

50 And when We parted the sea for you, so We saved you and drowned the people of Pharaoh while you saw.^a

وَإِذْ فَرَقْنَا بِكُمْ الْبَحْرَ فَأَنْجَيْنَاكُمْ وَأَغْرَقْنَا آلَ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

51 And when We appointed a time of forty nights^a with Moses, then you took the calf (for a god)^b after him, and you were unjust.

وَإِذْ وَعَدْنَا مُوسَىٰ أَرْبَعِينَ لَيْلَةً أَنْتَجِدُوكُمُ
الْيَوْمَ لِمَنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

52 Then We pardoned you after that so that you might give thanks.

ثُمَّ عَفَوْنَا عَنْكُمْ مِمَّنْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾

53 And when We gave Moses the Book and the Discrimination^a that you might walk aright.

وَإِذْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتَابَ وَالْفُرْقَانَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

50a. The Qur'ān does not say how the Israelites were made to pass through the sea or in what manner the parting of the sea was brought about. The word *bahr* means a sea or a river. As the Bible says, it was the northern extremity of the Red sea; "the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night" (Exod. 14:21), thus enabling the Israelites to get through. Another explanation is that the Israelites passed when the sea receded on account of the ebb, and the Egyptians were drowned because the tide was on at the time, and in their zeal to overtake the Israelites they did not care for it. Elsewhere the Qur'ān says: "And certainly We revealed to Moses: Travel by night with My servants, then strike for them a dry path in the sea" (20:77). See also 20:77a.

51a. "And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and got him up into the Mount: and Moses was in the Mount forty days and forty nights" (Exod. 24:18).

51b. Details are contained in 20:86–97. The story of the making of the calf is contained in the Bible in the 32nd chapter of Exodus. The only important difference is that while the making of the calf is attributed to Aaron in the Bible, the Holy Qur'ān declares that prophet to be innocent in the matter, and ascribes the leadership in the making of the calf and its worship to *Sāmīri*. The idea of calf, or bull-worship, seems to have been taken by the Israelites from the Egyptians. In the opinion of Renan, Maspero, and König, "bull-worship may have been an imitation of the worship of Apis at Memphis or of Mendis at Heliopolis" (En. Bib. col. 631). The writer of the article on the golden calf is, however, of opinion that "adoption from Egypt is unlikely", and his chief reason is that "the Egyptians worshipped only living animals". But the Israelites, too, seem to have been addicted to the worship of living animals in the time of Moses, as the incident narrated in vv. 67–71 shows, and the calf was only an image of a living animal, and at any rate four hundred years' contact with the Egyptians could not have been without its influence, bull-worship dating from a very remote antiquity in Egypt. It was for this reason that the Mosaic law laid great stress upon the slaughter of cows, and the commandment mentioned in v. 67 seems to have been given for the same reason. Notwithstanding all that Moses did to uproot this form of idolatry from among the Israelites, the worshipping of the bull appears to have continued up to the time of Hosea, who rails at it in very strong terms (Hos. 8:5; 10:5).

53a. The original word is *furqān*, an infinitive noun from the root *farq*, which signifies the making of distinction between two things, and *furqān*, according to LL, is anything that makes a separation or distinction between truth and falsity, and hence it

54 And when Moses said to his people: O my people, you have surely wronged yourselves by taking the calf (for a god), so turn to your Creator (penitently), and kill your passions.^a That is best for you with your Creator. So He turned to you (mercifully). Surely He is the Oft-returning (to mercy), the Merciful.

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ يُقَوْمِ ائْتِكُمْ ظَلْمَٰكُمْ
 اٰنْفُسَكُمْ بِاِيْتَاذِكُمْ الْعَجَلِ فَتُوْبُوْا اِلَىٰۤ اٰرْبَابِكُمْ
 فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۗ اِنَّكُمْ عِنْدَۤ اٰرْبَابِكُمْ
 فَتٰبَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥٤﴾

55 And when you said: O Moses, we will not believe in thee till we see Allāh manifestly, so the punishment overtook you while you looked on.^a

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يُوسَىٰ كُنْ نُوْمًا مِّنْ لَّاكَ حَتَّىٰ نَرَىٰ اللّٰهَ
 جَهْرًا ۗ فَاخَذْنَاكُم بِالصُّعْفَةِ ۗ وَاَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾

signifies a *proof* or *demonstration* and also *aid* or *victory*. The *furqān* or *discrimination* which is here spoken of as being given to Moses was Pharaoh's drowning in the sea and the deliverance of the Israelites. The battle of *Badr* afforded the *furqān* or *discrimination* in the case of the Holy Prophet, and hence the battle of *Badr* is called *yaum al-furqān* or *the day of discrimination* in 8:41.

54a. According to the Bible, the children of Levi were commanded to slay the others, and three thousand men were killed on that day. On the basis of this Bible story, the words *fa-qtulū anfusa-kum* occurring here have been translated as meaning *kill your people*. The context does not allow this interpretation. In the first place, the words are preceded by an order to repent and it could not be followed by an order to kill. Secondly, the words that follow are, *so He turned to you mercifully*, and an order to kill three thousand people could not be called a merciful dealing. Thirdly, it has already been made clear in v. 52 that God pardoned them for the offence of taking the calf for a god: *Then We pardoned you after that so that you might give thanks*. They could not be asked to give thanks for being killed. The order to kill is inconsistent with the statement that they were pardoned. Fourthly, when the same incident is narrated elsewhere, there is a clear statement that they were granted a pardon and there is no mention of killing: "Then they took the calf for a god, after clear signs had come to them, but We pardoned this" (4:153). Fifthly, according to the Qur'ān even Sāmīrī, the leader of calf-worship, was not killed and was dismissed simply with the order: "Begone then! It is for thee in this life to say, Touch (me) not". (20:97).

Hence the Holy Qur'ān rejects the Bible story of the Israelites being killed as a punishment for calf-worship. They were pardoned and were told simply to repent, and God accepted their repentance as clearly stated here. Therefore *anfusa-kum* does not mean here *your people*, but *your desires* or *your passions*, for the word *nafs*, of which *anfūs* is the plural, means not only *self* or *soul* but also *intention*, *desire* or *passion*. In fact, it was an order not to kill but to mortify, and this is the only interpretation which can be given to these words consistent with the clear mention of God's pardoning them and turning to them mercifully. I may add that no prophet or religion has ever taught that a man can be killed for the worship of an object other than God.

55a. The reference to this story contained in the Bible is in Exod. 19:16, 17: "And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the Mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. And Moses brought forth the people out of

56 Then We raised you up after your stupor that you might give thanks.^a ﴿نُفِّرْ بَعْدَكُمْ مِنْ بُعْدٍ مَوْنِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾

57 And We made the clouds to give shade over you^a and We sent to you manna and quails.^b Eat of the good things that We have given you. And they did not do Us any harm, but they wronged their own souls.

﴿وَضَلَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الْعَمَامَ وَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْمَنَّاءَ وَالسَّلْوَىٰ كُلًّا مِنْ مَّاءٍ رَزَقْنَاكَ وَمَا ظَلَمُونَا وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ﴾

58 And when We said: Enter this city,^a then eat from it a plenteous

﴿وَأَدْخَلْنَا أَدْخُلُوا هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةَ وَكُلُوا مِنْهَا﴾

the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the Mount". The Talmud gives the details.

