

# **AL 'IMRAN** [The House of 'Imran] **Madinan Period**

*In the name Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate*

[1] *Alif, Lam, Mim.*

[2] Allah, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting, Who sustains the entire order of the Universe - there is no god but He.

[3] He has revealed this Book to you, setting forth the Truth and confirming the earlier Books, and He revealed the Torah and the Gospel

[4] before that for the guidance of mankind; and He has also revealed the Criterion (to distinguish the Truth from falsehood). A severe chastisement lies in store for those who deny the Signs of Allah. Allah is All-Mighty; He is the Lord of Retribution.

[5] Nothing in the earth and in the heavens is hidden from Allah.

[6] It is He Who fashions you in the wombs as He wills. There is no god but He; the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

[7] He it is Who has revealed the Book to you. Among them there are absolutely clear and lucid verses,<sup>1</sup> and these are the core of the Book. Others are ambiguous.<sup>2</sup> Those in whose hearts there is perversity, go about the part that is ambiguous, seeking mischief and seeking to arrive at its meaning arbitrarily, although none knows their true meaning but Allah. But those firmly rooted in knowledge say: "we believe in it; it is all from our Lord alone."<sup>3</sup> No one derives true admonition from anything except the people of understanding.

1. The ***muhkam*** verses mentioned here are those *Qur'anic* verses which are embodied in clear and lucid language and whose meaning is not liable to any ambiguity and equivocation. Such Verses from the core of the Book; they are the verses which fulfil the true purpose for which the *Quran* was revealed, and they invite the whole world to Islam. They embody admonition and instruction, refutation of erroneous doctrines as well as elucidation of the Right way. They also contain the fundamentals of the true faith, embodying teachings relating to belief, worship and morality, and mandatory duties and prohibitions.

2. "Ambiguous" (*mutashabih*) verses are those whose meaning may have some degree of equivocation. It is obvious that no way of life can be prescribed for man unless a certain amount of knowledge explaining the truth about the universe, its origin and end, about man's position in it and other matters of similar importance, is intimated to him. It is also evident that the truths which lie beyond the range of human perception have always eluded and will continue to elude man; no words exist in the human vocabulary which either express or portray them. In speaking about such things, we necessarily resort to words and expressions that are generally employed in connection with tangible objects. In the *Qur'an*, too, this kind of language is employed in relation to supernatural matters; the verses which have been characterized as "ambiguous" refer to such matters.

3. *This might give rise to an unnecessary problem: How can people believe in “ambiguous” verses when the contents of these cannot be grasped? The fact is that a reasonable person will have faith that the Qur’an is the Book of God through his reading of its clear and lucid verses, rather than by learning fanciful interpretations of the ambiguous verses. Once so convinced, he is not likely to be troubled by doubts and anxieties caused by the ambiguities of a few verses.*

[8] They pray to Allah: "Our Lord! Do not let our hearts swerve towards crookedness after You have guided us to the Right Way, and bestow upon us Your Mercy for You are the Munificent Giver!"

[9] Our Lord! One Day You will surely gather all mankind together, a Day about (the coming of which) there is no doubt. Surely Allah never goes against His promise."

[10] As for the unbelievers, neither their wealth nor their offspring will avail them in the least against Allah. They shall be the fuel of the Fire.

[11] (To them shall happen) the like of what happened to the people of Pharaoh, and those before them. They rejected Our signs as false, so Allah seized them for their sins. Allah indeed is severe in punishment.

[12] Tell those who have disbelieved: "You shall soon be overpowered and mustered to Hell; what an evil resting place!"

[13] You have already come across an instructive sign in the two hosts that encountered each other in battle (at *Badr*): one host fighting in the way of Allah, and the other that of unbelievers. They saw with their very eyes that one host was twice the number of the other.<sup>4</sup> But (the result of the battle proved that) Allah succours with His victory whomsoever He wills. In this there is surely a lesson for all who have discerning eyes.

[14] People are naturally tempted by the lure of women, children, treasures of gold and silver, horses of mark, cattle and plantations. These are the enjoyments in the life of this world; but with Allah lies a goodly abode to return to.

4. *The actual disparity between the two armies was roughly that of three to one, but even a cursory glance was enough to tell the casual observer that the army of unbelievers was about twice as large as that of the believers.*

[15] Say: "Shall I tell you of things better than these? For the God-fearing there are, with their Lord, Gardens beneath which rivers flow; there they will abide forever, will have spouses of stainless purity as companions, and will enjoy the good pleasure of Allah." Allah thoroughly observes His servants.

[16] These are the ones who pray: "Our Lord! We do indeed believe, so forgive us our sins and keep us safe from the chastisement of the Fire;"

[17] People who are steadfast, truthful, obedient, spend (in the way of Allah) and implore Allah's forgiveness before daybreak.

[18] Allah Himself bears witness that there is no god but He; and likewise do the angels and those possessed of knowledge bear witness in truth and justice that there is no god but He, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

[19] The true religion with Allah is Islam. The People of the Book adopted many different ways rather than follow the True Way of Islam even after the knowledge of Truth had reached them, and this merely to commit excesses against one another. Let him who refuses to follow the ordinances and directives of Allah know that Allah is swift in His reckoning.

[20] But if they remonstrate with you, tell them: "I have submitted my whole being to Allah and so have those who follow me." And ask the People of the Book as well as those who follow no heavenly Scripture: "Have you also submitted (to Allah)?" If they have submitted to Him, they are indeed on the Right Way; but if they turn away from submitting to Allah, then your duty is merely to deliver the Message. Allah observes the affairs of His servants.

[21] Give those who refuse to follow the directives of Allah, who unjustly slay the Prophets, and slay those who enjoin justice, the glad tidings of a grievous chastisement.

[22] These are the people whose works have gone to waste both in this world and in the World to Come. They have none to come to their help.

