

Al-Nisa' [Women]

Madinan Period

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

[1] O people! Fear your Lord Who created you from a single being and out of it created its mate; and out of the two spread many men and women. Fear Allah in Whose name you plead for rights, and heed the ties of kinship. Surely, Allah is ever watchful over you.

[2] Give orphans their property, and do not exchange the bad for the good, and do not eat up their property by mixing it with your own. This surely is a mighty sin.

[3] If you fear that you might not treat the orphans justly, then marry the women that seem good to you: two, or three, or four.¹ If you fear that you will not be able to treat them justly, then marry (only) one² or marry from among those whom your right hands possess.³ This will make it more likely that you will avoid injustice.

1. It should be noted that making polygamy lawful was not the real purpose of this verse, for polygamy was already in vogue in Arabia and the Prophet (peace be on him) himself had more than one wife when this verse was revealed. The real object of its revelation was to help solve the problem of orphaned children of Muslim martyrs, for it tells the Muslims that if they cannot give the orphans their due rights they may marry women with orphaned children.

2. Muslim jurists are agreed that according to this verse the maximum number of wives has been fixed at four. This verse stipulates that marrying more wives than one is permissible on the condition that one treats one's wives equitably. A person who avails himself of this permission granted by God to have a plurality of wives, and disregards the condition laid down by God to treat them equitably, has not acted in good faith with God. In case there are complaints from wives that they are not being treated equitably, the Islamic state has the right to intervene and redress such grievances. Some people who have been overwhelmed and overawed by the Christianized outlook of Westerners have tried to prove that the real aim of the Qur'an was to put an end to polygamy (which, in their opinion, is intrinsically evil). Such arguments only show the mental bondage to which these people have succumbed. That polygamy is an evil per se is an unacceptable proposition, for under certain conditions it becomes a moral and social necessity. For this reason the Qur'an has allowed those who feel the need for it to resort to polygamy. The Qur'an has expressed its permission of polygamy in quite categorical terms. Indeed, there is not the slightest hint in the Qur'an that could justify the conclusion that it advocates abolition of polygamy.

3. This expression denotes "slave-girls," i.e. female captives of war who are distributed by the state among individuals when no exchange of prisoners of war takes place.

[4] Give women their bridal-due in good cheer (considering it a duty); but if they willingly remit any part of it, consume it with good pleasure.

[5] Do not entrust your properties-which Allah has made a means of support for you -to the weak of understanding, but maintain and clothe them out of it, and say to them a kind word of admonition.

[6] Test the orphans until they reach the age of marriage,⁴ and then if you find them mature of mind hand over to them their property, and do not eat it up by either spending extravagantly or in haste, fearing that they would grow up (and claim it). If the guardian of the orphan is rich let him abstain entirely (from his ward's property); and if he is poor, let him partake of it in a fair measure.⁵ When you hand over their property to them let there be witnesses on their behalf. Allah is sufficient to take account (of your deeds).

[7] Just as there is a share for men in what their parents and kinsfolk leave behind, so there is a share for women in what their parents and kinsfolk leave behind - be it little or much⁶ - a share ordained (by Allah).

4. When such people approach their majority their mental development should be watched so as to determine to what extent they have become capable of managing their own affairs.

5. The guardian is entitled to remuneration for his services. The amount of this remuneration should be one that is deemed fair by neutral and reasonable people. Moreover, the guardian is directed that he should take a fixed and known amount by way of remuneration, that he should take it openly rather than secretly, and that he should keep an account of it.

6. This verse embodies five legal injunctions. First, that women as well as men are entitled to inheritance. Second, that inheritance, however meagre it might be, should be distributed. Third, that the law of inheritance is applicable to all kinds of property - movable and immovable, agricultural, industrial and so on. Fourth, that the right of inheritance comes into force only after a person dies leaving some property behind him, but not while he is alive. Fifth, it implies the rule that immediate blood-relatives exclude those that are further removed. This law has been further explained in vv. 11 and 33 below.