Ṣā'iqah originally signifies *thunder or the sound of thunder*, and hence *any vehement cry* (T, LL); it also means *any destructive punishment* (LL). The same incident is referred to in 7:155, in the following words: "And Moses chose of his people seventy men for Our appointment. So when the earthquake overtook them". Thus the ṣā'iqah of this verse is the same as the *earthquake* in 7:155, and thus it here signifies the rumbling noise which precedes an earthquake.

56a. The word *maut* does not always mean cessation of life. It also signifies *loss of sensation, deprivation of intellectual faculties, experiencing great grief and sorrow, sleep*, etc. (R, LL). The *maut* mentioned in this verse refers to temporary loss of sensation, because on the same occasion Moses is spoken of as having fallen down "in swoon" (7:143), and the statement is followed by the words "when he recovered". A similar fate overtook his companions.

57a. The Bible speaks of a cloud, clear and bright during the night, thick and gloomy in day time (Exod. 13:21), a very unnatural phenomenon to continue for forty years. The Qur'ān simply speaks of clouds having given them shade at some point in their journey in the wilderness, when probably the excessive heat of the Arabian Desert had become unbearable.

57b. The *mann* and *salwā* are the manna and quails of Exodus, 16th chapter. Literally, *mann* is *anything which comes to man without much effort* (LL). In a saying of the Holy Prophet the *truffle* is spoken of as being *mann*. LL has the following explanation under the word *turanjabin*: "A kind of manna; the manna of the thorny plants called by the Arabs the *hāj*, and hence by European botanists *Alhagi*; according to Dr. Royle it is a sweetish juice which exudes from the *Alhagi maurorum*, crystallizes into small granular masses, and is usually distinguished by the name of Persian manna; a kind of dew that falls mostly in *Khurāsān* and *Mā-warā al-nahr* and in our country, mostly upon the *hāj*; the best thereof is that which is fresh or moist and white (Ibn Sinā), the *mann* or *manna* mentioned in the Qur'ān". Some say it was honey. *Salwā* means *whatever renders one content in a case of privation*. It is a certain bird resembling the quail (LL). The *mann* and the *salwā* formed the food of the Israelites in the wilderness. According to Zj, it includes all that Allāh bestowed on them as a gift in the wilderness and granted to them freely without much exertion on their part (AH).

58a. The city is probably Shittim: "And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-Jesimoth even unto Abel-Shittim in the plains of Moab", or Jericho, which was near by

(food) whence you wish, and enter the gate submissively,^b and make petition for forgiveness.^c We will forgive you your wrongs and increase the reward of those who do good (to others).

حَيْثُ شِئْتُمْ سَرَعْدًا وَأَدْخُلُوا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا
وَقُولُوا حِطَّةً نَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ خَطِيئَتَكُمْ وَسَنَزِيدُ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

59 But those who were unjust changed the word which had been spoken to them, for another saying,^a so We sent upon the wrongdoers a pestilence from heaven, because they transgressed.^b

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا قَوْلَ الَّذِي قِيلَ
لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا رِجْزًا مِّنَ
السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

SECTION 7: Divine Favours on Israel

60 And when Moses prayed for water for his people, We said: March on to the rock with thy staff.^a So

وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ
بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا

in the same plain (Num. 33:49, 50). Here it was that the worst features of the wickedness of the Israelites were displayed: “And Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab” (Num. 25:1). Or, the reference may be to the Holy Land, as stated elsewhere: “O my people, enter the Holy Land which Allāh has ordained for you” (5:21).

58b. They were told to remain submissive while abiding in a city where they would be able to enjoy the comforts of life. See 34a for the significance of *sajdah*.

58c. *Ḥiṭṭat-un* (from *ḥiṭṭa*, meaning *he put it down*) is a prayer for the putting down of the heavy burden of sins from one. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said to his followers: “Say, *We ask forgiveness of Allāh and turn to Him penitently*”; and to have added: “This is, to be sure, the *ḥiṭṭat-un* which the Israelites were commanded to say” (IH, ch. Hudaibiyah). By *qaul* the Arabs express all kinds of deeds (A). *Qilū ḥiṭṭat-un* therefore stands for a petition for forgiveness or for *being repentant*.

59a. That is to say, they went against the Divine commandment. The Bible says: “The people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab. And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat and bowed down to their gods. And Israel joined himself unto Baal-Peor, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel” (Num. 25:1–3).

59b. When a punishment overtakes a people as a consequence of their wicked deeds it is spoken of as coming from heaven, the significance probably being that it cannot be averted. The pestilence spoken of here is referred to in the Bible in Num. 25:8, 9, according to which 24,000 men died of the plague. The same incident is again referred to in 7:161, 162.

60a. The words *iḍrib bi’-aṣā ka-l-ḥajara* may be translated in two ways, *strike the rock with thy staff*, or *march on or go forth or hasten, to the rock with thy staff*. *Ḍarb*

there flowed from it twelve springs. Each tribe knew their drinking-place.^b Eat and drink of the provisions of Allāh, and act not corruptly, making mischief in the land.

عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا قَدْ عَلِمَ كُلُّ أُنَاسٍ مَّشْرِبَهُمْ
كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْمُوا
فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٥﴾

61 And when you said: O Moses, we cannot endure one food,^a so pray thy Lord on our behalf to bring forth for us out of what the earth grows, of its herbs and its cucumbers and its

وَإِذْ قُلْتُمْ يَا مُوسَى لَنْ نَصْبِرَ عَلَى طَعَامٍ وَاحِدٍ
فَادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُخْرِجْ لَنَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ
مِنْ بَقْلِهَا وَفِثَّائِهَا وَفُومِهَا وَعَدَسِيهَا وَبَصَلِهَا

means *striking, smiting, marching on, going from place to place, setting forth a parable*, and carries a number of other significances. In fact, *darb* is used to indicate all kinds of actions except a few (T). When *arḍ* (land or earth) is its object, it carries the significance of *going about* or *seeking a way*. Thus *daraba-l-arḍa* or *daraba fi-l-arḍi* both signify *he journeyed in the land* or *went forth or hastened in the land* (LL). The object of *iḍrib* here is *al-hajar* which means a rock or a mountain to which there is no access, as explained by *Tha'labi* (LL). 'Aṣā ordinarily means *staff* or *rod*, but its primary significance is a *state of combination* (T, LL), and the word is metaphorically used to speak of a community. Thus of the *Khawārij*, a Muslim sect, it is said, *shaqqū'asa-l-Muslimina* (lit., *they broke the staff of the Muslims*) which means that *they made a schism in the state of combination and union, or in the community of the Muslims* (LA). Hence the words may mean *strike the rock with thy staff*, or *march on to the mountain with thy staff* or *thy community*.

The story that Moses carried a stone with him and that twelve springs flowed from it whenever, placing it in the wilderness, he struck it with his staff, has no foundation in the words of the Holy Qur'ān or any saying of the Prophet. What the words of the Qur'ān signify is either that Moses was commanded by God to smite a particular rock with his staff from which water flowed forth miraculously, or to march on to a mountain from which springs flowed. The Bible does not contain any contemporaneous record of the events, and what it contains does not render much help. In Exod. 17:1–6 we are told that Moses went with the elders to the rock of Horeb, and on his smiting the rock with his rod water flowed out, but there is no mention of twelve springs there. But as Marah (Exod. 15:23) is now known by the name of *'uyūn Mūsā*, i.e., the springs of Moses (Bib. Dict., Cambridge Press, Art. "Wilderness"), it is very doubtful whether the incident referred to in Exod. 17:1–6 is correctly recorded, the more so as there is hopeless confusion about the other incidents related to have occurred at Rephidim, the scene of the smiting of the rock.