[23] Have you not noticed those who were given a portion of the Book? Whenever their learned men are summoned to the Book of Allah to judge the differences among them, a party of them turns away in aversion.

[24] This is because they say: "The Fire of Hell shall not touch us except for a limited number of days." The false beliefs which they have forged have deluded them in their faith.

[25] How, then, will they fare when We shall gather them all together to witness the Day about (the coming of) which there is no doubt, and when every human being shall be paid in full for what he has done, and none shall be wronged?

[26] Say: "O Allah, Lord of all dominion! You bestow dominion on whomever You please, and take away dominion from whomever You please, and You exalt whom You please, and abase whom You please. In Your Hand is all good. Surely You are All-Powerful.

[27] You cause the night to pass into the day and the day to pass into the night. You bring forth the living out of the dead, and You bring the dead out of the living, and You grant livelihood to whomever You will beyond all reckoning."

[28] The believers may not take the unbelievers for their allies in preference to the believers. Whoever does this has nothing to do with Allah unless he does so in order to protect himself from their wrongdoing.<sup>5</sup> Allah warns you to beware of Him for to Allah is the ultimate return.<sup>6</sup>

[29] Say: "Whether you conceal what is in your hearts or disclose it, Allah knows it. Allah knows all that is in the heavens and in the earth and He has power over everything."

[30] The Day is approaching when every soul shall find itself confronted with whatever good it has done and whatever evil it has wrought. It will then wish that there be a wide space between it and the Day! Allah warns you to beware of Him; He is Most Tender towards His servants.

[31] (O Messenger), tell people: "If you indeed love Allah, follow me, and Allah will love you and will forgive you your sins. Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate."

[32] Say: "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger." If they turn away from this then know that Allah does not love those who refuse to obey Him and His Messenger.

*5. This means that it is lawful for a believer, helpless in the grip of the enemies of Islam and in imminent danger of severe wrong and persecution, to keep his faith concealed and to behave in such manner as to create the impression that he is on the same side as his enemies. A person whose Muslim identity is discovered is permitted to adopt a friendly attitude towards the unbelievers in order to save his life. If he considers himself incapable of enduring the excess to which he may be subjected, he may even state that he is not a believer.*

*6. One may resort to prudent concealment of faith (taqiya) in order to save one's life. This concealment should, however, remain within reasonable limits. The most one is permitted to do is to save one's life and property without jeopardizing either the interests of Islam or the Muslim community as a whole, and without causing loss of life and property to other Muslims. One must never allow saving one's own life to lead to the propagation of unbelief at the expense of Islam and to the dominance of unbelievers over Muslims.*

[33] Truly Allah chose Adam and Noah and the descendants of Abraham and of 'Imran<sup>7</sup> above all mankind

[34] (for His Messengership) - a people alike and the seed of one another. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing

[35] (He also heard) when 'Imran's woman<sup>8</sup> said: "O Lord! Behold, unto You do I vow that the child in my womb is to be devoted to Your exclusive service. Accept it, then, from me. Surely You alone are All-Hearing, All-Knowing."

[36] But when she gave birth to a female child, she said: "O Lord! I have given birth to a female" - and Allah knew full well what she had given birth to - "and a male is not the same as a female. I have named her Mary and commit her and her offspring to You for protection from Satan, the accursed."

[37] Thereupon her Lord graciously accepted Mary and vouchsafed to her a goodly growth and placed her in the care of Zechariah. Whenever Zechariah visited her in the sanctuary, he found her provided with food. He asked her: "Mary, how did this come to you?" She said: "It is from Allah, Allah provides sustenance to whom He wills beyond all reckoning."

[38] Then Zechariah prayed to his Lord: "O Lord! Grant me from Yourself out of Your grace the gift of a goodly offspring, for indeed You alone heed all prayers."

7. *'Imran* was the father of Moses and Aaron, and has been mentioned in the Bible as Amram.

8. *If "'Imran's woman" is interpreted as the wife of 'Imran, this 'Imran must be different from the 'Imran just mentioned. He would rather be the father of Mary who was probably called 'Imran. If this expression, however, is interpreted to mean "a woman of the house of 'Imran," it would mean that the mother of Mary belonged to that tribe.*

[39] As he stood praying in the sanctuary, the angels called out to him: "Allah gives you good tidings of John (*Yahya*), who shall confirm a command<sup>9</sup> of Allah, shall be outstanding among people, utterly chaste, and a Prophet from among the righteous."

[40] Zechariah exclaimed, "My Lord! How shall I have a son when old age has overtaken me and my wife is barren?" He said: "Thus shall it be; <sup>10</sup> Allah does what He wills."

[41] Zechariah said: "O my Lord! Appoint a Sign for me." The angel said: "The Sign for you shall be that you shall not speak to people for three days except by gesture. Remember your Lord and extol His glory by night and by day."

[42] Then came the time when the angels said: "O Mary! Behold, Allah has chosen you, and has made you pure, and has exalted you above all the women in the world.

[43] O Mary! Remain devout to your Lord, and prostrate yourself in worship, and bow down with those who bow down (before Him)."

[44] (O Muhammad), We reveal to you this account from a realm which lies beyond the reach of your perception for you were not with them when they drew lots with their pens<sup>11</sup> about who should be Mary's guardian, and you were not with them when they disputed about it.

9. *The "command from Allah" here signifies Jesus (peace be on him). His birth took place as the result of an extraordinary command from God and in an unusual manner, hence he is designated as "the command" or "word" from Allah.*

10. *Here it is being stressed that God would grant Zechariah a son despite his old age and the barrenness of his wife.*

11. *They drew lots to decide who should be the guardian of Mary, whose mother had consecrated her to the service of God in the Temple.*

[45] And when the angels said: "O Mary! Allah gives you the glad tidings of a command from Him: his name shall be Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary. He shall be highly honoured in this world and in the Next, and shall be one of those near stationed to Allah.