[8] And if other near of kin, orphans and needy are present at the time of division of inheritance give them something of it and speak to them kindly.

[9] And those who would have been fearful on account of their helpless offspring they may have behind them, let them fear Allah and say what is right.

[10] Behold, those who wrongfully devour the properties of orphans only fill their bellies with fire. Soon they will burn in the Blazing Flame.

[11] Thus does Allah command you concerning your children: the share of the male is like that of two females.⁷ If (the heirs of the deceased are) more than two daughters, they shall have two-thirds of the inheritance⁸ and if there is only one daughter, then she shall have half the inheritance. If the deceased has any offspring, each of his parents shall have a sixth of the inheritance,⁹ and if the deceased has no child and his parents alone inherit him, then one-third shall go to his mother;¹⁰ and if the deceased has brothers and sisters, then one-sixth shall go to his mother.¹¹ All these shares are to be given after payment of the bequest he might have made or any debts outstanding against him.¹² You do not know which of them, your parents or your children, are more beneficial to you. But these portions have been determined by Allah, for He indeed knows everything, is cognizant of all beneficent considerations.

7. *Since Islamic law imposes greater financial obligations on men in respect of family life and relieves women of a number of such obligations, justice demands that a woman's share in inheritance should be less than that of a man.*

8. *The same applies in the case where there are two daughters. If the deceased leaves behind only daughters, and if there are two or more daughters, then they will receive two-thirds of the inheritance and the remaining one-third will go to the other heirs. But if the deceased has only one son there is consensus among jurists that in the absence of other heirs he is entitled to all the property; but if the deceased has other heirs, he is entitled to the property left after their shares have been distributed.*

9. *If the deceased leaves any issue each of his parents will receive one-sixth of the inheritance irrespective of whether the issue consists either only of daughters, only of sons or of both sons and daughters, or just one son or just one daughter. The remaining two-thirds will be distributed among the rest of the heirs.*

10. *If there are no other heirs than the parents, the remaining two-thirds will go to the share of the father; otherwise two-thirds will be distributed between the father and other heirs.*

11. *In the case where the deceased also has brothers and sisters the share of the mother will be one-sixth rather than one-third. In this case, the sixth that was deducted from the share of the mother will be added to that of the father, for in this circumstance the father's obligations are heavier. It should be noted that if the parents of the deceased are alive, the brothers and sisters will not be entitled to any share in the inheritance.*

12. *The mention of bequest precedes the mention of debt, but there is consensus among Muslims that the payment of debt takes precedence over the payment of bequest, i.e. if the deceased owes a debt and also leaves a bequest, the debt will first be paid out of the inheritance, and only then will his bequest be honoured.*

[12] And to you belongs half of whatever has been left behind by your wives if they die childless; but if they have any children then to you belongs a fourth of what they have left behind, after payment of the bequest they might have made or any debts outstanding against them. And to them belongs a fourth of what you leave behind, if you die childless; and if you have any child then to them belongs one eighth¹³ of what you have left behind, after the payment of the bequest you might have made or any debts outstanding against you. And if the man or woman (whose inheritance is to be distributed) has no heir in the direct line, but has a brother or sister, then each of these shall inherit one-sixth; but if their number is more than that then all of them shall be entitled to one-third of the inheritance,¹⁴ after the payment of the bequest that might have been made or any debts outstanding against the deceased, providing that the bequest causes no injury.¹⁵ This is a commandment from Allah; Allah is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing.

[13] These are the bounds set by Allah. Allah will make him who obeys Allah and His Messenger enter the Gardens beneath which rivers flow. He will abide there forever. That is the mighty triumph.

