allah is severe in punishing*, has a twofold meaning: (1) That Muslims should not think that these are mere minor details of certain outward rites and may therefore not be strictly observed; for all these things which the All-

R. 25.

198. ^aThe months of the Hajj are well known; so ^bwhoever determines to perform the Pilgrimage in these months, *should remember that there is to be no foul talk, nor any transgression, nor any quarrelling during the Pilgrimage. And whatever good you do, Allah knows it. And furnish yourselves with necessary provisions, and surely, the best provision is righteousness. And fear Me alone, O men of understanding.*²⁰⁴

الْحَجُّ أَشْهُرٌ مَّعْلُومَاتٌ ۖ فَمَنْ فَرَضَ فِيهِنَّ الْحَجَّ فَلَا رَفَثَ وَلَا فُسُوقَ وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ ۗ وَمَا تَفَعَّلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ يَّعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ ۗ وَتَزَوَّدُوا فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الزَّادِ التَّقْوَىٰ ۗ وَاتَّقُونِ يَا أُولِيَ الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٥﴾

^a2:190; 9:36. ^b3:98; 22:28.

Knowing God has prescribed for the Faithful are necessary in His sight and are meant for their own good. So, whoever neglects these details not only incurs the displeasure of God, but also hinders his own spiritual progress. (2) That the performance of *Hajj* should not fill the heart with pride (which unfortunately is very often the case nowadays), for this would defeat the very object of Pilgrimage which is the attainment of *تقوى* or fear of God. In such case, the so-called pilgrim will not find himself nearer God but rather would see His punishment descending on him.

In connection with this verse, it should also be noted that besides giving a general meaning as stated above, it also refers to a specific incident in Islamic history, i.e. the Truce of Hudaibiyyah. The verse was

revealed before that truce and hinted that a time was coming when Muslims would start towards Mecca with the intention of performing Pilgrimage, but they would be "kept back" from doing so by disbelievers. Later, however, God would grant them victory over the disbelievers and they would be "safe" to perform the Pilgrimage in peace. What a true picture of the apparent set-back at Hudaibiyyah and the subsequent Fall of Mecca at the hands of the Holy Prophet!

204. Important Words:

رفث (foul talk) means, foul, immodest or lewd talk or speech in relation to women. It also signifies acts leading to and including coition (Mufradāt & Lane). See also 2:188.

فسوق (transgression) is the same as

فسق for which see note on 2:27.

جدال (quarrelling) is derived from جدل. They say جدل الحبل i.e. he twisted the rope. جدل الرجل means, his dispute or quarrel became intensified. جادله means, he disputed or quarrelled with him. Thus جدال means, dispute or quarrel, or the use of strong and hot words (Aqrab).

تزودوا (furnish yourselves) and الزاد (provision) are both derived from زاد with واو as the central root letter. They say زاد الرجل i.e. the man prepared a provision for himself for a journey, etc. تزود means, he took for himself a provision. تزود من الامير كتابا الى عامله means, he took from the caliph a letter of introduction to his governor so that the latter might afford him his assistance as and when required. الزاد means, any provision, etc. taken when proceeding on a journey (Aqrab). The word is used of extra store meant for future use (Mufradāt).

Commentary:

The clause *the months of the Hajj are well known* is intended to hint that, in the matter of the time of Pilgrimage, the Quran gives no new commandment. The established custom is the right one, being rightly retained by the Arabs from the days of Abraham and Ishmael. The three lunar months during which one may formally undertake the Pilgrimage and enter into the state of *Ihrām* are *Shawwāl*, *Dhul-Qa'dah* and the first ten days of *Dhul-Hijjah* (Bukhārī).

The clause, *there is to be no foul talk, nor any transgression nor any quarrelling during the Pilgrimage*, does not mean that such acts are permissible at other times but that

these are necessary conditions for the completion of Pilgrimage, which would be like a soulless body if one indulged in such things while undertaking it. Another purpose underlying these injunctions is that a person should abstain from them particularly during the period of Pilgrimage so that it might become easy for him to shun these things at other times as well. The three vices selected are typical of what should be scrupulously avoided in a religious gathering like that at the Pilgrimage. رفث (*rafath*) stands for all foul, immodest and lewd talk as well as acts relating to sex. فسوق (*fusūq*) stands for transgression against the laws of God and disobedience of lawful authority, whether spiritual or temporal. And جدال (*jidāl*) stands for disputes and quarrels with co-travellers, companions and neighbours.

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

199. It is no sin for you that ^ayou seek the bounty of your Lord. But when you pour forth from 'Arafāt, remember Allah at Mash'arul-Harām; and ^bremember Him as He has guided you, although, before this, you were of those gone astray.²⁰⁵

لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَبْتَغُوا فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَإِذَا أَفَضْتُمْ مِّنْ عَرَفَاتٍ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ عِنْدَ الْمَشْعَرِ الْحَرَامِ وَاذْكُرُوهُ كَمَا هَدَيْتُمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمَنِ الصَّالِينَ ﴿١٩٩﴾

^a62:11. ^b2:153, 204; 8:46; 62:11.

detrimental to the noble object underlying Pilgrimage.

205. Important Words:

فضل (bounty). See 2:65.

افضتم (you pour forth) is derived from افاض which is again derived from فاض. They say فاض السيل i.e. the flood-water was great in quantity and overflowed the banks. فاضت عينه means, his eye was full of tears, which began to flow down fast. افاض is both transitive and intransitive. They say افاض الماء i.e. he poured out water. افاض القوم من المكان means, the people, who were great in number, poured forth from the house and dispersed. ففاض is one whose charity flows like water (Aqrab).

عرافات ('Arafāt) is the name given to a plain or valley near Mecca where pilgrims halt in the latter portion of the ninth day of *Dhul-Hijjah*. It is about a mile and a half in circuit with sloping sides rising nearly two hundred feet above the level of the adjacent plain. It is nine miles from Mecca, and the halt technically known as وقوف at this place forms the principal factor of *Hajj* or Pilgrimage. The word is derived from عرفت

meaning, he knew or recognized.

مشعر الحرام (*Mash'arul-Harām*) is the name given to a small hillock in *Muzdalifah*, which lies between Mecca and 'Arafāt. Here the Holy Prophet said the evening and the night Prayers and offered special prayers to God before the rising of the sun. It is thus a place specially meant for meditation and prayer in Pilgrimage. It is about six miles from Mecca. The name is a compound of مشعر (from شعر) meaning, the place or means of perception or knowledge, and الحرام (from حرم) meaning, sacred.

Commentary:

As the object of Pilgrimage is that the greatest possible number of Muslims should take part in it, therefore, the Quran permits pilgrims to engage in commerce and trade. Those who cannot take hard cash with them may carry merchandise, and thereby earn money to meet the expenses of the journey. This is what is hinted in the clause, *it is no sin for you that you seek the bounty of your Lord*. Similar permission is granted to those who gather for the Friday Prayers (62:11).

200. Then pour forth from where the people pour forth, and seek forgiveness from Allah; surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.²⁰⁶

ثُمَّ أَفِضُوا مِنْ حَيْثُ أَفَاضَ النَّاسُ
وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا لِلَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٠٠﴾

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

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

206. Important Words:

استغفروا (ask forgiveness) is derived from *غفر* for which see 2:59. *استغفر*

would thus mean, he asked God for *مغفرة* in all its senses, i.e. covering up of sins, forgiveness, protection against stumbling, protection against punishment of sins, etc. *استغفار* is not confined to verbal asking for forgiveness only, but extends to, and includes, practical change for the better on the part of him who asks for forgiveness. He should ask for pardon both by word and deed (*Mufradāt*).

Commentary:

The word *ثم* (then) in the clause, *then pour forth from where the people pour forth*, has given rise to a divergence of opinion among commentators. If it means "then", it must needs be taken to indicate sequence or order and the clause would thus signify: "after you have returned to *مشعرالحرام* from *عرفات* (as mentioned in the preceding verse), you should return (from *مشعرالحرام* to *منى*) from where the people return". But this is obviously superfluous, as nobody has ever differed about proceeding to and returning from *مشعرالحرام* with the people. A difference existed only with regard to proceeding to and returning from *عرفات*; for, whereas the Quraish and the Kinānah, known as *Hums*, stopped short at *Mash'arul-Harām*, a place within *حرم* (the Sacred Territory) and did not go up to *'Arafāt* which is

outside حرم, other pilgrims went right up to 'Arafāt. Consequently if the commandment with regard to "pouring forth with the people" was at all needed, it was needed with regard to 'Arafāt and not with regard to Mash'arul-Ḥarām but in the verse under comment the Quran appears to mention it in connection with the latter. This difficulty has led some to interpret the word ثم not as "then" but simply as "and" which the idiom of the Arabic language justifies (Lane). These commentators have translated the words ثم افيضوا not as "then pour forth" but simply as "and pour forth". In this case the "pouring forth" spoken of may relate to 'Arafāt and not to Mash'arul-Ḥarām as the clause under comment appears to indicate. This is certainly not an incorrect interpretation so far as the rules of the Arabic language go; but another interpretation is also possible in which the primary meaning of ثم (then) is retained. This may be explained as follows. The preceding verse speaks of "pouring forth" or returning from 'Arafāt, thereby making it plain that going up to 'Arafāt is necessary. This completes the commandment with regard to the stay at and return from 'Arafāt. The verse under comment takes us further, speaking of the return from Mash'arul-Ḥarām and not from 'Arafāt, and thus the primary significance of ثم i.e. "then" is retained, for the obvious reason that the return from Mash'arul-Ḥarām comes after the return from 'Arafāt. As to the words, *pour forth from where the people pour forth*, it may

be noted that in this case they would be taken to have been used merely to indicate that whereas the return from 'Arafāt is confined to those who adhere to the right custom and go right up to 'Arafāt, the return from Mash'arul-Ḥarām is general, including also the proud Ḥums who stopped short at Mash'arul-Ḥarām and did not go further. This is further corroborated by the fact that whereas the Quran uses the word افضتم (you pour forth) with regard to the return from 'Arafāt, it uses the words افيضوا من الناس i.e. "pour forth from where the people (i.e. all people) pour forth" with regard to the return from Mash'arul-Ḥarām which was at that time more general and extended to all. Thus the meaning of the word الناس would also change with the change in the meaning of the word ثم. If ثم is taken to mean "and", and "the return" spoken of in this verse is taken to refer to the return from 'Arafāt, then الناس would mean "other people"; but if ثم is taken to mean "then" and "the return" spoken of here is taken to refer to the return from Mash'arul-Ḥarām, then الناس would signify "all people" and both these meanings are justified by the rules of the Arabic language.

In short, before the advent of Islam the Quraish and the Banū Kinānah known as Ḥums did not accompany other pilgrims to 'Arafāt, but stopped short at Mash'arul-Ḥarām, waiting to join other people returning from 'Arafāt. In this and the preceding verse, they are bidden not to stop short at Mash'arul-Ḥarām but to go up to 'Arafāt and do as other people

201. And when you have performed ^athe acts of worship prescribed for you, ^bcelebrate the praises of Allah as you celebrated the praises of your fathers, or even more than that. And ^cof men there are some who say, 'Our Lord, grant us *good things* in this world;' and such a one shall have no share in the Hereafter.²⁰⁷

فَإِذَا قَضَيْتُمْ مَنَاسِكَكُمْ فَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ
كَذِكْرِكُمْ آبَاءَكُمْ أَوْ أَشَدَّ ذِكْرًا فَمِنَ
النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَمَا
لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلْقٍ ﴿٢٠١﴾

^a2:129. ^bSee 2:153. ^c4:135; 42:21.

do. After returning from 'Arafāt to *Mash'arul-Harām*, pilgrims should proceed to *Minā* where sacrifices are offered and the state of *Ihrām* comes to an end. The clause, *and seek forgiveness from Allah*, hints that as *Hajj* consists of certain rites, there is the possibility of some persons not understanding the meaning and spirit of these rites. Moreover, where a number of religious acts are crowded into a short space of time, there is always the possibility of some persons missing and omitting certain things or of forgetting the prescribed order thereof. The pilgrims are, therefore, exhorted to have recourse to *Istighfār*, i.e. seeking God's forgiveness as well as His protection against error and its consequences.

The word استغفار literally means "to pray for the covering up of sins and protection," which signifies forgiveness for past sins and protection against future ones. Thus, when a pilgrim offers *Istighfār*, he seeks not only forgiveness for what is

past or protection against stumbling with regard to the observance of the rites of Pilgrimage but also protection against future stumblings.

It should also be remembered that *Istighfār* is not needed by ordinary people only, but holy servants of God also resort to it. The former offer *Istighfār* to seek protection against future sins as well as from the consequences of past errors; while the latter seek protection against human shortcomings and limitations that may hinder their progress and work. Holy men too, are human, and though they may be free from sins, they are always eager to seek divine help and assistance against human weaknesses and frailties. Nay, as they have to set an example to others and their responsibilities are also far heavier than those of other people, they resort to *Istighfār* more often than ordinary men.

