

98 Whoever is an enemy to Allāh and His angels and His messengers and Gabriel and Michael, then surely Allāh is an enemy to disbelievers.^a

مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَ
جِبْرِيلَ وَمِيكَالَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَدُوٌّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾

99 And We indeed have revealed to thee clear messages, and none disbelieve in them except the transgressors.

وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَا يَكْفُرُ
بِهَا إِلَّا الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾

100 Is it that whenever they make a covenant, a party of them cast it aside? Nay, most of them have no faith.

أَوْ كُنَّا عَاهِدُوا وَعَاهِدُوا لَنَنْصُرَهُمْ
بَلْ كَفَرُوا بِهِمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

101 And when there came to them a messenger from Allāh verifying that which they have, a party of those who were given the Book threw the Book of Allāh behind their backs as if they knew nothing.^a

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ
لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ نَبَأَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ
كَيْتَابَ اللَّهِ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ كَانَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾

102 And they follow what the devils^a fabricated^b against the kingdom of Solomon.^c And Solomon

وَاتَّبَعُوا مَا تَتَّبِعُوا الشَّيَاطِينُ عَلَىٰ مُلْكِ سُلَيْمَانَ
وَمَا كَفَرُوا سُلَيْمَانَ وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا

98a. The enmity of man to Allāh and Allāh to man is thus explained: “In reality there can be no enmity between Allāh and man; as to man’s enmity to Allāh, it signifies opposition to His commandments, and as to Allāh’s enmity to man, it signifies the recompense for his opposition” (AH). Note that Allāh is here said to be an enemy to those disbelievers only who first make themselves enemies to the prophets of Allāh, and hence also to the angels and the Divine Being Himself. The same law of the punishment of an evil being spoken of in the terms of that evil really finds an expression here, as is referred to in 15a.

101a. The covenant referred to in the previous verse as being cast aside, and the throwing of the Book behind their backs, both refer to the Israelites paying no heed to the prophecy of Deut. 18:18, which was verified by the advent of the Holy Prophet. So clearly did that prophecy point to the Holy Prophet that it is again and again referred to in this chapter as the most powerful argument against the inimical attitude of the Jews.

102a. According to an interpretation accepted by all commentators, by the *devils* here are meant human devils, or devils in the form of men (AH, Rz).

102b. *Yaqūlu ‘alai-hi* means *such a one lies or says what is false against such a one*; *yatlū ‘alai-hi* sometimes carries the same significance (T, LL). Rz says *talā ‘alai-hi* means *he lied*. This is the significance here.

102c. By the *mulk* of Solomon is here meant *his prophethood or kingdom* (AH, Rz). The Jews attributed Solomon’s glory to certain devilish crafts, and this is the lie which they are spoken of here as having forged against Solomon (Rz).

disbelieved not,^d but the devils disbelieved, teaching men enchantment.^e And it was not revealed to the two angels in Babel, Hārūt and Mārūt. Nor did they teach (it to) anyone, so that they should have said, We are only a trial, so disbelieve not. But they learn from these two (sources) that by which they make a distinction between a man and his wife. And they cannot hurt with it anyone except with Allāh's permission. And they learn that which harms them and profits them not.^f And certainly they know that he who buys it has no share of good in the Hereafter. And surely evil is the price for which they have sold their souls, did they but know!

يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيَّ
 الْمَلَائِكِينَ بِبَابِلَ هَارُوتَ وَمَارُوتَ وَمَا
 يُعَلِّمِينَ مِنْ أَحَدٍ حَتَّى يَقُولَا إِنَّمَا حُنْ
 فَتْنَةٌ فَلَاتُكْفُرُوا فَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مِنْهُمَا مَا يُفَرِّقُونَ
 بِهِ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَزَوْجِهِ وَمَا هُمْ بِضَارِّينَ
 بِهِ مِنْ أَحَدٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَيَتَعَلَّمُونَ مَا
 يَضُرُّهُمْ وَلَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمُوا لَمَنِ
 اشْتَرَاهُ مَا لَهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنْ خَلَاقٍ ثُمَّ
 لِيَسْأَلَ مَا شَرُّوا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٠٢﴾

102d. In this respect the Holy Qur'an contradicts the Bible, which says that the wives of Solomon "turned away his heart after other gods" (1 Kings 11:4), and that "the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel" (1 Kings 11:9). It is now established that the statement of the Bible is wrong in this respect. The Rev. T.K. Cheyne has shown conclusively that Solomon was "not a polytheist", and, having shown how mistakes crept into the Bible statement, he concludes: "That Solomon had a number of wives, both Israelite and non-Israelite, is probable enough, but he did not make altars for all of them, nor did he himself combine the worship of his wives' gods with that of Yahwe" (En. Bib. col. 4689).

102e. According to Jauhari *everything of which the origin is subtle is sihr*. The primary significance is *the turning of a thing from its proper manner of being to another manner* (T, LL). Thus *saḥara-hū bi-kalāmi-hi* means *he caused him to incline to him by his soft or elegant speech* (Mgh). Hence it is applied to skilful eloquence, and hence also the saying of the Prophet: *Inna mina-l-bayāni la-sihr-an*, i.e., verily there is a kind of eloquence that is enchantment (*sihr*). And also *saḥara-hū* means *he deceived or beguiled him* (Q). And *saḥartu-l-fidḡata* signifies *I gilded silver* (LL). *Sihr* is also synonymous with *fasād* (T), thus signifying *the act of corrupting, marring, spoiling*, etc. It is also *the producing of what is false in the form of truth, and embellishment by falsification and deceit*. Hence the word *sihr* carries a very wide significance, and its use in Arabic is not equivalent to that of *sorcery* in the English language.

102f. According to Sale, the Persian Magi "mention two rebellious angels of the same names, now hung up by the feet with their heads downward, in the territory of Babel". A similar story is met with in the Jewish traditions in Midrash. Stories about sinning angels were also believed in by the Christians; see Second Epistle of Peter, ii. 4, and Epistle of Jude, v. 6. Upon these stories seem to be based the lengthy fables of some commentators, but the more learned reject them. Not only does the Qur'an not contain a

103 And if they had believed and kept their duty, reward from Allāh would certainly have been better; did they but know!

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ آمَنُوا وَآتَوْا الْحَقَّ الْمَشْكُوبَةَ مِنْ عِنْدِ
اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

SECTION 13: Previous Scriptures are abrogated

104 O you who believe, say not *Rā‘i-nā* and say *Unzur-nā*,^a and listen. And for the disbelievers there is a painful chastisement.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعَيْنَا وَتَقُولُوا
نُظِرْنَا وَأَسْمِعُوا وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾

word of these stories, but it plainly discredits them by denying that sorcery was revealed to certain angels at Babel, or that angels taught sorcery to men, giving them at the same time the warning, as was the common belief: We are only a trial, so disbelieve not. This statement was added to the story to save the character of the angels as penitents. The Arabic lexicons give the two words *Hārūt* and *Mārūt* under the roots *hart* and *mart*, and explain *harata* as meaning *he rent a thing* and *marata* as meaning *he broke a thing*.