13. *Whether a man has one wife or several wives the share of the wife/wives is one-eighth of the inheritance when the deceased has any issue and one-fourth when he has no issue. The share of the wives, whether one-fourth or one-eighth, will be distributed equally among them.*

14. *Qur'anic commentators are agreed that the sisters and brothers mentioned here mean half-brothers and half-sisters, i.e. those who have kinship with the deceased on the mother's side. Injunctions affecting full brothers and sisters, and half-brothers and half-sisters on the father's side are mentioned towards the end of the present surah. (See verse 176 below. Ed.)*

15. *Bequests which cause injury are those that entail depriving the deserving kin's of their legitimate rights. Similarly, the debt which causes injury is the fake debt which one falsely admits to owing, or any other device to which one resorts merely to deprive the rightful heirs of their shares in inheritance.*

[14] And he who disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses the bounds set by Him-him shall Allah cause to enter the Fire. There he will abide. A humiliating chastisement awaits him.

[15] As for those of your women who are guilty of immoral conduct, call upon four from among you to bear witness against them. And if four men do bear witness, confine those women to their houses until either death takes them away or Allah opens some way for them.

[16] Punish both of those among you who are guilty of this sin, then if they repent and mend their ways, leave them alone. For Allah is ever ready to accept repentance, is All-Compassionate.¹⁶

[17] (And remember that) Allah's acceptance of repentance is only for those who commit evil out of ignorance and then soon repent. It is towards such persons that Allah turns graciously. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

16. *In these two verses (15-16) the first, preliminary directives regarding punishment of unlawful sexual intercourse are stated. Later, another injunction was revealed (see Surah al-Nur 24: 2) which laid down that both the male and female involved in this act should be given a hundred lashes.*

[18] But of no avail is the repentance of those who do evil until death approaches any of them and then he says: "Now I repent." Nor is the repentance of those who die in the state of unbelief of any avail to them. For them We have kept in readiness a painful chastisement.

[19] Believers! It is not lawful for you to become heirs to women against their will.¹⁷ It is not lawful that you should put constraint upon them so that you may take away anything of what you have given them; (you may not put constraint upon them)¹⁸ unless they are guilty of brazenly immoral conduct, Live with your wives gracefully. If you dislike them in any manner, it may be that you dislike something in which Allah has placed much good for you.

[20] And if you decide to dispense with a wife in order to take another, do not take away anything of what you might have given the first one, even if you had given her a heap of gold. Would you take it back by slandering her and committing a manifest wrong?

[21] How can you take it away after each one has enjoyed the other, and they have taken a firm covenant from you?

17. *This means that the relatives of the husband should not treat the widow of the deceased as if she were a part of the inheritance and begin imposing their will on her. Upon the death of her husband a woman becomes independent. As soon as her legally-prescribed period of waiting ends, she is free to go wherever she likes and to marry anyone she wishes to.*

18. *This injunction is not meant to provide people with an excuse to grab the property of their wives; instead, the purpose is to enable them to put constraint upon them if they are guilty of brazenly immoral conduct.*

[22] Do not marry the women whom your fathers married, although what is past is past.¹⁹ This indeed was a shameful deed, a hateful thing, and an evil way.²⁰

[23] Forbidden to you are your mothers,²¹ your daughters,²² your sisters,²³ your father's sisters and your mother's sisters, your brother's daughters and your sister's daughters,²⁴ your milk-mothers, your milk-sisters,²⁵ the mothers of your wives, and the stepdaughters- who are your foster-children,²⁶ born of your wives with Whom you have consummated the marriage; but if you have not consummated the marriage with them, there will be no blame upon you (if you marry their daughters). It is also forbidden for you to take the wives of the sons who have sprung from your loins²⁷ and to take two sisters together in marriage,²⁸ although what is past is past. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.²⁹

19. *It does not mean that if a man had married his step-mother during the days of Ignorance he can maintain the matrimonial relationship with her even after the revelation of this prohibitory injunction. What it rather means is that the children born of such previously contracted marriage will not be considered illegitimate after the promulgation of this injunction and will not be disinherited.*

20. *In Islamic law marrying women who fall in the prohibited degrees of marriage is a recognized criminal offence.*

