

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER
CHAPTER 22
SURAH AL-HAJJ

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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HOLY QURAN

CHAPTER

022

SURAH AL-HAJJ

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Introduction and Summary

We now come to a new series of four Surahs, dealing with the environments and methods contributing to our spiritual progress, as the last five Surahs dealt with the Messengers who came in various ways to proclaim the Truth and conquer evil. See Introduction to Surah 17.

The subject matter of this particular Surah is concerned mainly with the spiritual implications of the Sacred House, the Pilgrimage, the Sacrifice, Striving and Fighting in defence of Truth when attacked, and other acts that make for Unselfishness and uproot Falsehood.

On the chronology of this Surah, opinion is divided. Some parts were probably revealed in the latter Makkan period, and some in Madinah. But the chronological question has no significance here.

Summery- Importance of the spiritual Future, and need of firmness in Faith: help for Truth and punishment for Evil (22:1-25, and C. 151).

Purity, Prayer, Humility, and Faith are implied in the Pilgrimage; in solemn Sacrifice we express our gratitude and reverence to Allah, and our desire to share food with our poorer brethren; Striving and Fighting in defence of Truth when attacked are necessary as tests of self-sacrifice (22:26-48, and C. 152).

The promptings of Evil may hinder the work of Allah's Prophet, but that work must triumph, and the Mercy and Truth of Allah must be established; therefore serve Allah humbly, and He will protect and help you (22:49-78, and C. 153).

C.151 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(22:1-25)

*Will not mankind take warning
From the dreadful consequences of Evil
Clearly proclaimed to them? Will they
Dispute about Allah and the Life of the Future?
They have only to look around and within them,
And they will see vestiges of the Plan
And Purpose of Allah. Let them not halt
Between Good and Evil: Allah's Message as well
As his Messenger must win against all
Obstacles. Only the evil will be brought
To shame and agony. The good-whose speech
Is pure and conduct worthy of praise-
Will have a meed of refinement, beauty, and bliss.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ...

1. O mankind!
fear your Lord!

...إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيمٌ (١)

For the convulsion of the Hour (of Judgment) will be a thing terrible!

C2770. The serious issues involved are indicated by showing how terrible the consequences will be for those who disobey Allah's Will.

The terror will only be for those who rebel and disobey: the righteous will not suffer from it, but on the contrary will be greeted by angels with joy (21:103).

يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّا أَرْضَعَتْ...

2. The Day ye shall see it, every mother giving suck shall forget her suckling-babe,

...وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمَلٍ حَمْلَهَا...

and every pregnant female shall drop her load (unformed):

...وَتَرَى النَّاسَ سُكَارَى...

thou shalt see mankind as in a drunken riot,

C2771. Three metaphors are used for the extreme terror which the Awful Day will inspire,

1. No mother abandons the baby at her breast in the greatest danger; yet that will happen in this Dreadful Hour.
2. An expectant mother carries the young life within her with great pride and hope: yet the terror will overpower the hope at this "Hour", and nature's working will be reversed,

3. Men ordinarily retain their self-possession except under intoxication: here, without intoxication, they will be driven to frenzy with terror.

...وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكَارَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ (٢)

yet not drunk:

but dreadful will be the Wrath of Allah.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ...

3. And yet among men there are such as dispute about Allah, without knowledge,

...وَيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطَانٍ مَّرِيدٍ (٣)

and follow every evil one obstinate in rebellion!

كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُ مَن تَوَلَّاهُ فَأَنَّهُ يُضِلُّهُ وَيَهْدِيهِ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ (٤)

4. About the (Evil One) it is decreed that whoever turns to him for friendship, him will he lead astray, and he will guide him to the Penalty of the Fire.

C2772. Even after the warnings there are men who are such fools as to turn away from Allah who created them and cherishes them with His love and care; they become outlaws in His Kingdom, making friends with Satan, which is a rebel in Allah's Kingdom.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِن كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ...

5. O mankind!

if ye have a doubt about the Resurrection,

C2773. If they really have doubts in their minds about the life after death, they have only to turn their attention either to their own nature, or to the nature around.

How wonderful is their own physical growth, from lifeless matter, to seed, fertilised ovum, foetus, child youth, age, and death!

How can they doubt that the Author of all these wonderful stages in their life here can also give them another kind of life after the end of this life?

Or, if they look at external nature, they see the earth dead and barren and Allah's fertilising showers bring it in to life, growth and beauty in various forms.

The Creator of this great pageant of Beauty can surely create yet another and a newer world.

...فَلَمَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ... ..

(consider) that We created you out of dust,

...ثُمَّ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ... ..

then out of sperm,

...ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ... ..

then out of a leech-like clot,

...ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُخَلَّقَةٍ وَعَيْرٍ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِنَبِّئَنَّ لَكُمْ... ..

then out a morsel of flesh, partly formed and partly unformed, in order that We may manifest (Our Power) to you;

C2774. The stages of man's physical growth from nothing till he completes the cycle of this life are described in words whose accuracy, beauty, and comprehensiveness can only be fully understood by biologists.

Parallel to the physical growth, may be understood man's inner growth, also by stages and by Allah's creative artistry.

...وَنُقَرِّئُ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى... ..

and We cause whom We will to rest in the wombs for an appointed term,

C2775. That is,

- a male or a female child,
- a fair or an ugly child,
- a good or a rebellious child, etc,

involving countless mysteries of genetics and heredity.

...ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِيَبْلُغُوا أَشُدَّكُمْ...

then do We bring you out as babes, then (foster you) that ye may reach your age of full strength;

...وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُؤَوَّقَى...

and some of you are called to die,

...وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ أَرْدَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا...

and some are sent back to the feeblest old age, so that they know nothing after having known (much).

C2776. Cf. 16:70.

In that passage the mystery of our life was used to illustrate Allah abundant mercies and favours to us.

Here it is used to illustrate Allah's power in giving us a future Life of even greater promise.

...وَتَرَىٰ الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً...

And (further), thou seest the earth barren and lifeless,

...فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَأَنْبَتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ (٥)

but when We pour down rain on it, it is stirred (to life), it swells, and it puts forth every kind of beautiful growth (in pairs).

C2777. A beautiful nature passage so pregnant in meaning that the earnest student wonders what magic and truth have been conveyed in so few words.

M. Pickthall's Egyptian colleague Prof. Ghamrawi (see M. Pickthall's note on this passage) was but expressing the feelings of every careful student of the Quran.

The "subtlety and wealth of meaning" are indeed marvellous.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ...

6. This is so, because Allah is the Reality:

...وَأَنَّهُ يُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ وَأَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٦)

it is He Who gives life to the dead,

and it is He Who has power over all things.

C2778. All these beautiful and well-articulated pageants of life and nature point to the Reality behind them i.e. Allah.