The statement made in the Qur’ān amounts to this. The Jews, instead of following the word of God, followed certain evil crafts which they falsely attributed to Solomon and to two angels at Babel. Solomon is declared free of any such sinfulness attributed to him, and the story of the two angels is declared to be a fabrication. But the Jews are blamed for learning from these two sources, i.e., by their fabrications against Solomon and the story of the two angels, things by which *they made a distinction between a man and his wife*. The personal pronoun *humā* (meaning *two*) refers to these two fabrications. The clue to what this was is contained in the words *they cannot hurt with it anyone except with Allāh’s permission*, showing that by this craft they intended to inflict some injury on the Prophet. Similar words are met with in chapter 58 where, after denouncing the secret counsels of the enemies of Islām, it is said in v. 10: “Secret counsels are only (the work) of the devil that he may cause to grieve those who believe, and he can hurt them naught except with Allāh’s permission”. It is evident that the 58th chapter was revealed at Madīnah, where secret counsels of the nature of masonic societies were carried on against the Prophet by the Jews, and these secret counsels are stated to be the work of the devil, the expression being closely parallel to what is stated in the verse under discussion, where the Jews are spoken of as following the devil while ascribing their evil doctrines to prophets and angels. In 58:10 we also see that the object of these secret counsels was to cause hurt to the Prophet and to the Muslims, and the same is stated to be the object of the evil machinations of the Jews in the verse under discussion. These considerations point clearly to the fact that the secret counsels of the Jews mentioned in chapter 58 are referred to here. It is further clear that the words *by which they make a distinction between a man and his wife* refer to secret gatherings of the nature of masonic societies, for it is in freemasonry and in no other religious society of the world that women are totally excluded. Instead of mentioning freemasonry itself, therefore, its distinctive characteristic is mentioned. And however untrustworthy may be the old histories of freemasonry, there is no doubt that the institution is an ancient one, “having subsisted from time immemorial” (En. Br.). The statement made in the “Book of Constitutions” that Cyrus constituted Jerubbabel grand master in Judah (En. Br.) may not be without a substratum of truth.

104a, see next page.

105 Neither those who disbelieve from among the people of the Book, nor the polytheists, like that any good should be sent down to you from your Lord. And Allāh chooses whom He pleases for His Mercy; and Allāh is the Lord of mighty grace.^a

مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَ
لَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ
مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ
يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿١٠٥﴾

106 Whatever message We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or one like it. Knowest thou not that Allāh is Possessor of power over all things?^a

مَا نَنْسَخْ مِنْ آيَةٍ أَوْ نُنسِهَا نَأْتِ بِخَيْرٍ مِنْهَا
أَوْ مِثْلَهَا أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٦﴾

104a. *Rā'i-nā* is equivalent to *give ear to, hearken, or listen to us*, but with a slight change of accent it becomes *ra'ina*, which means *he is foolish or stupid or unsound in intellect*, the derivation in the first case being from *ra'y*, to *pasture or to be mindful*, and in the second case from *ra'n*, i.e., *being foolish* (LL). The Jews in derision changed the accent, "distorting" the word, as stated in 4:46, and thus made it a term of reproach. The word *unzur-nā*, which means *wait for us or grant us a little delay*, is suggested instead, because it cannot be distorted like its equivalent *rā'i-nā*. The Muslims are here forbidden to use a certain form of expression, but the real object is to show how great was the hatred of the Jews towards the Holy Prophet, so that they did not observe even the ordinary rules of decency. Morally the injunction is one worthy of the highest regard, as it disapproves of the use of words bearing a sinister meaning.

105a. *Khair*, lit., *good*, and *rahmat*, lit., *mercy*, both stand here for *Divine revelation*, for it was this good which the Jews would not like to be sent down to the Muslims, and it was this mercy for which the Muslims had been chosen (AH).

106a. Reading the verse under discussion in the light of the context, it is clear that the Jews are addressed here. The two previous sections deal, more or less, with a particular Jewish objection to the revelation of the Prophet, viz., that they could not accept a new revelation which was not granted to an Israelite. This is plainly stated in vv. 90 and 91. The same subject is continued, the Jews being addressed throughout. Their objection was: Why was another revelation sent down to Muhammad, and why was a law containing new commandments promulgated? That objection was to be answered. The answer is given partly in v. 105, and partly in the verse under discussion. In the former of these they are told that Allāh chooses whom He pleases for His revelation. In the latter, that if one law (i.e. the Jewish law) was abrogated, one better than it was given through the Holy Prophet. It should be noted that the new law is here stated to be better than the one abrogated or like it. It is a fact that though the law of the Qur'ān is decidedly superior to and more comprehensive than the previous laws in most respects, yet there are many points of likeness in the two. Hence the words *one like it* are added.

In the verse that follows, attention is called to the laws of nature as prevailing in the universe. Is it not true that the old order in nature gives place to a new one, the inferior to the better? It was therefore quite natural that the Mosaic law, which was in the main given for a particular people in a particular age, and suited only their requirements, should give place to a new and universal law, the law of Islām. The old law had been partly forgotten, and what remained was now abrogated to give place to one better and in certain matters one like it. It will thus be seen that the reference here is to the abrogation of the Jewish law, the statement being really an answer to the objection of the Jews.

107 Knowest thou not that Allāh's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and that besides Allāh you have not any friend or helper?

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَّالِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٥٧﴾

108 Rather you wish to put questions to your Messenger, as Moses was questioned before. And whoever adopts disbelief instead of faith he indeed has lost the right direction of the way.^a

أَمْ تَرْيَدُونَ أَنْ نَسْأَلَكُمْ أَسْئَلَكُمْ كَمَا سَأِلَ
مُوسَىٰ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعِ الْكُفْرَ
بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٥٨﴾

That some of the Quranic verses were abrogated by others, though a generally accepted doctrine, is due to a misconception of the words of this verse. The word *āyat* occurring here has been wrongly understood to mean a verse of the Qur'ān. Similar words occur elsewhere: "And when We change a message (*āyat*) for a message (*āyat*) — and Allāh knows best what He reveals — they say: Thou art only a forger" (16:101). This is a Makkan revelation and it is an undisputed fact, admitted by all upholders of abrogation in the Qur'ān, that there was no abrogation at Makkah, because the details of the law were not revealed there. Therefore the word *āyat*, occurring there twice, could only mean a message or a communication from God, and the first *message* meant the previous scriptures and by the second *message* was meant the Qur'ān.

The interpretation adopted by the commentators generally is not based on any saying of the Prophet; it is their own opinion. Nor is there a single report traceable to the Prophet that such and such a verse was abrogated. A companion's opinion that he considered a certain verse to have been abrogated by another could not carry the least weight. It was the Prophet only on whose authority any verse was accepted as being a part of the Holy Qur'ān, and it was he only on whose authority any verse could be considered as having been abrogated. But there is not a single *ḥadīth* of the Prophet speaking of abrogation.

Another consideration which shows the erroneousness of the doctrine that any verse of the Qur'ān was abrogated by another is the hopeless disagreement of the upholders of this view. In the first place there is no agreement as to the number of the verses which are alleged to have been abrogated; while some accept no more than five verses to be abrogated, others carry the number to hundreds. This shows that the view is based simply on conjecture. Secondly, if one commentator holds a certain verse to be abrogated, another calls this an erroneous view. In Bukhārī especially do we find opposite views cited side by side. What happened really was this that when a commentator could not reconcile one verse with another, he held the verse to be abrogated by the other, but another who, giving deeper thought, was able to effect a reconciliation between the two, rejected abrogation. This seems to be the basis on which the theory of abrogation of Quranic verses rests, and this basis is demolished by the Holy Qur'ān when it says: "Will they not then meditate on the Qur'ān? And if it were from any other than Allāh, they would have found in it many a discrepancy" (4:82). There are no discrepancies in the Qur'ān, and it is want of meditation on it that is responsible for the theory of abrogation.

108a. The Jews are addressed here, because it is they who vexed Moses with different demands and different questions. The words *whoever adopts disbelief instead of faith* do not signify a change of disbelief for belief, but the adoption of the former instead of the latter, and therefore these words also apply to the Jews.

109 Many of the people of the Book wish that they could turn you back into disbelievers after you have believed, out of envy from themselves, after truth has become manifest to them.^a But pardon and forgive, till Allāh bring about His command. Surely Allāh is Possessor of power over all things.

وَدَّ كَثِيرٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يَرُدُّوكُم مِّنْ
بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ كُفَّارًا حَسَدًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ أَنفُسِهِمْ مِّنْ
بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْحَقُّ فَاعْتُوا وَأَصْحَابُ حَتَّى
يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٠٩﴾

110 And keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate. And whatever good you send before for yourselves, you will find it with Allāh. Surely Allāh is Seer of what you do.

وَاقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا
لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١٠﴾

111 And they say: None shall enter the Garden except he who is a Jew, or the Christians.^a These are their vain desires. Say: Bring your proof if you are truthful.

وَقَالُوا لَنْ يَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَن كَانَ هُودًا
أَوْ نَصْرًا تِلْكَ آمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ
إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١١١﴾

112 Nay, whoever submits himself entirely to Allāh and he is the doer of good (to others), he has his reward from his Lord, and there is no fear for such nor shall they grieve.^a

بَلَىٰ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَجْهًا لِلَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَلَهُ
أَجْرُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ
لَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾

109a. The Jews were so inimical to Islām that, knowing it to be a religion based on the Unity of God as their own religion was, and knowing that it led men to a life of righteousness and turned them away from the path of evil, they longed, and in fact did their best by joining hands with the idolatrous enemies of Islām, to turn them back into idolatry. Elsewhere the following words occur about the Jews: “Hast thou not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given? They believe in sorcery and diviners and say of those who disbelieve: These are better guided in the path than those who believe” (4:51). The Muslims are, however, told to pardon and forgive.

111a. The address hitherto has been particularly to the Jews, but the “people of the Book” include both Jews and Christians, and along with the idolaters they were both opposed to Islām; and hence the Christians are now expressly spoken of. That the Jews denounced the Christians and the Christians denounced the Jews is expressly stated in v. 113, and hence what is said here may be expanded thus: The Jews say that none shall enter the Garden except a Jew and the Christians say that none shall enter the Garden except the Christians. Both degraded religion to a belief in a set of doctrines, and leading a life of righteousness was not considered as of the essence of religion.

112a. The Jews and the Christians are told that their assertions that only the Jews and the Christians will be saved are groundless. It is entire submission to Allāh and the doing of good to His creatures that is the true source of salvation, and that is what Islām

SECTION 14: Perfect Guidance is only in Islām

113 And the Jews say, The Christians follow nothing (good), and the Christians say, The Jews follow nothing (good),^a while they recite the (same) Book. Even thus say those who have no knowledge, like what they say. So Allāh will judge between them on the day of Resurrection in that wherein they differ.^b

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ كَبَسَتِ النَّصْرَى عَلَى شَيْءٍ
وَقَالَتِ النَّصْرَى كَبَسَتِ الْيَهُودُ عَلَى شَيْءٍ لَا
وَهُمْ يَتْلُونَ الْكِتَابَ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

114 And who is more unjust than he who prevents (men) from the mosques of Allāh, from His name being remembered therein, and strives to ruin them? (As for) these, it was not proper for them to enter them except in fear. For them is disgrace in this world, and theirs is a grievous chastisement in the Hereafter.^a

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ مَنَعَ مَسْجِدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ يُذْكَرَ
فِيهَا اسْمُهُ وَسَعَى فِي خَرَابِهَا أُولَئِكَ مَا كَانَ
لَهُمْ أَنْ يَدْخُلُوهَا إِلَّا خَائِفِينَ لَهُ لَوْ كَانُوا
الَّذِينَ خَرَعُوا لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

means according to the Holy Qur'ān. Here the word *wajh* does not stand for the *face*, but is used "for the whole, because *wajh* is the most noble part" (LL). Similarly *wajhū* in 3:20 signifies *my person* or *myself* (T). *Wajh* also means *course*, *way*, *purpose* or *object* as in v. 115.

From *aslama*, meaning *he submitted himself* or *entered into peace*, is derived the name of the religion which the Holy Qur'ān preaches, i.e., *Islām*, for which see 3:19a.

113a. In '*alā shai*'-in the word '*alā*' signifies *conformity*, as in the proverb *al-nāsu 'alā dīni mulūki-him* which means *the people are in conformity to*, i.e., *are followers of, the religion of their kings* (LL). The word '*shai*', which primarily means simply *a thing*, signifies in such cases *a thing worth being regarded*, or *a thing of any account or value*, or *anything good*, as in the proverb *laisa bi-shai*'-in (LL).

113b. The Jews and the Christians are here blamed for denying all good in each other like ignorant men, notwithstanding that they were both followers of one Book, by which is here meant the Old Testament, which both accepted. As against this, the Qur'ān accepts that there is partial truth in all religions. The declaration of this cosmopolitan principle by Islām as regards a substratum of truth underlying all religions is the more wonderful when it is borne in mind that Islām took its birth in a country which had no connection with the outside world, and the principle was proclaimed by a man who had not read the scriptures of any religion.

114a. The idolatrous Quraish had turned the Muslims out of the Sacred Mosque at Makkah and the Jews and the Christians were now helping them to annihilate the small Muslim community in Madīnah, which practically meant the laying waste of the Sacred Mosque itself. The word *masājīd* (mosques) is used here because the Sacred Mosque was to be the centre of all the mosques of the world. This generalization further shows that the fate of all those who prevented Muslims from worshipping Allāh in the mosques

115 And Allāh's is the East and the West, so whither you turn thither is Allāh's purpose. Surely Allāh is Ample-giving, Knowing.^a

وَلِلَّهِ الْمَشْرِقُ وَالْمَغْرِبُ فَأَيْنَمَا تُوَلُّوا فَثَمَّ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١١٥﴾

116 And they say: Allāh has taken to Himself a son — glory be to Him ! Rather, whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His. All are obedient to Him.^a

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهُ ط بَلْ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ط كُلُّ لَّهُ قٰنِطُوْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾

117 Wonderful Originator^a of the heavens and the earth! And when He decrees an affair, He says to it only, Be, and it is.^b

بَدِيعُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ط وَاِذَا قَضٰى اَمْرًا فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿١١٧﴾

is predicted here, and the fate of the opponents of the Prophet bears ample testimony to the truth of this prediction. The Jewish residents of Madinah, who exerted themselves to their utmost to bring ruin to Islām, were either banished in disgrace or perished in their struggle to annihilate Islām. The idolaters or the Quraish, who prevented Muslims from repairing to the Sacred Mosque at Makkah, were also finally subjugated and had to bow their heads before the very men whom they had persecuted for no other fault than that they worshipped Allāh.

115a. The previous verse predicts disgrace for those who persecuted the Muslims; this one predicts the Muslim conquests by which the enemy was to be disgraced. The concluding words, Allāh is *Ample-giving, Knowing*, also support this conclusion. The Muslims, who had been deprived of all they possessed and made utterly destitute, were promised ample gifts. The words *whither you turn, thither is Allāh's purpose*, point clearly to the Divine promise that all obstacles in the path of the Muslims will be removed and victory will follow their footsteps.

The word *wajh* occurring here denotes *countenance* or *face*, as well as *course, purpose, or object* which one is pursuing, or a *direction* in which one is going or looking (T, LL). According to R it signifies *attention* or *course*.

116a. The Christian doctrine that God has a son is refuted here. Though mainly it is the Jews who are addressed in this chapter, Christianity also is spoken of occasionally, in contrast with the next chapter in which Christianity finds a detailed mention while there are occasional references to Judaism. The phrase *subhāna-hū* is always used to declare the freedom of the Divine Being from all imperfections, and is always mentioned in connection with the doctrine of sonship to show that to attribute a son to the Divine Being is to attribute an imperfection to Him, which is met with in human beings. The doctrine of sonship is mentioned here as being opposed to the religion which requires entire submission to Divine commandments from every man and thus dispenses with the necessity of a conciliator.

117a. The original word is *Badi'*, which is applicable to the thing made as well as to the maker. A *thing is badi'* which is *not after the similitude of any thing pre-existing*, and *badi'* is also *the person who makes or produces or brings into existence for the first time and not after the similitude of anything pre-existing* (LL).