21. *The word "mother" applies to one's step-mother as well as to one's real mother. Hence the prohibition extends to both. This injunction also includes prohibition of the grandmother, both paternal and maternal.*

22. *The injunction with regard to daughters also applies to grand- daughters on both the paternal and maternal sides.*

23. *This applies to full sisters as well as to half-sisters.*

24. *In all these relationships, no distinction is made between the full and step-relationships.*

25. *There is consensus among Muslims that if a boy or girl is breast-fed by a woman, that woman attains the status of mother and her husband the status of father. It is forbidden to marry relatives through milk-feeding in the same way as marriage is forbidden with relatives through one's real mother and real father. Not only is the foster mother's child, who has taken suck along with the foster child, forbidden for him but all the children of the foster*

mother are just like real brothers and sisters and their children are for him just like his real nephews.

26. This prohibitive restriction in regard to such girls is not based on the consideration of their having been brought up in the house of a step-father. The jurist sure almost unanimous that it is prohibited to marry one's step-daughter irrespective of whether or not she has been raised in the step-father's house.

27. Like the wife of one's own son, the wives of grandsons – both paternal and maternal – are prohibited to grandfathers on both the mother's and father's side.

28. The Prophet (Peace be on him) has taught that it is prohibited for a man to combine in marriage an aunt "whether maternal or paternal - with her niece. The guiding principle is that it is prohibited to have as wives two women who, if one of them were a male, would be prohibited to each other.

29. This is an assurance that God would not call them to task for such misdeeds of the Jahliyah period as combining two sisters in matrimony. For this reason if a man has two sisters as his wives, he is required to divorce one of them when he embraces Islam.

[24] Also forbidden to you are all married women (*muhsanat*) except those women whom your right hands have come to possess (as a result of war).³⁰ This is Allah's decree and it is binding upon you. But it is lawful for you to seek out all women except these, offering them your wealth and the protection of wedlock rather than using them for the unfettered satisfaction of lust. And give bridal- due of those whom you have enjoyed in wedlock as an obligation. But there is no blame on you if you mutually agree to alter the settlement after it has been made. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

[25] And those of you, who cannot afford to marry free, believing women (*muhsanat*), let them marry such believing women whom your right hands possess. Allah knows all about your faith. All of you belong to one another. Marry them, then, with the leave of their guardians, and give them their bridal-due in a fair manner that they may live in the protection of wedlock rather than be either mere objects of unfettered lust or given to secret love affairs. Then if they become guilty of immoral conduct after they have entered into wedlock, they shall be liable to half the penalty to which free women (*muhsanat*) are liable.³¹ This relaxation is for those of you who fear falling into sin by remaining unmarried. But if you persevere, it is better for you. Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

30. Women who come as captives of war, leaving their husbands behind in Dar al -Harb (Domain of War), are not prohibited, for their marriage is nullified by virtue of their entry into Dar al-Islam (Domain of Islam).

31. In verses 24-5, the term muhsanat (protected women) is used in two different meanings. First, it is used in the sense of "married women", that is, those who enjoy the protection of their husbands. Second, it is used in the sense of "women belonging to families", i.e. those who enjoy the protection of their families even though they may not be married. In the verse under discussion, the word muhsanat is used in the latter sense, i.e. in the sense of women who enjoy the protection of their families as opposed to slave-girls. At the same time, the

word is also used in the first meaning when slave-girls have acquired the protection accorded by the contract of marriage (fa idhada uhsinna). In that case they will be liable to the punishment laid down in this verse if they are guilty of unlawful sexual intercourse.

[26] Allah wants to make all this clear to you, and to guide you to the ways which the righteous have followed in the past; He will graciously turn towards you. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

[27] Allah indeed wants to turn graciously towards you; but those who follow their lusts would want you to drift far away from the Right Way.

[28] Allah wants to lighten your burdens, for man was created weak.