[46] And he shall speak to people in the cradle and also later when he grows to maturity and shall indeed be among the righteous."

[47] She said: "O my Lord! How shall I have a son when no man has ever touched me?" The angel answered: "Thus shall it be.<sup>12</sup> Allah creates whatever He wills. When He decides something, He merely says: "Be," and it is.

[48] And He will teach him the Book, the Wisdom, the Torah, the Gospel,

[49] and he will be a Messenger to the Children of Israel." (And when he came to them he said): "I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord. I will make for you from clay the likeness of a bird and then I will breathe into it and by the leave of Allah it will become a bird. I will also heal the blind and the leper, and by the leave of Allah I will bring the dead to life. I will also inform you of what things you eat and what you treasure up in your houses. Surely this is a Sign for you if you are true believers.

[50] And I have come to confirm the truth of whatever there still remains of the Torah, and to make lawful to you some of the things which had been forbidden to you.<sup>13</sup> I have come to you with a Sign from your Lord; so have fear of Allah and obey me.

*12. Thus it was affirmed that a child would be born to Mary despite the fact that no man had touched her.*

*13. What Jesus wanted to impress upon them was that he would abolish the prohibitive innovations which had infiltrated the original Divine Law (Shari'ah). These innovations were the result of the superstitions of their ignorant commoners, the legal hair-splitting of their lawyers, and the exaggerations of their world-renouncing pietists. He also made it clear that in determining what is lawful and unlawful, he would be guided by the injunctions of God and not by the inventions of human beings.*

[51] Surely, Allah is my Lord and your Lord; so serve Him alone. This is the Straight Way."

[52] And when Jesus perceived their leaning towards unbelief, he asked: "Who will be my helpers in the Way of Allah?" The disciples<sup>14</sup> said: "We are the helpers of Allah.<sup>15</sup> We believe in Allah, and be our witness that we have submitted ourselves exclusively to Allah.

[53] Our Lord! We believe in the commandment You have revealed and we obey the Messenger; make us, then, one of those who bear witness (to the Truth)."

[54] Then they schemed (against the Messiah), and Allah countered their schemes by schemes of His own. Allah is the best of schemers.

[55] (And it was part of His scheme) when Allah said. "O Jesus! I will recall you<sup>16</sup> and raise you up to Me and will purify you (of the company) of those who disbelieve, and will set your followers above the unbelievers till the Day of Resurrection, Then to Me shall all of you return, and I shall judge between you regarding whatever you differed among yourselves.

[56] As for those who disbelieved, I shall inflict a terrible chastisement on them in this world and in the Next; and they shall find none to help them."

*14. The word **hawari** means approximately the same as the word **ansar** in the Islamic tradition.*

*15. That is, they are his allies in the cause of directing people to the Path of God.*

16. *The expression used is **mutawaffika**. The original meaning of **tawaffa** is to take and receive. To "seize a person's soul" constitutes the figurative rather than the literal meaning of the word.*

[57] But those who believe and do righteous deeds, He will reward them in full. Allah does not love the unjust.

[58] What We recite to you consists of signs and wise admonition.

[59] Surely, in the sight of Allah, the similitude of the creation of Jesus is as the creation of Adam whom He created out of dust, and then said: "Be," and he was.<sup>17</sup>

[60] This is the truth from your Lord; be not, then, among those who doubt.

[61] Tell whoever disputes with you on this matter after true knowledge has come to you: "Come Let us summon our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, and ourselves and yourselves, and then let us pray together and invoke the curse of Allah on those who lie."

[62] This is the true story. There is no god but Allah, and assuredly Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

[63] And if they turn their backs, truly Allah knows those who cause mischief.

[64] Say; "People of the Book! Come to a word common between us and you: that we shall serve none but Allah and shall associate none with Him in His Divinity and that some of us will not take others as lords other than Allah." And if they turn away (from accepting this call), tell them: "Bear witness that we are the ones who have submitted ourselves exclusively to Allah."

17. *This means that if Jesus' miraculous birth is sufficient proof that he should be regarded either as God or the son of God then there are even stronger grounds to apply this to Adam. For, while Jesus was born without a father, Adam was born without any father and mother.*

[65] People of the Book! Why do you dispute with us about Abraham even though the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after his time? Do you not understand?

[66] Behold, you are those who have severely disputed concerning matters of which you have knowledge; why are you now disputing concerning matters that you know nothing about? Allah knows it whereas you do not know.

[67] Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian; he was a Muslim, wholly devoted to God.<sup>18</sup> And he certainly was not amongst those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity

[68] Surely the people who have the best claim to affiliation with Abraham are those who followed him (in the past), and presently this Prophet and those who believe in him. Allah is the Guardian of those who truly believe.

[69] A party of the People of the Book would fain lead you astray, whereas in truth they lead none astray except themselves, but that they do not realize it.

[70] People of the Book! Why do you reject the Signs of Allah even though you yourselves witness them?<sup>19</sup>

[71] People of the Book! Why do you confound the Truth with falsehood, and why do you conceal the Truth knowingly?

18. *The word hanif denotes someone who turns his face away from all other directions in order to follow one particular course. We have tried to convey this sense through the expression: "a Muslim, wholly devoted to God."*

19. *Another rendering of this could be, "and you yourselves bear witness" to Muhammad's prophethood. However it is translated, the sense remains the same. In fact, the impeccable purity of the life of the Prophet (peace be on him), the astounding impact of his teachings and training on the lives of his Companions, and the loftiness of the teachings of the Qur'an all constituted such illustrious signs of God that it was very difficult for anyone conversant with the lives of the Prophets and the tenor of Divine Scriptures to doubt Muhammad's prophethood.*

[72] A party of the People of the Book said: "Believe in the morning what has been revealed to those who believe, and then deny it in the evening that they may retract (from their faith)."