60b. The number of springs is in accordance with the number of the Israelite tribes. It is very probable that the reference in this verse is to the twelve wells at Elim (Exod. 15:27), to which place the Israelites had gone from Marah. Moreover, the twelve tribes could settle on twelve springs apart from each other only if the springs were situated at a distance from each other and did not flow from one source. Compare also the next verse, according to which the demand for a variety of foods is granted by pointing out the natural course of settling in a town and tilling the ground.

61a. "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic. But now our soul is dried away, there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes ... Then Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent" (Num. 11:5–10).

garlic^b and its lentils and its onions. He said: Would you exchange that which is better for that which is worse? Enter a city,^c so you will have what you ask for. And abasement and humiliation were stamped upon them, and they incurred Allāh's wrath.^d That was so because they disbelieved in the messages of Allāh and would kill the prophets unjustly.^e That was so because they disobeyed and exceeded the limits.

قَالَ اسْتَبَدُّوا لَنْ أَلِدِي هُوَ أَذْيُ بِالَّذِي هُوَ
 خَيْرٌ ۗ إِهْبِطُوا مِصْرًا فَإِنَّ لَكُمْ مَّا سَأَلْتُمْ ۗ
 وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذِّلَّةُ وَالْمَسْكَنَةُ ۗ وَبَاءُوا
 بِعَصْيِهِمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُكَفِّرُونَ
 بِلَايَةِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيِّنَّ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ
 ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَأَكْرَهُوا ۗ يَعْتَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

61b. The Israelites were required to live a hard life which would make them fit for conquering the Holy Land; this was better for them. But they wanted to live a life of ease and to have all kinds of food which they could get only by settling in towns and tilling the land.

61c. Sale's translation, "Get ye down into Egypt," is decidedly wrong. The word *miṣr* is used here as a common noun, and means a *city*. Hazeroth (Num. 11:35) seems to have been the place referred to here, "a station in the desert journey, the second after leaving Senai, probably to be identified with the modern 'Ain al-Huderah, about forty miles N.E. of Jabal Mūsā" (Bib. Dict., Cam.).

61d. The verse speaks of the ultimate condition to which the Israelites were reduced when they persisted in setting at naught the Divine commandments and indulged in immoral and depraved practices. A comparison with 3:112 will show the truth of this remark, for that verse, which is almost identical with the one under discussion, clearly refers to the later history of Israel. The truth of this prophecy regarding the fate of the Jewish nation is amply borne out by Jewish history. The Jews are the wealthiest of nations but their lot is miserable in almost every country of the world, notwithstanding their great influence in politics it remains so to this day. Moses had promised the same fate for them: "The Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other ... And among those nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind" (Deut. 28:64, 65).

61e. Jesus also holds the Jews guilty for "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias" (Matt. 23:35), and condemns them for their hypocritical assertion that "if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets" (Matt. 23:30). There is an allusion here to the Jewish plans against the life of the Prophet also. The word *qatl* signifies sometimes an attempt to kill or the *doing of things which may lead to murder whether murder actually takes place or not* (RM). Whether any prophets were actually killed or not is a different question, but they undoubtedly tried to kill prophets, and made several attempts to kill the Holy Prophet Muḥammad too.

SECTION 8: Israelites' Degeneration

62 Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians,^a whoever believes in Allāh and the Last Day and does good, they have their reward with their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.^b

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَالَّذِينَ هَادُوا وَالنَّصَارَى
وَالصَّبِيَّانَ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ
وَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

63 And when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain above you:^a Hold fast that which We have given you, and bear in mind what is in it, so that you may guard against evil.

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمُ
الطُّورَ طُحُوتًا مَّا اتَّيْنَكُم بِقُوَّةٍ وَّأَذْكُرُوا
مَا فِيهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

62a. The Sabians are mentioned in the Holy Qur'ān on three occasions only, here and in 5:69 along with the Jews and the Christians, and in 22:17 with these and the Magians. According to En. Br., the Sabians were a semi-Christian sect of Babylonia, closely resembling the so-called "Christians of St. John the Baptist". The probable derivation of the name is traced to an Aramaic root, and the root meaning is said to be *those who wash themselves*, and this is said to be corroborated by Arab writers applying to them the name of *al-Mugh̃tasilah*. The idea that the Sabians were star-worshippers is rejected; the error, it is said, being due to the pseudo-Sabians of Harrian, who chose to be known by that name in the reign of Al-Māmūn, in 830 A.D., in order to be classed as the "People of the Book". The commentators hold different opinions regarding them, most of them agreeing that they are representatives of a religion between Judaism and Christianity, based on the doctrine of unity, but also maintaining worship of angels. The majority do not include them in the *Ahl al-Kitāb* (AH).

62b. This verse strikes at the root of the idea of a favoured nation whose members alone may be entitled to salvation. The subject is introduced here to show that even the Jews, notwithstanding their transgressions which had made them deserving of Divine wrath, were entitled to a goodly reward if they believed and did good deeds. It should be borne in mind that, as shown in 4b, belief in Allāh and the Last Day is equivalent to belief in Islām as the true religion. The statement made amounts to this, that salvation cannot be attained by mere lip-profession by any people, not even by the Muslims, unless they adhere to a true belief and do good deeds. As to those who stick to their own religions, we are told in 22:17 that "Allāh will decide between them on the day of Resurrection". The existence of good men in other religions is not denied by the Holy Qur'ān, but perfect peace, or the state of absolute contentment which is indicated by freedom from fear and grief, is obtainable only in Islām, because Islām alone is the religion of absolute submission to the Divine Being.

63a. "They stood at the nether part of the mount" (Exod. 19:17). There is nothing in the words of the Qur'ān to support the baseless story that the mountain was suspended in mid-heaven over the heads of the Israelites to frighten them into submission (see 7:171a). The use of the word *raf'* is in accordance with the Arabic idiom, for it signifies the *rearing* or *uprearing* of a building, or *making it high* or *lofty* (R, LL). In this sense the word is used in v. 127.

64 Then after that you turned back; and had it not been for the grace of Allāh and His mercy on you, you had certainly been among the losers.

ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَكُونَ لَافِئَةً لِّلَّهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ لَكُنْتُمْ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

65 And indeed you know those among you who violated the Sabbath,^a so We said to them: Be (as) apes, despised and hated.^b

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ الَّذِينَ اعْتَدُوا مِنكُمْ فِي السَّبْتِ
فَقُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٦٥﴾

65a. The root meaning of *sabt* (from which *Sabt*, meaning Sabbath, is derived) is *cutting off* (R). The *Sabt* or the Sabbath is so called *because the Jews ceased thereon from work* (T). The Jews and the Christians observed a particular day for religious worship, and they were forbidden to do any work on that day. In this sense there is no Sabbath among the Muslims, because in Islām no particular day is set apart for Divine worship. On the other hand, the Muslim is required to pray in the very midst of his everyday work, and even the Jumū'ah (Friday) prayers are no exception, for the Qur'an expressly allows the doing of work both before and after the Jumū'ah prayers (see 62:9a).