207. Important Words:

فَاذْكُرُوا (celebrate praises of) is derived from ذَكَرَ which means, (1) he

talked of him by way of praising him; (2) he remembered him in his heart (Aqrab & Mufradāt). See also 2:41, 153.

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

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

Commentary:

The clause, *celebrate the praises of Allah as you celebrated the praises of your fathers*, points to a practice of pagan Arabs who used to gather together at a certain place in *Minā* after the performance of the rites of Pilgrimage and glorify their forefathers by reciting poems in their praise. Muslims are here bidden to glorify God instead, and praise Him as they used to praise their forefathers, and, the words "even more than that" have been added to emphasize that God's praises should transcend all, for the word او (or) also means, "nay". It is also possible that the word ك (as) in the expression كذكركم (as you celebrated praises) has been used only to denote general similarity without reference to degree, and the word او (or) has been used in the sense of "and". In this case the verse would mean that though in the general manner of praise your celebration of God's praises may resemble the praises with which you glorified your fathers, in degree it should excel it, being اشد (stronger, loftier and firmer).

Here is a good example of how the Quran, while retaining some old

customs, improved upon and, spiritualised them to serve the ends of Islam.

The clause, when you have performed the acts of worship prescribed for you, celebrate the praises of Allah as you celebrated the praises of your fathers or even more than that, has yet another meaning. As the word ذكر also means 'remembering' and the word اب (father) includes mother as well (12:101), the clause may also signify that the rites of Pilgrimage, if performed in the right spirit, should fill the heart of man with such love for God as to make him always remember Him just as a child remembers his parents. This is why the Quran begins the word اذكروا with the conjunction ف meaning "so" or "then", hinting that the result of the performance of the rites of Pilgrimage should be that a pilgrim should ever after remember his Creator with the fondness displayed by a child for his parents. But this is only the first stage. With holier men God's love should be even greater, as the verse hints in the words, or even more than that. Says the Holy Prophet, "The sign of true faith is that a believer's love for God and His Apostle should be greater than his love for any other being or thing" (Bukhārī).

The concluding clause, i.e. *of men there are some who say, 'Our Lord, grant us (good things) in this world, and such a one shall have no share in the Hereafter*, points to the fact that if the pilgrim confines himself to the

202. And “of them there are some who say: ‘Our Lord, grant us good in this world as well as good in the world to come, and protect us from the torment of the Fire.’²⁰⁸

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَقُولُ رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا
حَسَنَةً وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا
عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

^{42:21.}

celebration of the praises of his fathers and forgets his Creator, he would be like a person who spends all his efforts in the pursuit of this world, even his prayers being confined to search after worldly things. Such a person shall evidently have no claim to the good things of the Hereafter. It is also significant that in this clause the Quran does not use the word *حسنة* (good things) with the words *في الدنيا* (in this world) thereby hinting that such men generally make no distinction between the good things of this world and the bad things thereof, their sole object being the things of this world, irrespective of whether they are good or bad.

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

208. Commentary:

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

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

The prayer has another significance also. The good things of this world and the good things of the Hereafter spoken of in this verse may both stand for spiritual blessings, the good

203. For these there shall be a *goodly* share because of what they have earned. And Allah is swift at reckoning.²⁰⁹

204. And ^aremember Allah during the appointed number of days; but whoso hastens to leave in two days, it shall be no sin for him; and whoso stays

أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا كَسَبُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٠٣﴾

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْدُودَاتٍ ۗ فَمَنْ تَعَجَّلَ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ وَمَنْ تَأَخَّرَ فَلَا إِثْمَ عَلَيْهِ ۗ لِمَنِ اتَّقَىٰ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا

^aSee 2:153.

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

209. Important Words:

نصيب (share) is derived from نصب. They say نصبه i.e. he set it up. Therefore نصيب means, a set share or portion (Lane).

Commentary:

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

behind, it shall be no sin for him. *This is* for him who fears God. And fear Allah and know that you shall *all* be brought together before Him.²¹⁰

اللَّهُ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٢١٠﴾

210. Commentary:

The glorification of God, or the celebration of His praises enjoined in the preceding verses is to be particularly observed in the appointed number of days to be spent in *Minā* after the *Hajj* is over. These are the 11th, the 12th and the 13th day of *Dhul-Hijjah* during which the pilgrims are required, so far as possible, to stay at *Minā* and pass their time in God's glorification. In these days they are also required, as a symbol of the driving out of Satan, to cast pebbles daily at the three pillars so long as they stay there. These are called أيام التشرية i.e. the days of beauty and brightness.

The clause, *whoso hastens to leave in two days*, refers to the stay in *Minā*. If a pilgrim leaves *Minā* two days earlier or stays behind for two days more, no sin shall attach to him, provided everything he does is done with good intention, acting righteously and God-fearingly.

The verse ends with the clause, *and fear Allah and know that you shall be brought together before Him*, to bring home to the reader or the pilgrim that the underlying object of the Pilgrimage is تقوى, the very word with which the Quran began its commandments about *Hajj* in 2:197,

thus emphasizing that mere outward observance of certain rites is nothing unless they are accompanied by تقوى or the spirit of righteousness which must underlie all actions of man.

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

Now that the description of *Hajj* as given in these verses has come to an end, it would be appropriate to give here a brief but collective note on the wisdom and the significance of this act of worship and devotion. The Pilgrimage is indeed a great spiritual ordinance. According to the Quran, the Ka'bah is the first house of worship that was built for mankind (3:97). It dates not from Abraham, who simply rebuilt it, but from Adam. The Quran speaks of it as "the Ancient House" (22:30, 34). A Jewish tradition also says that Abraham built

"the altar which Adam had built, which had been destroyed by the waters of the Deluge, which Noah had again builded, and which had, been destroyed in the age of divisions" (The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan ben Uzziel translated by J. W. Ethebridge, London, 1862, p. 226). The Ka'bah is the only altar that answers this description; there is no other place so ancient. It was the purpose of God that men from all quarters should assemble at this central house and thus be reminded of their common humanity and common relation with the Lord of the worlds. Differences which divided one nation from another were to be forgotten and all drawn closer to one another in one common bond. The *Hajj* provides pilgrims of different lands and diverse nationalities with an excellent opportunity to cultivate acquaintance with one another and discuss matters of common interest. This purpose has been made all the more accessible by ordering pilgrims to pass the days of *Hajj*, and the days following, not within the four walls of Mecca but out in the open desert at *Minā*, *Muzdalifah* and *'Arafāt* and back again in *Minā*.

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

The Ka'bah or the *Baitullāh* (the

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

The act of running between the *Şafā* and the *Marwah* calls to the minds of pilgrims the pathetic story of Hagar and Ishmael, reminding them how God provides for his helpless servants even in the solitude of a great wilderness.

Minā is a name derived from the word *'umniyyah* which means "an object" or "a desire". This reminds the pilgrim of the fact that he goes there with the "object" or the "desire" of meeting God. From *Minā* the pilgrim proceeds to *Muzdalifah* which means "nearness" and reminds him that the object with which he had set out has drawn "near". The other name of *Muzdalifah* is *Mash'arul-Ḥarām*, meaning the sacred symbol. This also hints that the final stage is near. From *Muzdalifah*, the pilgrim proceeds to *'Arafāt*, the root-meaning of which is "to recognize". This reminds him that he has now reached the stage of "recognition" where he has "recognized" or known the One Lord and has met Him.

Again, the place chosen for this great concourse of the Faithful is a barren waste, devoid of all vegetation, as the Quran itself states (14:38). The only things that are met

with there are sand, pebbles, rocks and rugged hillocks. Such a place has been chosen to bring home to us the fact that it possesses absolutely no attraction for which one might visit it. If there is anything for which one should go there, it is God and God alone. This is why in the present verse the Quran says, "know that you are being gathered here (not for any worldly object but) to meet Him".

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

The casting of pebbles at the three pillars at *Minā*—known as *Dunyā*, *Wustā* and *'Aqabah*, is also an interesting representation. It reminds the pilgrim of the three stages through which man has to pass and which have been referred to in the Quran as the three stages of human life, viz. (1) the present world, or *Dunyā* as it is called, which is symbolized by the first pillar, significantly called *Jamratud-Dunyā*, i.e. the pillar situated near; (2) the grave or the middle stage lying between this world and the next, the pillar corresponding to which is

called *Jamratul-Wustā*, i.e. the middle pillar; and (3) the next world (known also as عقی *'Uqbā*) which is symbolized by the third pillar, which is accordingly called *Jamratul-'Aqabah*, i.e. the pillar of the distant hillock that comes after the others. The casting of pebbles at these pillars is also symbolic of Satan being pelted. Evil thoughts should be driven out of one's mind just as God has driven away Satan from His presence.

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

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

In short, the various rites of the *Hajj* and the objects that play a part therein are all emblematic and are replete with great and momentous lessons, but only for those who care to meditate.

205. And ^aof men there is he whose talk on this life would please thee, and he would call Allah to witness as to that which is in his heart, and yet he is the most contentious of quarrellers.²¹¹

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ
الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ ۗ وَهُوَ
الَّذِي الْخَصَامِ ﴿٢٠٥﴾

206. And when he is in authority, he runs about in the

وَإِذَا تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ

^a63:5.

211. Important Words:

يعجبك (would please thee) is derived from عجب meaning, he wondered; he became pleased. عجبه means, it pleased him and caused him to wonder (Aqrab).

الد (most contentious) is derived from لد (*ladda*). They say لده meaning, he contended or quarrelled with him vehemently. So الد, which is the noun of pre-eminence from it, means, one who is a great quarreller. The plural of الد is لدد—*ludd* (Aqrab).

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

Commentary:

Two kinds of men have already been mentioned: (1) those who seek only the things of this world (2:201); and (2) those who seek both the good things of this world and those of the next (2:202). The present verse and

those that follow mention two extreme types of these two classes. Of the former class, states the verse under comment, there are those who wax eloquent in their talk about this world, pleading for the necessity of improving the conditions of life for mankind and calling God to witness their sincerity. Their eloquence and apparent love for fellow beings would deceive the listener, but at heart they love only their own selfish interests and, would vehemently dispute with others for their smallest rights, supposed or real, displaying none of that spirit of sacrifice which is essential for real human progress. They would look to their own interests or the interests of their family or those of their community or their nation only and would not make any sacrifice for, or even do justice to, others.

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

land to create disorder in it and destroy the crops and the progeny of man; and Allah loves not disorder.²¹²

فِيهَا وَ يُهْلِكُ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ ط
وَ اللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ ۝

212. Important Words:

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

سعى (runs about) means: (1) he walked briskly or he ran; (2) he made an effort; or he strove to obtain an object (Aqrab).

الحرث (the crops) is the noun-infinitive from حرث i.e. he ploughed or tilled the soil; he sowed seeds or planted plants in it; he acquired or earned or laboured for wealth or sustenance; he worked or laboured for the goods of the world. حرث means: (1) a tilth or a piece of land ploughed for sowing, or land actually sown with some crop; (2) land under crop; (3) crop or produce of land whether field crop or garden crop; (4) gain, acquisition or earning; (5) reward or recompense; (6) worldly goods; (7) wife or wives, because a wife is like a tilth in which seed is sown to bear crop in the form of children; (8) a much used road or a beaten track (Lane).

النسل (progeny). نسل الولد means, he begot a child. نسل الرجل means, the man had many children; the progeny of the man increased. نسل means: (1) creatures; (2) children; (3) progeny, whether of man or beast (Aqrab & Lane).

Commentary:

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

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

The words, *Allah loves not*

207. And when it is said to him, 'Fear Allah,' pride incites him to *further* sin. So Hell shall be his sufficient reward; and surely, it is an evil place of rest.²¹³

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُ اتَّقِ اللَّهَ أَخَذَتْهُ الْعِزَّةُ
بِالْإِثْمِ فَحَسْبُ جَهَنَّمُ ۖ وَلَيْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿٢٠٧﴾

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

213. Important Words:

أَخَذَتْهُ (incites him) is from أَخَذَ meaning, he took, or he took hold; or he seized; or he punished etc. (Aqrab). أَخَذْتَهُ بِكَذَا means, you incited him to do that and made him stick to it (Kashshāf). أَخَذْتَهُ الْعِزَّةَ بِالْإِثْمِ may also mean, pride encompasses him with sin (Muḥīṭ); or pride seizes him owing to his sin (Fath).

العِزَّة (pride) is derived from عَزَّ which means, he became mighty and honoured and noble. عِزُّ الشَّيْءِ means, the thing became rare. العِزَّة means, (1) might and power; (2) high position; (3) honour; (4) self-exaltation (Lane); (5) consciousness of one's position and rank; (6) pride in bad sense; (7) vanity (Aqrab).