[73] They also say among themselves: "Do not follow anyone except him who follows your faith." Say: "Surely true guidance is Allah's. It is His favour that anyone should be given the like of what you have been given in the past, and that others should have been given firm evidence to proffer against you before your Lord." Say: "Surely bounty is in the Hand of Allah; He gives it to whom He wills. Allah is All-Embracing,<sup>20</sup> All-Knowing.

[74] He singles out for His Mercy whomever He wills. Allah is possessed of abounding bounty."

[75] There are some among the People of the Book who will restore you even if you were to entrust a treasure of gold, and among them are also others who, were you to entrust one gold piece, will not restore it unless you stand over them. That is because they say: "We will not be taken to task for whatever we may do to non-Jews (*ummi*s)," Thus they falsely fix a lie upon Allah, and do so wittingly.

20. *The word wasi' which is used here occurs in the Qur'an in three contexts. The first context is the narrow-mindedness and mean outlook of certain people, in contrast to which God is not narrow. The second context is the denunciation of miserliness, meanness and niggardliness, in contrast to which God is Generous and Munificent. The third context is the ascription of finite, limited concepts to God as a result of their limited imagination, whereas the truth is that God is infinite.*

[76] But Allah loves only those who fulfil their covenant and fear Allah. Truly Allah loves the God-fearing.



[77] There shall be no share in the Life to Come for those who sell away the covenant of Allah and their oaths for a trivial gain. On the Day of Resurrection Allah will neither address them, nor look at them, nor will He purify them. A grievous chastisement awaits them.

[78] There is a party among them who twist their tongues while reciting the Book to make you think that it is part of the Book when in fact it is not. They say: "It is from Allah," when in fact it is not from Allah. They falsely fix a lie upon Allah, and do so wittingly.

[79] It does not befit a man that Allah should grant him His Book and sound judgement and prophethood, and thereafter he should say to people: "Become servants to me apart from Allah." He would rather say: "Become dedicated men of Allah, in accord with the dictates of the Book you have been teaching and studying."

[80] He will never enjoin you to take the angels or Prophets for your lords. Will he enjoin upon you unbelief when you have submitted yourselves to Allah?

[81] Recall when Allah took a covenant from the Prophets: "This is the Book and the Wisdom which I have granted you. But should a Prophet come to you confirming what you already possess, you shall believe in him and shall help him."<sup>21</sup> So saying, Allah asked: "Do you agree and accept to take up the burden of the covenant?" They answered: "We agree." He said: "Then bear witness; and I will be with you among the witnesses.

[82] Then whosoever shall turn away from this covenant, they are the transgressors."

[83] Do they now seek a religion other than that prescribed by Allah and this despite all that is in the heavens and the earth is in submission to Him - willingly or unwillingly - and to Him all shall return?

[84] Say: "We believe in Allah and what was revealed to us and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and to Isaac and Jacob and his descendants, and the teachings which Allah gave to Moses and Jesus and to other Prophets. We make no distinction between any of them; and to Him do we submit."

[85] And whoever seeks a way other than this way of submission - Islam - will find that it will not be accepted from him and he will be among the losers in the Life to Come.

*21. This means that all Prophets had been asked to pledge -and the pledge of a Prophet is automatically binding upon his followers - that they would support every Prophet that God sent to preach and establish His religion, for the cause for which they had been raised. It is useful to point out that the Prophets before Muhammad (peace be on him) had to take this pledge, and this is why every Prophet announced to his followers the coming of other Prophets in the future and directed them to support those Prophets whenever they appeared. It seems significant that there is no mention, either in the Qur'an or in the Hadith, that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) was asked to take such a pledge. Moreover, the Prophet (peace be on him) neither informed his followers of the advent of any future Prophet nor did he direct them to believe in the prophethood of any such Prophet. On the contrary, he has been pronounced **khatam al-nabiyin** (the seal of the Prophets), meaning the last of them by the Qur'an. Several traditions from the Prophet (peace be on him) confirm that he categorically declared that no Prophet would come after him.*

[86] How can Allah guide a people who once believed, and after they had received Clear Signs and affirmed that the Messenger was a true one, they lapsed into disbelief? Allah does not guide the wrong-doers.

[87] The recompense for their wrong-doing is that the curse of Allah and of the angels and of all men shall be upon them.

[88] Thus shall they abide. Neither shall their chastisement be lightened nor shall they be granted any respite.

[89] But for those who repent and mend their ways Allah is indeed Most Forgiving, Most Compassionate.

[90] Those who disbelieved after having believed and then hardened in their disbelief,<sup>22</sup> their (pretence to) repentance shall not be accepted. Such have utterly gone astray.

[91] Truly those who embraced unbelief and died as unbelievers, not even the whole earth full of gold will be accepted from them as ransom. For such there is painful chastisement; and none shall come to their help.

[92] You shall not attain righteousness until you spend (for the sake of Allah) out of what you love. Allah knows whatever you spend.

*22. These opponents of the Truth were not content with just rejecting the call to the Truth but stood in vehement opposition and hostility to it and spared no efforts to obstruct people from following the way of God. They created doubts, spread misgivings, sowed seeds of distrust and engaged in the worst conspiracies and machinations to frustrate the mission of the Prophet (peace be on him).*

[93] All food (that is lawful in the Law revealed to Muhammad) was lawful to the Children of Israel,<sup>23</sup> except what Israel made unlawful to themselves before the revelation of the Torah. Tell them: "Bring the Torah and recite any passage of it if you are truthful."

[94] Those who forge lies against Allah despite this are the wrong- doers.

[95] Say: "Whatever Allah has said is true. Follow, then, the way of Abraham in total devotion to Allah. He was not among those who associate others with Allah in His Divinity."