[29] Believers! Do not devour one another's possessions wrongfully; rather, let there be trading by mutual consent;³² and do not kill yourselves.³³ Surely Allah is ever Compassionate to you.

[30] And whoever does this by way of transgression and injustice We shall surely cast him into the Fire; that indeed is quite easy for Allah.

32. The expression "wrongfully" embraces all transactions which are opposed to righteousness and which are either legally or morally reprehensible. "Mutual consent" means that the exchange should be free of undue pressure, fraud and deception.

33. This can be considered either as complementary to the preceding statement or as an independent statement. If it is complementary it means that to consume the property of others by wrongful means is tantamount to courting one's destruction. Taken as an independent statement, it would mean either that one should not kill others or that one should not kill oneself.

[31] But if you avoid the major sins which you have been forbidden, We shall remit your (trivial) offences, and cause you to enter an honourable abode.

[32] Do not covet what Allah has conferred more abundantly on some of you than others. Men shall have a share according to what they have earned, and women shall have a share according to what they have earned. Do ask Allah for His bounty. Allah has full knowledge of everything.

[33] To everyone We have appointed rightful heirs to inherit whatever the parents and near of kin might leave behind. As to those with whom you have made a solemn covenant, give them their share. Allah watches over all things.³⁴

[34] Men are the protectors and maintainers of women³⁵ because Allah has made one of them excel over the other, and because they spend out of their possessions (to support them). Thus righteous women are obedient and guard the rights of men in their absence under Allah's protection. As for women of whom you fear rebellion, admonish them, and remain apart from them in beds, and beat them.³⁶ Then if they obey you, do not seek ways to harm them. Allah is the Exalted, the Great.

34. According to the customary law of Arabia, those who concluded compacts of alliance and friendship also became mutual heirs. Likewise, an adopted son inherited from his foster-father. While abrogating this customary law, this verse reveals that inheritance goes to one's kin according to the rules for the distribution of inheritance laid down by God Himself. However, if a man has made commitments to people, he has the right to give away to them whatever he wishes during his lifetime.

35. A *qawwam* or *qayyim* is a person responsible for administering and supervising the affairs of either a person, or an organization or a system; responsible for protecting and safeguarding them and providing for the needs of those under his supervision.

36. This does not mean that a man should resort to these three measures all at once, but that they may be employed if a wife adopts an attitude of obstinate defiance. So far as the actual application of these measures is concerned, there should naturally be some correspondence between the fault and the punishment that is administered. Moreover, it is obvious that wherever a light measure can prove effective one should not resort to stern measures. Whenever the Prophet (peace be on him) permitted a man to administer corporal punishment to his wife, he did so with great reluctance, and continued to express his utter distaste for it.

[35] If you fear a breach between the two, appoint an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both want to set things right, ³⁷ Allah will bring about reconciliation between them. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.

[36] Serve Allah and ascribe no partner to Him. Do good to your parents, to near of kin, to orphans, and to the needy, and to the neighbour who is of kin and to the neighbour who is a stranger, and to the companion by your side, ³⁸ and to the Wayfarer, and to those whom your right hands possess. Allah does not love the arrogant and the boastful,

37. The statement: "if they both want to set things right" may be interpreted as referring either to the mediators or to the spouses concerned. Every dispute can be resolved provided the parties concerned desire reconciliation, and the mediators too are keen to remove the misunderstandings between them and to bring them together.

38. The expression *al-sahib bi al-janb* (the companion by your side) embraces those with whom one has friendly relations of an abiding nature as well as those with whom one's relationship is transient: for instance, either the person who walks beside one on the way to the market or who sits beside one while buying things from the same shop or one's fellow traveller. Even this temporary relationship imposes certain claims on every refined and decent person – that he should treat the latter, as far as possible, in a kind and gracious manner and avoid causing him any discomfort.

[37] who are niggardly and bid others to be niggardly and conceal the bounty which Allah has bestowed upon them. We have kept in readiness a humiliating chastisement for such deniers (of Allah's bounty).