117b. *Kun fa-yakūnu* is the oft-recurring phrase in which Allāh's act of the creation and annihilation of things is spoken of in the Holy Qur'ān. It is not meant by this that

118 And those who have no knowledge say: Why does not Allāh speak to us or a sign come to us?^a Even thus said those before them, the like of what they say. Their hearts are all alike. Indeed We have made the messages clear for a people who are sure.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ لَوْلَا يُكَلِّمُنَا اللَّهُ أَوْ تَأْتِينَا آيَةٌ كَذَلِكَ قَالَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِثْلَ قَوْلِهِمْ تَشَابَهَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾

119 Surely We have sent thee with the Truth as a bearer of good news and as a warner, and thou wilt not be called upon to answer for the companions of the flaming Fire.

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَلَا تُسْأَلُ عَنْ أَصْحَابِ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٩﴾

120 And the Jews will not be pleased with thee, nor the Christians, unless thou follow their religion. Say: Surely Allāh's guidance — that is the (perfect) guidance.^a And if thou follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to thee thou shalt have from Allāh no friend, nor helper.

وَلَنْ تَرْضَى عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَى حَتَّى تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّةَهُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَلَئِنَّ الْأَغْوَآءَ لَهُمْ بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَّالِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿١٢٠﴾

there is no gradual process in the creation of things; evolution in creation is in fact plainly spoken of in the very first words of the Qur'ān, where God is spoken of as *Rabb* (Evolver) of words, the *Fosterer of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion* (R). It is, in fact, an answer to those who think that the creation of things by God is dependent on the previous existence of matter and soul and the adaptability of their attributes. The argument given here in the word *badi'* is that man, who stands in need of matter to make things, also stands in need of a pattern after which to make them, but God stands in need of neither. The verse seems particularly to refer here, however, to the revolution that was to be brought about by the Prophet. It seemed an impossibility to men, but Allāh had decreed it. And, in fact, the revolution brought about in Arabia by the Prophet was so wonderful that the old heaven and earth of the peninsula may be said to have been changed into new ones.

118a. The disbelievers refused to accept the truth of Islām unless either Allāh spoke to them, so that they should have a proof that He sends His messages to men, or that a sign should come to them. The sign which they often demanded was the threatened punishment. As disgrace in this world is predicted for them (v. 114), their demand is that as an evidence of the Prophet's truth that punishment should overtake them. The answer to both these demands is contained in v. 119, for *as a bearer of good news* the Prophet told them that if they purified themselves by walking in his footsteps, Allāh would speak to them, and *as a warner* he informed them of the coming wrath if they persisted in their evil ways.

120a. The Guidance of Allāh or the religion of Islām is here called *al-hudā* or the *perfect guidance*, as against the Jewish and Christian religions which are called *ahwā' al-hum* or *their desires*, because both the religions had lost their original purity. What the

121 Those to whom We have given the Book follow it as it ought to be followed.^a These believe in it. And whoever disbelieves in it, these it is that are the losers.

الَّذِينَ اتَّيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَتْلُونَهُ حَقَّ تِلَاوَتِهِ
أُولَئِكَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِهِ فَأُولَئِكَ
هُمُ الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

SECTION 15: Covenant with Abraham

122 O Children of Israel, call to mind My favour which I bestowed on you and that I made you excel the nations.^a

يٰٓبَنِي إِسْرٰٓءِيلَ اذْكُرُوا النِّعْمَةَ الَّتِي آتٰٓتٰكُمْ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَاِنِّي فَضَّلْتُكُمْ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾

123 And be on your guard against a day when no soul will avail another in the least, neither will any compensation be accepted from it, nor will intercession profit it, nor will they be helped.

وَاتَّقُوا يَوْمًا لَا تَجِزِي نَفْسٌ عَنْ نَفْسٍ شَيْئًا
وَلَا يُفْتَلُ مِنْهَا عَدْلٌ ۗ وَلَا تَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَاعَةٌ
وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

124 And when his Lord tried Abraham with certain commands he fulfilled them. He said: Surely I will make thee a leader of men. (Abraham) said: And of my offspring? My covenant does not include the wrongdoers, said He.^a

وَإِذِ ابْتَلٰٓ اِبْرٰٓهٖمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمٰتٍ فَاَتَمَمْتَهُنَّ
قَالَ اِنِّي جَاعِلُكَ لِلنَّاسِ اِمٰٓمًا ۗ قَالَ وَمِنْ
ذُرِّيَّتِي ۗ قَالَ لَا يَنَالُ عَهْدِي الظَّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾

Prophet taught is here called *al-'ilm*, or *science*, because it establishes all the principles of religion, both theoretical and practical, with clearness.

121a. The Muslims are meant, while the *Book* is the Qur'ān (AH). I'Ab interprets the words *yatlūna-hū haqqa tilāwati-hi* as meaning *follow it as it ought to be followed* (IJ). For *talā*, meaning *he followed it*, or *did according to it*, see LL, which quotes several authorities.

122a. The Israelites are thrice told in the Holy Qur'ān that God had made them a great nation but that it was by their own evil deeds and forsaking the ways of righteousness that they were proving themselves unworthy of that greatness. They are first addressed in v. 40 and told that the Prophet Muḥammad came in fulfilment of their own prophecies. They are again addressed in v. 47 and told how favours were shown to them in the time of Moses and after him. Now they are being addressed a third time and reminded of the covenant which was made with Abraham, the great patriarch in whom the Israelites and the Ishmaelites met.

124a. The first part of the verse relates that Abraham was made spiritual leader of men because he was found perfect in fulfilling the Divine commandments. As a spiritual leader of three great nations of the world, that patriarch occupies a unique position

125 And when We made the House وَرَادُ جَعَلْنَا الْبَيْتَ مَثَابَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَمْسًا ط
a resort for men and a (place of)

among religious personalities. Having discussed at length that a prophet from the Ishmaelites had come in accordance with the prophecies of the Israelite prophets, the Holy Qur'ān now proceeds to show that even the covenant with their great ancestor Abraham necessitated the appearance of a prophet in Arabia.

The second part of the verse states that the spiritual leadership of the world was still with Abraham's descendants. They are told that the covenant was made, not with Israel but with Abraham, and that therefore the seed of Ishmael and Isaac were equally to be blessed. Nay, as stated further on in v. 125, the covenant was made with both Abraham and Ishmael. The Jewish and Christian contention that the covenant made with Ishmael was simply of a temporal nature is groundless. On the other hand, the following arguments show that the covenant included both Ishmael and Isaac. (1) The promise to bless Abraham and his seed was given long before either Ishmael or Isaac was born: "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. ... And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2, 3). (2) The promise given to Abraham regarding the multiplicity of his seed is the same as that given to Hagar regarding Ishmael when she conceived him: "And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (Gen. 15:5). "And the angel of the Lord said unto her (i.e. Hagar), I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude" (Gen. 16:10). (3) The covenant was made again with Abraham after Ishmael was born, while Abraham had no hope of another son, nor was there a Divine promise that a son should be born to him from Sārah, the promise contained in Gen. 15:4, "but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir" having been fulfilled in the birth of Ishmael. This promise is contained in Gen. 17:2-6: "And I will make My covenant between Me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. ... And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee". (4) The covenant was renewed with Ishmael after Isaac was promised: "And as for Ishmael I have heard thee: Behold I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation" (Gen. 17:20). It should also be noted that God's hearing Abraham with regard to Ishmael refers to Abraham's prayer in Gen. 17:18: "O that Ishmael might live before thee!", and shows that Ishmael was righteous in the sight of God. (5) The nature of the promise made to Ishmael does not differ materially from that made to Abraham: they are both to be blessed, both to be made fruitful, the seed of both is to be multiplied exceedingly, princes and kings are promised among the descendants of both of them, and both are promised to be made a great nation. Nothing is said regarding Abraham that is not said regarding Ishmael. (6) The covenant on the part of Abraham's seed was kept by the children of Isaac as well as of Ishmael. According to Gen. 17:10: "This is My covenant which ye shall keep between Me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised". Now, circumcision has been a characteristic of the Israelites as well as of the Ishmaelites. Hence God's covenant was with both these nations. (7) The fulfilment of the covenant on the part of God has also been true with regard to both nations: "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (Gen. 17:8). If the covenant was only with Isaac's children, the promise of an everlasting possession failed with the advent of Islām, so that even God could not keep His promise. But the fact is that the land of Canaan continues to remain as an everlasting possession in the hands of the seed of Abraham, for as soon as the Israelites or their representatives, the Christians, were deemed unfit to have the Holy Land in their possession because of their unrighteousness, that Holy Land was given to the Arabs, who were Ishmaelites, and to

security.^a And: Take ye the Place of Abraham for a place of prayer.^b And We enjoined Abraham and Ishmael, saying: Purify My House for those who visit (it) and those who abide (in

وَأَتَّخِذُوا مِن مَّقَامِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ مُصَلًّى ۖ
عَهْدَنَا إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ أَنَّ طَهِّرَا

this day it remains in the hands of the Muslims, who are the true representatives of the house of Ishmael.