[96] Behold, the first House (of Prayer) established for mankind is the one at Bakkah: it is full of blessing and is a centre of guidance for the whole world.

[97] In it there are Clear Signs" and the station of Abraham; whoever enters it becomes secure, Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to Allah by all who can make their way to it. As for those who refuse to follow His command, surely Allah stands in need of no one in the whole universe.

*23. The Jewish rabbis found no grounds to criticize the fundamental teachings of the Prophet (peace be on him) for there was no difference between the teachings of the previous Prophets and that of the Arabian Prophet on matters which constitute the core of religion. They,*

*therefore, raised objections about the details of the religious law. The first objection was that the Prophet (peace be on him) had declared lawful a number of things which had been reckoned as unlawful since the time of the ancient Prophets. What is said here is to refute that objection. The Jews also raised the objection that the direction of Prayer had been changed from Jerusalem to the Ka`bah. The verses that follow address this objection.*

**24.** *Here it is stressed that there are several Clear Signs which prove that the Makkan sanctuary enjoys God's blessing and has been chosen by Him as His sanctuary. Even though it is located in the middle of wide expanses of desert God has seen to it that its inhabitants enjoy a satisfactory living. Although the rest of Arabia was plunged into chaos and disorder for about two and a half thousand years, peace and tranquillity reigned in both the precincts and environs of the Ka`bah. Thanks to the Ka`bah the entire Arabian peninsula enjoyed four months of peace and order every year. These were the sacred months when people went on Pilgrimage. Moreover, barely a half century before the revelation of these verses, people had seen how Abrahah, the Abyssinian invader, fell prey to God's scourge when he attacked Makkah to destroy the Ka`bah. At the time when the Qur'an was revealed, this incident was known to everybody in Arabia. Its memory was fresh and many eye-witnesses were still alive at the time of the Prophet (peace be on him).*

[98] Say: "People of the Book! Why do you reject the Signs of Allah when Allah is witness to all that you do?"

[99] Say: "People of the Book! Why do you hinder believers from the Way of Allah, seeking that they follow a crooked way, even though you yourselves are witness to its being the Right Way?" Allah is not heedless of what you do.

[100] Believers! Were you to obey a party of those who were given the Book, they might cause you to renounce the Truth after you have attained to faith.

[101] How can you disbelieve when you are the ones to whom the Signs of Allah are recited and when His Messenger is in your midst? Whoever holds fast to Allah will certainly be guided to the Straight Way.

[102] Believers! Fear Allah as He should be feared, and see that you do not die save in submission to Allah.

[103] Hold fast together to the cable of Allah,<sup>25</sup> and be not divided. Remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you: you were once enemies, then He brought your hearts together, so that through His blessing you became brothers. You stood on the brink of a pit of fire and He delivered you from it. Thus Allah makes His Signs clear to you that you may be guided to the Right Way.

[104] And from amongst you there must be a party who will call people to all that is good and will enjoin the doing of all that is right and will forbid the doing of all that is wrong. It is they who will attain true success.

[105] Do not be like those who fell into factions and became opposed to one another after Clear Signs had come to them. A mighty chastisement awaits them

[106] on the Day when some faces will turn bright and other faces will turn dark. Those whose faces have turned dark will be told: "Did you fall into unbelief after you had been blessed with belief? Taste, then, chastisement for your unbelief."

[107] And those whose faces have turned bright, they will be in the mercy of Allah, and therein they shall abide.

[108] These are the messages of Allah which We recite to you in all truth, and Allah desires no wrong to the people of the world.

[109] To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth, and to Allah are all matters referred for decision.

[110] You are now the best nation brought forth for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book<sup>26</sup> believed, it were better for them. Some of them are believers but most of them are transgressors.

*25. The expression "cable of Allah" in the verse refers to the "religion of God". The reason for use of the word "cable" (habl) is that it both establishes a bond between man and God and joins all believers together.*

[111] They will not be able to harm you except for a little hurt, and if they fight against you they will turn their backs (in flight), and then they will not be succoured.

[112] Wherever they were, they were covered with ignominy, except when they were protected by either a covenant with Allah or a covenant with men.<sup>27</sup> They are laden with the burden of Allah's wrath, and humiliation has been pitched upon them; all this because they rejected the Signs of Allah and slew the Prophets without right, and because they want only disobeyed and used to transgress.

[113] Yet all are not alike among the People of the Book: there are upright people who recite the messages of Allah in the watches of the night and prostrate themselves in worship.

[114] They believe in Allah and in the Last Day and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, and hasten to excel each other in doing good. These are among the righteous.

[115] Whatever good they do shall not go unappreciated. Allah fully knows those who are pious.

[116] As for those who denied the Truth, neither their possessions nor their children will avail them against Allah. They are the people of the Fire, and therein they shall abide.

*26. "People of the Book" refers here to the Children of Israel.*

*27. If the Jews have ever enjoyed any measure of peace and security anywhere in the world they owe it to the goodwill and benevolence of others rather than to their own power and strength. At times Muslim governments granted them havens of refuge while at others non-Muslim powers extended protection. Similarly, if the Jews ever emerged as a power it was due not to their intrinsic strength but to the strength of others. Similar is the status of the*

*present-day Jewish state called Israel which came into being with the active support of the U.S.A., Britain and U.S.S.R.*

[117] The example of what they spend in the life of this world is like that of a wind accompanied with frost which smote the harvest of a people who wronged themselves, and laid it to waste. It is not Allah Who wronged them; rather, it is they who wronged themselves.

[118] Believers! Do not take for intimate friends those who are not of your kind. They spare nothing to ruin you; indeed they long for you to suffer. Their hatred is clearly manifest in what they say, and what their breasts conceal is even greater. Now We have made Our messages clear to you; if only you can understand (the danger of their intimacy)!