The commandments regarding the observance of the Sabbath by the Jews are manifold, but we find the Jews so persistently violating them that the later prophets openly reproved them for it (see next note).

65b. Mjd explains this in the following words: *They were not transformed or metamorphosed; it is only a parable which Allāh has set forth for them, the like of what He has set forth in likening them to asses* (62:5), i.e., *their hearts were transformed, not that they were metamorphosed into apes* (IJ). The verse that follows lends support to this explanation as a monkey could not afford a lesson to the generations that came after the metamorphosis had taken place. R observes in explaining this verse: *It is said that He rather made them morally like apes*. Compare also 5:60: "they are those whom Allāh has cursed and upon whom He brought His wrath and of whom He made apes and swine, and who serve the devil. These are in a worse plight and further astray from the straight path". This description of the same people clearly shows that it is men who imitate apes and swine that are meant. See also 4:47: "Or (We shall) curse them as We cursed the Sabbath-breakers". Now, in the case of the Holy Prophet's opponents from among the Jews, who are referred to in the words, *We shall curse them*, there was no metamorphosis, but here it is stated that the same curse must overtake them as overtook the Sabbath-breakers. A reference to Deut. 28 will show that the curses which Moses prophesied for them meant their being scattered among the nations of the earth, and this was the fate which overtook the Prophet's enemies from among the Jews. *Qiradah* is the plural of *qird*, meaning *an ape*, and among the Arabs the ape is a proverbially incontinent animal, they say *more incontinent than an ape* (LL).

Turning to the Bible, we find that the Israelites became *apes*, in all the senses in which that word is used in the Arabic language, by violating the Divine commandments: "Thou hast despised Mine holy things, and hast profaned My Sabbaths. In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood: and in thee they eat upon the mountains; in the midst of thee they commit lewdness. In thee have they discovered their father's nakedness: in thee have they humbled her that was set apart for pollution. And one hath committed abomination with his neighbour's wife; and another hath lewdly defiled his daughter-in-law; and another in thee hath humbled his sister, his father's daughter ... And I will scatter thee among the heathen and disperse thee in the countries" (Ezek. 22:8-15).

66 So We made them an example to those who witnessed it and those who came after it and an admonition to those who guard against evil.

فَجَعَلْنَاهَا نَكَالًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَمَا خَلْفَهَا
وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾

67 And when Moses said to his people: Surely Allāh commands you to sacrifice a cow.^a They said: Dost thou ridicule us? He said: I seek refuge with Allāh from being one of the ignorant.

وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَن
تَذْبَحُوا بَقْرَةً قَالُوا أَتَتَّخِذُنَا هُزُوًا قَالَ
أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ أَن أَكُونَ مِنَ الْجَاهِلِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾

68 They said: Call on thy Lord for our sake to make it plain to us what she is. (Moses) said: He says, Surely she is a cow neither advanced in age nor too young, of middle age between these (two); so do what you are commanded.

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا هِيَ قَالَتْ
إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ لَا فَارِصٌ وَلَا يَكُونُ
عَوَانٌ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ فَاعْمَلُوا مَا تُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾

69 They said: Call on thy Lord for our sake to make it clear to us what her colour is. (Moses) said: He says, She is a yellow cow; her colour is

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا لَوْنُهَا قَالَ
إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقْرَةٌ صَفْرَاءٌ فَاقْتَرِفْنَاهَا

67a. The slaughter of the cow referred to in this verse has nothing in common with the slaying of a heifer as an expiation of an uncertain murder in Deut. 21:1-9, or the slaughter of a red heifer, the ashes of which purify one who has touched the dead body of any man (Num. 19:1-19), except the fact that as the Israelites held the cow in great honour, and even worshipped it, as is clear from their worship of the golden calf, they were ordered to slaughter such cows as were usually let abroad and worshipped as sacred objects — cows not wrought with, nor drawn in yoke, but let loose to wander abroad. The cow mentioned in these verses is a typical cow answering this description. This type of cow is still an object of special reverence in India, and the slaughter of this particular type was especially enjoined upon the Jews, according to the Bible as well as the Holy Qur'ān, the object being to root out cow-worship from among them. But whereas the Biblical injunction to slaughter a heifer is a general injunction to be observed whenever an uncertain murder takes place or an unclean person is to be purified, the injunction as contained in the Qur'ān points to the slaughter of one particular cow which was probably likely to become an object of worship. Indeed, there is a striking resemblance between the colour of the golden calf and the cow ordered to be slaughtered. The concluding words of the section show that, because of their reverence for that particular cow, the Jews were very averse to slaughter it. The red heifer "had a whole treatise to itself in the Mishna, where its qualifications were elaborated to such a point that at last R. Nisin said that no one since the days of Moses had been able to find one fit to be slain" (En. Bib., col. 846). This remark clearly suggests that in the time of Moses one fit to be slain and answering that description had been found. For the Israelites' worship of cows, see 51b.

intensely yellow delighting the beholders.

سَمُّ النَّظِيرِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

70 They said: Call on thy Lord for our sake to make it clear to us what she is, for surely to us the cows are all alike, and if Allāh please we shall surely be guided aright.

قَالُوا ادْعُ لَنَا رَبَّكَ يُبَيِّنْ لَنَا مَا فِي بَقَرَةَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ إِنَّ الْبَقَرَةَ
تَشْبَهُ عَلَيْكُم وَإِنَّا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾

71 (Moses) said: He says: She is a cow not made submissive to plough the land, nor does she water the tilth, sound, without a blemish in her. They said: Now thou hast brought the truth. So they slaughtered her, though they had not the mind to do (it).^a

قَالَ إِنَّهُ يَقُولُ إِنَّهَا بَقَرَةٌ لَا ذَلُولَ تُثِيرُ
الْأَرْضَ وَلَا تَسْقِي الْحَرْثَ مُسَلَّمَةٌ لَا شِيبَةَ
فِيهَا طَلُّوا أَلْسِنَ الْجَنِّ بِالْحَقِّ قَدْ بَحَوَّهَا
وَمَا كَادُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧١﴾

SECTION 9: They grow in Hard-heartedness

72 And when you (almost) killed a man,^a then you disagreed about it. And Allāh was to bring forth that which you were going to hide.^b

وَإِذْ قَتَلْتُمْ نَفْسًا فَادْرَأْتُمْ فِيهَا وَاللَّهُ مُخْرِجُ
مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾

71a. The concluding words of this verse, as well as those of the 69th, show that the cow which the Israelites were commanded to slaughter was one specially venerated by them. It was delightful in appearance, and the Israelites were averse to slaughter it. This shows that this particular cow was likely to become an object of worship among them, and hence Moses' precaution. The directions contained in Deut. 21:1-9 and elsewhere in regard to the slaughter of this type of cow show further precautions against a similar tendency of the Israelite mind.