They will perish, but He is eternal. They are but shadows; the substance (if such a word may be used) is in Him. They are shifting and illusory, in the sense that they have neither permanency or independent existence. But they have a sort of secondary reality in the sense in which a shadow is a real reflection from substance. No Power or Existence has any meaning except as a reflection of Allah's ineffable Glory.

وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ آتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهَا...

7. And verily the Hour will come: there can be no doubt about it,

وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ مَنْ فِي الْقُبُورِ (٧)

or about (the fact) that Allah will raise up all who are in the graves.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُّنِيرٍ (٨)

8. Yet there is among men such a one as disputes about Allah, without knowledge, without guidance, and without a Book of Enlightenment --

C2779. For "**Book of Enlightenment**- see 3:184 and n. 490.

1 understand "**knowledge**- to mean here their human knowledge or intelligence, -guidance" to mean divine guidance, such as comes from Allah or prophets of Allah or a revelation from Allah, and the "**Book of Enlightenment**- to mean the fundamental guide to good conduct, the clear rules laid down in all Dispensations to help men to lead good lives.

The "**Book of Enlightenment**" may mean a revealed Book in which case "Guidance" would refer to divine guidance through a prophet of Allah. (R).

ثَانِي عَطْفِهِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ...

9. (Disdainfully) bending his side, in order to (lead men) astray from the Path of Allah;

...لَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ...

for him there is disgrace in this life,

C2780. Some Commentators think this refers to Abu Jahl, but the words are perfectly general, and this type of man is common in all ages.

The same may be said about verse 3 above:

Commentators give the immediate reference to one Nadhar ibn Harith.

...وَنُذِيفُهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ (٩)

and on the Day of Judgment we shall make him taste the Penalty of burning (Fire).

ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتَ يَدَاكَ...

10. (It will be said):

"This is because of the deeds which thy hands sent forth,

...وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ (١٠)

for verily Allah is not unjust to His servants."

C2781. 'What you suffer is the consequence of your own sinful deeds; Allah is just; He is not unjust in the least to any of His creatures'. (R).

Section 2

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَعْْبُدُ اللَّهَ عَلَى حَرْفٍ...

11. There are among men some who serve Allah, as it were, on the verge:

C2782. They are men whose minds are not firm: they will have faith, if all goes well with them, but as soon as they are tried, they are found wanting.

They are a different kind from hypocrites. It is not fraud or double dealing that is their sin: it is a weak mind, petty standards of judging right by success, a selfishness that gives nothing but asks for all, a narrow-mindedness that does not go beyond petty mundane calculations- a "nicely calculated less or more" of the good things of this world.

They fail in both worlds, and their failure in this world is patent for every on-looker.

...فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرٌ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ...

if good befalls them, they are, therewith, well content;

...وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةٌ انْقَلَبَ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ...

but if a trial comes to them, they turn on their faces:

...خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ (١١)

they lose both this world and the Hereafter:

that is loss for all to see!

يَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُ وَمَا لَا يَنْفَعُهُ...

12. They call on such deities, besides Allah, as can neither hurt nor profit them:

C2783. To such minds religion does not mean high endeavour, self-sacrifice for noble ends, the recognition of Allah's infinite world, but just a small concession to formalism, perhaps a present to an idol (literal or figurative), perhaps attendance at worship if it can be done without trouble!

It is false gods they worship, and the more they worship, the more they stray.

...ذَلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلَالُ الْبَعِيدُ (١٢)

that is straying far indeed (from the Way)!

يَدْعُو لِمَنْ ضَرُّهُ أَقْرَبُ مِنْ نَفْعِهِ...

13. (Perhaps) they call on one whose hurt is nearer than his profit:

C2784. Such false worship is not always neutral, bringing neither harm nor good.

Perhaps the harm comes first, and there is no help from Allah. Such minds are themselves demoralised, and render themselves unfit for help!

...لَيْسَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَلَيْسَ الْعَشِيرُ (١٣)

evil, indeed, is the patron, and evil the companion (for help)!

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ...

14. Verily Allah will admit those who believe and work righteous deeds,

...جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ...

to Gardens, beneath which rivers flow:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ (١٤)

for Allah carries out all that He plans.

C2785. Allah is both true to His promise, and He has power to give full effect to His Will and Plan.

مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْصُرَهُ اللَّهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ...

15. If **any** think that Allah **will not help him** (His Messenger) in this world and the Hereafter,

...فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ لِيَقْطَعْ...

let him stretch out a rope to the ceiling and cut (himself) off:

C2786. There is some difference of opinion as to the interpretation of this verse.

Most Commentators are agreed that the pronoun "him" in the second line ("will not help him") refers to the holy Prophet, and that the "any" in the first line refers to his enemies, who wished to see him destroyed and removed from the scene of his labours.

Ibn Abbas, whom I have followed here, and whom a great number of Commentators follow, construes the later clauses in the sense given in the text. Freely paraphrased, it means-

if the enemies of Allah's Messenger are enraged at his successes, let them fix a rope to their ceiling and hang themselves.

Samaa is thus rendered by the word "ceiling".

If **Samaa** is rendered by the word "heaven" (the usual meaning), the paraphrase would be:

if the enemies of Allah's Messenger are enraged at the help he gets from heavens, let them stretch a rope to heavens, and see if they can cut off the help in that way! -in other words, they are fools if they think they can intercept Allah's help by their petty devices!

...فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ يُدْهِبَنَّ كَيْدُهُ مَا يَغِيظُ (١٥)

then let him see whether his plan will remove that which enrages (him)!

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ...

16. Thus have We sent down Clear Signs;

C2787. Instead of plotting against Allah's Messenger, the unbelievers should observe the Clear Signs which he has brought, and obey and follow the Guidance which comes from Allah according to the Laws which He has fixed by His holy Will and Plan.

...وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَهْدِي مَن يُرِيدُ (١٦)

and verily Allah doth guide whom He will!

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالصَّابِئِينَ ...

17. Those who believe (in the Qur'an), those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Sabians,

C2788. For **Sabians**, see n. 76 to 2:62.

They are also referred to in 5:69.

In both those passages the Muslims are mentioned with the Jews, Christians, and Sabians, as receiving Allah's protection and mercy.

Here, besides the four religions, there is further mention of Magians and Polytheists: it is not said that they would receive Allah's Mercy, but only that Allah will judge between the various forms of faith. (R).

... وَالنَّصَارَى وَالْمَجُوسَ وَالَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا ...

Christians, Magians, and Polytheists --

C2789. This is the only place where the **Magians** (Majas) are mentioned in the Quran.