125a. *Al-Bait* or *The House* is the famous house known by this name to this day, the *Ka'bah*. It is also known as *Bait Allāh* or the House of Allāh, and is the same as the *Beth-el* of the Bible. In the Qur'ān itself it is mentioned by the name *al-Bait* several times, as here and in vv. 127, 158; 3:97; 8:35; 22:26. It is also mentioned as *al-Bait al-Ḥarām* or the *Sacred House* (5:2, 97), and *al-Bait al-'Atiq*, or the *Ancient House* (22:29, 33), and *al-Bait al-Ma'mūr* or the *Often-visited House* (52:4). It is also spoken of as *awwala bait-in wuḍi'a li-l-nāsi*, the *First House appointed for men for Divine worship* (3:96).

History bears out these three distinguishing characteristics of the *Ka'bah*. It exists from the remotest antiquity; it was visited annually by people from the most distant corners of Arabia; and its sacredness was respected by the whole of Arabia. Thus writes Muir: "A very high antiquity must be assigned to the main features of the religion of Mecca. ... Diodorus Siculus, writing about half a century before our era, says of Arabia washed by the Red Sea: "There is in this country a temple greatly revered by the Arabs". These words must refer to the Holy House of Mecca, for we know of no other which ever commanded such universal homage. ... Tradition represents the *Ka'bah* as from time immemorial the scene of pilgrimage from all quarters of Arabia: from Yemen and Ḥaḍramaut, from the shores of the Persian Gulf, the deserts of Syria, and the distant environs of Hira and Mesopotamia, men yearly flocked to Mecca. So extensive a homage must have had its beginnings in an extremely remote age" (Life of Mahomet).

125b. The previous verse speaks of Abraham, and there is apparently a change now introduced in resorting to the subject of the *Ka'bah*. But really there is no change. This section deals with the covenant made with Abraham and this covenant included both the Israelites and the Ishmaelites. The *Ka'bah*, the spiritual centre of Islām, it is now related, was connected with the name of Abraham, and pointed reference to this is made in the mention of *Maqām Ibrāhīm* or the Place of Abraham. It is true that a particular place, a small building supported by six pillars about eight feet high, situated in the *Ka'bah*, is known by this name, and was so known in the time of the Prophet and even before him, and this is incontrovertible evidence of Abraham's connection with Arabia and its spiritual centre. But here really *Maqām Ibrāhīm* stands for the House itself. It is *The House* that was made a resort for men and a place of security as stated in the opening words of the verse, and it is *The House* that was to be purified of idols by Abraham and Ishmael, as stated in the latter part. The injunction therefore to take the Place of Abraham for a place of prayer can carry no other significance than that *The House* or the *Ka'bah* shall be the Central Mosque of the Muslims. It is called the Place of Abraham because it was Abraham who purified it of the idols and it was Abraham who rebuilt *The House* as stated further on. While some commentators take the words *Maqām Ibrāhīm* as referring to the particular place known by that name, many of them understand by it the *Ka'bah* or the whole of the sanctuary. There is a ḥadīth in *Bukhārī* according to which 'Umar is reported to have said to the Prophet: O Messenger of Allāh, wert thou to take *Maqām Ibrāhīm* for a place of prayer. These words were spoken when the Prophet, after his flight to Madīnah, turned his face to Jerusalem as the *qiblah*, because Jerusalem was the *qiblah* of the Israelite prophets that had gone before him. It was on receiving this Divine injunction that he made the *Ka'bah* the *qiblah* of the Muslims.

it) for devotion and those who bow down (and) those who prostrate themselves.^c

بَيْتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْعَاكِفِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ السُّجُودِ ﴿١٢٥﴾

126 And when Abraham said: My Lord, make this a secure town and provide its people with fruits, such of them as believe in Allāh and the Last Day. He said: And whoever disbelieves, I shall grant him enjoyment for a short while, then I shall drive him to the chastisement of the Fire. And it is an evil destination.^a

وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرَاهِيمُ رَبِّ اجْعَلْ هَذَا بَلَدًا آمِنًا وَارْزُقْ أَهْلَكَ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ مَنْ آمَنَ مِنْهُمْ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ قَالَ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَأُمْتِعْهُ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ أَضْطَرُّهُ إِلَى عَذَابِ النَّارِ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٢٦﴾

127 And when Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the

وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ

125c. It should be noted that Ishmael is very often mentioned along with Abraham in connection with the Ka'bah. Ishmael's connection with Arabia is established by the Bible itself, for Kedar (son of Ishmael, Gen. 25:13) stands throughout the writings of the Old Testament for Arabia (Ps. 120:5; Is. 42:11; 60:7). The Arab tradition on this point was so strong and of such old standing that the Holy Qur'an every now and then refers to it as a matter of undoubted history. As Muir says: "This was no Muslim fiction, but the popular opinion of the Meccans long before the era of Muḥammad, otherwise it could not have been referred to in the Qur'an as an acknowledged fact, nor would the names of certain spots around the Ka'bah have been connected, as we know them to have been, with Abraham and Ishmael" (*Life of Mahomet*). The Arab tradition representing Abraham as coming with Hagar and Ishmael to the place where now Makkah is, is quite independent of the Bible statement, and the two taken together justify us in drawing the conclusion as to the truth of the Quranic statement. Moreover, the situation of Makkah on a well-recognized ancient route from Syria to Yaman and the visits from the deserts of Syria to that "Ancient House" corroborate this conclusion. Thus there is not the least reason to reject the popular tradition as a fable, and the facts recorded in the Qur'an are borne out fully by Arab tradition and the Bible.

References to Ishmael, the eldest son of Abraham, are very frequent in the Holy Qur'an. For further references see 2:133, 136, 140; 3:84; 4:163; 6:86; 14:39; 19:54, 55; 21:85; 37:101–107 (where he is not mentioned by name); and 38:48.

For references to Isaac, Abraham's younger son, which are always brief, see 2:133, 136, 140; 3:84; 4:163; 6:84; 11:71; 12:6; 14:39; 19:49; 21:72; 29:27; 37:112, 113; and 38:45–47.

126a. It was Abraham who, when settling Hagar and Ishmael near the Sacred House, which was already there, laid the foundations of a city there. Makkah is elsewhere spoken of as *hādih-al-Balad* (14:35; 90:1, 2) or *this City*. In 3:96, it is mentioned by the name Bakkah. It was built in a place which was unproductive of fruit (14:37) and therefore devoid of the primal necessities of life. Hence, Abraham's prayer for the residents of the city that they might be provided with fruits. But while Abraham prayed for provisions of life for the righteous only, God's acceptance of the prayer included the wicked as well. Elsewhere, the acceptance of this prayer is referred to thus: "Have We not settled them in a safe, sacred territory to which fruits of every kind are drawn — a sustenance from Us" (28:57).