72a. The story generally narrated by the commentators to explain this passage is not based on any saying of the Holy Prophet; nor is it met with in the Bible. The very indefiniteness of the incident is an indication that it refers to some well-known event in history, and as almost all incidents of the stubbornness of the Jewish nation prior to the time of Jesus have been mentioned, it becomes almost certain that this incident refers to Jesus himself, as it was with respect to his death that disagreement took place and many doubted his death. This inference becomes stronger when we compare the incidents narrated here with the same incidents as narrated in the fourth chapter in vv. 153-157, where, after enumerating almost all the incidents narrated here in the three previous sections, the Qur'ān goes on to accuse the Jews in the following words: "And for their saying: We have killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of Allāh, and they killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the cross, but he was made to appear to them as such. And certainly those who differ therein are in doubt about it. They have no knowledge about it, but only follow a conjecture" (4:157). The part quoted answers exactly to vv. 72 and 73, only that the name is omitted here. This comparison makes it

72b, see next page.

73 So We said: Smite him with it partially.^a Thus Allāh brings the dead to life,^b and He shows you His signs that you may understand.

فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبُوهُ بِبَعْضِهَا كَذَلِكَ يُحْيِي اللَّهُ
الْمَوْتَى وَيُرِيكُمْ آيَاتِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾

74 Then your hearts hardened after that, so that they were like rocks, rather worse in hardness. And surely there are some rocks from which streams burst forth; and there are some of them which split asunder so water flows from them; and there are some of them which fall down for the fear of Allāh.^a And Allāh is not heedless of what you do.

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ
كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ
لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشَقَّقُ
فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ
حَشِيَّةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾

clear that it is the apparent killing of Jesus that is referred to here. The words *you killed* (Ar. *qatalum*) are used, because in the first place the Jews asserted that they had killed him, and secondly because metaphorically a person may be said to have been killed when he is made to appear as if he were dead. Thus in the well-known saying, *idhā mā māta mait-un* (lit., *when a dead man dies*), the word *dead* really signifies *not the dead man, but one who is about to die*. 'Umar's saying, *uqtulū S'ad-an*, is explained by LA as meaning, *make him like one who is slain*. LA also allows the use of the word *qatl* for a *severe punishment* in cases in which the drunkard and the habitual thief are spoken of as deserving of *qatl* in certain sayings of early-day judges.

72b. The Jews wanted to kill Jesus, but God ordained that he should not die. This was the bringing forth of that which they were going to hide.

73a. The construction of the phrase, *iqribū-hu bi-ba'di-hā*, is rather difficult, but a comparison with 4:157 makes the meaning clear. *Ḍarb*, as shown in 60a, conveys a number of significations. It means *striking* as well as *likening*, and an instance of the latter significance we find in the Qur'ān itself, where it is said *yaḍribu-llāhu-l-ḥaqqa wa-l-bāḥila*, *Allāh compares truth and falsehood* (13:17). In *ba'di-hā* (lit., *a part of it*), the personal pronoun *hā*, i.e., *it*, refers to the act of murder. The act of murder was not completed in the case of Jesus, as the Gospels show, for after he was taken down from the cross his legs were not broken, as in the case of the thieves. The meaning of the sentence is therefore according to the signification of *ḍarb* that we adopt: *strike him with partial death, or liken his condition to that of the partially dead man*; and thus he was made to appear as a dead man, as stated in 4:157. There is no other case of a murder or an attempted murder in Jewish history of which the whole nation could be said to have been guilty, and which might answer to the description of these two verses.

73b. This was really a case of giving life to the dead, for Jesus Christ was dead to all appearance. Those actually dead do not return to life in this world; see 21:95a, 23:100a and 39:42a.

74a. The hardened hearts are likened to rocks, and then they are metaphorically spoken of as bursting forth so that streams of water flow from them; others are spoken of as splitting asunder so that water flows from them; others still as falling down for fear of Allāh. The significance is clear; even hardened hearts would receive life — nay more,

75 Do you then hope that they would believe in you, and a party from among them indeed used to hear the word of Allāh, then altered it after they had understood it, and they know (this).^a

أَفَتَطْمَعُونَ أَنْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِالْكُمْ وَقَدْ كَانُوا سَرِيعِينَ
مِنْهُمْ يَسْمَعُونَ كَلِمَ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ يَحْرِفُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
مَا عَقَلُوهُ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

76 And when they meet those who believe they say, We believe, and when they are apart one with another they say: Do you talk to them of what Allāh has disclosed to you that they may contend with you by this before your Lord? Do you not understand?^a

وَإِذَا الْقَوْمُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَا بِضَعَفَهُمْ
رَأَى بَعْضُ قَائِلُوا أَنْ تَحِثُّنَهُمْ بِمَا فَتَحَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
لِيُجَاجِلْكُمْ بِهِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾

77 Do they not know that Allāh knows what they keep secret and what they make known?

أَوَلَا يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُرْسُونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

78 And some of them are illiterate;^a they know not the Book but only (from) hearsay, and they do but conjecture.

وَمِنْهُمْ أُمِّيُونَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا أَمَْانَةً
وَأِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٧٨﴾

they would give life to others, be a source of spiritual life for others as water and streams are sources of life in the physical world.

75a. That the Israelites did not preserve their sacred books in their purity is a constant charge laid by the Holy Qur'ān against the Jews. In fact, the alteration and corruption of the various books of the Bible is now proved beyond all doubt; see 79a.

76a. They remonstrate with their less careful co-religionists who would talk of the prophecies of the advent of the promised Prophet, telling them that the Muslims would benefit by these disclosures in the sight of their Lord. The absurdity of this argument is made clear in the next verse. Truth was truth in the sight of Allāh whether they made it known or not.

78a. The word translated here as *illiterate* is *ummiyyūn*, plural of *ummi*, which signifies *one who neither writes nor reads a writing* (R). The word is, therefore, specially applied to the Arabs, who were generally unacquainted with reading and writing, exceptions being rare. It is, however, here applied to the illiterate Jews; see also 7:157a. The Jewish masses had no access to their own sacred books which were known only to their learned men, and therefore religious ideas were based only on stories which they knew from hearsay. The word *amāni* is plural of *ummiyyah* which means *a desire* and also carries the significance of *lying*, because desire leads to lies (R). Some understand by it the repetition of words without knowing their significance. What is said here about the Jews is to a very large extent true of the Muslims of our day. In the early days of Islām, every individual Muslim, man as well as woman, sought light direct from the Qur'ān. Not so the Muslims in this age who depend entirely on their learned men. They

79 Woe! then to those who write the Book with their hands then say, This is from Allāh; so that they may take for it a small price.^a So woe! to them for what their hands write and woe! to them for what they earn.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ يَكْتُبُونَ الْكِتَابَ بِأَيْدِيهِمْ ثُمَّ يَقُولُونَ هَذَا مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ لِيَشْتَرُوا بِهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا طُغْيَانًا لَهُمْ وَمِمَّا كَتَبَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَوَيْلٌ لَهُمْ مِمَّا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

80 And they say: Fire will not touch us but for a few days.^a Say: Have you received a promise from Allāh? Then Allāh will not fail to perform His promise. Or do you speak against Allāh what you know not?

وَقَالُوا لَنْ نَسْتَأْذِنَكَ إِلَّا أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَةً قُلْ أَتَّخَذْتُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَهْدًا أَفَلَنْ يُخْلِفَ اللَّهُ عَهْدَ أَمْرًا يَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

81 Yea, whoever earns evil and his sins beset him on every side, those

بَلَىٰ مَنْ كَسَبَ سَيِّئَةً وَأَحَاطَتْ بِهِ خِطَايَاتُهُ

do read the Qur'ān but look upon mere recitation as a meritorious deed without trying to learn what it says, and then act upon it.