[119] Lo! It is you who love them but they do not love you even though you believe in the scriptures. When they meet you they say: "We believe," but when they are by themselves they bite their fingers in rage at you. Say: "Perish in your rage." Allah knows even what lies hidden in their breasts.

[120] If anything good happens to you, they are grieved; if any misfortune befalls you, they rejoice. Yet if you remain steadfast and mindful of Allah their designs will not cause you any harm. Allah surely encompasses all that they do.

[121] (O Messenger, remind the Muslims of the occasion) when you went forth from your home at early dawn (to the battlefield of Uhud) and placed the believers in battle arrays, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

[122] And recall when two groups from among you were inclined to flag although Allah was their Protector; it is in Allah that the believers should put their trust.

[123] For sure Allah helped you at Badr when you were utterly Weak. Beware, then, of Allah; perhaps you will be thankful.

[124] And recall when you said to the believers; "Will it not suffice you that your Lord will aid you by sending down three thousand angels?"

[125] If you are steadfast and mindful of God, even though the enemy should suddenly fall upon you; your Lord will help you with five thousand marked angels.

[126] Allah has reminded you of this only as a glad tiding to you and to let your hearts be at rest. Help can only come from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

[127] (Allah provided this aid to you) in order that He may cut asunder a part of those who disbelieved or frustrate them so that they retreat in utter disappointment.

[128] (O Messenger), you have no part of the authority to decide whether He will accept their repentance or chastise them, for they surely are wrong-doers.

[129] Whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah. He forgives whom He wills, and chastises whom He wills. Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, Most Compassionate.<sup>28</sup>

[130] Believers! Do not devour interest, doubled and redoubled, and be mindful of Allah so that you may attain true success,

[131] and do have fear of the Fire which awaits those who deny the Truth,

*28. When the Prophet was injured in the Battle of Uhud he uttered words of imprecation against the unbelievers: "How can a people that injures its own Prophet attain salvation?" These verses are in response to that utterance.*

[132] and obey Allah and the Messenger, that mercy be shown to you.

[133] And hasten to the forgiveness of your Lord and to a Paradise as vast as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the God-fearing

[134] who spend in the way of Allah both in affluence and hardship, who restrain their anger, and forgive others. Allah loves such good-doers.

[135] These are the ones who, when they commit any indecency or wrong themselves, instantly remember Allah and implore forgiveness for their sins -for who will forgive sins save Allah? - and do not wilfully persist in the wrong they had committed,

[136] They shall be recompensed by forgiveness from their Lord and by Gardens beneath which rivers flow; there they shall abide. How good is the reward of those who earnestly labour!

[137] Many eras have passed before you. Go about, then, in the land and behold the end of those who rejected (the directives and commands of Allah), calling them lies.

[138] This is a plain exposition for mankind, and a guidance and admonition for the God-fearing.

[139] Do not, then, lose heart or grieve: for you shall surely gain the upper hand if you are believers.

[140] If you have suffered a wound the people opposed to you have suffered a similar wound.<sup>29</sup> These are vicissitudes of time which We deal out in turn among people so that Allah might mark out those who truly believe and select from among you those who really bear witness (to the Truth):<sup>30</sup> for Allah does not love the wrong-doers,

*29. This alludes to the Battle of Badr. The purpose is to point out to the Muslims that if the unbelievers were not demoralized by the setback they suffered at Badr then the Muslims should not be disheartened by the setback they suffered in the Battle of Uhud.*

[141] and He makes men go through trials in order that He might purge the believers and blot out those who deny the Truth.

[142] Did you think that you would enter Paradise even though Allah has not yet seen who among you strove hard in His Way and remained steadfast?

[143] You previously longed for death (in the way of Allah): now you have faced it, observing it with your own eyes.

[144] Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and Messengers have passed away before him. Then, if he were to die or be slain, will you turn about on your heels? Whoever turns about on his heels can in no way harm Allah. As for the grateful ones, Allah will soon reward them.

[145] It is not given to any soul to die except with the leave of Allah, and at an appointed time. He who desires his reward in this world. We shall grant him the reward of this world; and he who desires the reward of the Other World, We shall grant him the reward of the Other World. And soon shall We reward those that are grateful.

*30. The actual words of this verse, wa yattakhidha minkum shuhada can be interpreted in two ways. One meaning could be that God wanted to select some of them so that He could bestow upon them the honour of martyrdom. The second meaning could be that out of the hotchpotch of true believers and hypocrites of which their community was comprised at that moment, God wanted to sift those who were truly His witnesses over all mankind, i.e. those who were capable of fulfilling the responsibility of carrying out the mission assigned to them.*

[146] Many were the Prophets on whose side fought a large number of people devoted to God: they neither lost heart for all they had to suffer in the Way of Allah nor did they weaken nor did they abase themselves. Allah loves such steadfast ones.

[147] And all they said was this: "Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, and our excesses in our affairs, and set our feet firm, and succour us against those who deny the Truth."

[148] Thereupon Allah granted them the reward of this world as well as a better reward of the World to Come. Allah loves those who do good.

[149] Believers! If you follow those who deny the Truth, they will drive you back on your heels; and you will turn about, losers.

[150] But Allah is your Protector, and He is the Best of helpers.

[151] We will cast terror into the hearts of those who have denied the Truth since they have associated others with Allah in His Divinity, for which He has sent down no sanction. The Fire is their abode; how bad the resting place of the wrong-doers will be!

[152] Allah surely fulfilled His promise (of succour) when you were slaying them by His leave until the moment when you flagged and quarrelled among yourselves about the matter, and disobeyed (the Prophet) after He showed you what you intensely desire; for some of you sought this world and some of you sought the Next. Thereupon, in order to put you to a test He turned you away from your foes. Still He pardoned you after that for Allah is Bounteous to those who believe.