جَهَنَّم (Hell). Lexicographers differ as to the origin of the word جَهَنَّم but they generally agree that in Arabic it has no root except itself and is used as a proper name for the place of punishment reserved for the evildoers in the next world. It is, however, possible that the word has been derived from جَهَم meaning, he became frowning or contracted, or ugly in

face. جَهْمَةٌ means, the middle or the darkest part of the night. جَهَامٌ means, clouds that have no water (Lane). In this case the ن in جَهَنَّم would be something additional as in the word التَّنَدُّ derived from الدَّ meaning, a quarreller (Muḥīṭ). Thus جَهَنَّم would mean, a place of punishment which is dark and waterless and makes the faces of its inmates ugly and contracted.

Commentary:

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

The word حَسْبُ (sufficient) in the clause, *Hell shall be his sufficient reward*, points to the fact that as such a man is never contented in this life, and is always hungering for more wealth and more power and more

208. And of men there is he who would sell himself to seek the pleasure of Allah; and ^aAllah is Compassionate to His servants.²¹⁴

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَشْرِي نَفْسَهُ ابْتِغَاءَ
مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢٠٨﴾

209. O ye who believe! come into submission wholly and ^bfollow not the footsteps of Satan; surely, he is your open enemy.²¹⁵

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السَّلَامِ
كَآفَّةً وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٩﴾

^a3:31; 9:117; 57:10. ^bSee 2:169.

dominion, so nothing in this world would suffice him. He will find satisfaction and sufficiency only in the fire of Hell. Similarly, the word مهادر (place of rest) points to the fact that the man who tramples on the rights of others in order to secure comfort for himself will find no rest in this life; his only rest will be in Hell.

214. Important Words:

رهؤوت (Compassionate) is derived from رءف. They say رءف به meaning, he pitied him, he was compassionate to him. رءفة (compassion) is like رءمة (mercy) but signifies greater tenderness, though the latter is certainly more extensive in meaning. رهؤوت means, compassionate or pitiful, and is one of the attributes of God, though like رءيم it may also be applied to human beings as in 9:128 (Lane).

Commentary:

Having completed the description of an extreme type of man belonging to the first-mentioned class of people, i.e. those who seek only the things of this world, the Quran now describes a

type of man belonging to the second-mentioned class, i.e. those who seek the good things of this world as well as of the next. And of these, it singles out here the noblest type whose aim is to seek the pleasure of God alone. To such men the good things of this world mean only such spiritual blessings as are vouchsafed to righteous men in this very world or such things as lead to the attainment thereof (2:202). Their sole concern is to seek the pleasure of their Lord, as if they had given away their souls for that very purpose. They use the things of this world, not because these things please them, but because God's law has made them the support of a life which they find pleasure in devoting to the service of God. Thus they approach the things of this world not directly but through God. To such servants of His, God is indeed most Compassionate and His compassion for them has a good leaven of tenderness in it.

215. Important Words:

السلم (submission) is derived from

210. But if you slip after the clear Signs that have come to

فَإِنْ زَلَلْتُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْكُمْ

سلم meaning, he was or became safe from danger or disease or defect, etc. سالمه means, he made peace with him.

اسلم means, he submitted; he embraced Islam. السلم therefore, means (1) submission; (2) peace; (3) the religion of Islam (Aqrab).

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

Commentary:

Having completed the description of the two classes of men along with their sub-divisions in the previous verses, the Quran now fittingly addresses believers generally and those weak in faith particularly, calling upon them to try to be reckoned among the best and noblest type of men. To attain this end they should do two things, one positive and the other negative: (1)

Individually they should come into submission or, in other words, they should enter Islam, wholly. Partial submission and half-hearted obedience will not do; and collectively they should try to offer submission all together, allowing no member to stand aside and remain outside the circle. (2) They should eschew the ways of Satan, who is an open enemy of Islam and is out to cut all holy ties asunder (2:169).

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

The word خطوات (footsteps) in the clause, *follow not the footsteps of Satan*, apparently seems to be superfluous, for, "following Satan" seems to give the same meaning as "following in his footsteps", but it is not so really. The word خطوات (footsteps) has been very wisely added to hint that those who follow Satan do so slavishly and blindly. Just as a blind man who cannot see his way, finds it convenient to place his hand on the shoulder of any passer-by and then blindly tread on in his footsteps, so do they.

you, then know that Allah is Mighty *and* Wise.²¹⁶

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

أَبَيَّنْتُ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢١٦﴾
 هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي ظُلَلٍ مِنَ الْغَمَامِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَقُضِيَ الْأَمْرُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٢١٧﴾

^a6:159; 16:34; 89:23.

216. Commentary:

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

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

217. Important Words:

يَأْتِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ (Allah should come to them) is a metaphorical expression, meaning, Allah should come to them

with His punishment, i.e. Allah should punish them. The metaphor *ايان الله* i.e. coming of God, is used by the Quran elsewhere also (16:27; 59:3). In contrast to this, the Quran uses the metaphor *توب الله* i.e. turning of God, to express His turning with mercy (2:38; 9:117.) Similarly, *ايان الله* i.e. the coming of the angels, indicates their coming with punishment.

ظلال (coverings) is the plural of *ظلة* (*zullah*) which is derived from *ظل* and *اطل* the latter word meaning, he or it afforded or cast a shadow. But whereas *ظل* (*zill*) the plural of which is *ظلال* or *اطلال* means, shadow, *ظلة* whose plural is *ظلال*, means, a covering or a shade, i.e. a thing that casts or gives a shade or a shadow (Aqrab). The word *ظلة* or *ظل* is generally used in connection with punishment (Mufradāt).

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

Commentary:

The form of speech has been changed here from the second to the

R. 26.

212. Ask of the children of Israel ^ahow many clear Signs We gave them. But whoso changes the gift of Allah after it has come to him, surely, then, Allah is severe in punishing.²¹⁸

سَلْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كَمَا آتَيْنَاهُم مِّنْ آيَاتِنَا
بَيِّنَاتٍ ۖ وَمَنْ يُّبَدِّلْ نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا جَاءَتْهُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٣٧﴾

^a17:102; 28:37.

third person. The verse has apparently been addressed to either disbelievers or to hypocrites and the weak in faith. If it be taken to refer to disbelievers, as the change of form in the address indicates, it would mean that by desisting from belief they are, as it were, waiting for the punishment of God, and the verse incidentally hints that appointed punishment would come to them through raining clouds. The reference is to the Battle of Badr, when God helped believers by sending down clouds and rain (Bukhārī), as was promised (25:26), and also sent down angels (8:10) who inspired the believers with courage and filled the hearts of the disbelievers with fear (8:13). Some of the disbelievers are reported to have actually seen the angels on that day (Zurqānī). The matter was then "decided"; for, on that memorable day, all the chief leaders of the Quraish were killed, the Muslims obtaining a decisive victory which broke the power of the enemy. The coming of clouds refers to the rainfall which on the battlefield of Badr proved a blessing for the Muslims. It made the sand firm for them, while the land on the side of the enemy,

being clayey, became slippery.

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

218. Commentary:

The preceding verses referred to those weak in faith who had not yet "come into submission wholly" (2:209). The position of these people was that they had received a favour of God but practically they sought to "change" it. They wished to be known as Muslims and yet to be free to live as they liked. This was exactly what the Israelites had done before. So the Quran fittingly turns here to the story of the children of Israel who afforded an object-lesson for Muslims. The Holy Prophet and, for that matter,

every reader of the Quran is asked to enquire of the descendants of Israel how many and how varied were the Signs which God had bestowed upon them as a favour and how persistent and impudent was their rejection of His Messengers and their disregard of His teachings.

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

For disbelievers the expression means converting a *مبشر* Prophet into a *منذر* Prophet. The Quran speaks of the Prophets of God as a *نعمة* i.e. a favour or gift (5:21) and it further holds that the mission of every Prophet is twofold—he is a *مبشر* or bearer of glad tidings for those who accept him, and he is a *منذر* or warner of coming punishment for those who reject him (18:57). Now when God sends a Prophet, He wishes the people to accept him as a bearer of glad tidings only, and it is the people themselves who reverse the position by rejecting him. In this way the people, as it were, "change" the *مبشر* Prophet into the *منذر* Prophet.

Again, for Israelites or Jews the

expression, *whoso changes the gift of Allah*, may mean that though they knew that their Scriptures embodied the word of God which was a favour and a blessing, yet they had the audacity to interfere with it in order to meet their own ends (5:14), thus "changing" the very substance of God's favour.

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

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

213. "The life of this world is made to appear attractive to those who disbelieve; and they scoff at those who believe. But those who fear God shall be above them on the Day of Resurrection; and Allah bestows His gifts on whomsoever He pleases without reckoning."²¹⁹

رُزِينِ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا
وَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ
اتَّقَوْا فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ
مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢١٣﴾

^a3:15; 18:47; 57:21. ^b3:38; 24:39; 35:4; 40:41.

219. Important Words:

زين (is made to appear attractive) is passive voice from زين which is derived from زان. They say زان الشيء or زين الشيء meaning, he decorated or embellished or beautified the thing so as to make it look attractive (Aqrab).

يسخرون (they scoff) is formed from سخر. They say سخر منه or سخر به i.e. (1) he mocked at or scoffed at or laughed at him; he derided or ridiculed him; (2) he cut a joke with him or made a jest of him; (3) he deemed him ignorant (Aqrab & Lane).

فوقهم (above them). The word فوق is the infinitive noun from فاق. They say فاقه i.e. he was above him or was superior to him (in any sense); he excelled him in rank, eminence, nobility, knowledge or any other good quality; he overcame him in argument (Aqrab & Lane).

يوم القيامة (the Day of Resurrection) is a compound expression being made up of يوم (day) and القيامة (resurrection). The word يوم (day) is also used to denote time generally as already explained in 1:4; and القيامة

(resurrection) is derived from قام meaning, (1) he stood up, or (2) he stood still. The expression قامت الساعة means, the appointed hour of resurrection came to pass. القيامة therefore, means the rising of the dead or the Resurrection (Aqrab). The word is also used for such occasions on which people leave their homes and gather in a place in response to a call, as in the Friday Prayers (Tāj). Thus figuratively the word القيامة (resurrection) may denote a state of unusual life and activity following a state of inertia and lifelessness. The word القيامة is really القيام (the act of standing) which is the noun-infinitive from قام, the final ة being added to denote the act of resurrection being sudden and all together (Mufradāt).

Commentary:

As the preceding verse spoke of those who change the gift of God by rejecting it or refusing to act upon it, the present verse fittingly provides the underlying reason of such rejection or refusal. The attention of these people is devoted to the affairs

of this world, which appear so attractive to them as to leave no room in their hearts for God and His Messenger. The فاعل or author of the act denoted by the verb زين which is in the passive voice, has not been named here; but elsewhere the Quran clearly states that it is Satan who has taken upon himself to make the things of this world look beautiful and attractive in the eyes of unbelieving people (15:40), who thus become engrossed in the affairs of the world.

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

The clause, *but those who fear God shall be above them on the Day of Resurrection*, does not mean that the triumph of the Faithful over disbelievers will be confined to the next world only. The words "the Day of Resurrection" have been added to point out that whereas believers will also triumph in this world, as borne out by the facts of history, their triumph in the next world will be

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

It will be noted that while making the promise of future greatness, the verse substitutes the expression "those who fear God" for the expression "those who believe". This change has been made to point to the fact that to obtain triumph mere ايمان (belief) is not enough; the Muslims should effect a real change in themselves, by attaining تقوى or fear of God. The phrase "without reckoning" may mean three things: (1) that the favours and gifts of God know no ending; for a thing that does not end cannot be reckoned; (2) that God bestows upon believers more favours and more gifts than they appear to deserve, the more so because believers spend in the cause of God to the utmost of their power without

214. Mankind were one community, then they differed among themselves, so "Allah raised Prophets as bearers of good tidings and as warners, and sent down with them the Book containing the truth that He might judge between the people wherein they differed. But now they began to differ about the Book, and none differed about it except those to whom it was given, after clear Signs had come to them, out of envy towards one another. Now has Allah, by His command,

كَانَ النَّاسُ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ
التَّبِيبِينَ مُبَشِّرِينَ وَمُنذِرِينَ وَأَنْزَلَ
مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
فِيمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ ۗ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ إِلَّا
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَتْهُمْ
الْبَيِّنَاتُ بَغْيًا بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ فَهَدَى اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ
أَمَنُوا لِمَا اخْتَلَفُوا فِيهِ مِنَ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ
وَاللَّهُ يَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٢١٤﴾

^a4:166; 6:49; 18:57.

keeping an account of what they spend, so God also showers His blessings upon them without reckoning; (3) that God treats the believers as friends; and as people do not keep an account of what they give to their friends, therefore God also keeps no account of what He gives to the Faithful.