Their cult is a very ancient one. They consider Fire as the purest and noblest element, and worship it as a fit emblem of Allah. Their location was the Persian and Median uplands and the Mesopotamian valleys, their religion was reformed by Zardusht (date uncertain, about B.C. 600?). Their scripture is the Zend-Avesta, the bible of the Parsis. They were "the Wise men of the East" mentioned in the Gospels. (R).

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ...

Allah will judge between them on the Day of Judgment:

... إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ (١٧)

for Allah is witness of all things.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ
وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُومُ ...

18. Seest thou not that to Allah bow down in worship all things that are in the heavens and on earth -- the sun, the moon, the stars;

C2790. Cf. 21:79, and n. 2733.

All created things, animate and inanimate, depend on Allah for their existence, and this dependence can be construed as their Sajdah or bowing down in worship.

Their very existence proclaims their dependence. How can they be objects of worship?

...وَالْجِبَالُ وَالشَّجَرُ وَالذَّوَابُّ...

the hills, the trees, the animals;

...وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ...

and a great number among mankind?

...وَكَثِيرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ...

But a great number are (also) such as are fit for Punishment:

For **haqqa** in this verse. Cf. 15:64, n. 1990.

...وَمَنْ يُهِنِ اللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُ مِن مُّكْرَمٍ...

and such as Allah shall disgrace -- none can rise to honor:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَاءُ (١٨)

for Allah carries out all that He wills.

C2791. Cf. 22:16. There the argument was that those who work in harmony with Allah's Law and Will will get their reward, for Allah always carries out His Plan.

Here is the Parallel argument: those who defy Allah's Will must suffer pain and disgrace, for Allah is well able to carry out His Will.

هَذَانِ خَصْمَانِ اخْتَصَمُوا فِي رَبِّهِمْ...

19. These two antagonists dispute with each other about their Lord:

C2792. Two antagonists: i.e., parties of antagonists, viz.,

- Men of Faith, who confess their Lord and seek to carry out His Will,
- and Men who deny their Lord and defy His Will.

...فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قُطِعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِّن نَّارٍ...

but those who deny (their Lord) -- for them will be cut out a garment of Fire:

...يُصَبُّ مِن فَوْقِ رُؤُوسِهِمُ الْحَمِيمُ (١٩)

over their heads will be poured out boiling water.

يُصْنَعُ بِهِ مَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ وَالْجُلُودُ (٢٠)

20. With it will be scalded what is within their bodies, as well as (their) skins.

C2793. The punishment, will be all-pervading, not merely superficial.

وَلَهُمْ مَقَامِعٌ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ (٢١)

21. In addition there will be maces of iron (to punish) them.

C2794. Read this with the next verse.

There will be no escape from the final Punishment adjudged after the time of repentance is past.

كَلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ غَمٍّ أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا...

22. Every time they wish to get away therefrom, from anguish, they will be forced back therein, and (it will be said),

...وَدُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ (٢٢)

"Taste ye the Penalty of Burning!"

Section 3

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ...

23. Allah will admit those who believe and work righteous deeds, to Gardens beneath which rivers flow:

C2795. In 22:14 above, was described the meed of the Righteous as compared with the time-servers and those who worshipped false gods (Verses. 10-13):

here we have the case of those who were Persecuted, abused, prevented from entering the Ka'bah and deprived of all that makes life smooth, agreeable, and comfortable. For them the meed is described in a way that negative these afflictions:

- costly adornments (as against being stripped of home and property),
- purity of speech (as against the abuse they received),
- the Path of the Lord of Praise (as against the fierce and malignant persecution to which they were subjected).

...يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا ...

they shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearls;

...وَلِبَاسُهَا مِنْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ (٢٣)

and their garments there will be of silk.

...وَهُدُوا إِلَى الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ...

24. For they have been guided (in this life) to the purest of speeches;

...وَهُدُوا إِلَى صِرَاطِ الْحَمِيدِ (٢٤)

they have been guided to the Path of Him Who is worthy of (all) praise.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَالْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ...

25. As to those who have rejected (Allah), and would keep back (men) from the Way of Allah, and from the Sacred Mosque,

...الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَاءً الْعَاكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ ...

which We have made (open) to (all) men -- equal is the dweller there and the visitor from the country --

...وَمَنْ يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِإِلْحَادٍ بِظُلْمٍ نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ (٢٥)

and any whose purpose therein is profanity or **wrongdoing** -- them will We cause to taste of a most grievous Penalty.

C2796. All these were enormities of which the Pagan clique in power in Makkah before and during the Hijrah.

C.152 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(22:26-48)

*For our spiritual growth are provided
Symbols and means of expression in our ordinary
Lives. Such is the pilgrimage, meant
To gather men and women from far and near
To share in sacrifice, and prayer and praise.
In an age-old centre of worship. The sacrifices
Too, are symbols of Piety of Heart,
A longing to share with fellow-men
In the bounties of Allah. In the Fight for Truth
Is tested our purity of motives, unselfishness
Of aim, and devotion to Right at the coat
Of Self. Fearless must we fight; for Truth
Has often been flouted, but must finally win.*

Section 4

وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ الْبَيْتِ...

26. Behold! We gave the site, to Abraham, of the (Sacred) House, (saying):

C2797. The site of Makkah was granted to Abraham (and his son Ismail) for a place of worship that was to be pure (without idols, the worship being paid to Allah, the One True God) and universal, without being reserved (like Solomon's Temple of later times) to any one People or Race. (R).

... أَنْ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهَّرْ بَيْتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ

السُّجُودِ (٢٦)

"Associate not any thing (in worship) with Me;
and sanctify My House for

- those who compass it round,
- or stand up,
- or bow,
- or prostrate themselves (therein in prayer).

C2798. Cf. 2:125.

Note that here the word **qaimin** ('who stand up for prayer') occurs in place of 'akifin (who use it as a retreat).

In practice the meaning is the same. Those who go for a retreat to the Ka'bah stay there for the time being.

وَأَذِّنْ فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا ...

27. "And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot

... وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِنْ كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ (٢٧)

and (mounted) on every kind of camel, lean on account of journeys through deep and distant mountain highways;

C2799. When the Pilgrimage was proclaimed, people came to it for every quarter, near and far, on foot and mounted.

The "**lean camel**" coming after a fatiguing journey through distant mountain roads typifies the difficulties of travel, which Pilgrims disregard on account of the temporal and spiritual benefits referred to in the next verse.

لِيَسْهَبُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ...

28. "That they may witness the benefits (provided) for them,

C2800. There are benefits both for this our material life and for our spiritual life.

- Of the former kind are those associated with social intercourse which furthers trade and increases knowledge.
- Of the latter kind are the opportunities of realising some of our spiritual yearnings in sacred associations that go back to the most ancient times.

Of both kinds may be considered the opportunities which the Pilgrimage provides for strengthening our international Brotherhood.

...وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ ...

and celebrate the name of Allah, through the Days appointed,

C2801. The three special days of Hajj are the 8th, 9th, and 10th of the month of Dhu al Hijjah, and the two or three subsequent days of Tashriq:

see the rites explained in n. 217 to 2:197.

But we may ordinarily include the first ten days of Dhu al Hijjah in the term.

... عَلَى مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِّنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ ...

over the cattle which He has provided for them (for sacrifice):

C2802. The great day of commemorative Sacrifice ('Id al Adha) is the 10th of Dhu al Hijjah: the meat then killed is meant to be eaten for food and distributed to the poor and needy. (R).

...فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ (٢٨)

then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed ones in want.

... ثُمَّ لِيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ ...

29. "Then let them complete the rites prescribed for them,

C2803. Tafath- the superfluous growth on one's body, such as nails, hair, etc., which it is not permitted to remove in Ihram.

These may be removed on the 10th day, when the Hajj is completed: that is the rite of completion.

... وَلْيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ ...

perform their vows,

C2804. The Pilgrimage is completed by the performance of these rites.

The Pilgrim should carry in mind the purification he gained in performing his pilgrimage. Then comes the final Tawaf.

...وَلْيَطُوفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ (٢٩)

and (again) circumambulate the Ancient House."

...ذَلِكَ

30. Such (is the Pilgrimage):

...وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمْ حُرْمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ...

whoever honors the sacred rites of Allah, for him it is good in the sight of his Lord.

...وَأُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ الْأَنْعَامُ إِلَّا مَا يُثَلَى عَلَيْكُمْ

Lawful to you (for food in pilgrimage) are cattle except those mentioned to you (as exceptions):

C2805. The general food prohibitions will be found in 2:173 , 5:4-5, and 6:121, 138-146.

They are meant for health and cleanliness, but the worst abominations to shun are those of false worship and false speech.

Here the question is about food during Pilgrimage. Lawful meat but not game is allowed.

...فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ...

but shun the abomination of idols,

...وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ الزُّورِ (٣٠)

and shun the word that is false --

حَقَّاءَ لِلَّهِ عَبِيدَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ...

31. Being true in faith to Allah, and never assigning partners to Him:

...وَمَنْ يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَتَخَطَفَهُ الطَّيْرُ...

if anyone assigns partners to Allah, he is as if he had fallen from heaven and been snatched up by birds,

...أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ (٣١)

or the wind had swooped (like a bird on its prey) and thrown him into a far-distant place.

C2806. A parable full of meaning. The man who falls from the worship of Allah, The One True God, is like a man who falls from heaven, His being taken up with false objects of worship is like the failing man being picked up in the air by birds of prey. But the false objects of worship cannot hold him permanently in their grip.

A fierce blast of wind- the Wrath of Allah- comes and snatches him away and throws him into a place far, far away from any place he could have imagined-into the hell of those who defied Allah. (R).

...ذَلِكَ...

32. Such (is his state):

...وَمَنْ يُعَظِّمُ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ ...

and whoever holds in honor the Symbols of Allah, (in the sacrifice of animals),

C2807. Sha'air, symbols, signs, marks by which something is known to belong to some particular body of men, such as flags.

In 2:158 the word was applied to Safa and Marwa: see n. 160 there.

Here it seems to be applied to the rites of sacrifice. Such sacrifice is symbolical: it should betoken dedication and piety of heart.

See below, [22:37](#).

...فَأَيُّهَا مِنَ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ (٣٢) ...

such (honor) should come truly from piety of heart.

لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى...

33. In them ye have benefits for a term appointed:

C2808. In them: in cattle, or animals offered for sacrifice.

It is quite true that they are useful in many ways to man, e.g., camels in desert countries are useful as mounts or for carrying burdens, or for giving milk, and so for horses and oxen: and camels and oxen are also good for meat, and camel's hair can be woven into cloth; goats and sheep also yield milk and meat, and hair or wool. But if they are used for sacrifice, they become symbols by which men show that they are willing to give up some of their own benefits for the sake of satisfying the needs of their poorer brethren.

...ثُمَّ مَحَلُّهَا إِلَى الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ (٣٣)

in the end their place of sacrifice is near the Ancient House.

C2809. Ila: towards, near.

The actual sacrifice is not performed in the Ka'bah, but at Mina, five or six miles off, where the Pilgrims encamp: see n. 217 to 2:197.

Thumma: then, finally, in the end; i.e., after all the rites have been performed, Tawaf, Safa and Marwa, and 'Arafat.

Section 5

وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا...

34. To every people did We appoint rites (of sacrifice),

...لِيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُمْ مِّنْ بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ...

that they might celebrate the name of Allah over the sustenance He gave them from animals (fit for food),

C2810. This is the true end of sacrifice, not propitiation of higher powers, for Allah is One, and He does not delight in flesh or blood (22:37), but a symbol of thanksgiving to Allah by sharing meat with fellow-men.

The solemn pronouncement of Allah's name over the sacrifice is an essential part of the rite.

...فَالِهَكُمْ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَلَهُ أَسْلِمُوا...

but your Allah is one Allah:

submit then your wills to Him (in Islam)

...وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ (٣٤)

and give thou the Good News to those who humble themselves --

C2811. The good news: i.e. the Message of Allah, that He will accept in us the sacrifice of self for the benefit of our fellow-men.

الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ...

35. - To those whose hearts, when Allah is mentioned, are filled with fear,

...وَالصَّابِرِينَ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَهُمْ...

- who show patient perseverance over their afflictions,

...وَالْمُقِيمِي الصَّلَاةِ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ (٣٥)

- keep up regular prayer,

- and spend (in charity) out of what we have bestowed upon them.

C2812. Some qualities of Allah's devotees are mentioned here, in ascending order:

1. Humility before Allah makes them receptive, and prepares them to listen to Allah's Message;
2. fear of Allah, which is akin to love, touches their heart, and penetrates through their inmost being;
3. they are not afraid of anything in mortal life; they take their trials patiently, and they go on in a course of righteousness with constancy;
4. their prayer now is not a matter of form, but a real communion with Allah, with a sense of confidence such as a faithful servant feels in the presence of a kind and loving master;
5. and gratitude to Allah, as shown by practical acts of charity to all fellow-creatures.

وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ...

36. The sacrificial camels we have made for you as among the Symbols from Allah:

in them is (much) good for you:

...فَادْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَافَّ...

then pronounce the name of Allah over them as they line up (for sacrifice):

C2813. See [n. 2808 to 22:33](#) above.

What was expressed in general terms is applied here more particularly to camels, the most precious and useful animals of Arabia, whose mode of slaughter for sacrifice is different from that of smaller animals:

the special word for such sacrifice is *Nahr* (108:2).

...فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْقَانِعَ وَالْمُعْتَرَّ...

when they are down on their sides (after slaughter), eat ye thereof, and feed such as (beg not but) live in contentment, and such as beg with due humility:

C2814. There are ethics in begging, as in charity. No approval is given to arrogant and insolent begging, though the relief of distress of all kinds, deserved and undeserved, is included in charity.

But those who beg with humility and those who receive gifts with gratitude and contentment are both mentioned for special attention.

Charity should not be given for show, or to get rid of importunate demands. It should find out real needs and meet them.

...كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرْنَاهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ (٣٦)

thus have we made animals subject to you, that ye may be grateful.

لَنْ يَبَالَ اللَّهُ لِحُومِهَا وَلَا دِمَائِهَا وَلَكِنْ يَبَالُهُ التَّقْوَى مِنْكُمْ...

37. It is not their meat nor their blood, that reaches Allah:

it is your piety that reaches Him:

...كَذَلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللَّهَ عَلَى مَا هَدَاكُمْ...

He has thus made them subject to you, that ye may glorify Allah for His guidance to you:

C2815. The essence of sacrifice has been explained in n. 2810.

No one should suppose that meat or blood is acceptable to the One True God. It was a Pagan fancy that Allah could be appeased by blood sacrifice. But Allah does accept the offering of our hearts, and as a symbol of such offer, some visible institution is necessary.

He has given us power over the brute creation, and permitted us to eat meat, but only if we pronounce His name at the solemn act of taking life, for without this solemn invocation, we are apt to forget the sacredness of life.

By the invocation we are reminded that wanton cruelty is not in our thoughts, but only the need of food. Now if we further deny the greater part of the food (some theologians fix the proportion at three-quarters or two-thirds) for the sake of our poorer brethren in solemn assembly in the precincts of the Haram (sacred territory), our symbolic act finds practical expression in benevolence, and that is the virtue sought to be taught.

We should be grateful to Allah for His guidance in this matter, in which many Peoples have gone wrong, and we should proclaim the true doctrine so that virtue and charity may increase among men.

...وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (٣٧)

and proclaim the Good News to all who do right.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدَافِعُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا...

38. Verily Allah will defend (from ill) those who believe:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُورٍ (٣٨)

verily, Allah loveth not any that is a traitor to faith, or shows ingratitude.

Section 6

أَذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَاتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظَلِمُوا...

39. To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight) because they are wronged --

C2816. Several translators have failed to notice that **yuqatalina** (in the best-approved texts) is in the passive voice, "against whom war is made", -not "who take arms against the unbelievers" as Sale translates it.

The clause -and verily ... their aid- is parenthetical. Verse 40 connects on with "they are wronged". The wrong is indicated: 'driven by persecution from their home, for no other reason than that they worshipped the One True God'.

This was the first occasion on which fighting -in self-defence- was permitted. This passage therefore undoubtedly dates from Madinah.

...وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ (٣٩)

and verily, Allah is Most powerful for their aid --

الَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّا أَنْ يَقُولُوا رَبُّنَا اللَّهُ...

40. (They are) those who have been expelled from their homes in defiance of right -- (for no cause) except that they say, "Our Lord is Allah."

...وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ...

Did not Allah check one set of people by means of another,

C2817. To allow a righteous people to fight against a ferocious and mischief-loving people was fully justified. But the justification was far greater here, when the little Muslim community was not only fighting for its own existence against the Makkan Quraish, but for the very existence of the Faith in the One True God.

They had as much right to be in Makkah and worship in the Ka'bah as the other Quraish; yet they were exiled for their Faith. It affected not the faith of one peculiar

people. The principle involved was that of all worship, Jewish or Christian as well as Muslim, and of all foundations built for pious uses.

...لَهْدَمْتُ صَوَامِعُ وَيَبِيعُ وَصَلَوَاتٍ وَمَسَاجِدُ يُذَكَّرُ فِيهَا اسْمُ اللَّهِ كَثِيرًا...

there would surely have been pulled down monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is commemorated in abundant measure.

...وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ...

Allah will certainly aid those who aid His (cause);

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ (٤٠)

for verily Allah is Full of Strength, Exalted in Might, (Able to enforce His Will).

C2818. 'Aziz means:

- Exalted in power, rank, dignity;
- Incomparable;
- Full of might and majesty;
- Able to enforce His Will.

The last signification is the one that predominates here.

...الَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ...

41. (They are) those who, if We establish them in the land,

- establish regular prayer
- and give regular charity,

...وَأْمُرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ...

- enjoin the right and forbid wrong:

C2819. "Enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong" is an essential duty of the Muslim Ummah and one of the main purposes for which it has been raised.

See 3:104, 110; 9:71, 111-112.

...وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ (٤١)

with Allah rests the end (and decision) of (all) affairs.

وَأِنْ يَكْذِبُواكَ فَفَعَلْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ ...

42. If they treat thy (mission) as false, so did the Peoples before them (with their Prophets),

C2820. It is nothing new if the Prophet of Allah is accused of imposture. This was done in all ages; e.g,

- Noah (7:64);
- Hud the prophet of the 'Ad people (7:66);
- Salih the prophet of the Thamud (7:76);
- Abraham (21:55);
- Lut (7:82);
- Shu'aib the prophet of the Madyan people (7:85)
- and also of the Companions of the Wood (15:78).

The case of Moses is mentioned apart, as his people survived to the time of our Prophet and survive to the present, and they frequently rebelled against Moses (2:49-61).

... قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَتَمُودُ (٤٢)

the People of Noah, and 'Ad, and Thamud;

وَقَوْمُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ (٤٣)

43. Those of Abraham and Lut;

وَأَصْحَابُ مَدْيَنَ ...

44. And the Companions of the Madyan people:

C2821. Were they the same as the Companions of the Wood?

See n. 2000 to 15:78.

...وَكُذِّبَ مُوسَى...

and Moses was rejected (in the same way).

...فَأْمَلَيْتُ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ...

But I granted respite to the Unbelievers and (only) after that did I punish them:

...فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ (٤٤)

but how (terrible) was My rejection (of them)!

C2822. My Wrath on them, and the complete reversal of their fortune in consequence.

...فَكَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ...

45. How many populations have We destroyed, which were given to wrongdoing!

...فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَى عُرُوشِهَا...

They tumbled down on their roofs.

C2823. The roofs fell in first, and the whole structure, walls and all, came tumbling after, as happens in ruins. The place was turned upside down.

...وَبِنَاءٍ مُّعْتَلَةٍ وَقُصْرٍ مَّشِيدٍ (٤٥)

And how many wells are lying idle and neglected, and castles lofty and well-built!

C2824. In a dry country like Arabia, a well stands as a symbol for a living, flourishing population, and many place-names mean "the well of so-and-so" e.g., Bir 'Ali, a village just south of Madinah the quality of whose drinking water is famous, or Abyar Ibn Hassan, a noted stopping place on the road from Makkah to Madinah about 92 miles from Madinah.

...أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ...

46. Do they not travel through the land,

...فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا أَوْ آذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا...

so that their hearts (and mind) may thus learn wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear?

C2825. The word for "**heart**" in Arabic speech imports both the seat of intelligent faculties and understanding as well as the seat of affections and emotions.

Those who reject Allah's Message may have their physical eyes and ears, but their hearts are blind and deaf. If their faculties of understanding were active, would they not see the Signs of Allah's Providence and Allah's Wrath in nature around them and in the cities and ruins if they travel intelligently?

...فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ (٤٦)

Truly it is not their eyes that are blind but their hearts which are in their breasts.

وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ...

47. Yet they ask thee to hasten on the Punishment!

But Allah will not fail in His promise.

C2826. If Allah gives respite, those to whom it is given have a real chance of repentance and amendment. He will not curtail His promise of respite.

But on the other hand He has promised to call everyone to account for his deeds, and this involves justice and punishment for sin.

His promise will also come true. It is foolish to try to hasten it. Time with Him is nothing. We keep count of time for our relative calculations. His existence is absolute, and not conditioned by Time or Place. What we call a thousand years may be nothing more than a day or a minute to Him.

...وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ (٤٧)

Verily a day in the sight of thy Lord is like a thousand years of your reckoning.

وَكَايِّنَ مَنْ قُرِّيَّةٍ أُمَّلَتْ لَهَا وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ...

48. And to how many populations did I give respite, which were given to wrongdoing?

C2827. The argument begun in 22:45 is now rounded off and closed.

... ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ ...

In the end I punished them.

... وَإِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ (٤٨)

To Me is the destination (of all).

C.153 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)

(22:49-78)

*The power of Evil is in insidious suggestion:
They are only a trial to those whose hearts
Are inclined to evil, but Truth doth shine
The nobler for the Believers, by the grace
And guidance of Allah. Martyrs who give
Their all in the cause of Allah will find
A provision ample and eternal. The finest
And subtlest mysteries are but proofs of the goodness
Of Allah, Dispute not about rites and ceremonies:
Follow the Straight Way. Seek for worship
The Only True God, and strive in His service,
That ye may be witness among men
To Allah's Truth, as the Prophet is witness to you.*

Section 7

فَلْيَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّمَا أَنَا لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ (٤٩)

49. Say:

"O men! I am (sent) to you only to give a clear warning:

C2828. It is Messenger's duty to convey the warning in the clearest terms to the wicked.

It is not part of his duty to coerce them or judge them, or bring on the Punishment for them. That only rests with Allah. But the warning itself is full of Mercy: for it gives the highest hope to the repentant sinner who turns and comes to Allah.

فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ (٥٠)

50. "Those who believe and work righteousness, for them is forgiveness and a sustenance most generous.

C2829. The "**sustenance**" must be construed in the widest sense, spiritual as well as intellectual and physical.

The reward of righteousness is far more generous than any merit there may be in the creature following the Will of his Creator.

وَالَّذِينَ سَعَوْا فِي آيَاتِنَا مُعَاجِزِينَ أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ (٥١)

51. "But those who strive against Our Signs, to frustrate them, they will be Companions of the Fire."

C2830. It will not be in their power to **frustrate** Allah's Plan; all they will do is to go further and further down in their spiritual state, deeper and deeper in their Hell.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَسُولٍ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ...

52. Never did We send a Messenger or a Prophet before thee,

...إِلَّا إِذَا تَمَنَّى أَلْفَى الشَّيْطَانُ فِي أُمْنِيَّتِهِ...

but, when he framed a desire, Satan threw some (vanity) into his desire:

C2831. Prophets and messengers (the distinction is explained in n. 2503 to 19:51) are but human. Their actions are righteous and their motives pure. But in judging things from a human point of view, the suggestion may come to their mind (from Satan) that it would be good to have power or wealth or influence for furthering Allah's cause, or that it may be good to conciliate some faction which may be irreconcilable.

In fact, in Allah's Plan, it may be the opposite. Allah, in His mercy and inspiration, will cancel any false or vain suggestions of this kind, and confirm and strengthen His own Commands and make known His Will in His Signs or revelations.

...فَيَنْسَخُ اللَّهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ...

but Allah will cancel anything (vain) that Satan throws in,

...ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللَّهُ آيَاتِهِ...

and Allah will confirm (and establish) His Signs:

...وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ (٥٢)

for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom:

C2832. This clause and the similar clause at the end of the next verse are parenthetical.

...لِيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطَانُ فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ ...

53. That He may make the suggestions thrown in by Satan, but a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease ,

C2833. If any suggestion comes to the human mind that is not in accordance with Allah's Will and Plan, it has two opposite effects:

- to evil minds it is a trial and temptation from the Satan,
- but to the mind well-instructed in Faith, it stands self-condemned at once, and becomes a means of strengthening the Faith and stimulating redoubled efforts to conform to the Will of Allah.

... وَالْقَاسِيَةَ قُلُوبُهُمْ...

and who are hardened of heart:

C2834. Cf. 2:10.

I understand the "disease in the heart" to be an earlier state of curse, which leads in an intensified form to a complete "**hardening of the heart**".

... وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ (٥٣)

verily the wrongdoers are in a schism far (from the Truth):

... وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ...

54. And that those on whom knowledge has been bestowed may learn that the (Qur'an) is the Truth from thy Lord,

C2835. The last clause in the last verse was parenthetical. Treat this clause as parallel with the first clause in verse 53, "that he may make", etc. Both will then connect with "Allah will confirm (and establish) His Signs" in verse 52. See [n. 2833 above](#).

... فَيُؤْمِنُوا بِهِ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهُ قُلُوبُهُمْ...

and that they may believe therein, and their hearts may be made humbly (open) to it:

... وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُدٍ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ (٥٤)

for verily Allah is the Guide of those who believe, to the Straight Way.

وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ حَتَّىٰ تَأْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً...

55. Those who reject Faith will not cease to be in doubt concerning (Revelation) until the Hour (of Judgment) comes suddenly upon them,

C2836. The penalty of deliberately rejecting Faith is that the person doing so closes the channels of Mercy that flow from Allah. He will always be subject to doubts and superstitions, until the time comes when all earthly scales fall from his spiritual eyes. But then there will be no time for Repentance: it will be too late to profit by the guidance of Allah given through Revelation.

...أَوْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ يَوْمَ عَقِيمٍ (٥٥)

or there comes to them the Penalty of a Day of Disaster.

الْمَلِكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلَّهِ ...