[38] Allah does not love those who spend out of their wealth to make a show of it to people when in fact they neither believe in Allah nor in the Last Day. And he who has taken Satan for a companion has indeed taken for himself a very bad companion.

[39] What harm would have befallen them if they had believed in Allah and the Last Day, and spent on charity what Allah had bestowed upon them as sustenance? For Allah indeed has full knowledge of them.

[40] Indeed Allah wrongs none, not even as much as an atom's weight. Whenever a man does good, He multiplies it two-fold, and bestows out of His grace a mighty reward.

[41] Consider, then, when We shall bring forward witnesses from every community, and will bring you, (O Muhammad), as a witness against them all.

[42] Those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger will wish on that Day that the earth were levelled with them. They will not be able to conceal anything from Allah.

[43] Believers! Do not draw near to the Prayer while you are intoxicated³⁹ until you know what you are saying;⁴⁰ nor when you are defiled⁴¹ - save when you are travelling - until you have washed yourselves.⁴² If you are either ill or travelling or have satisfied a want of nature or have had contact with women⁴³ and can find no water, then betake yourselves to pure earth, passing with it lightly over your face and your hands.⁴⁴ Surely Allah is All-Relenting, All-Forgiving.

39. This is the second in the chronological sequence of injunctions concerning intoxicants. We have already come across the first injunction in surah al-Baqarah (2: 219).

40. What is required is that while praying one should at least be conscious enough to know what one is uttering in the Prayer.

41. The term janabah denotes the state of major ritual impurity, which results from the act of sexual intercourse or from seminal emission (ensuing either from sexual stimulation or from a wet dream).

42. A group of jurists and Quranic commentators interprets this verse to mean that one should not enter a mosque in the state of major ritual impurity (janabah), unless it be out of necessity. Another group thinks that the reference here is to travel. In the opinion of this group, if a traveller is in the state of major ritual impurity he may resort to tayammum (i.e. symbolic ablution attained through wiping the hands and face with clean earth).

43. There is disagreement as to what is meant here by the verb lamastum. Several jurists are of the opinion that it signifies sexual intercourse. Abu Hanifah and his school follow this view. Contrary to this, some other jurists hold that it merely signifies the act of touching. This is the opinion adopted by Shafi'i. Malik is of the opinion that if a man and a woman touch each other with sexual desire, their ablution is nullified. He sees nothing objectionable, however, in the mere act of a man touching a woman's body, or vice versa, provided the act is not motivated by sexual desire.

44. *The detailed rules of tayammum are as follows: A man who either needs to perform ablution or take a bath to attain the state of purity for ritual Prayer may resort to tayammum provided water is not available to him. Permission to resort to tayammum, rather than make ablution with water or take a bath, is also extended to invalids whose health is likely to be harmed by the use of water.*

[44] Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given? They purchased error for themselves, and wish that you too lose the Right Way?

[45] Allah knows your enemies better and Allah suffices as a Protector, and Allah suffices as a Helper.

[46] Among those who have become Jews there are some who alter the words from their context,⁴⁵ and make a malicious play with their tongues and seek to revile the True Faith. They say: "We have heard and we disobey" (*sami`na wa 'asayna*).⁴⁶ "Do hear us, may you turn dumb" (*isma` ghayr musma in*),⁴⁷ and "Hearken to us" (*ra`ina*).⁴⁸ It would indeed have been better for them and more upright if they had said, "We have heard and we obey" (*sami na wa at'ana*) and: "Do listen to us, and look at us (with kindness)" (*wa isma` wa unzurna*). But Allah has cursed them because of their unbelief. Scarcely do they believe.