As to the relevancy of this clause to the previous one, it may be noted that as God promised to grant special victory and unusual greatness to believers—so much so that they were to be "above" the disbelievers in all respects when the time of "resurrection" (i.e. the fall of the disbelievers and the rise of the believers) came—the question naturally arose, how out of all proportion to their efforts and

resources were the handful of believers going to attain this glorious triumph? In reply to this implied question, the Quran says that the people need not doubt this prophecy for the matter is not to be settled by ordinary rules of cause and effect but by the fact, so amply borne out by history, that "Allah bestows His favours on whomsoever He pleases without reckoning." In this connection we may well quote from Carlyle who, while speaking of the spectacular rise of Islam to power, says: "These Arabs, the man Mohammad, one spark on a world of what seemed black unnoticeable sand; but lo, the sand proves explosive powder, blazes heaven-high from Delhi to Granada!" (*On Heroes and Hero Worship*).

guided the believers to the truth in regard to which they (the unbelievers) differed; and Allah guides whomsoever He pleases to the right path.²²⁰

220. Commentary:

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

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

In the second case, the meaning of the clause would be that before the advent of a Prophet all men are like one people in the sense that they are all disbelievers, and disbelief and wrongdoing reign supreme in the world. But when a Prophet appears, all people, in spite of their mutual

differences, form one united front against him. This meaning is in harmony with the well-known saying of the Holy Prophet, الكفرة واحدة, i.e. all disbelievers (to whatever creed or religion they may belong) are one people.

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

The "difference" referred to in the verse at two separate places signifies two different kinds of disagreement. Before the advent of a Prophet people differ among themselves about false beliefs and idolatrous practices. But after the appearance of the truth, they begin to differ with regard to the truth itself. The advent of a Prophet, however, does not, as may be

215. ^aDo you think that you will enter Heaven while there has not come over you the condition of those who passed away before you? ^bPoverty and

أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَأْتِكُمْ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ^ط مَسَّهُمُ الْبَأْسَاءُ وَالضَّرَّاءُ وَزُلْزِلُوا

^a3:143; 9:16. ^bSee 2:178.

wrongly imagined, create differences. The differences are already there; they merely assume a new form. But whereas before a Prophet has made his appearance the people, in spite of their differences, look like one people, they become divided into two distinct camps, believers and disbelievers, after he has appeared.

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

The clause, *Now has Allah, by His command, guided believers to the truth in regard to which they (the unbelievers) differed*, refers to the advent of the Holy Prophet who was raised by God with a universal mission to remove the differences of all the peoples of the earth. The expression *بِأَمْرِهِ* translated as "by His command" may also mean "according

to His eternal decree". In the beginning of the world God willed that the final Law-giving Prophet should come with a universal mission and should constitute, as it were, the zenith of the system of النبوة or prophecy. Says the Holy Prophet "I was a Prophet of God while Adam was yet in the making between the body and the soul" (Tirmidhī).

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

afflictions befell them, and they were violently shaken ^auntil the Messenger and those who believed along with him said: 'When *will come* the help of Allah?' Yea, surely the help of Allah is nigh.²²¹

حَتَّى يَقُولَ الرَّسُولُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ
مَتَى نَصَرَ اللَّهُ ۗ أَلَا إِنَّ نَصْرَ اللَّهِ
قَرِيبٌ ﴿٢٢١﴾

^a12:111.

221. Important Words:

زلزل (violently shaken) is from زلزل or زل. They say زلزل الله الارض i.e. God made the earth quake violently or put the earth in a state of convulsion or violent motion. زلله means, he put him or it in a state of commotion or agitation or violent motion; he put him in a state of great fear or terror. الزلزلة which is the noun-infinitive from زلزل means: (1) violent shaking or commotion; (2) earthquake. The word is also used, especially in its plural form, to denote afflictions, miseries and trials (Aqrah & Lane).

Commentary:

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

Indeed, acceptance of the Message of Islam was no bed of roses, and Muslims were warned that they would have to pass through a fiery

ordeal of trials and tribulations before they could hope to achieve their sublime ideal. Incidentally, they were also told that the sufferings and hardships they had already undergone were nothing as compared with the trials that were yet in store for them. They were being mentally prepared to meet the storm which was brewing in Mecca and which reached its culmination in the Battle of the Ditch.

The word الجنة literally meaning garden and translated here as "Heaven" need not necessarily refer to the Heaven vouchsafed to the Faithful in the Hereafter. The word is also used to express a state of success and prosperity in this very world. Nay, God has definitely promised in the Quran that the righteous would have جنة or Heaven even in this life (55:47). In this sense the word "Heaven" in this verse would refer to the great success and prosperity promised to Muslims in the preceding verse.

The word حتى translated as 'until' also means, so that or in order that. According to the latter signification, the verse would mean that God proves or tries the Prophet and the believers with difficulties and hardships and withholds His help

216. They ask thee what they shall spend. Say: "Whatever of good and abundant wealth you spend should be for parents and near relatives and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer. And whatever good you do, surely Allah knows it well." 222

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۗ قُلْ مَا أَنْفَقْتُمْ
مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَلِلْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ
وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ ۗ وَمَا
تَفْعَلُوا مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١٦﴾

2:178; 4:37.

from them so that they may invoke it by earnest prayers and supplication. This is a beautiful way by which God manifests His love for the Prophet and his followers. He delights in treating them like children, wishing them to beg of Him so that He may give them.

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

222. Important Words:

خير (good and abundant wealth). See 2:181.

اقربين (near relatives) is the plural of

اقرب (derived from قريب) meaning, one nearer; a near relative (Aqrab).

Commentary:

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

In reply to their eager question, God's reply also indicates a sort of eagerness, as if He meant to impart to the Faithful the relevant commandment in its entirety, without waiting for any further question on their part; for whereas their question related only "what" they should spend, God's answer goes a step

217. "Fighting is ordained for you, though it is repugnant to you; but it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you, and it may be that you like a thing while it is bad for you. Allah knows *all things*, and you know not.²²³

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ وَهُوَ كُرْهٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ
وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ ۚ وَعَسَىٰ أَنْ تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ
لَّكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢١٧﴾

⁴8:6.

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

As to the other part of the anticipated question, i.e. on whom should the money be spent, the Quran says that money should be spent *on parents and near relatives* (lit. near ones) *and orphans and the needy and the wayfarer*. The five classes include all such persons as generally stand in need of help. The two first-mentioned classes include relatives, neighbours and friends who go to form the group that immediately surrounds a man and must claim his first attention, owing to personal relationship or personal contact. Then follow two classes that deserve help owing to their particular circumstance, orphans being without anyone to support them and the needy without any means of

support. Lastly comes the wayfarer, whose claim consists in his being a stranger with no friend, no relative and no supporter. By pointing out these five classes as deserving of help, the Quran desires to hint that unless the entire community, including those who come to stay with them temporarily, is prepared to fight in the cause of Allah and unless the well-to-do classes help the weaker ones in their preparation for the national struggle, Muslims cannot present a united front nor can their efforts bring about the desired result. Each and every person must gird up his loins to contribute his fullest possible share, and those who cannot do so for want of means must receive help from others who can afford such help.

223. Important Words:

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

Commentary:

In 2:215, God warned Muslims that in order to reach the promised goal they must pass through an ordeal of

R. 27.

218. They ask thee about fighting in the Sacred Month. Say: 'Fighting therein is a great transgression, but to hinder men from the way of Allah, and to be ungrateful to Him and the Sacred Mosque, and to turn out

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الشَّهْرِ الْحَرَامِ قِتَالٍ فِيهِ ۗ
 قُلْ قِتَالٌ فِيهِ كَبِيرٌ ۗ وَصَدٌّ عَن سَبِيلِ
 اللَّهِ وَكُفْرٌ بِهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِخْرَاجُ
 أَهْلِهِ مِنْهُ أَكْبَرُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَالْفِتْنَةُ

poverty, affliction and violent shaking. In conformity with the ordeal of poverty, verse 2:216 called upon them to be prepared to make great monetary sacrifices. Now in the verse under comment, God refers to the ordeal of affliction and violent shakings by drawing the attention of the Faithful to the menace of war surrounding them. As, however, Muslims were averse to war, the verse also enjoins them to put implicit trust in the guidance of Allah: for, *it may be that you dislike a thing while it is good for you.*

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

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

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

its people therefrom, is *a* greater sin with Allah; and *a* 'persecution is worse than killing.' And they will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith, if they can. And *b* whoso from among you turns back from his faith and dies while he is a disbeliever, it is they *c* whose works shall be vain in this world and the next. These are the inmates of the Fire and therein shall they abide.²²⁴

أَكْبَرَ مِنَ الْقَتْلِ^ط وَلَا يَزَالُونَ
يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ حَتَّى يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَنْ دِينِكُمْ
إِنْ اسْتَطَاعُوا^ط وَمَنْ يَرْتَدِدْ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ
دِينِهِ فِيمَتْ وَهُوَ كَافِرٌ فَأُولَئِكَ حَبِطَتْ
أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ^ع وَأُولَئِكَ
أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ^ع هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ^{٢٢٤}

^a2:192. ^b3:84, 91; 4:138; 5:55; 47:26. ^c3:23; 7:148; 18:106.

224. Important Words:

كبير (great transgression) really stands for ذنب كبير i.e. a great sin or great transgression or great offence. أكبر is in the comparative degree and means, a greater sin, etc.

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

يرتد (turn you back) and يرتد (turns back) are both derived from رد. They say رده i.e. he turned him back; and ارتد i.e. he himself turned back. ارتد عن الاسلام means, he turned back from Islam and reverted to a state of disbelief. مرتد means, one who turns back from

his religion, particularly from Islam; one who apostatizes (Tāj).

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

Commentary:

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

The Quran has already explained that if disbelievers violate the sanctity of a sacred month, Muslims may also

retaliate in a sacred month; for thus only can the sanctity of a sacred thing be safeguarded (2:195).

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

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

The verse acknowledges the sanctity of the Sacred Months and

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

The verse should not be understood to imply that Muslims did start a fight in a sacred month, it only purports to bring home to disbelievers the fact that in view of their persistent violation of highly sacred thing, it does not lie in their mouth to accuse Muslim of violating the sanctity of a sacred month.

The clause *it is they whose works shall be vain in this world and the next* does not mean that everything that a renegade from Islam, or, for that matter, everything that a disbeliever, does will go for nothing and produce no result. The clause only means that such actions of the renegades as they might do to weaken the cause of Islam in this world as well as those of their actions which they might perform in opposition to the teaching of Islam in order to win the pleasure of God in the world to come, will all be in vain. Thus the clause does not refer to such good actions as a person may perform in the state of unbelief; for, as the Quran expressly states, these must have their reward (99:8) which may either take the form of the acceptance of Islam or that of the lightening of punishment. The Holy Prophet is reported to have

219. Those who believe and "those who migrate and strive hard in the cause of Allah, it is these who hope for Allah's mercy; and Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful. 225

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا
وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوَلَّيكَ يَرْجُونَ
رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢١٩﴾

^a8:75; 9:20.

said about his uncle Abū Ṭālib that on account of the good treatment the latter extended to him, he is likely to be only lightly punished for his non-acceptance of Islam (Bukhārī). On another occasion when Ḥakīm bin Ḥizām, a nephew of his wife Khadījah, asked the Prophet whether he would get any reward for the good deeds he did before he accepted Islam, the Holy Prophet said, "your very acceptance of Islam is a reward thereof" (Bukhārī).

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

Finally, the clause, *and they will not cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith, if they can*, throws a flood of light on the attitude of disbelievers towards Muslim. They were not only the first to begin hostilities, but had also vowed not to cease fighting until Islam had been totally wiped out from Arabia and not a soul remained to call himself a Muslim. This clear testimony of the

Quran should be an eye-opener for those who accuse Muslims of being aggressors in their early struggle against disbelievers. The words, *if they can*, are highly eulogistic of the Companions of the Holy Prophet. Do what they could, disbelievers would never be able to turn back Muslims from their faith. Their love for Islam was too deep to be extirpated by persecution however severe and bitter it might be.

225. Important Words:

هجر (migrated) is derived from هجر. They say هجر الشيء i.e. (1) he cut it or he severed it; (2) he avoided it or kept away from it, or he gave it up. هاجر means, he left one place to settle in another (Aqrah). The word is particularly used about one who leaves a place where religion is persecuted and goes to a place where there is no such persecution, especially to a place where there exists means of serving and supporting the faith. The early Muslims who migrated from Mecca to Medina were known as مهاجرين i.e. those who left Mecca and settled in Medina with the intention of helping the cause of Islam.

جاهدوا (strive hard) is derived from جهد which means, he strove or laboured hard, taking extraordinary

220. They ask thee concerning "wine and the game of hazard. Say: 'In both there is great sin and also *some* advantages for men; but their sin is greater than their advantage.' And they ask thee what they should spend. Say: 'Spend What you can spare.' Thus does Allah make His commandments clear to you that you may reflect,²²⁶

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْخَمْرِ وَالْمَيْسِرِ ۖ قُلْ فِيهِمَا إِثْمٌ كَبِيرٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَإِثْمُهُمَا أَكْبَرُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِمَا ۚ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا يُنْفِقُونَ ۗ قُلِ الْعَفْوَ ۗ كَذَلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٢٠﴾

pains. جهاد في الامر means, he used his utmost power in prosecuting the affair. جاهد العدو means, he fought with the enemy exerting his utmost effort to repel him, his enemy doing the like. جهاد means, exerting one's utmost power in contending with an object of disapprobation; and this is of three kinds, namely, (1) with a visible enemy (2) with Satan, and (3) with one's self (Lane).