[153] Recall when you were fleeing without casting even a side glance at anyone, and the Messenger was calling out to you from the rear.<sup>31</sup> Then Allah requited you by inflicting grief after grief upon you so as to instruct you neither to grieve for the losses you might suffer or for the afflictions that might befall you. Allah knows all that you do.

[154] Then, after inflicting this grief, He sent down an inner peace upon you, a sleep which overtook some of you.<sup>32</sup> Those who were concerned merely about themselves, entertaining false notions about Allah – the notions of the Age of Ignorance - asked: "Have we any say in the matter?" Tell them: "Truly, all power of decision rests solely with Allah." Indeed, they conceal in their hearts what they would not reveal to you, saying: "If we had any power of decision, we would not have been slain here." Say: "Even if you had been in your houses, those for whom slaying had been appointed would have gone forth to the places where they were to be slain." All this happened so that Allah might test the thoughts you entertained in your hearts and purge your hearts of all impurities. Allah knows 'well what is in the breasts of men.

*31. When subjected to a sudden two-pronged attack, the Muslims scattered; some fled to Madinah while others climbed Mount Uhud. Despite this, the Prophet (peace be on him) did not budge from his position. The enemy surrounded him on all sides and only a small party of ten to twelve followers was left with him. Even at that critical moment his feet remained firm and he continued to summon his fleeing followers towards himself.*

*32. A strange phenomenon was experienced at the time by some Muslim soldiers. Abu Talhah, who took part in the battle, states that the Muslims were seized by such drowsiness that their swords began to slip from their hands.*

[155] Surely those of them who turned their backs on the day when the two armies met did so because Satan made them slip because of some of their lapses. But Allah has pardoned them; He is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing.

[156] Believers, do not be like those who disbelieved and said to their brethren (who met some suffering) in the course of journey or fighting: "Had they remained with us, they would not have died nor been slain." Allah makes such thoughts the cause of deep regrets in their hearts. For in truth it is Allah alone Who grants life and deals death. Allah sees all that you do.

[157] If you were to be slain or to die in the Way of Allah, then surely Allah's forgiveness and mercy are better than all the goods that people amass.

[158] Were you to die or be slain, it is to Allah that all of you will be mustered.

[159] (O Prophet), it was thanks to Allah's mercy that you were gentle to them. Had you been rough, hard-hearted, they would surely have scattered away from you. So pardon them, and pray for their forgiveness, and take counsel from them in matters of importance. And when you are resolved on a course of action put your trust in Allah. Surely Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him).

[160] If Allah helps you, none shall prevail over you, and if He forsakes you, then who can help you? It is in Allah that the believers should put all their trust.

[161] It is not for a Prophet to defraud; and whoever defrauds shall bring with him the fruits of his fraud on the Day of Resurrection, when every human being shall be paid in full what he has earned, and shall not be wronged.



[162] Is he who follows the good pleasure of Allah like him who is laden with Allah's wrath and whose abode is Hell? How evil that is for a resting place!

[163] They vary greatly in rank in the sight of Allah, and Allah sees what they do.

[164] Surely Allah conferred a great favour on the believers when He raised from among them a Messenger to recite to them His Signs, and to purify them, and to teach them the Book and Wisdom. For before that they were in manifest error.

[165] And how come when a calamity befell you, even though the enemy had suffered at your hands (in the Battle of Badr) twice what you have suffered, you began to ask: "How has this come about?" Say: "This calamity has been brought about by yourselves. Surely Allah has power over everything."

[166] What befell you on the day when the two hosts met was by the leave of Allah, and in order that He might mark out those who believe

[167] from those who are hypocrites. And when these hypocrites were asked: "Come and fight in the Way of Allah," or (at least) "defend yourselves," they answered: "If we but knew that there would be fighting, we would certainly have followed." They were then nearer to infidelity than to faith. They utter from their mouths what is not in their hearts. Allah knows well what they conceal.

[168] These are the ones who stayed away, saying about their brothers: "Had they followed us, they would not have been slain." Say: "If you speak the truth then avert death when it comes to you."

[169] Think not of those slain in the Way of Allah as dead. Indeed they are living, and with their Lord they have their sustenance,

[170] rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them out of His bounty, jubilant that neither fear nor grief shall come upon the believers who have been left behind in the world and have not yet joined them.

[171] They rejoice at the favours and bounties of Allah, and at the awareness that Allah will not cause the reward of the believers to be lost.

[172] There were those who responded to the call of Allah and the Messenger after injury had smitten them.<sup>33</sup> There is mighty reward for all those who do good and fear Allah.

[173] When people said to them: "Behold, a host has gathered around you and you should fear them," it only increased their faith and they answered: "Allah is Sufficient for us; and what an excellent Guardian He is!"

[174] So they returned with a mighty favour and a great bounty from Allah having suffered no harm. They followed the good pleasure of Allah, and Allah is the Lord of great bounty.<sup>34</sup>

*33. When, after the Battle of Uhud, the Makkan polytheists had travelled several stages of their journey, they began to say among themselves what a mistake they had made in allowing the opportunity to crush the power of Muhammad to slip out of their hands. At one place they*

*halted and deliberated among themselves about launching a second attack on Madinah. They failed, however to muster sufficient courage and carried on to Makkah. The Prophet (peace be on him), for his part, also realized that the Makkans might attack once again. The second day after the Battle of Uhud, therefore, he gathered the Muslims and urged them to pursue the unbelievers, Even though this was a highly critical moment, those who were truly faithful girded their loins and were prepared to lay down their lives at the behest of the Prophet (peace be on him), They accompanied him to Hamra' al-Asad, eight miles from Madinah. The present verse refers to those dedicated men.*

[175] It was Satan who urged you to have fear of his allies. But do not fear them; fear Me, if you truly believe.