56. On that Day the Dominion will be that of Allah:

C2837. Such power as Evil has over those who yield to it (17:62-64) will then be gone, as the respite granted to Satan be over, and Allah's Kingdom will be established.

...يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ...

He will judge between them:

...فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ (٥٦)

so those who believe and work righteous deeds will be in Gardens of Delight.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُهِينٌ (٥٧)

57. And for those who reject Faith and deny Our Signs, there will be a humiliating Punishment.

Section 8

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوا أَوْ مَاتُوا لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ اللَّهُ

رِزْقًا حَسَنًا...

58. Those who leave their homes in the Cause of Allah, and are then slain or die -- on them will Allah bestow verily a goodly Provision:

C2838. Rizq: sustenance, provision.

I have preferred the latter word here, because after death we can only think of rizq in a large metaphorical sense. i.e., all the provision necessary to equip the person for a full and happy Future Life, and also, I think, a provision for his dependents and near and dear ones in this life. (R).

...وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّازِقِينَ (٥٨)

truly Allah is He Who bestows the best Provision.

لِيُدْخِلَهُمْ مُنْجَلًا يَرْضَوْنَهُ...

59. Verily He will admit them to a place with which they shall be well pleased:

...وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ (٥٩)

for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.

C2839. Martyrdom is the sacrifice of life in the service of Allah. Its reward is therefore even greater than that of an ordinarily good life.

The martyr's sins are forgiven by the very act of martyrdom, which implies service and self-surrender in the highest sense of the word- Allah knows all his past life but will forbear from calling him to account for things that should strictly come into his account.

ذَلِكَ...

60. That (is so).

وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبَ بِهِ ثُمَّ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ لِيَنْصُرْتَهُ اللَّهُ...

And if one has retaliated to no greater extent than the injury he received, and is again set upon inordinately, Allah will help him:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَعَفُورٌ غَفُورٌ (٦٠)

for Allah is One that blots out (sins) and forgives (again and again).

C2840. Ordinarily Muslims are enjoined to bear injuries with patience and return good for evil (23:96).

But there are occasions when human feelings get the better of our wise resolutions, or when, in a state of conflict or war, we return "as good as we get". In that case our retaliation is permissible, provided the injury we inflict is not greater than that we receive.

After such retaliation we are even, but if the other side again acts aggressively and goes beyond all bounds in attacking us, we are entitled to protection from Allah in spite of all our faults; for Allah is One that blots out our sins, and forgives again and again.

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يُوَلِّجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوَلِّجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ...

61. That is because Allah merges Night into Day, and He merges Day into Night,

...وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ (٦١)

and verily it is Allah Who hears and sees (all things).

C2841. To some it may appear strange or even irreconcilable that Allah should be both Merciful and Just; that He should both protect His devotees and yet ask for their self- sacrifice- that he should command them to return good for evil, and yet permit retaliation under certain restrictions.

But such thoughts are short-sighted.

Do they not see many inconsistencies in all Life, all Nature, and all Creation?

Why, even in such simple phenomena as Night and Day, the one merges into the other, and no one can tell when precisely the one begins and the other ends.

Yet we can see in a rough sort of way that the one gives rest and the other activity, that the one reveals the beauties of the starry heavens and the other the splendour of the sun.

In countless ways we can see there the wisdom and the fine artistry of Allah. And there are subtle nuances and merging in nature that our intelligence can hardly penetrate. Now human life and human relations are far more complicated, and it is Allah alone Who can see all the subtle distinctions and hear the cries of all His creatures, in a world which Tennyson described as "red in tooth and claw".

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ...

62. That is because Allah -- He is the Reality:

C2842. The emphatic construction calls attention to the fact that Allah is the only abiding Reality. All else is like shadows that will pass away.

...وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ هُوَ الْبَاطِلُ...

and those besides Him whom they invoke -- they are but vain
Falsehood:

...وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ (٦٢)

verily Allah is He, Most High, Most Great.

C2843. See [n. 2841](#) above.

Our vain imaginings, groundless doubts, foolish subtleties, and false worship should all give place to trust and faith in the one and only Reality.

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَتُصْبِحُ الْأَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً...

63. Seest thou not that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and
forthwith the earth becomes clothed with green?

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ (٦٣)

For Allah is He Who understands the finest mysteries, and is
well-acquainted (with them).

C2844. Latif, as a name of Allah, is as difficult to define
in words as the idea it seeks to represent is difficult to
grasp in our minds.

It implies:

1. fine, subtle (the basic meaning);
2. so fine and subtle as to be imperceptible to human
sight;
3. so pure as to be incomprehensible;
4. with sight so perfect as to see and understand the
finest subtleties and mysteries;
5. so kind and gracious as to bestow gifts of the most
refined kind; extraordinarily gracious and
understanding.

No. 4 is the predominant meaning here and in 12:100;

Nos. 2 and 3 in 6:103;

and No.5 in 42:19;

but every shade of meaning must be borne in mind in each case, as a subsidiary factor in the spiritual melody.

لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ...

64. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth:

...وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ الْعَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ (٦٤)

for verily Allah -- He is Free of all wants, Worthy of all praise.

C2845. Each of the verses [22:61-63](#) mentioned two attributes of Allah with reference to the contents of that verse.

This verse now sums up the whole argument, and the two attributes with which it closes sum up the idea by which we can understand Allah's goodness.

Allah's loving kindness and mercies are not like those of human creatures who all depend upon one another, and often expect some kindness or recognition in return. Allah is above all wants and depends in no way whatever on His creatures. His mercies have therefore a special quality, which we cannot describe except by gratefully singing the praises of Allah.

Cf. 2:267.

Section 9

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ...

65. Seest thou not that Allah has made subject to you (men) all that is on the earth,

...وَالْفُلُكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ...

and the ships that sail through the sea by His command?

C2846. Land and sea have been made subject to man by Allah's command, so that man can develop his life freely on earth.

...وَيُمْسِكُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ...

He withholds the sky (rain) from falling on the earth except by His leave:

C2847. Sama means

1. something high,
2. a roof, a ceiling,
3. the sky, the canopy of heaven.
4. cloud or rain.

I understand the last meaning here, though most authorities seem to render it by some such words as "sky".

If we understand rain here, we have a complete picture of the three elements in which man lives-land, air and sea. Rain is also appropriate for mention with Allah's kindness and mercy. He regulates the rain for man's benefit.

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَوْؤُفٌ رَّحِيمٌ (٦٥)

for Allah is Most Kind and Most Merciful to man.

...وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ...

66. It is He Who gave you life, will cause you to die, and will again give you life:

...إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ (٦٦)

truly man is a most ungrateful creature!

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنَسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ...

67. To every People have we appointed rites and ceremonies which they must follow,

C2848. Rites and ceremonies may appear to be an unimportant matter compared with "weightier matters of the Law" and with the higher needs of man's spiritual nature. But they are necessary for social and religious organisation, and their effect on the individual himself is not to be despised.