House: Our Lord, accept from us; surely Thou art the Hearing, the Knowing.^a

128 Our Lord, and make us both submissive to Thee, and (raise) from our offspring, a nation submissive to Thee,^a and show us our ways of devotion and turn to us (mercifully); surely Thou art the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

129 Our Lord, and raise up in them a Messenger from among them who shall recite to them Thy messages and teach them the Book and the Wisdom, and purify them. Surely Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.^a

وَاسْمِعْ لِي يَا رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٢٨﴾

رَبَّنَا وَاجْعَلْنَا مُسْلِمِينَ لَكَ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِنَا
أُمَّةً مُسْلِمَةً لَكَ وَأَرِنَا مَنَاسِكَنَا وَتُبْ
عَلَيْنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿١٢٩﴾

رَبَّنَا وَابْعَثْ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتِكَ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٣٠﴾

SECTION 16: The Religion of Abraham

130 And who forsakes the religion of Abraham but he who makes a fool of himself. And certainly We made him pure^a in this world and in the Hereafter he is surely among the righteous.

وَمَنْ يَرْتَدَّ عَنْ غَيْرِهَا إِلَّا مَنْ سَفِهَ
نَفْسَهُ وَلَقَدْ اصْطَفَيْنَاهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ
فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٣٠﴾

127a. Abraham and Ishmael rebuilt the Ka'bah, which was already there; see 14:37.

128a. The word translated as *submissive* is *Muslim* in the original. A Muslim is so called because he surrenders himself to the will of God or because he is secure from the slavery of the devil (R) or because he enters into peace. Though all prophets were Muslims but only the followers of the Prophet Muhammad are known as a Muslim nation. At the time when these verses were revealed, there existed only a few Muslims in Madinah, and reference to a Muslim nation was still prophetic.

129a. The Messenger had appeared but the great task of teaching the Book and the Wisdom to the progeny of Ishmael, the Arabs, and the still greater task of purifying them of evil, had yet to be performed, and its mention at this time was therefore prophetic. The more one ponders on the unique transformation brought about by the Prophet in Arabia, and through Arabia in the world, the more his head bows before the grandeur of this prophecy.

130a. *Iṣṭafainā-hu* means *We made him pure from all dross* (AH); also *We chose him* (LL). The root is *ṣafw* meaning *purity*. *Muṣṭafā*, the *Purified One* or the *Chosen One*, is one of the titles of our Prophet.

131 When his Lord said to him, Submit, he said: I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds.

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾

132 And the same did Abraham enjoin on his sons, and (so did) Jacob: O my sons, surely Allāh has chosen for you (this) religion, so die not unless you are submitting ones.^a

وَوَصَّى بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بَنِيهِ وَيَعْقُوبَ بَنِيَّ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَى لَكُمْ الدِّينَ فَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾

133 Or were you witnesses when death visited Jacob, when he said to his sons: What will you serve after me? They said: We shall serve thy God and the God of thy fathers, Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac, one God only, and to Him do we submit.

أَمْ كُنْتُمْ شُهَدَاءَ إِذْ حَضَرَ يَعْقُوبَ الْمَوْتَ إِذْ قَالَ لِبَنِيهِ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِي قَالُوا نَعْبُدُ إِلَهَكَ وَاللَّهُ أَبَايَكَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٣﴾

134 Those are a people that have passed away; for them is what they earned and for you what you earn; and you will not be asked of what they did.

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَلكُمْ مِمَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٣٤﴾

135 And they say: Be Jews or Christians, you will be on the right course. Say: Nay, (we follow) the religion of Abraham, the upright one, and he was not one of the polytheists.^a

وَقَالُوا كُونُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تَهْتَبُونَ وَاطْلُبْ بَلًا مِثْلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿١٣٥﴾

136 Say: We believe in Allāh and (in) that which has been revealed to

قَوْلُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ

132a. Jacob, elsewhere called Israel, was the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham. Compare Gen. 18:19: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement."

For further references to Jacob, see 2:133, 136, 140; 3:84, 92; 4:163; 6:84; 12th chapter; 21:72, 73; and 38:45–47.

135a. *Hanif* is from the root *hanf*, meaning *inclining* or *declining* (LL). Hence *hanif* is *one inclining to a right state or tendency* (R, LL). The word is often mentioned in connection with the name of Abraham and the Holy Prophet, and his followers are also enjoined to be *hanif*. It seems to signify firmness in sticking to the right state, and has, no doubt, reference to the inclining to error on the part of both the Jews and the Christians. As opposed to both these professed followers of Abraham, the Muslims are enjoined to remain firm in the right state, and thus to be the true representatives of the Abrahamic faith in the world. It is for this reason that the word *hanif* is used here in opposition to the attitude of both the Jews and the Christians.

us, and (in) that which was revealed to Abraham, and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and (in) that which was given to Moses and Jesus, and (in) that which was given to the prophets from their Lord, we do not make any distinction between any of them and to Him do we submit.^a

137 So if they believe as you believe, they are indeed on the right course; and if they turn back, then they are only in opposition. But Allāh will suffice thee against them; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing.^a

138 (We take) Allāh's colour, and who is better than Allāh at colouring, and we are His worshippers.^a

139 Say: Do you dispute with us about Allāh, and He is our Lord and your Lord, and for us are our deeds

إِلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَمَا
أُوتِيَ النَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ
أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ ۗ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿١٣٧﴾

فَإِنْ آمَنُوا بِبَيْتِ مَا آمَنْتُم بِهِ فَقَدْ اتَّخَذُوا
وَأَنْ كُونُوا فَإِنَّمَا هُمْ فِي شِقَاقٍ تَسِيكَافِيَتِهِمْ
اللَّهُ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿١٣٨﴾

صِبْغَةَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ أَحْسَنُ مِنَ اللَّهِ صِبْغَةً
وَنَحْنُ لَهُ عَابِدُونَ ﴿١٣٩﴾

قُلْ إِنَّمَا جُؤُنَا فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّكُمْ ۗ وَلَنَا

136a. This shows the cosmopolitan nature of a Muslim's belief. Not only is belief in the great prophets of Israel an article of faith with a Muslim, but the words *that which was given to the prophets from their Lord* make the Muslim conception of belief in prophets as wide as the world. And it should be noted that this broad conception was promulgated at a time when the Jews and the Christians were exerting themselves to the utmost against the new faith.

137a. Islām recognized the prophets of the Jews and the Christians and the prophets of all other nations. How could a follower of any religion reject Islām? Yet the Jews not only did not accept Islām, but actively opposed it, so much so that they were making plans to take the Prophet's life and annihilate a religion which was based on such broad principles. The words *Allāh will suffice thee against them* mean that *Allāh will guard thee against their evil plans to annihilate thee* (AH).

138a. *Şabgh* means *dyeing* or *colouring*, and also *dipping* or *immersing in water*; hence *şibghah* indicates *baptism*, which the Christians effect by immersing in water. *Şibghah* also means *religion* (T), because religion brings about a change in mentality and gives its own colour to a man's views. The religion of Islām is called Allāh's colour because God is uppermost in a Muslim's ideas, and because his views are as broad as humanity. This particular word *şibghah* has also been adopted here as a hint to the Christians that the baptism of water does not effect any change in a man. It is the baptism of the broad principle of faith, accepting the prophets of all nations, that brings about change in the mentality of man. It is through this baptism that the new birth is received, because it opens the mind for the reception of all truth, and inspires it with love and reverence for all good men.

and for you your deeds; and we are sincere to Him?^a

أَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُخْلِصُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

140 Or do you say that Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes were Jews or Christians?^a Say: Do you know better or Allāh? And who is more unjust than he who conceals a testimony that he has from Allāh? And Allāh is not heedless of what you do.

أَمْ تَقُولُونَ إِنَّ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطَ كَانُوا هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى ط
قُلْ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا اللَّهُ وَ مَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَتَمَ شَهَادَةً عِنْدَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

141 Those are a people that have passed away; and for them is what they earned and for you what you earn; and you will not be asked of what they did.