79a. The alteration and corruption of the Bible, the Old as well as the New Testament, spoken of in v. 75 and repeated here, is now an established fact. That the alteration spoken of in v. 75 was an alteration of the words of the text is made manifest here: "They write the Book with their hands then say: This is from Allāh". These alterations they effected for their own selfish ends. "That they may take for it a small price". I give below a few quotations from Rev. Dummelow, which prove the alteration of the Bible text beyond all doubt: "On close examination, however, it must be admitted that the Pentateuch reveals many features inconsistent with the traditional view that in its present form it is the work of Moses. For instance, it may be safely granted that Moses did not write the account of his own death in Dt. 34. The statement in Dt. 1:1 that Moses spoke these words beyond Jordan is evidently made from the standpoint of one living in Canaan, which Moses never did Other passages which can with difficulty be ascribed to him are Ex. 6:26, 27; 11:3; 16:35, 36; Lv. 18:24-28; Nu. 12:3; Dt. 2:12" (Bible Commentary, p. xxiv). And again: "A careful examination has led many scholars to the conviction that the writings of Moses formed only the rough material or purport of the material, and that in its present form it is not the work of one man, but a compilation made from previously existing documents" (p. xxvi). Still again: "Similarly in the legislative portions of these books we find apparent contradictions and these not in minor or insignificant details, but in fundamental enactments" (p. xxvi). The text of the New Testament is still more unreliable. The same author says: "To begin with, the writers of the Gospels report in Greek ... the sayings of Jesus Christ, who for the most part probably spoke Aramaic ... Not even in later centuries do we find that scrupulous regard for the sacred text which marked the transmission of the Old Testament. A copyist would sometimes put in not what was in the text, but what he thought out to be in it. He would trust a fickle memory, or he would even make the text accord with the views of the school to which he belonged" (p. xvi).

80a. "It is a received opinion among the Jews at present that no person, be he ever so wicked, or of whatever sect, shall remain in hell above eleven months, or at most a year, except Dathan and Abiram and atheists, who will be tormented there to all eternity" (Sale).

are the companions of the Fire; therein they abide.^a

فَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

82 And those who believe and do good deeds, these are the owners of the Garden; therein they abide.^a

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَنَّةِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾

SECTION 10: Their Covenant and its Violation

83 And when We made a covenant with the Children of Israel:^a You shall serve none but Allāh.^b And do good to (your) parents,^c and to the near of kin and to orphans and the needy,^d and speak good (words)^e to

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ لَا تَعْبُدُونَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ فَمَا يُؤَدُّ الْإِنسَانُ أَيْمَانَهُ إِذْ يَخْرُجُ مِنَ بَيْتِهِ إِلَىٰ مَسْكَنِهِ أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُ إِلَىٰ مَا نَدَّبَهُ الرَّسُولُ ﴿٨٣﴾

81a. The inmates of the Fire are here stated to be those who earn evil, and find themselves beset on every side by their evil deeds. These are the men who give themselves up to evil, and who therefore ultimately find themselves in the power of evil, which even in this life, but more palpably in the life after death, assumes the form of a burning fire. It should be noted that the man who struggles against evil, however long that struggle may take, to overcome an evil inclination, is not the man who earns evil, because the earnest struggle in which the fighter against evil hates and detests evil, and seeks to overcome it, always ends in a victory for the good and noble qualities in man.

82a. This verse speaks of those whose lives are devoted to the doing of good as against those who earn evil, spoken of in the last verse. It should be noted that, though refraining from evil is a praiseworthy thing, the doing of good occupies a much higher place. Sinlessness is simply a preparatory ground for the development of self, while that development consists in the doing of good.

The doers of good are called *aṣḥāb al-Jannat* or *owners of the Garden*. The word *aṣḥāb* is pl. of *ṣāḥib* which means a *companion* or an *owner*. I have translated *aṣḥāb al-nār* as *companions of the Fire* but *aṣḥāb al-Jannat* as *owners of the Garden*, because while the inmates of the Fire will be taken out of it after being purged of the evil, of the inmates of paradise it is said that it is “a gift never to be cut off” (11:108), and that those in it will never be ejected from it (15:48). As to the reason for calling the righteous the owners of the Garden or describing the fruit of their labour as Gardens in which rivers flow, see 25a.

83a. Allāh’s making a covenant with a people signifies His giving commandments to them. Compare Deut. 4:13: “And He declared unto you His covenant, which He commanded you to perform”.

83b. Compare Exod. 20:3: “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me”, and Exod. 23:25: “And ye shall serve the Lord your God”, and various other places.

83c. Compare Exod. 20:12, and Deut. 5:16: “Honour thy father and thy mother”.

83d. Compare Deut. 15:11: “Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land”.

83e, see next page.

(all) men, and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate.^f Then you turned back except a few of you, and you are averse.

أَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ إِلَّا
قَلِيلًا مِّنْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

84 And when We made a covenant with you: You shall not shed your blood, nor turn your people out of your cities; then you promised and you bear witness.^a

وَإِذْ أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَكُمْ لَا تَسْفِكُونَ دِمَاءَكُمْ
وَلَا تَخْرِجُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ ثُمَّ أَقْرَرْتُمْ
وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

85 Yet you it is who would slay your people and turn a party from among you out of their homes, backing each other up against them unlawfully and exceeding the limits.^a

ثُمَّ أَنْتُمْ هَؤُلَاءِ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَتُخْرِجُونَ
فَرِيقًا مِّنْكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ فَتُظَاهَرُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ
بِالْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَإِن يَأْتُواكُمْ أُسْرَىٰ

83e. The word *qaul* (*speaking*) is used to express all kinds of deeds (N), and hence the speaking of good words to all stands for kind dealing with all.

83f. Prayer and *zakāt* as enjoined on the Israelites differed from the Islāmic prayer and *zakāt* in details. The directions regarding poor-rate among the Israelites are contained in Deut. 14:28, 29: "At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates. And the Levite (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee), and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; and the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest".

84a. The previous verse speaks of a covenant with *the Children of Israel* while this one speaks of a covenant with *you*. The reference here is to the important treaty of mutual obligation in writing which the Holy Prophet entered into with the Jews when he settled at Madinah. By this treaty the Muslims and the Jews were bound not only not to turn their hands against each other but also to defend one another against a common enemy. In fact, this treaty aimed at a perfect union among the discordant elements of the population of Madinah. I quote a few clauses of this treaty: "Whosoever is rebellious or seeketh to spread enmity and sedition, the hand of every man shall be against him, even if he be a son ... Whosoever of the Jews followeth us shall have aid and succour; they shall not be injured, nor shall any enemy be aided against them ... The Jewish clans in alliance with the several tribes of Madinah are one people with the believers. ... The Jews will profess their religion, the Muslims theirs. As with the Jews so with their adherents. No one shall go forth to war excepting with the permission of Muḥammad, but this shall not hinder any from seeking lawful revenge. The Jews shall be responsible for their expenditure, the Muslims for theirs; but if attacked, each shall come to the assistance of the other. Madinah shall be sacred and inviolable for all that join this treaty. Controversies and disputes shall be referred to the decision of God and His Prophet. None shall join the men of Makkah or their allies, for verily the engaging parties are bound together against every one that shall threaten Madinah. War and peace shall be made in common" (IH-Muir).