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

Commentary:

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

this world and the next.

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

226. Important Words:

الخمر (wine) is the noun-infinitive

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

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

اثم (sin) is the noun-infinitive from اثم meaning, he did what was unlawful. اثم means: (1) that which is unlawful (Aqrab); (2) that which keeps back a person from what is

good (Mufradāt); (3) punishment of sins and evil actions (Lane).

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

Commentary:

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

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

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

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

Attempts have been made during the ages by social reformers, and even the help of legislation has been enlisted in some countries, to put an end to wine-drinking. But all such attempts have so far failed. The only

experiment on record which met with complete success in this direction was that made in Arabia more than thirteen hundred years ago. A whole people steeped in drinking became absolute teetotallers by the mere declaration by the Prophet that God had forbidden drinking. This constitutes no small testimony to the great hold that Islam had come to possess on the minds of the unlettered and unruly Arabs, and to the wonderful transformation it had brought about in their lives.

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

When the principal means hitherto employed in Arabia for meeting the expenses of war, i.e. by casting lots, was prohibited, the question naturally arose as to how the expenses of war were to be met. Believers, realizing that they would themselves have to meet these expenses, hastened to inquire of the Holy Prophet as to how much they would have to contribute towards the expenses of war. In reply to their query they were told that they should spend *عفو* i.e. what may be spared after meeting the necessities of life. The word *عفو* by virtue of its twofold connotation, given under Important Words above, applies to two different classes of persons. Ordinary believers are required to spend what remains after their needs

have been met, i.e. what they can spare; and the higher class of believers are expected to go ahead and spend the best portion of their possessions. If, however, the clause be applied collectively to all believers, it would mean, that in times of war, they should retain for themselves only such portion of their possessions as may suffice to meet their bare necessities of life. The balance should be spent in the cause of God. This is what God wanted them to do. Actually, however, some of the Companions spent even more than that. For instance, when the Holy Prophet appealed for funds for the campaign of Tabūk, Abū Bakr brought his entire possessions and laid them at the feet of his Master. When asked how much he had retained for himself and his family and how much he had brought to be spent in Allah's cause, Abū Bakr replied that he had brought all that he possessed and that nothing remained in his house except the name of Allah (Tirmidhī, ch. on *Manāqib* & *Zurqānī*).

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

(1) "Alcoholism is an important factor in the causation of disease; and

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

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

(2) "The effects of consumption of alcohol are almost all due to its action upon the nervous system. Thus the immediate sensation of well-being is due to the flushing of the skin, suppressing temporarily the sense of chill, and to the fact that the sensibility to minor pains and inconveniences becomes blunted; whilst with larger doses the diminution of the power of self-control and sense of personal responsibility gives rise to excitability. In the secondary stage the fineness of the senses (hearing, touch, taste and vision) is affected, and this gives rise to an inability to

control bodily movements such as facial expression. In the advanced stage of drunkenness, the intellectual processes of judgement and control are suspended." (Enc. Brit. 14th Edition, i. 540).

(3) "Alcohol is a poison for protoplasm, that is, for the soft plastic material which is the essential constituent of every one of the minute cells that make up living organisms, whether animal or vegetable. Its poisonous effect in very dilute solution is easily shown on lowly organisms...

"The nerve cells of the brain, the most highly organised and delicate of the tissues, very early show the effect of alcohol. Many of the test observers of their own mental processes, such as Helmholtz and Huxley, have expressed themselves strongly as to the harmful effect of minute doses of alcohol on brain work. It would seem that the 'stimulating' effect is really due to the paralysis of the very highest nerve-centres, so that cheerfulness, wit, and recklessness have free play. Large numbers of psychometric experiments under conditions of the greatest accuracy prove that alcohol, in small dietetic doses, exercises a distinctly paralysing effect on the working of the brain. Some mental processes are quickened for a short time, and then a retarding effect shows itself, which is prolonged and much more than cancels the apparent beneficial result...

"There is universal testimony as to the close relationship between excessive drinking and breaches of the moral law and the law of the State. This is a direct consequence of

the paralysis of the higher faculties, intellectual and moral, and the resulting free play given to the lower inclinations" (Enc. Rel. Eth, i. 299-301).

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

"The vicious tendency of gambling has never been called in question. Lord Beaconsfield spoke of it as 'a vast engine of national demoralization'...In 12 years (1895-6 to 1906-7) there were 156 suicides or attempted suicides in England assigned to this cause, as well as 719 cases of theft or embezzlement and 442 bankruptcies. In view of these facts, it is not surprising that, in all civilized countries, gambling is subjected to definite legislative restraints...It is, as Herbert Spencer says, a kind of action by which pleasure is obtained at the cost of pain to another. The happiness of the winner implies the misery of the loser. This kind of action, therefore, is essentially anti-social; it sears the sympathies, cultivates a hard egoism, and so produces a general deterioration of character. It is a habit intrinsically savage...In an atmosphere of brotherhood no form of gambling could exist...But the immorality of gambling may be argued on higher grounds than a calculation of pleasure.

"(a) Every gambling transaction involves a transfer of property in one shape or another. When the gambler is asked why he stakes his money on a game or a race, his reply is, 'To add an interest to the game'. The interest thus added is, simply stated, the interest of acquisition. If the real object were, as is claimed, merely the

221. Yes, that you may reflect upon this world and the next. And they ask thee concerning "the orphans. Say: 'Promotion of their welfare is an act of great goodness. And if you intermix with them, they are your brethren. And Allah knows the mischief-maker from the reformer. And if Allah had willed, He would have put you to hardship. Surely, Allah is Mighty and Wise.' 227

فِ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ
الْيَتَامَىٰ ۖ قُلْ إِصْلَاحٌ لَّهُمْ خَيْرٌ وَإِنْ
تَخَالَطُوهُمْ فَاخْوَانُكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
الْمُفْسِدَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِ ۗ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ
لَأَعْتَبْتَكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

"4:128; 89:18; 93:10; 107:3.

sport and the excitement, then men might just as well wager counters, or, for the matter of that, agree to hand over all winnings to public charities. But this is not done. The transfer of property, in one shape or another, is essential to the act. There are only three ways in which property can be legitimately acquired—by gift, by labour, and by exchange. Gambling stands outside all of these.

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

"(c) It is, moreover, an appeal to chance. If in any contest skill comes in, odds are given or handicaps

arranged so as to equalize the chances as far as possible. To make chance the arbiter of conduct is to subvert the moral order and stability of life.

"(d) It concentrates attention upon lucre, and thereby withdraws attention from worthier objects of life" (Enc. Rel. Eth. vi. pp. 165-166).

227. Important Words:

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

تخالطوهم (intermix with them) is derived from خلط الشيء بالشيء. They say خلط الشيء بالشيء i.e. he mixed up one thing with the other. خالطه means, he mixed or mingled or associated with him; he

mixed or joined with him in his affairs; he became co-partner with him. *خالط قلبه هم* means, anxiety pervaded his heart (Aqrab & Lane).

اعتكم (put you to hardship) is derived from *عنت* which means, he fell into difficulty or hardship. *اعتته* means, he put him to hardship; he burdened him with a task that was beyond his power (Aqrab).

Commentary:

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

As Quranic verses follow a natural order—an order prompted and followed by the innermost nature of

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

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

God's attributes of "Powerful" and "Wise" placed at the end of the verse

222. And ^amarry not idolatrous women until they believe; even a believing bond-woman is better than an idolatress, although she may *highly* please you. And give not *believing women* in marriage to idolaters until they believe; *even* a believing slave is better than an idolater, although he may *highly* please you. These call to the Fire, but Allah calls to Heaven and to forgiveness by His command. And He makes His Signs clear to the people that they may remember.²²⁸

وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكَةَ حَتَّىٰ يُؤْمِنَ
وَلَأَمَةٌ مُّؤْمِنَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكَةٍ وََلَوْ
أَعَجَبْتُمْ^ج وَلَا تَنْكِحُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ حَتَّىٰ
يُؤْمِنُوا^ط وَاعْبُدُوا^ط مُؤْمِنِينَ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ مُّشْرِكٍ
وَلَوْ أَعَجَبَكُمْ^ط أُوَلِّيكِ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى
التَّارِ^ع وَاللَّهُ يَدْعُو إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ
وَالْمَغْفِرَةِ بِإِذْنِهِ^ج وَيُبَيِّنُ آيَاتِهِ لِلنَّاسِ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُونَ^ع

^{٢٧}
ع
١١

contain a general admonition to guardians of orphans to be very careful about their dealings with them. They should not delude themselves with the idea that, being weak and not yet possessed of proper understanding, the orphans are entirely at their mercy and that they can treat them as they like. For, if orphans are not strong and wise, God certainly is, and He would call them to account if they behaved unkindly or dishonestly towards these helpless and friendless creatures of His. By mentioning God's attributes of "Powerful" and "Wise" the Quran also means to exhort Muslims to look after orphans in such a way and give them such good education and training as should help them to grow strong and wise and become useful members of the community.

228. Important Words:

تنكحوا—*tankihū* (marry) and تنكحوا—*tunkihū* (give in marriage) are both derived from نكح. They say نكح المطر الارض i.e. the rain fell on the earth and became mixed with the soil. نكح امرأة means, he married a woman. نكح زوجته means, he went in unto his wife. نكح المرأة means, the woman married a man. انكح المرأة زيداً means, he gave the woman in marriage to Zaid. Thus نكح means, both (1) marriage and (2) coition with one's wife. The Quran itself uses the word in the latter sense in 2:231 (Aqrab & Mufradāt).

مشارك (an idolater) is derived from شرك. They say شركه فيه meaning, he shared the thing with him; he became his co-partner in it. اشركه في الامر means, he made him his co-partner in the

affair. *اشرك اليه* means, he attributed to, or set up with, him a co-partner. *شريك* means, a sharer, or a co-partner, or an associate, or a colleague, Thus *مشرك* means, one who attributes to, or sets up with, God a co-partner or co-partners, allotting to the latter all or some of the attributes of the former. *شرك* means, attributing to, or setting up with, God co-partners idolatry (Lane). *شرك* is of two kinds: *شرك عظيم* (the greater idolatry) signifying belief in a person or thing as being co-partner with God, and *شرك صغير* (the lesser idolatry), i.e. ascribing to some person or thing any of the attributes of God without looking upon him or it as His co-partner (Mufradāt). Other relevant terms are *شرك جلي* i.e. manifest idolatry, and *شرك خفي* i.e. hidden idolatry; and *شرك في الذات* i.e. believing one to be a co-partner with God in His person, and *شرك في الصفات* i.e. ascribing any of the attributes of God to someone. The term *مشركين* (idolaters) is generally confined to such peoples as set up co-partners with God and do not believe in any revealed Book.

Commentary:

The question of marriage with "idolatrous women" is intimately connected with the subject of war, for it is during war that Muslims, being away from their homes for a considerable time, are liable to be tempted to contract marriages with such women. This the Quran strictly disallows in the verse under comment, which also forbids the giving of believing women in marriage to idolatrous men. The prohibition is based on religions as

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

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

R. 28.

223. And they ask thee concerning menstruation. Say: 'It is a harmful thing, so keep away from women during menstruation, and go not in unto them until they are clean. But when they have cleansed themselves, go in unto them as Allah has commanded you. Allah loves those who turn to Him and loves those who keep themselves clean.' 229

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ قُلْ هُوَ آذَى^١
فَاعْتَرِلُوا النِّسَاءَ فِي الْمَحِيضِ وَلَا
تَقْرَبُوهُنَّ حَتَّى يَطْهَرْنَ^٢ فَإِذَا تَطَهَّرْنَ
فَأْتُوهُنَّ مِنْ حَيْثُ أَمَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ^٣

idolatry would become extinct in Arabia.

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

229. Important Words:

المحيض (menstruation) is derived from *حاض*. They say *حاضت المرأة* i.e. the woman menstruated; blood came

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

اذى (harmful thing) is the infinitive-noun from *اذى* meaning, he came to harm, or he was annoyed. *آذى* means, he or it caused a harm. *اذى* means, a harmful thing; a disagreeable thing; an annoyance; a hurt; a thing held to be unclean or filthy; a slight evil less than what is termed *ضرر* (Tāj).

اعتزلوا (keep away from) is derived from *عزل* *عزله عنه* means, he removed him or it from that (Aqrab). *اعتزل الشيء* or *اعتزل عنه* means, he kept away from the thing (Aqrab).