In any case, as they are visible external symbols, they give rise to the most heated controversies. Such controversies are to be deprecated.

That does not mean that our rites and ceremonies are to be made light of. Those in Islam rest on the highest social and religious needs of man, and if we are convinced that we are on the Right Way, we should invite all to join us, without entering into controversies about such matters.

...فَلَا يُنَازِعُكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَادْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ...

let them not then dispute with thee on the matter, but do thou invite (them) to thy Lord:

...إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُّسْتَقِيمٍ (٦٧)

for thou art assuredly on the Right Way.

وَأِنْ جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلْ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ (٦٨)

68. If they do wrangle with thee, say,

"Allah knows best what it is ye are doing."

C2849. 'You are only wrangling about matters about which you have no knowledge nor any deep religious feeling. The springs of your conduct are all open before Allah, and He will judge you.'

اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ (٦٩)

69. "Allah will judge between you on the Day of Judgment concerning the matters in which ye differ."

C2850. 'You not only find fault with the very few and simple rites and ceremonies in Islam: you, outside Islam, have no rites and ceremonies which you are yourselves agreed upon, either as Christians or as Jews, or one compared with the other.'

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ...

70. Knowest thou not that Allah knows all that is in heaven and on earth?

...إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ...

Indeed it is all in a record,

...إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ (٧٠)

and that is easy for Allah.

C2851. We human beings can only think of knowledge being accurately and permanently preserved by means of a record. Allah's knowledge has all the qualities of a perfect record, and it is moreover complete and comprehensive. This is not difficult for Him from whom flow all knowledge and intelligence.

وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَنْزَلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ...

71. Yet they worship, besides Allah, things for which no authority has been sent down to them, and of which they have (really) no knowledge:

...وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن نَّصِيرٍ (٧١)

for those that do wrong there is no helper.

C2852. When plain common-sense shows the absurdity of false worship, behind which there is neither knowledge, intelligence, nor authority (quite the contrary), who or what can help the false misguided creatures who dishonour Allah by false worship?

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ نَّعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمُنْكَرَ...

72. When Our Clear Signs are rehearsed to them, thou wilt notice a denial on the faces of the Unbelievers!

C2853. Munkar;

- a refusal to accept something offered;
- a denial of something stated or pointed out;
- a feeling of disapproval or active aversion, or disgust.

...يَكَادُونَ يَسْطُونَ بِالَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا...

They nearly attack with violence those who rehearse Our Signs to them.

...قُلْ أَفَأَنْبَأَكُم بِشَرٍّ مِّنْ ذَلِكَُمْ...

Say,

"Shall I tell you of something (far) worse than these Signs?"

C2854. There is irony here.

'You think Allah's revelations and Signs are distasteful to you! There will be something far more distasteful to you if you do not repent! What do you say to the inevitable Punishment?'

...النَّارُ...

It is the fire (of Hell)!

...وَعَدَهَا اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا...

Allah has promised it to the Unbelievers!

...وَيَبْسُ الْمَصِيرُ (٧٢)

And evil is that destination!"

Section 10

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاستَمِعُوا لَهُ...

73. O men!

Here is a parable set forth! Listen to it!

... إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوْ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ ...

Those on whom, besides Allah ye call, cannot create (even) a fly, if they all met together for the purpose!

... وَإِنْ يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ...

And if the fly should snatch away anything from them, they would have no power to release it from the fly:

...ضَعْفَ الطَّالِبِ وَالْمَطْلُوبِ (٧٣)

feeble are those who petition and those whom they petition!

C2855. Both idols and their worshippers are poor, foolish, feeble creatures!

مَا قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ...

74. No just estimate have they made of Allah:

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ (٧٤)

for Allah is He Who is strong and able to carry out His Will.

C2856. No one can have a true idea of Allah, who descends to the base forms of false worship. Allah has all power, and He is fully able to carry out every part of His Will and Plan.

He is exalted above all in power and dignity.

Cf. 22:40 and n. 2818 for the full meaning of '**Aziz**'.

اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ...

75. Allah chooses Messengers from angels and from men:

C2857. Men are chosen as Messengers to ordinary men; for ordinary men will not be able to understand and be in communion with beings so refined as angels. But angels are sent as Messengers to Allah's chosen prophets, to convey the Message from time to time.

In either case they are chosen by Allah, are subject to Allah's Will, and should not be worshipped as gods.

...إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ (٧٥)

for Allah is He Who hears and sees (all things).

C2858. As Allah regards the humblest of His creatures and hears their prayer, He sends men messengers out of their own brethren (see last note), and to such messengers He communicates the highest spiritual Truths through His angels.

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ...

76. He knows what is before them and what is behind them:

...وَالَى اللَّهُ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ (٧٦)

and to Allah go back all questions (for decision).

C2859. Time, before or behind, may be of some importance to men. They may dispute as to what was the first Message, and what is the last Message.

To Allah, this question of priority and posteriority is of no consequence. All questions go back ultimately to Him and are judged on their merits.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَعَبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ...

77. O ye who believe!

bow down, prostrate yourselves, and adore your Lord;

...وَأَفْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ (٧٧)

and do good; that ye may prosper.

C2860. Prosper: in a spiritual sense, both in this life and the Hereafter.

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ...

78. And strive in His cause as ye ought to strive, (with sincerity and under discipline):

C2861. As far as the striving is concerned with Jihad in the narrow sense, see the limitations in n. 204 to 2:190 and n. 205 to 2:191.

But the words are perfectly general and apply to all true and unselfish striving for spiritual good.

...هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ...

He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion;

C2862. The Jews were hampered by many restrictions, and their religion was racial.

Christianity, as originally preached, was a hermit religion: "sell whatsoever thou hast" (Mark 10:21); "take no thought for the morrow" (Matt. 6:34).

Islam, as originally preached, gives freedom and full play to man's faculties of every kind. It is universal, and claims to date from Adam: father Abraham is mentioned as the great Ancestor of those among whom Islam was first preached (Jews, Christians, and Arab Quraysh).

...مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ...

it is the cult of your father Abraham.

...هُوَ سَمَّاكُمْ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَذَا...

It is He Who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation);

C2863. Before: see Abraham's prayer in 2:128. In this revelation: in this very verse, as well as in other places

...لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ...

that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and ye be witnesses for mankind!

C2864. See 2:143, and notes 143 and 144.

As the Prophet is a guide and exemplar among us, so Muslims ought to be exemplars amongst mankind. The best witness to Allah's Truth are those who show its light in their lives.

...فَأَقِمْوَا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ...

So establish regular Prayer, give regular Charity,

...وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ...

and hold fast to Allah! He is your Protector --

...فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ (٧٨)

the Best to protect and the Best to help!