85a. There is a prophetic reference here to the Jewish attitude towards the Muslims later on when they secretly made an alliance with the Quraish who attacked Madinah. Thus in a later *sūrah*: "And He drove down those of the People of the Book who backed

And if they should come to you as captives you would ransom them, whereas their turning out itself was unlawful for you.^b Do you then believe in a part of the Book and disbelieve in the other? What then is the reward of such among you as do this but disgrace in the life of this world, and on the day of Resurrection they shall be sent back to the most grievous chastisement. And Allāh is not heedless of what you do.

86 These are they who buy the life of this world for the Hereafter, so their chastisement shall not be lightened, nor shall they be helped.

نَفَدُوهُمْ وَهُوَ مُحَرَّمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِخْرَاجَهُمْ
 أَفَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِبَعْضِ الْكِتَابِ وَتُكْفُرُونَ بِبَعْضٍ
 فَمَا جَزَاءُ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ إِلَّا خِزْيٌ
 فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يُرَدُّونَ إِلَى
 أَشَدِّ الْعَذَابِ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرَوُا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا بِالْآخِرَةِ
 فَلَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٨٦﴾

SECTION 11: They reject the Prophet

87 And We indeed gave Moses the Book and We sent messengers after

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ وَقَفَّيْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ

them (i.e. the Quraish), from their fortresses" (33:26). The reference here is to the Bani Quraizah, who were in alliance with the Prophet, but when the Quraish attacked Madinah, which, under the treaty, they were bound to repel, they secretly sided with the invading army; see 33:26a. Under the treaty, the Muslims and the Jews were *one people* and hence they are spoken of, in the opening words of the verse, as slaying their own people. The two Jewish tribes, the Qainuqā' and the Bani Naḍir, were also guilty of intriguing with the enemy and violating the treaty.

85b. The reference in these words is to the terms of the original treaty under which the Jews were bound to ransom the Muslims if they were made captives by an enemy. They did not openly repudiate the treaty but intrigued with the enemy to turn the Muslims out of Madinah. The reference in believing in a part of the book and disbelieving in the other is to this conduct of the Jews. Most commentators, however, understand that the reference here is to the alliance which the two Jewish tribes, Quraizah and Naḍir, living side by side at Madinah, had made with Aus and Khazraj, the two rival tribes of Madinah respectively. When the latter fought against each other, their allies took part in the fighting, and thus one Jewish tribe slaughtered and imprisoned the other and laid waste their habitations, but afterwards collected subscriptions for the release of the Jewish prisoners, on the ground that the law commanded them to redeem the prisoners and they fought against their co-religionists for the honour of their allies. The punishment or disgrace which they are threatened with at the end of the verse was witnessed by all the three Jewish tribes of Madinah, the Qainuqā', the Nadir, and the Quraizah, on account of their violation of the treaty, and making secret alliances with the enemies of Islām in the hope that they would succeed in turning the Muslims out of Madinah.

him one after another; and We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear arguments and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit.^a Is it then that whenever there came to you a messenger with what your souls desired not, you were arrogant? And some you gave the lie to and others you would slay.^b

بِالرُّسُلِ وَآتَيْنَا عِيسَى ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ الْبَيِّنَاتِ وَ
 آيَدْنَاهُ بِرُوحِ الْقُدُسِ أَفَكُلَّمَا جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ
 بِمَا لَا تَهْوَى أَنْفُسُكُمْ اسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ فَفَرِحْنَا
 كَدَابَّتُمْ وَفَرِحْنَا تَفْتُلُونِ ﴿٥٨﴾

88 And they say: Our hearts are repositories.^a Nay, Allāh has cursed them^b on account of their unbelief; so little it is that they believe.

وَقَالُوا قُلُوبُنَا غُلْفٌ ط بَلْ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِكُفْرِهِمْ
 فَقَلِيلًا مَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

87a. The Hebrew for Jesus is Yasū', but in Arabic it is always 'Īsā, and generally the epithet Ibn Maryam (son of Mary) is added to it, to show that he was a mortal like other prophets of God. The long chain of prophets that came after Moses ended in Jesus, Moses being the first and Jesus the last prophet of the Israelite dispensation.

Jesus is here spoken of as having been given clear arguments and strengthened with the Holy Spirit, yet he too was rejected by the Jews. The idea of the Holy Ghost as met with in Christian religious literature is quite different from and opposed to the Jewish conception of the Holy Spirit which Islām accepts. The Christians believe in the Holy Ghost as one of the three persons of Divinity and not as a creation of God, for which there is not the least ground in Jewish religious thought. Even among the Christians the idea was of a later growth, as we find both Zacharias and John spoken of as being filled with the Holy Ghost.

According to the Holy Qur'ān, the Holy Spirit is the angel which brought revelation: "The Holy Spirit has revealed it (i.e. the Qur'ān) from thy Lord" (16:102). The Holy Spirit is mentioned by two other names, Gabriel (v. 97) and the Faithful Spirit (26:193). So Jesus' being strengthened with the Holy Spirit only means that he was granted Divine revelation like other prophets before him.

87b. The change of tense from the past to the optative is an allusion to the attempts which were then being made on the life of the Holy Prophet. Rz thus explains this change: "For you seek by devices the murder of Muḥammad, were it not that I had protected him from you".

88a. *Ghulf* carries two significances. It is plural of *ghilāf*, which means a *covering*, a *case* or a *repository*. The meaning in this case would be that their hearts were repositories of knowledge and they stood in no need of any further knowledge. *Ghulf* is also plural of *aghlaf* which means *enclosed in a covering* (LL), and the significance in this case is that their hearts were covered from hearing and accepting what the Prophet said.

88b. *Curse*, as implying an imprecation of evil, is not the exact equivalent of *la'nat*, which implies *the banishing and estranging of one from good* (LA), though it must necessarily be adopted as such for want of another simple equivalent. The allegation of the Israelites was that, being descendants of prophets, their hearts were the repositories of knowledge, and being already, as it were, full of knowledge, they did not stand in need of more. They are told that it was really their disbelief which became the cause of their estrangement from the good which the Holy Prophet had brought.