تِلْكَ أُمَّةٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ ءَلَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَ لَكُمْ مِمَّا كَسَبْتُمْ وَلَا تُسْأَلُونَ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

Part 2

SECTION 17: The Ka'bah as the Spiritual Centre

142 The fools among the people will say: "What has turned them from their *qiblah* which they had?"^a

سَيَقُولُ السُّفَهَاءُ مِنَ النَّاسِ مَا وَلَّهُمْ عَن قِبَلِهِمُ النَّبِيُّ كَانُوا عَلَيْهَا قُلُوبَ اللَّهِ الْمَشْرُوقِ وَ

139a. A Muslim's conception of Allāh is very broad. It includes all that is best in all other religions, but is free from the limitations they put. Therefore no one who is true to his religion can dispute the Muslim conception of the Divine Being. Moreover, every religion of the world limits the spiritual sustenance of God to one nation or one country. A Jew thinks that God revealed truth only to the Israelites; a Christian thinks that the truth was revealed only to Jesus; a Hindu thinks that God revealed the truth only to the sages of India; a Zoroastrian thinks that the truth was revealed to none but Zoroaster. Not so Islām, which says that the truth was revealed to every nation. Every nation thus accepts partial truth, only that part of the truth which was revealed to it, but Islām accepts the whole truth.

140a. The interrogation here is simply to reprove the Jews and the Christians, for the Jewish claim was that only acceptance of the Jewish law could save man, and the Christians claimed that none could be saved unless he accepted the atonement of Jesus. They are told that their ancestors who were prophets were the followers of neither the one nor the other. Islām was, in fact, a reversion to the simple faith of sincerity, the faith of Abraham and his immediate followers and descendants.

142a. *Qiblah* means the direction or point towards which one turns his face (LL). In its religious usage it means the direction towards which one turns his face when saying

Say: The East and the West belong only to Allāh; He guides whom He pleases to the right path.

الْمَرْبُ يُهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٤٣﴾

143 And thus We have made you an exalted^a nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Messenger may be a bearer of witness to you.^b And We did not make that which thou wouldst have to be the *qiblah*^c but that We

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا الْقِبْلَةَ الَّتِي كُنْتَ عَلَيْهَا إِلَّا لِمَعْلَمٍ مَن يَتَّبِعِ الرَّسُولَ مِمَّن يَنْقَلِبُ عَلَى عَقْبَيْهِ

his prayers, and the *qiblah* is thus the Spiritual Centre of a people. The change here referred to is the change which took place at Madinah about sixteen months after the Prophet's flight to that city (B. 2:29). It should be noted that while the Holy Prophet was at Makkah among the idolaters of Arabia, he used to pray with his face to the Holy Temple at Jerusalem, but when he came to Madinah, where the Jewish element was strong and powerful, he was directed by Divine Revelation to turn his face to the Ka'bah as his *qiblah*. The Jews are here spoken of in particular, and the subject continues what is said in the last two sections. If Abraham's seed was to be blessed in Ishmael's progeny, it was necessary that the new Spiritual Centre should be the house purified by Abraham and Ishmael, the First House appointed for men, the temple at Jerusalem being only the spiritual centre of the Israelites. This change contained a clear indication that Makkah would be conquered by the Muslims, for, an idolatrous temple could not be the spiritual centre of a religion of pure monotheism. To this conquest of Makkah there is also a reference in the words, "*The East and the West belong only to Allāh*".

143a. The word in the original is *wasat*, which signifies *the middle part of anything*; and therefore, as being removed from either extreme, it signifies *the best part of a thing*, according to LL, who translates *ummat wasat* as meaning *a just, equitable or good nation*; that is, *one not inclining to either extreme*. The commentators explain *wasat* as meaning *equitable* and *exalted* (Rz, AH, Kf), and this sense fits the context. By making the Ka'bah their *qiblah*, Allāh had made it known that they were the people, the Muslim nation, for whom Abraham had prayed (v. 128), and therefore they were the inheritors of all those Divine blessings which had been promised to the seed of Abraham.

143b. One explanation of *shahid*, or *bearer of witness*, is given in the following words: "*So that you may carry to them what you have learned of the revelation and the faith as Allāh's Messenger has brought to you*" (AH, Rz). Therefore *the bearers of witness* are the persons who carry knowledge to others, bearing testimony to its truth in their own persons. Some commentators explain the word as meaning *a purifier* (AH). But *shahid* also signifies *one possessing much knowledge* (LL), and it means also an *Imām* or a *leader*, and the significance is that just as the Prophet delivered the message of truth to the Muslims and was their purifier and leader, the role of the Muslim community was to deliver the message of truth to the whole of humanity and to be its purifiers and leaders.

143c. Rz explains the words *kunta 'alai-hā* as meaning *on which thou hadst firmly set thy heart that it should be thy qiblah*. It thus appears that the Prophet longed that the Ka'bah should be his *qiblah*, yet he did not take any step until he had received the Divine Revelation. If his revelations had been the outcome of his own desires he would not have waited for sixteen months for a revelation from on high to change the *qiblah*.

might distinguish^d him who follows the Messenger from him who turns back upon his heels. And it was indeed a hard test except for those whom Allāh has guided. Nor was Allāh going to make your faith to be fruitless.^e Surely Allāh is Compassionate, Merciful, to the people.

وَأَنَّ كَانَتْ لَكَبِيرَةً إِلَّا عَلَى الَّذِينَ
هَدَى اللَّهُ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُضَيِعَ إِيمَانَكُمْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالْئِثْمِ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤٤﴾

144 Indeed We see the turning of thy face to heaven, so We shall surely make thee master of the *qiblah* which thou likest;^a turn then thy face towards the Sacred Mosque. And wherever you are turn your faces towards it. And those who have been given the Book certainly know that it is the truth from their Lord.^b And Allāh is not heedless of what they do.

قَدْ نَرَى تَوَلَّى تَوَلَّيْتُمْ وَجْهَكَ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ كُنْتُمْ تِلْكَ
قِبْلَةً تُرَضُّبَهَا فَوَلَّيْتَ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ
الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوْا وُجُوْهَكُمْ
شَطْرَهُ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَيَعْلَمُونَ
أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ
عَمَّا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

143d. *Na'lama* means *We might know*; but I have followed AH in translating it as meaning *We might distinguish*, for 'ilm is not followed by *min* except when it is used in the sense of *distinguishing one thing from another*. Taking the ordinary meaning, the significance would be that God might know how they act when confronted with the test.

143e. By some the word *imān*, lit., *faith*, is explained as meaning *prayer* (I'Ab-B). Adopting the ordinary significance, the words would mean that the faithful had no hesitation in accepting the change, and thus their faith bore fruit by keeping them on the right path.

144a. The words *fa-la-nuwalliyanna-ka qiblat-an* are generally translated as *We shall turn thee to a qiblah*. But the order to make the Ka'bah a *qiblah* had already been given, see v. 125; and this section deals with the objections arising from this change, as vv. 142 and 143 show. One of the objections the Jews advanced was that while the Prophet claimed that his religion was the religion of pure monotheism, he made the Ka'bah, which was full of idols, his Spiritual Centre; see 142a. The Prophet turned his face to heaven, i.e., sought help from God in this matter, and the words that follow are an answer to this prayer, and could not mean *We shall turn thee to a qiblah*, because that had already been done. He is here told that the Ka'bah will not remain an idol temple, as he will soon be master of it, and idolatry will forever be swept off from the new Spiritual Centre of the world. The words *wallā kadhā* mean *he made him guardian or possessor of a thing* (R), as *walī* means a guardian, and *wilāyah* means *government or management of a Province*, and *wallā* (inf.n. *tauliyah*) means *he set anyone over, entrusted anyone with the government of a Province or management of an affair* (R). *Wallā* when followed by 'an, as in v. 142, means *he turned him back from a thing*, but when followed by two objects, as here, it means *he made him master of a thing*. So the Prophet was told to have no anxiety on that account and to turn his face to the Ka'bah.

144b, see next page.

145 And even if thou shouldst bring to those who have been given the Book every sign they would not follow thy *qiblah*, nor canst thou be a follower of their *qiblah*, neither are they the followers of each other's *qiblah*.^a And if thou shouldst follow their desires after the knowledge that has come to thee, then thou wouldst indeed be of the wrongdoers.