[176] Let not those who run towards unbelief grieve you; they shall not hurt Allah in the least. Allah will not provide for them any share in the Next Life. A mighty chastisement awaits them.

[177] Indeed those who have purchased unbelief in exchange for faith shall not hurt Allah in the least. Theirs shall be a painful chastisement.

[178] Let not the unbelievers imagine that the respite We grant them is good for them. We grant them respite so that they may grow in wickedness. A humiliating chastisement awaits them.

**34.** *While returning from the Battle of Uhud, Abu Sufyan challenged the Muslims to another encounter at Badr the following year. But when the appointed time arrived, Abu Sufyan's courage failed him on account of the famine prevailing in Makkah that year. As a face-saving device he arranged" to send an agent to Madinah who spread the rumour that tremendous war preparations were afoot among the Quraysh, and that they were trying to muster a huge army which would be too powerful to be resisted by any power in the whole of Arabia. The effect of this measure was such that when the Prophet (peace be on him) urged the Muslims to accompany him to Badr the initial response was not encouraging. Finally, the Prophet (peace be on him) publicly announced that if no one would accompany him, he would go alone. In response, fifteen hundred devotees expressed their willingness and accompanied him to Badr. As for the camp of unbelievers, Abu Sufyan did not turn up to give battle. The Prophet (peace be on him) and his Companions stayed at Badr for eight days awaiting the promised encounter. Meanwhile, they conducted business with a trade caravan which yielded them considerable profit.*

[179] Allah will not let the believers stay in the state they are: He will set the wicked apart from the good. Allah is not going to disclose to you what is hidden in the realm beyond the reach of perception<sup>35</sup> but He chooses from among His Messengers whom He wills (to intimate such knowledge). So believe in Allah and in His Messengers; and if you believe and become God-fearing, yours will be a great reward.

[180] Those who are niggardly about what Allah has granted them out of His bounty think that niggardliness is good for them; rather, it is bad for them. What they were niggardly about will turn into a halter round their necks on the Day of Resurrection. To Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth. Allah is well aware of what you do.

[181] Allah has heard the saying of those who said: "Allah is poor, and we are rich."<sup>36</sup> We shall record what they have said, and the fact of their slaying the Prophets unjustly, and we shall say to them: "Taste now the torment of the Fire.

[182] That is in recompense for your own deeds."Allah does no wrong to His servants.

*35. This means that God does not resort to revelation to provide information regarding specific persons whether they are true men of faith or hypocrites.*

*36. This statement was made by the Jews. When the Qur'anic verse (Al-Baqarah 2:245): "Who of you will lend Allah a goodly loan?" was revealed, the Jews began to make fun of it, saying: "Look, God has now gone bankrupt and has begun to beg of His creatures for loans."*

[183] To those who say: "Allah has directed us that we accept none as Messenger until he makes an offering that the fire will consume," say: "Other Messengers came to you before me with Clear Signs, and with the sign you have mentioned. So why did you slay them, if what you say is true?"

[184] Now, if they give the lie to you, then other Messengers who came with Clear Signs and scriptures and the illuminating Book were also given the lie to before you.

[185] Everyone is bound to taste death and you shall receive your full reward on the Day of Resurrection. Then, whoever is spared the Fire and is admitted to Paradise has indeed been successful. The life of this world is merely an illusory enjoyment.

[186] (Believers), you will certainly be put to test in regard to your properties and lives, and you will certainly hear many hurtful things from those who were granted the Book before you, and from those who have associated others with Allah in His Divinity. If you remain patient and God-fearing this indeed is a matter of great resolution.

[187] Recall when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the Book: "You shall explain it to people and not hide it," Then they cast the Book behind their backs and sold it away for a trivial gain. Evil indeed is their bargain.

[188] Do not think that those who exult in their misdeeds and love to be praised for what indeed they have not done, do not (even) think that they are secure from chastisement. A painful chastisement awaits them.

[189] To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is All-Powerful.

[190] Surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are Signs for people of understanding

[191] - those who remember Allah while standing, sitting or (reclining) on their backs, and reflect in the creation of the heavens and the earth, (saying): "Our Lord! You have not created this in vain. Glory to You! Save us, then, from the chastisement of the Fire.

[192] Our Lord! Whomsoever You cause to enter the Fire, him You indeed bring to disgrace, and there will be none to succour the wrong-doers.

[193] Our Lord! We indeed heard a crier calling to the faith, saying: "Believe in your Lord"; so we did believe. Our Lord! Forgive us our sins, and wipe out our evil deeds and make us die with the truly pious.

[194] Our Lord! Fulfil what You promised to us through Your Messengers, and disgrace us not on the Day of Resurrection; indeed You never go back on Your promise."

[195] Their Lord answered the prayer thus: "I will not suffer the work of any of you, whether male or female, to go to waste; each of you is from the other. Those who emigrated and were driven out from their homesteads and were persecuted in My cause, and who fought and were slain, indeed I shall wipe out their evil deeds from them and shall certainly admit them to the Gardens beneath which rivers flow." This is their reward with their Lord; and with Allah lies the best reward.

[196] (O Messenger), do not let the strutting about of the unbelievers in the land deceive you.

[197] This is but a trifling and fleeting enjoyment; then their destination is Hell -what an evil resting place!

[198] But those who fear their Lord: theirs shall be the Gardens beneath which rivers flow and therein they will live forever: a hospitality from Allah. And Allah's reward is best for the truly pious.

[199] Among the People of the Book some believe in Allah and what has been revealed to you, and what has been revealed to them. They humble themselves before Allah, and do not sell Allah's revelations for a trivial gain. For such their reward lies with their Lord. Allah is swift in reckoning.

[200] Believers, be steadfast, and vie in steadfastness, stand firm in your faith, and hold Allah in fear that you may attain true success.