89 And when there came to them a Book from Allāh verifying that which they have, and aforetime they used to pray for victory against those who disbelieved — but when there came to them that which they recognized, they disbelieved in it; so Allāh’s curse is on the disbelievers.^a

وَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ كِتَابٌ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ ۖ وَكَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ يَسْتَفْتِحُونَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۗ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ مَا عَرَفُوا كَفَرُوا بِهِ فَلَعْنَةُ اللَّهِ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾

90 Evil is that for which they sell their souls — that they should deny that which Allāh has revealed, out of envy that Allāh should send down of His grace on whomsoever of His servants He pleases; so they incur wrath upon wrath. And there is an abasing chastisement for the disbelievers.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ اسْتَخَرُوا بِهِ أَنْفُسَهُمْ أَنْ يَكْفُرُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بَغْيًا أَنْ يَنْزِلَ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ عَلَى مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۖ فَبَاءُوا بِغَضَبٍ عَلَى غَضَبٍ ۖ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ ﴿٩٠﴾

91 And when it is said to them, Believe in that which Allāh has revealed, they say: We believe in that which was revealed to us.^a And they deny what is besides that, while it is the Truth verifying that which they have. Say: Why then did you kill Allāh’s prophets before (this) if you were believers?^b

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ آمِنُوا بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا نُوْمِنُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْنَا وَنَكْفُرُ بِمَا وَرَاءَهُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقٌ لِّمَا مَعَهُمْ ۗ كُلِّفِمُ لِقَائِهِمْ أُنْيَاءَ اللَّهِ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩١﴾

89a. The Jews expected that when the Prophet spoken of in Deut. 18:18 came, he would make them victorious over their disbelieving opponents: “And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God” (Deut. 28:1, 2). Read it along with Deut. 18:15–19, and the significance of “hearkening” becomes clear. As to the fact that the Jews were still waiting for the appearance of the Promised Prophet, see John 1:25; “Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet”; *that prophet*, as in John 1:21, referring to the promised prophet of Deut. 18:15 and 18. This shows clearly that they waited for three different prophets. Acts 3:21–23 also shows that the Prophet spoken of in Deut. 18:18 was still waited for after the death of Christ.

91a. By saying that they believed in that which was revealed to them, they asserted that they could accept only a revelation granted to an Israelite. The reply to this is that the revelation of the Holy Prophet is the truth verifying that which is contained in their own Scriptures, the reference being to the prophecies of the advent of the Holy Prophet contained in Deut. 18:15–18 and other places.

91b, see next page.

92 And Moses indeed came to you with clear arguments, then you took the calf (for a god) in his absence and you were wrongdoers.

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّخَذْتُمُ
الْعِجْلَ مِن بَعْدِهِ وَأَنْتُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾

93 And when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain above you: Take hold of that which We have given you with firmness and obey.^a They said: We hear and disobey.^b And they were made to imbibe (the love of) the calf into their hearts on account of their disbelief.^c Say: Evil is that which your faith bids you if you are believers.

وَرَادَ أَحَدًا نَامِيْنَا فَاكُمُ وَرَفَعْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ الطُّورَ
خُدُوا مَا آتَيْنَاكُمْ بِقُوَّةٍ وَأَسْمَعُوا أَقْوَامًا سَمِعْنَا
وَعَصَيْنَا وَأَشْرُونَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْعِجْلَ
يَكْفُرُهُمْ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِمَا كُفَرُوا بِهِ إِيمَانًا
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

94 Say: If the abode of the Hereafter with Allāh is specially for you to the exclusion of the people, then invoke death if you are truthful.^a

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
خَالِصَةً مِّن دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَتَّعُوا الْمَوْتِ
إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾

91b. They are shown guilty out of their own mouths. Their contention was that they would believe only in a revelation which was granted to an Israelite prophet. Yet they tried to kill even Israelite prophets, which shows that it was their hard-heartedness which prevented them from accepting the truth, whether that truth was revealed through an Israelite or a non-Israelite prophet.

93a. The original word is *isma'ū*, meaning primarily *hear* or *listen*, but it may also mean *obey* (AH), a meaning given to it in the Qur'ān itself in 36:25. It may also mean *accept* (LL). The sense of the word as used here is made clear by the similar expression in v. 63: "And when We made a covenant with you and raised the mountain above you: Hold fast that which We have given you, and bear in mind what is in it".

93b. They did not utter these words with their tongues, but it is an expression of their condition, for the word *qaul* is used to denote *what is expressive of the condition of a thing*. *Qālati-l-'aināni* means *the eyes showed* (not *spoke*) (T). Kf explains the words as meaning, *we hear the words and we disobey the command*.

93c. The words used here signify that they had imbibed *the love of the calf*. The use of the word *qulūb* (hearts) shows clearly that it was a thing that had gone deep down into their hearts; nothing was taken by mouth. According to Exod. 32:20 and Deut. 9:21 the Israelites were actually made to drink of the water on which the ashes of the calf were strewed. The Holy Qur'ān makes it clear in 20:97 that the ashes of the calf were scattered by being thrown into the sea.

94a. According to I'Ab *tamannawu-l-mauta* (lit., *desire death*) signifies *invoke death on the party that lies or is false in its assertion* (IJ). A similar challenge, but in fuller words, is contained in 3:61: "Whoever then disputes with thee in this matter after the knowledge that has come to thee, say: Come! let us call our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and our people and your people, then let us be earnest in prayer and invoke the curse of Allāh on the liars". This challenge is given to the Christians, and the same challenge in fewer words is given here to the Jews.

95 And they will never invoke it on account of what their hands have sent on before, and Allāh knows the wrongdoers.

وَلَنْ يَسْتَمْتُوهُ أَبَدًا بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾

96 And thou wilt certainly find them the greediest of men for life, (greedier) even than those who set up gods (with God). One of them loves to be granted a life of a thousand years, and his being granted a long life will in no way remove him further off from the chastisement. And Allāh is Seer of what they do.^a

وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَ صَاحِبِ النَّاسِ عَلَى حَيَاتِهِمْ ۖ
مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا ۖ يَوَدُّ أَحَدُهُمْ لَوْ يُعَمَّرُ
أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ وَمَا هُوَ بِمُرَجَّحِهَا مِنَ الْعَذَابِ
أَن يُعَمَّرَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾

SECTION 12: Their Enmity to the Prophet

97 Say: Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel^a — for surely he revealed it to thy heart by Allāh’s command,^b verifying that which is before it and a guidance and glad tidings for the believers.

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلْجِبْرِيلَ فَإِنَّهُ نَزَّلَهُ
عَلَى قَلْبِكَ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ
وَهُدًى وَبُشْرَى لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾

96a. By those who set up gods with God, are meant the Christians, because they also hold the polytheistic belief of the Divinity of a man. They too refused to accept the Prophet’s challenge of the *mubāhalah* (3:61) on account of the love of this life. As to their desire of living for a thousand years and its fulfilment, as indicated here, see 20:103a. It would thus mean the life of a people in prosperity and not the life of an individual. Or, the reference may be to the Zoroastrians who, when invoking a blessing on anyone, prayed that he should live for a thousand years.

97a. Michael was regarded by the Jews as a friend, “the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people” (Dan 12:1). And they looked upon Gabriel as their enemy, because he was considered to be an avenging angel who brought down Divine punishment upon the guilty. But in the Bible, as in the Holy Qur’ān, Gabriel is mentioned as delivering Divine messages to men, as in Dan. 8:16 and in Luke 1:19 and 26. According to Muqāṭal, the Jews considered Gabriel as their enemy because they thought that he was charged to convey the gift of prophecy to the Israelites, and he conveyed it to another people, i.e., Ishmaelites (Rz). Some commentators look upon both the words *Jibril* and *Mikāl* as foreign words having no derivation in Arabic (AH), but others consider *Jibril* as a combination of *jabr*, meaning *a servant*, and *il* meaning *Allāh*, and *Mikāl* as made up of *mik* and *il*, the word *mik* having the same significance as *jabr* (IJ).

97b. The word *idh̄n* signifies *permission*, *leave* or *concession of liberty to do a thing*; and sometimes *command*, likewise *will*; also *knowledge* (LL).