يطهرن (they are clean) and *تطهرن* (they have cleansed themselves) and *المتطهرين* (who keep themselves clean) are all

224. Your wives are a tilth for you; so approach your tilth when and how you like and send ahead *some good* for yourselves; and fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him; and give good tidings to those who obey.²³⁰

نِسَاؤُكُمْ حَرْثٌ لَّكُمْ ۖ فَأْتُوا حَرْثَكُمْ
أَيَّ شَيْئُمْ ۚ وَقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ ۗ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّكُمْ مُلْقَوَةٌ
وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٢٤﴾

derived from طهر which means, he or it became clean or free from dirt or filth, etc.; or he or it became pure. طهرت المرأة means, the woman became clean from the menstrual discharge, i.e. her flow of menses stopped. طهرت المرأة means, she became cleansed or purified by washing herself. اظهر (ittahara) is like تطهر giving the same meaning, i.e. he became cleansed or he kept himself clean (Aqrah).

Commentary:

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

The command referred to in the words *go in unto them as Allah has commanded you* is contained in, *and seek what Allah has ordained for You* (2:188), hinting that coition with one's wife should be in a manner productive of issue. A further hint to the above is contained in the

following verse.

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

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

230. Important Words:

حرت (tilth). See 2: 206.

انّ (how and when) means: (1) how; (2) when; and (3) where (Aqrab).

قدم (send ahead) is derived from قدم meaning, he came or stepped forward. قدم (qaddama) means, be sent forward or sent ahead; he put forward; he offered. قدم لنفسه means, he did good or evil that will in future bear good or bad fruit for himself. قدمه على غيره means, he preferred him to others. قدم له الثمن means, he paid him the price in advance (Aqrab). The Quran uses this expression to point out that whatever good or evil deed a man does, serves like a seed to bear a future crop. No action is ever lost.

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

Commentary:

This verse constitutes an eloquent testimony to the inimitably pure and dignified language of the Quran. An extremely delicate subject has been dealt with in a most decent and discreet manner, and the whole philosophy of marriage and conjugal relations has been given in one brief sentence, i.e. *Your wives are a tilth for you*. A woman is indeed like a tilth in which the seed of progeny is sown. The expression has a twofold significance depending on the meaning of the words اتوا حركتكم (approach your tilth). If approaching the tilth means coition, then the expression *approach your tilth how you like* would signify that: (1) you should go in unto your wife in a manner suited to her capacity as a tilth and in no other manner; and (2)

that both of you should try to keep your hearts pure at the time of coition so that the issue of the process may also share that purity. Says the Holy Prophet, "When the husband goes in unto his wife, they should both pray to God saying, 'Our Lord, keep both of us away from Satan; and if Thou grant us an issue, keep that also away from him'" (Muslim *Kitābun-Nikāh*).

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

A wise husbandman selects the best soil, prepares the best tilth, secures the best seed, and chooses the best time and manner of sowing it. So should you, for on the harvest which you are to reap in the form of children depends not only your own but also your community's entire

225. And make not Allah a target for your oaths that you may *thereby* abstain from doing good and acting righteously and making peace between men. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.²³¹

وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا اللَّهَ عُرْضَةً لِأَيْمَانِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَتُصَلِّحُوا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٥﴾

future. It is to this supreme fact that the clause, *and send ahead some good for yourselves*, so pointedly refers. In short, the likening of woman to tilth throws a flood of light on the morality of eugenics and sex. But the real basis of all happiness and progress is the fear of God and in the words, *fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him*, the Quran warns the Faithful never to lose sight of the real object of marriage even in the heat of carnal passions for even the seat of these passions is the source of the procreation of children and the continuation of a good race on the earth. Finally, the clause, *and bear glad tidings to those who obey*, contains a mighty *بشارة* (good news) for those who may obey this injunction, for it would not only make their own lives supremely happy but would also secure for them the best progeny for all time.

231. Important Words:

عرضة (target) is derived from *عرض*. They say *عرض الشيء* meaning, he exhibited or offered the thing; he placed it before or in sight of the people. *عرض لي عارض* means, a hindrance came across my way. Thus *عرضة* means: (1) an obstacle or hindrance in the way of a person; (2) a thing or person exposed to or confronting

someone or something; (3) a butt or target like the butt of archers; also figuratively, as one might say, "he became the *عرضة* or butt of their rebukes"; (4) an object; (5) an excuse or pretext (Aqrab & Tāj).

يمين (oaths) is the plural of *يمين* which is derived from *يمن*. They say *يمن الرجل* meaning, he approached him from the right hand side. *يمن الله فلانا* means, God made him blessed. *يمين* means, (1) the right hand side; (2) the right hand; (3) strength, blessing and good fortune; (4) an oath (Aqrab).

Commentary:

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

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

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللَّهُ بِاللَّغْوِ فِي أَيْمَانِكُمْ
وَلَكِنْ يُؤَاخِذُكُمْ بِمَا كَسَبْتُمْ
فُلُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٢﴾

^a5:90.

holy things, should not be used as an obstacle in the way of righteousness and of doing good to others.

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

232. Important Words:

يؤاخذكم (will call you to account) is derived from اخذ. اخذ means, he took hold of him; he seized him. آخذ means, he called him to account; he punished or chastised him (Aqrab).

اللغو (vain) is derived from لغا. They say لغا بكلمة i.e. he uttered or spoke a word. لغا الشيء means, the thing went in vain. لغا عن الطريق means he deviated from the path. لغا في قوله means, he spoke without proper care and thinking. اللغو therefore means, a speech or writing, etc. which is worthless and of no account and deserves no attention; it also means, the barking of a dog

(Aqrab). لغا means, he jested or joked with him (Lane). اللغو also means that which one utters without seriously meaning it (Muḥīṭ).

حليم (Forbearing) is derived from حلم meaning, he was forbearing and clement; he forgave and connived at offences; he controlled his temper in moments of anger; he was patient, sedate, or intelligent and calm and was not hasty in punishing or taking revenge. Thus حليم which is one of the attributive names of God, means, one who is forbearing and to whom the disobedience of the disobedient does not cause agitation or excitement, who is slow in punishing but quick in forgiving; it also means one who is intelligent (Aqrab, Lane & Mufradāt).

Commentary:

Oaths are very serious things, as mentioned in the preceding verse, but some men are in the habit of swearing without meaning anything. Such oaths as are referred to in this verse are oaths taken carelessly or as a matter of habit or those taken in a sudden fit of anger. The fact that such oaths are not liable to be punished does not, however, mean that indulgence in them is permitted. It only means that a person who swears vain oaths will not be punished on the basis of such oaths, i.e. these oaths

227. For those who vow *abstinence* from their wives, the *maximum* period of waiting is four months; then if they go back from the vow, surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.²³³

لِّلَّذِينَ يُؤۡلُونَ مِنۡ نِّسَائِهِمۡ تَرَبُّصًا
 اَرۡبَعَةَ اَشۡهُرٍ ۚ فَاِنْ فَاۡءُوۡا۟ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ
 عَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ﴿٢٢٧﴾

will not be legally treated as oaths. But he will certainly suffer the consequences of indulging in vain and useless talk. A Muslim is expected to avoid all things that are vain or purposeless and the Quran clearly enjoins it (23:4).

The clause, *He will call you to account for what your hearts have earned*, means that a person will have to answer for oaths he takes consciously and deliberately. The words, *what your hearts have earned*, also hint that God does not call a man to account for such passing thoughts as may flash across the mind and then disappear. Only such thoughts are punishable as are "earned" by the heart, i.e. cherished and retained by the mind.

The words, *Allah is Most Forgiving, Forbearing*, signify that as Allah knows your weaknesses, He treats you with forbearance, and does not call you to account for such of your acts as you might do without meaning them.

233. Important Words:

يُؤَلُونَ (vow) is derived from the root ا ل ي meaning, he fell short; or he fell short of doing what he ought to have done; or he was remiss. ا ل ي means, he swore. ا ل ي ت على الشيء means, I swore to do the thing. ا ل ي ت لا افعل كذا means, I swore that I would not do such a

thing. ا ل ي من زوجه شهرا means, he swore he would not go near his wife (i.e. not go in unto her) for a month. ا ت ل ي also gives the same meaning as ا ل ي i.e. he swore, as in 24:23. ا ي ل اء means, an oath or the act of swearing; and technically it means, a vow taken by a husband not to go near his wife (Aqrab & Lane).

تربص (waiting) is derived from ربص. They say ربص به i.e. he waited for a good or an evil to befall him. ربص means, he waited or he awaited, or he tarried waiting. ربص عن الامر means, he remained waiting and did not do the thing, i.e. he abstained from doing it (Aqrab).

Commentary:

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

228. And if they decide upon "divorce, then surely, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.²³⁴

229. And ^bthe divorced women shall wait concerning themselves for three courses;

وَإِنْ عَزَمُوا الطَّلَاقَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٢٨﴾

وَالْمُطَلَّقَاتُ يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ ثَلَاثَةَ قُرُوءٍ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَهُنَّ أَنْ يَكْتُمْنَ مَا

^a2:230; 33:50; 65:2, 3. ^b2:235; 65:5.

the succeeding verses, it speaks of real though revocable divorce. And finally (2:231) it speaks of irrevocable divorce. A really wonderful order designed to put as many obstacles as possible in the way of divorce which Islam recognizes and retains as a sort of necessary evil.

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

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

234. Important Words:

طلق (divorce) is derived from طلق

They say طلقت البائة i.e. the she-camel became loosened and free from the rope which tied her. طلقت المرأة من زوجها means, the woman left her husband and severed her connection with him. طلق المرأة زوجها means, the husband divorced his wife. الطلاق therefore, means, breaking of the tie of marriage; divorce (Aqrab).

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

Commentary:

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

With this verse begins a discussion of the Islamic law of divorce. According to this law, the husband possesses the right to divorce his wife, when legitimate necessity arises. But this right is to be exercised only on rare occasions and in exceptional circumstances.

and it is not lawful for them that they conceal what Allah has created in their wombs, if they believe in Allah and the Last Day; and their husbands have the greater right to take them back during that period, provided they desire reconciliation. And they (the women) have rights similar to those (of men) over them in equity; but ^amen have a rank above them. And Allah is Mighty and Wise.²³⁵

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي أَرْحَامِهِنَّ إِنْ كُنَّ يُؤْمِنَنَّ
بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَبِعَوْنِهِنَّ أَحَقُّ
بِرَدِّهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ إِنْ أَرَادُوا إِصْلَاحًا
وَلَهُنَّ مِثْلُ الَّذِي عَلَيْهِنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَلِلرِّجَالِ عَلَيْهِنَّ دَرَجَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ
حَكِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٥﴾

^a4:35.

235. Important Words:

قرء (courses) is the plural of قراء which is derived from قرأ. They say قرأ الشيء i.e. he collected or put together the thing. قرأت الناقة means, the she-camel became pregnant. قرأت الحامل means, the pregnant woman gave birth to a child. اقرأت المرأة or قرأت المرأة means, the woman became pure from menstrual discharge. اقرأت المرأة also means, she menstruated, thus giving contrary meanings. قرء (Qur'un or Qar'un), means: (1) a time, and this is the primary significance of the word, as we say هبت الريح لقرئها i.e. the wind blew at its fixed time; (2) menstruation; (3) period or state of purity preceding and following a menstrual discharge, i.e. the period between two menstruations; thus the word gives contrary meanings; (4) termination of a menstruation (Aqrab & Lane). The word قرء is also sometimes applied to the period of

menstruation and that of purity taken together, i.e. the whole month (Muḥīṭ). According to Rāghib قرء means the time or state when a woman leaves her state of purity and enters that of menstruation (Mufradāt).

ارحام (wombs) is the plural of رحم (riḥm or raḥim) which is from the verb رحم. They say رحمه i.e. he showed him mercy, he was tender towards him. رحمت المرأة means, the woman had complaint of the womb after childbirth. رحم (raḥim) or رحم (riḥm) means, (1) womb; (2) relationship, particularly by the female side. The expression ذوالالارحام or اولوالارحام means, relatives or kinsmen. In Muslim jurisprudence the expression signifies such relations as are not direct heirs (Lane).

بعولة (husbands), like بعول, is the plural of بعل. They say بعل الرجل i.e. the man became a husband. بعلت المرأة

means, the woman married and had a husband. بعل is like زوج meaning, both a husband and a wife, i.e. a partner in life; but the significance of husband is more common. The word also means, lord, master or owner of a thing; or a person in authority. The Arabs sometimes gave the name بعل to their idols also (Lane & Mufradāt).

المعروف (equity) is a common Arabic word which has been freely used in the Quran as well as the Ḥadīth. The word is derived from عرف. They say عرفه i.e. he knew it either by means of the five senses or by mental perception, as by reflection, or by consideration of the effect of a thing on the mind; he recognized it. المعروف means, (1) a known or commonly known thing; (2) an action or thing the goodness of which is known by reason, i.e. equity; (3) an action or thing the goodness of which is known by the law of Shari‘ah; (4) goodness, kindness and beneficence; (5) liberality coupled with moderation; (6) good fellowship with one’s family and others; (7) sincere and honest word of advice, etc. (Lane). It may be noted here that while taking the oath of allegiance from would-be Muslims, the Holy Prophet always used the word المعروف asking them to solemnly affirm that they would obey him in all معروف things, i.e. not only in such things as formed part of the divine law of Shari‘ah but also in those which the Prophet held to be good by his own reason.