وَلَيْنَ اتَّبَعْتَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ بِكُلِّ آيَةٍ مَا تَبِعُوا قِبْلَتَكَ وَمَا أَنْتَ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَتَهُمْ وَمَا بَعْضُهُمْ بِتَابِعٍ قِبْلَةَ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَلَئِنِ اتَّبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّكَ إِذًا لَمِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾

146 Those whom We have given the Book recognize him as they recognize their sons.^a And a party of them surely conceal the truth while they know.

الَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْرِفُونَهُ كَمَا يَعْرِفُونَ آبَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّ فَرِيقًا مِنْهُمْ لَيَكْتُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٤٦﴾

147 The truth is from thy Lord, so be thou not of the doubters.^a

الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُتَمَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾

144b. The truth of the Prophet was manifest so far as the Jews and the Christians were concerned. There was a clear prophecy for the appearance of a Prophet who was to be the like of Moses; see Deut. 18:15–18. That Prophet was to appear from among the “brethren” of the Israelites, i.e., the Ishmaelites, and not a single prophet from among the Israelites, not even Jesus, claimed to be the promised prophet of Deut. They also knew that God had promised to bless Ishmael (see 124a), but that no prophet had up to this time appeared from among the Ishmaelites. They also knew that Ishmael was left in Arabia, and they identified his son, Kedar, with the Arabs. Isaiah 21:13 speaks in clear words of a prophecy about “Arabia” and of the Prophet’s Flight. The *Bait Allāh* (Ka’bah) was the only *Beit-el* that the world knew.

145a. Every sign of the Prophet’s truth had been given to them already but their hearts were so hardened that they did not pay any attention to the clearest signs. But they were not agreed even among themselves. Notwithstanding that the Jews and Christians both looked to the temple at Jerusalem as their central temple, they were not agreed upon it as their *qiblah* or Spiritual Centre. The Christians turned towards the East (Muir). Moreover, there are differences among the Jews and the Samaritans, though both follow the law of Moses.

146a. All the prophets of Abraham’s seed had hitherto appeared among the Children of Israel, and hence *as they know their sons* is equivalent to *as they know the Israelite prophets*, the significance of the whole passage being that the Israelites or the Jews recognized the Prophet who appeared among the Children of Ishmael, as they recognized the prophets who appeared among the Children of Israel. They knew this not only because blessings had equally been promised for both sons of Abraham, but also because of the clear prophecy of Moses that a prophet *like him* would be raised among the brethren of the Israelites, i.e., Ishmaelites, and because no prophet answering that description had appeared among the Israelites.

147a. It is the reader who is addressed here.

SECTION 18: The Ka'bah as the Spritual Centre

148 And everyone has a goal to which he turns (himself), so vie with one another in good works.^a Wherever you are, Allāh will bring you all together. Surely Allāh is Possessor of power over all things.

وَلِكُلِّ وِجْهَةٍ هُوَ مَرْتَبٌ فَاسْتَقْبُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ
 آيِنَ مَا تَكُونُوا يَأْتِ بِكُمْ اللَّهُ جَمِيعًا
 إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾

149 And from whatsoever place thou comest forth, turn thy face towards the Sacred Mosque.^a And

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ
 الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ

148a. In making the Ka'bah the Spiritual Centre the Muslims are told that their goal, as a nation, is to lead the world on to the greatest good. Their race is not a race for material benefits, a race for riches or power, but a race for the attainment of good and for the spread of good. As stated in clear words in v. 143, they are made leaders of the world, and this lead they are now told they must give in doing good, and hence they must vie with one another in doing good. In the words that follow — wherever you are Allāh will bring you all together — they are told that they will be spread far and wide in the world, yet their goal must be one. The outward unity of the *qiblah* has a deeper meaning under it; it stands for their *unity of purpose*, as being a nation which strives after one goal, and it forms the basis on which rests the brotherhood of Islām; hence the saying of the Prophet: “Do not call those who follow your *qiblah* unbelievers” (N. under *Kufr*).

149a. A great honour is thus given to the Sacred Mosque but it must be remembered that the Ka'bah has never been supposed by any Muslim to possess any Divine attribute. The strange conclusion drawn by some Christian writers, that the honour thus given to the Ka'bah is a remnant of the pre-Islāmic Arab polytheism or idolatry, is quite erroneous. The Muslims honour the Ka'bah because it is their Spiritual Centre; they do not worship it. Even the idolatrous Arabs never worshipped the Ka'bah, though they had placed idols in it which they worshipped.

It should also be borne in mind that the famous Black Stone was not one of the Arab idols, nor can the kissing of it in performing the pilgrimage be looked upon as a remnant of idolatry. That Stone stands only as a monument: “The stone which the builders refused is become the head-stone of the corner” (Ps. 118:22). Ishmael was looked upon as rejected, and the covenant was considered to have been made with the children of Isaac, yet it was that rejected stone, for which the Black Stone at the Ka'bah stands as a monument, that was to become “the head-stone of the corner”. The Black Stone is unhewn, so it is the stone that was “cut out of the mountain without hands” (Dan. 2:45). Jesus Christ made this clear in the parable of the husbandmen, when he plainly told the Israelites that the vineyard (i.e., the kingdom of God) would be taken away from them and given to “other husbandmen”, i.e. to a non-Israelite people, giving indication of that people in the words: “Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?” (Matt. 21:42). And he added: “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43), thus showing that he was referring to a rejected nation. Hence if the Black Stone is kissed, it is not kissed as an idol or as a god, but as a monument of the rejection of a nation which was to become the corner-stone of the Divine kingdom.

surely it is the truth from thy Lord. And Allāh is not heedless of what you do.

150 And from whatsoever place thou comest forth turn thy face towards the Sacred Mosque. And wherever you are turn your faces towards it, so that people may have no plea against you except such of them as are unjust — so fear them not and fear Me — and that I may complete My favour to you and that you may go aright.^a

151 Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you, who recites to you Our messages and purifies you and teaches you the Book and the Wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know.^a

وَمَا اللَّهُ بِعَافِيٍّ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾

وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ
شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ
فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ لِئَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ
عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَن
فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي وَلَا تَمْرِعْمَتِي
عَلَيْكُمْ وَعَلَيْكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِنْكُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْكُمْ
آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ
وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٥١﴾

150a. By *completing of favour* is meant the bestowing of spiritual favours on them. The Muslim nation was not like any other nation of the world, nor was mere advancement in the world their goal. The words with which the next verse opens are a further explanation: “Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you, who recites to you Our messages and purifies you”. They are thus told that they have been raised to carry the Divine message to other people and to purify them and teach them the Book and the Wisdom. Spiritual light was henceforth to shine from one Spiritual Centre alone. If that message was not conveyed to other people they had a plea against the Muslims that they had not conveyed the Truth to them. The turning of the face to the Sacred Mosque is thus equivalent to proclaiming the Truth which had its origin in the Ka’bah to the whole world. If the Muslims did not do it, they failed in their duty to God and man.

The Prophet and his followers are told in this verse that with the change of prophethood from the Israelites to the Ishmaelites it was necessary to change the Spiritual Centre too, so that people may have no plea against you. The Ka’bah was the house rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael, and with prophethood now being transferred to the descendants of Ishmael, the Spiritual Centre had necessarily to be changed. The Ka’bah was moreover the first Spiritual Centre of the world (3:96), and it was in the fitness of things that it should be the last Spiritual Centre of the whole world. The words of the next verse which speak of the Messenger in almost the same words as the Messenger of Abraham’s prayer in v. 129 make this significance still more clear. In the *completion of favours* in the concluding words of the verse there is a reference to the Muslim nation being the exalted nation of v. 143 whose sole object was to carry the truth to the whole world.

151a. The reference is to Abraham’s prayer in v. 129, as pointed out in the last note. The functions of the Promised Prophet there are exactly the same as here.