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

Commentary:

In view of the fact that divorce is

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

The verse adds that as far as personal rights are concerned, the husband and the wife stand on a par, but in matters relating to discipline,

R. 29.

230. Such ^adivorce may be pronounced twice; then, ^beither retain them in a becoming manner or send them away with kindness. And it is not lawful for you that you take anything of what you have given them (your wives) unless both fear that they cannot observe the limits prescribed by Allah. But,

الطَّلَاقُ مَرَّتَيْنِ ۖ فَاِمْسَاكِ بِمَعْرُوفٍ اَوْ
تَسْرِیْحٍ بِاِحْسَانٍ ۗ وَلَا يَحِلُّ لَكُمْ اَنْ
تَاْخُذُوْا مِمَّا اَتَيْتُمُوْهُنَّ شَيْئًا اِلَّا اَنْ
يَخَافَا اِلَّا يَتَّقِيْمَا حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ ۗ فَاِنْ
خِفْتُمْ اِلَّا يَتَّقِيْمَا حُدُوْدَ اللّٰهِ ۗ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْهِمَا فِيمَا افْتَدَتْ بِهٖ ۗ تِلْكَ حُدُوْدُ اللّٰهِ

^aSee 2:228. ^b2:232; 4:130; 65:3.

the husband has superiority over the wife, i.e. in case of difference, the final authority is vested in him. The reasons for this are given in 4:35.

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

A word here about the significance of *قرء* seems essential. As explained under Important Words, this word

gives two distinct and contrary meanings, i.e. (1) menstruation; and (2) the period of purity between two menstruations. This has given rise to much difference of opinion among scholars of Muslim jurisprudence; Abū Bakr and ‘Umar among the Companions of the Holy Prophet and Abū Ḥanīfah and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal the Imāms of jurisprudence have held the view that by using the word *قرء* the Quran means menstruation and not the period of purity. On the contrary, ‘Ā’ishah (wife of the Holy Prophet) and Ibn ‘Umar among the Companions, and Mālik and Shāfi‘ī among the Imāms of jurisprudence have held the opposite view (*Muḥīṭ*). Opinions being so balanced, it would be open to a Muslim to take either of the two views, but a collective survey of relevant arguments, which need not be stated here, leads one to the conclusion that the first-mentioned view is perhaps the more reasonable of the two. If, however, one should desire to be on the perfectly safe side, it is open to him to take the word *قرء*

if you fear that they cannot observe the limits prescribed by Allah, then it shall be no sin for either of them in what she gives to get her freedom. These are the limits prescribed by Allah, so transgress them not; and whoso transgresses the limits prescribed by Allah, it is they that are the wrongdoers.²³⁶

فَلَا تَعْتَدُوا هَآءِ وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٢٣٦﴾

to signify the periods of menstruation and purity taken together, i.e. the whole month.

236. Important Words:

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

تسريح (send away) is the noun-infinitive from سرح (*sarraḥa*) which is derived from سرح. They say سرح المواشى i.e. the cattle went forth for grazing. سرح السيل means, the flood moved on leisurely. سرحه means, he sent him away. سرح فلان زوجته means, he sent away or divorced his wife (Aqrab).

حدود (limits) is the plural of حد i.e. a limit. حده means, he put a limit to it. حد الشيء عن الشيء means, he distinguished one thing from the other. الحد means, (1) the limit or the line where two things meet; (2) last limit or extremity of a thing; (3) that by which a thing may be defined; (4)

prescribed punishment for an offence. حدود الله means God's religious commandments (Aqrab).

Commentary:

This verse contains the fifth check on divorce. A man who seeks permanent and irrevocable separation from his wife must pronounce divorce on three separate occasions, each in a separate طهر i.e. period of purity, when the woman is clean and the man has not gone in unto her during that period of purity. The pronouncement of divorce twice or thrice at one and the same time is not permissible as the verse hints in the word مرتان (twice) which signifies a thing happening on two separate occasions and not two things happening at one and the same time. The Holy Prophet treated such collective pronouncements, whatever their number, as only one divorce (Tirmidhī & Dāwūd). According to Nasā'ī, the Holy Prophet was extremely angry when one day he was told that a person had made all the three pronouncements of divorce at one and the same time, and said: "Is the Book of God going to be made

a plaything while I am yet among you?"

After the pronouncement of the first two divorces, the husband can take back the divorced wife within 'iddah, i.e. the period of waiting, with or without her consent; but after the period of waiting is over, he can take her back only with her consent and that after remarrying her. After the pronouncement of the third divorce, however, the husband forfeits this right and the couple are finally separated. A Companion of the Holy Prophet once asked him saying, "The Quran has here spoken of two divorces only, whence comes in the third!" The Prophet referred him to the Quranic words *اوتسريح باحسان* i.e. *or send them away with kindness* meaning thereby that after the pronouncement of the first two divorces the husband was free to retain his wife if he so desired but if he wanted irrevocable separation, he should "send her away", i.e. divorce her a third time (Jarīr & Musnad). The point is further made clear in the succeeding verse. Thus the word *تسريح* here signifies *طلاق* i.e. divorce.

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

If, however, it is the wife who

demands separation, technically known as *خلع* (*Khul'a* lit. the putting off of clothes etc., or the shedding of old leaves), she must get it through a *Qāḍī* or judge as the word *خفتتم* (you fear), which has been put in the plural number, hints. In this case she has to part with, in full or in part, her dowry as well as the gifts she might have received from her husband, as agreed on by the parties or decided by the judge. The case of Jamīlah, wife of Qais bin Thābit, provides a good illustration of the exercise of the right of *Khul'a* by women. She demanded separation from her husband, Qais, on the ground that she did not like him, i.e. their temperaments being different, she could not get on with him. She was granted *Khul'a* by the Holy Prophet, but she had to return to her husband the orchard he had given her (Bukhārī). This right, however, is not to be exercised in a light-hearted manner. The Holy Prophet has condemned the action of a woman who demands separation from her husband without valid reason even as he has condemned the action of a man who divorces his wife without genuine cause. He is reported to have said, "A woman who seeks separation from her husband without a legitimate cause shall be deprived of the fragrance of heaven" (Dāwūd & Tirmidhī). This is what is hinted in the concluding words, *these are the limits prescribed by Allah, so transgress them not, etc.* The husband and the wife are both warned to fear God and refrain from transgressing the limits imposed by God for their own good.

231. And if he divorces her *the third time*, then she is not lawful for him thereafter, until she marries another husband; and, if he *also* divorces her, then it shall be no sin for them to return to each other, provided they are sure that they would be able to observe the limits prescribed by Allah. And these are the limits prescribed by Allah which He makes clear to the people who have knowledge.²³⁷

فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا تَحِلُّ لَهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ حَتَّى
تَنْكِحَ زَوْجًا غَيْرَهُ ۖ فَإِنْ طَلَّقَهَا فَلَا
جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا أَنْ يَتَرَاجَعَا إِنْ ظَنَّا أَنْ
يُقِيمَا حُدُودَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَتِلْكَ حُدُودُ اللَّهِ
يُبَيِّنُهَا لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٧﴾

237. Important Words:

يتراجعا (return to each other) is derived from رجع i.e. he returned; the word is used to indicate the coming together of people after their dispersal or separation, as they say تراجع القوم i.e. the people returned to the place from where they separated or left (Aqrab).

يقِيمَا (observe) is derived from اقام which means, he made a thing stand upright; he observed or duly performed a religious commandment or duty, etc. (Lane). See also under 2:4.

تنكح (she marries) is derived from نكح. They say نكح or نكحت meaning (1) he or she married a spouse; (2) he or she had sexual intercourse with his or her spouse. In the present verse the word is used in the latter sense. See also 2:222.

Commentary:

This verse refers to the third and final pronouncement of divorce after which the husband loses all right of reunion with his wife unless the

divorced woman marries another man and establishes conjugal relations with him, and is then formally divorced by him or he dies, leaving her free to marry another man. By the inclusion of this provision in the law of divorce, Islam has, on the one hand, enhanced the sanctity of the marriage tie which must not be trifled with and has declared unlawful the evil practice of *halalah* (حالة); and, on the other, it has afforded yet another opportunity to the couple who once had lived as husband and wife to become reunited if they so desired. The practice of *halalah* referred to above consists in a divorced woman marrying a man, other than her former husband, with the object of obtaining divorce from him and thereby making herself lawful for the former husband. Islam condemns this practice as a thing accursed (Tirmidhī ch. on *Nikāh*) and enjoins that marriage with and divorce from another husband must both be genuine.

232. And when you divorce your wives and ^athey approach the end of their *appointed* period, then ^beither retain them in a becoming manner; or send them away in a becoming manner; but retain them not wrongfully so that you may transgress. And whoso does that, surely wrongs his own soul. And do not make a jest of the commandments of Allah, and ^cremember the favour of Allah upon you and the Book and the Wisdom which He has sent down to you, whereby He exhorts you. And fear Allah and know that Allah knows all things well.²³⁸

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ
فَأَمْسِكُوهُنَّ بِمَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ سَرِّحُوهُنَّ
بِمَعْرُوفٍ ۖ وَلَا تُمْسِكُوهُنَّ ضَرَارًا
لِتَعْتَدُوا ۚ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ
نَفْسَهُ ۗ وَلَا تَتَّخِذُوا آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوًا
وَأذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ يَعِظُكُمْ
بِهِ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣٢﴾

﴿٢٣٢﴾

^a2:229; 65:5. ^bSee 2:230. ^c3:104.

238. Important Words:

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

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

يعظكم (exhorts you). يعظ is derived from وعظ meaning, he gave him good

advice; he exhorted him; he admonished him; he warned him of the consequences of his actions and called him to a life of righteousness (Aqrab).

Commentary:

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

As is apparent from the context, the divorce spoken of here refers to the revocable divorce. After such divorce has been pronounced, there are only two courses open to the husband. He may either retain his wife and treat her with kindness or he may part with her in a good and becoming manner.

R. 30.

233. And when you divorce women and they reach the end of their period, prevent them not from marrying their husbands, if they agree between themselves in a decent manner. This is an admonition for him among you who believes in Allah and the Last Day. It is more blessed for you and purer; and Allah knows but you do not know.²³⁹

وَإِذَا طَلَّقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَبَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا تَعْضُلُوهُنَّ أَنْ يَنْكِحْنَ أَزْوَاجَهُنَّ إِذَا تَرَاضُوا بَيْنَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ يُوعَظُ بِهِ مَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ أَزْكَ لَكُمْ وَأَطْهَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾

He is not allowed to maltreat her and keep her in a state of suspense. The concluding part of the verse warns the husband against making light of the commandments of Allah relating to the rights of women, adding that, God being All-Knowing, even the hidden intentions and secret machinations of man are known to Him.

239. Important Words:

لا تعضلوهن (prevent them not) is derived from عضل. They say عضلها i.e. he prevented or debarred her from marrying. The primary signification of عضل is the act of straitening or preventing, or withholding or debarring. عضل means, he straitened him in his affairs and intervened as an obstacle between him and that which he desired (Tāj).

تراضوا (agree between themselves) is derived from رضى i.e. he was pleased, or he was satisfied, or he agreed. تراضى القوم means, the people agreed between themselves, or they came to a mutual agreement (Aqrab).

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

Commentary:

The word "husbands" mentioned in this verse may refer either to former husbands or to prospective ones. In the former case, the clause, *and when you divorce women*, would be taken as referring to the first or second pronouncement of divorce. Sometimes, when a husband desires to take back his wife before pronouncing the third or irrevocable divorce, her offended relatives do not like her to go back to him again and therefore try to prevent her from remarrying him. The verse condemns that practice. In case the word "husbands" stands for prospective husbands, the above phrase would

234. And ^amothers shall give suck to their children for two whole years; *this is* for ^bthose who desire to complete the suckling. And the man to whom the child belongs shall be responsible for their (the mothers') food and clothing according to usage. ^cNo soul is burdened beyond its capacity. The mother shall not make *the father* suffer on account of her child, nor shall he to whom the child belongs make *the mother* suffer on account of his child, and the same is incumbent on the heir. If they both decide upon weaning *the child* by mutual consent and consultation, there is no blame on them. And if you desire to engage a wet-nurse for your children, there shall be no blame

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضَعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ
كَامِلَيْنِ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُتِمَّ الرَّضَاعَةَ^ط
وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ^ط لَا تُكَلَّفُ نَفْسٌ إِلَّا
وُسْعَهَا^ه لَا تَضَارُّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا
مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ^و وَعَلَى الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ
ذَلِكَ^ج فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِنْهُمَا
وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا^ط وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ
أَنْ تَسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَيْكُمْ إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُمْ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ^ط وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ^{١٢٤}

^a31:15; 46:16. ^b65:7. ^c2:287; 6:153; 7:43; 23:63; 65:8.

refer to the third or final divorce. Some men, even after the complete dissolution of their marriage, do not like the idea that their divorced wives should marry other persons and try to prevent them from contracting new marriages. This practice is also condemned in the clause, *prevent them not from marrying their (prospective) husbands*. Should the guardian of a divorced woman prevent her from remarrying her

former husband or should the former husband prevent her from marrying a new husband, she can do so with the permission of the *Qāḍī* or the judge. The verse under comment also implies a repudiation of the evil practice of pronouncing three divorces at one and the same time, because had it been permissible, the question of divorced women remarrying their former husbands would have been meaningless.

on you, provided you pay what you have agreed to pay, in a fair manner. And fear Allah and know that Allah sees what you do.²⁴⁰

240. Important Words:

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

حول (two years) is the dual of حول (a year) which is the infinitive-noun from حال meaning, it passed and became complete, or it passed from one state to another, or it turned round. A year is called حول because it is a complete measure of time and turns round and round. حول also means strength and power to do a thing as in the well-known formula لاحول ولا قوة الا بالله (Aqrab).

وسعها (its capacity) is derived from وسع meaning, it was sufficiently capacious. وسعت رحمة الله كل شيء means, God's mercy extends to, and covers, all things. وسع means capacity or power or strength. The infinitive-noun from it is سعة meaning, breadth; extent, capaciousness; capacity and power. ذوسعة means, a man of means or a man of ample means (Aqrab).

تكلف (is burdened) is derived from

كلف. They say كلفه امرأ i.e. he imposed on him the task of doing a thing, or he tasked him to do a thing. It also means, he ordered him to do a thing which was difficult or troublesome or inconvenient (Lane).

فصال (weaning the child) is derived from فصل which is both transitive and intransitive, meaning, he separated, he divided, he partitioned; or he got separated, he went forth from. فصلت المرأة الرضيعها means, the woman weaned her child, which is also a sort of separation between the woman and her suckling. هذا يوم الفصل means, this is the day when a decision or a distinction shall be made between the parties, i.e. the doers of good and the doers of evil. فصال means, the weaning of a child from its mother or from the woman who suckles it (Tāj).

تشاور (consultation) is derived from شاور. They say شاور العسل i.e. he extracted honey from the honey-comb. شاور الدابة means, he rode the beast in order to try it and ascertain its worth. اشار besides giving the same meaning as شاور, also means, he made a thing known, he pointed to a thing, he gave a word of good counsel to a person. شاوره means, he consulted him, he sought his advice and counsel. تشاور means, mutual consultation. مشورة and شورى give similar meanings, i.e. consultation (Aqrab).

235. And ^athose of you who die and leave wives behind, ^bthese (wives) shall wait concerning themselves four months and ten days. And when they have reached the end of their period, no sin shall lie on you in anything that they do with regard to themselves according to what is fair. And Allah is aware of what you do.²⁴¹

وَالَّذِينَ يُتَوَفَّوْنَ مِنْكُمْ وَيَذَرُونَ
أَزْوَاجًا يَتَرَبَّصْنَ بِأَنْفُسِهِنَّ أَرْبَعَةَ
أَشْهُرٍ وَعَشْرًا ۖ فَإِذَا بَلَغْنَ أَجَلَهُنَّ فَلَا
جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا فَعَلْنَ فِي أَنْفُسِهِنَّ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٥﴾

^a2:241. ^b2:229.

Commentary:

If a woman is divorced while she is pregnant, the question of the suckling of the child and the expense of bringing it up naturally arises. The verse under comment supplies the answer. It points out that the suckling of the child should last for two years at the maximum. But it is allowable to discontinue it before the end of that period, if the father and the mother both agree on that course. The verse also implies that the child is not to be weaned before the end of two years without the consent of its mother.

The expression لا تضار is both in the active and the passive voice; the clause والدة بولدها may therefore mean that: (1) the mother shall not make the father suffer on account of her child; and (2) the mother shall not be made to suffer on account of her child; and both meanings are equally good and equitable. The words مولود له (he to whom the child belongs) have been used here in preference to the

simpler word والد (father), in order to point to the inherent right of the father to possess the child and to his natural responsibility for its maintenance.

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

241. Important Words:

يتوفون (who die) is derived from توفى which is derived from وفى (*wafā*). They say وفى بالعهد i.e. he fulfilled his promise; وفى فلانا حقه. وفى (*waffā*) means, he gave him his right

236. And there shall be no blame on you in throwing out a hint regarding a proposal of marriage to *these* women or in keeping *the desire* hidden in your minds. Allah knows that you will think of them *in this connection*. But make not a contract with them in secret, except that you say a fair word. And resolve not on the marriage tie until the prescribed period

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ
خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ
عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنَّكُمْ سَتَذْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا
تُوَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا
مَعْرُوفًا وَلَا تَعْزِمُوا عَقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ
حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ وَعَلِمُوا أَنَّ
اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ

in full. اوفى gives both the meanings ascribed to وفى and وفى (*waffā*) above. توفى means, he took something in full, as they say توفى حقه i.e. he got or obtained his right in full. توفى الله زيدا means, God took away the soul of Zaid, leaving the body behind; God caused Zaid to die. توفى فلان means, his soul was taken away, i.e. he died. In this case God is متوفى (*mutawaffī*) and the man who dies is متوفى (*mutawaffā*). الوفاة means, death (Aqrab). The Quran says: *اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا* i.e. *God takes away the souls of men at the time of their death; and He also takes away the souls of men that have not died, during their sleep* (39:43). The Arabic idiom, which has the support of the Quranic usage, definitely shows that wherever God is فاعل (i.e. subject) and a being having a soul is مفعول به (i.e. object) the word توفى invariably means, the taking away of the soul.

Commentary:

After having dealt with the question

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

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

reaches its end. And know that Allah knows what is in your minds; so beware of it. And know that Allah is Most Forgiving, Forbearing.²⁴²

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وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿۳۳﴾

242. Important Words:

عرضتم (you throw out a hint) is derived from *عرض* meaning, he offered and presented a thing. *عرض* (*'arrada*) means, he used an expression susceptible of different meanings; or he mentioned a thing not clearly but in a veiled manner; or he used words to convey a sense which the words used did not definitely convey (Lane).

خطبة (proposal of marriage) is derived from *خطب* meaning, he addressed a meeting; he delivered a sermon. *خطب المرأة* means, he proposed marriage to her. *خطبة (khuṭbah)* means, a sermon. *خطبة (khiṭbah)* means, a proposal of marriage (Aqrab).

اكنتم (you keep hidden) is derived from *كن*. They say *كن الشيء* or *اكن الشيء* meaning, he concealed the thing; he covered it. *كان* means, a veil or covering, and *مكون* means, covered or hidden (Aqrab).

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

Commentary:

According to this verse, it is forbidden to a man to make an open proposal of marriage to a widow

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

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

The divine attributes, "Forgiving" and "Forbearing", have been mentioned at the end of this verse not to hint that breach of these injunctions would find God Forgiving and Forbearing but that the exigencies of the circumstances required stricter laws in this matter, but as God knows human

R. 31.

237. It shall be no sin for you if you divorce women while you have not touched them, nor settled for them a dowry. But provide for them—the rich man according to his means and the poor man according to his means—a provision in a becoming manner, an obligation upon the virtuous.²⁴³

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ طَلَقْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ مَا
لَمْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ أَوْ تَفْرِضُوا لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً
وَمِمَّا كُنْتُمْ عَلَى الْوُضْعِ قَدَرُهُ وَعَلَى
الْمُقْتِرِ قَدَرُهُ مَتَاعًا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ حَقًّا
عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

weaknesses, He has been lenient in this respect. So whatever commandment has now been given, must be faithfully followed and all lapse be honestly guarded against.

243. Important Words:

متعوهن (provide for them) is derived from متع (mata'a). They say متع الشيء i.e. the thing became tall. متع الرجل means, the man became well off. متع الله فلانا (matta'a) means, God granted him life and the necessaries thereof. متع المرأة المطلقة means, he provided his divorced wife with necessaries of life. تمتع به أو منه or استمتع means, he profited by it for some length of time; he was afforded an opportunity to enjoy it. المتاع means, things that are necessary for life without affording opulence; things useful and necessary such as food, clothing, household utensils, furniture, etc. (Aqrab & Lane).

المقتِر (the poor man) is derived from قتر. They say قتر على عياله i.e. he was niggardly towards his family. اقتتر الرجل means, the man became poor and straitened in circumstances. المقتِر is,

therefore, one who is poor, one who is in straitened circumstances (Aqrab).

Commentary:

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

238. And if you divorce them before you have touched them, but have settled for them a dowry, then half of what you have settled *shall be due from you*, unless they remit, or he, in whose hand is the tie of marriage, should remit. And that you should remit is nearer to righteousness. And do not forget to do good to one another. Surely, Allah sees what you do.²⁴⁴

وَإِنْ طَلَّقْتُمُوهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَمْسُوهُنَّ
وَقَدْ فَرَضْتُمْ لَهُنَّ فَرِيضَةً قِصْفًا مَا
فَرَضْتُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْفُونَ أَوْ يَعْفُوا الَّذِي
بِيَدِهِ عَقْدَةُ النِّكَاحِ ۗ وَأَنْ تَعْفُوا أَقْرَبُ
لِلتَّقْوَى ۗ وَلَا تَتَسَوُا الْفَضْلَ بَيْنَكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٣٨﴾

244. Important Words:

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

Commentary:

If the divorce occurs after the dowry has been fixed but before the husband has gone in unto his wife, the husband shall pay half of the fixed dowry. The clause, *he in whose hand is the tie of marriage*, may signify either the husband or the guardian of the divorced woman, because whereas after marriage the tie of marriage is in the hands of the husband, before marriage the guardian of the woman also holds it in his hands. In the former case, the word يعفو would mean that the husband should try to give more than half the dowry, or if he has already paid the whole dowry, he should try

not to demand its return. If, however, the clause, *he in whose hand is the tie of marriage*, be considered to apply to the guardian of the divorced woman, the word يعفو would mean that he should try to remit or relinquish her right, i.e. he should, so far as possible, strive to give up, even that which he is entitled to receive on behalf of the divorced woman. But God certainly prefers that the husband should make a greater show of generosity.

This is how each party is exhorted to vie with the other in acting generously toward the other, the husband by paying more than what is obligatory on him, and the wife or her guardian by relinquishing what is due to her. If people truly inculcated such a spirit of sacrifice, the earth would indeed become a heaven.

The expression, *And that you should remit is nearer to righteousness*, applies to the husband

239. "Watch over Prayers, and the middle Prayer, and stand before Allah submissively.²⁴⁵

حِفْظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ
الْوَسْطَىٰ ق وَتَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ ﴿٢٣٩﴾

^a23:10; 70:35.

particularly; but it may, in its broader significance, apply to all—husbands, wives and guardians.

245. Important Words:

حفظ (watch) is derived from حفظ. They say حفظه i.e. he preserved it, or he guarded or protected it, or he prevented it from perishing or becoming lost. حفظ القرآن means, he memorized the Quran, i.e. he learned it by heart. حافظ على الامر means, he watched over the thing; he attended to it carefully and constantly (Tāj).

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

Commentary:

This verse which stresses the importance of, and regularity in, Prayers appears to be rather oddly placed, being wedged in between verses relating to conjugal relations. But the very context of it explains the deep philosophy of its meaning. After marriage one is apt to become a little lax in Prayers, particularly the supererogatory *Tahajjud* Prayer (said in the latter part of the night). Besides, family life multiplies the cares of both man and woman. Hence, the necessity of urging

married people to be regular and punctual in their Prayers.

الصلوة الوسطى (the Middle Prayer) has been differently explained. According to some commentators it is the *Tahajjud* Prayer, and according to others, it is the morning Prayer, while according to yet others, it is the late afternoon or 'Aṣr Prayer. The latter view is supported by some of the sayings of the Holy Prophet. For it is on record that on his missing the right time of the 'Aṣr Prayer, when engaged in repelling the repeated attacks of the enemy in the Battle of the Ditch, and having been obliged to combine it with the *Maghrib* or the sunset Prayer, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "May God curse the Jews (who were mostly responsible for this battle)! They have prevented us from saying our Middle Prayer in time" (Bukhārī). Truly speaking, however, the "Middle Prayer" is the Prayer which happens to fall within busy hours. In the above-quoted tradition, the Holy Prophet called the 'Aṣr the "Middle Prayer," because it fell within extraordinarily busy hours. The Quran has placed this verse here to point out firstly, that married life, and for that matter any life however busy, should not make man slack in the observance of Prayers, and secondly, that like this verse, the Middle Prayer is one which is surrounded by