45. *This signifies three things. First that they tampered with the text of the Scripture. Second, that they misinterpreted the Scripture and thereby distorted the meanings of the verses of the Book. Third, that they came and stayed in the company of the Prophet (peace be on him) and his Companions and listened to the conversations which took place there, then went to other people and misreported what they had heard.*

46. *When God's commands are announced to such people, they loudly proclaim "Yes, we heard"(Sami`na), but then they whisper: "And we disobeyed" (wa 'asayna). Or else they pronounce ata'na ("we obey") with such a twist of the tongue that it becomes indistinguishable from 'asayna.*

47. *Whenever they wanted to say something to the Prophet (peace be on him) they would say, isma (listen), but they added to this the expression, ghayr musma 'in which had several meanings. It could either be a polite expression, meaning that he was worthy of such deep respect that one should say nothing to his dislike or it could have a malicious implication, meaning that he did not deserve to be addressed by anybody. It also meant the imprecation: "May God turn you deaf."*

48. *For an explanation of this see Surah al-Baqarah 2: 104, n. 36 above.*

[47] O you who have been granted the Book! Do believe in what We have (now) revealed, which confirms the revelation which you already possess. Do this before We alter countenances, turning them backwards, or lay a curse upon them as We cursed the Sabbath men. Bear in mind that Allah's command is done.

[48] Surely Allah does not forgive that a partner be ascribed to Him, although He forgives any other sins for whomever He wills. He who associates anyone with Allah in His Divinity has indeed forged a mighty lie and committed an awesome sin.

[49] Have you not seen those who boast of their righteousness, even though it is Allah Who grants righteousness to whomsoever He wills? They are not wronged even as much as the husk of a date-stone (if they are not granted righteousness).

[50] See how they forge lies about Allah! This in itself is a manifest sin.

[51] Have you not seen those to whom a portion of the Book was given? They believe in baseless superstitions,⁴⁹ and taghut⁵⁰ (false deities), and say about the unbelievers that they are better guided than those who believe.⁵¹

[52] Such are the ones whom Allah has cursed; and he whom Allah curses has none to come to his help.

[53] Have they any share in the dominion (of Allah)? Had that been so, they would never have granted people even as much as the speck on a date-stone.

[54] Do they envy others for the bounty that Allah has bestowed upon them? (Let them bear in mind that) We bestowed upon the house of Abraham the Book and Wisdom, and We bestowed upon them a mighty dominion,

[55] whereupon some of them believed, and others turned away. (As for those who turn away), Hell suffices for a blaze.⁵²

[56] Surely We shall cast those who reject Our Signs into the Fire; and as often as their skins are burnt out, We shall give them other skins in exchange that they may fully taste the chastisement. Surely Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

49. Jibt signifies "a thing devoid of any true basis and bereft of all usefulness." In Islamic terminology the various forms of sorcery, divination and soothsaying, in short all superstitions, are termed jibt.

50. For explanation see surah al-baqarah 2: 256, nn. 89-go above.

51. In this verse the word "unbelievers" mean those people in Arabia who associated others with God in His Divinity.

52. This is in response to the malicious remarks of the Israelites. What is being said is that they had no justified reason to feel jealous since both the Israelites and Ishmaelite were offspring of the same Abraham. Now, the leadership of the world had been promised only to those children of Abraham who followed the Book and Wisdom revealed by God. The Book and Wisdom had been sent down earlier to the Israelites, and to their discredit, they turned away from them. The same Book and Wisdom had now been made available to the Ishmaelite and they had decided to receive it with faith and gratitude.

[57] And those who believe and do good deeds, We shall cause them to enter the Gardens beneath which rivers flow. There they shall abide forever. There they shall have spouses purified and there We shall cause them to enter a shelter with plenteous shade.

[58] Allah commands you to deliver trusts to those worthy of them; and when you judge between people, judge with justice.⁵³ Excellent is the admonition Allah gives you. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

53. Here the Muslims are forewarned against the evils which had afflicted the Israelites. One of the fundamental mistakes committed by the Israelites was that in the time of their decadence they had handed over positions of trust, (i.e. religious and political leadership), to incompetent, mean, immoral, dishonest and corrupt persons. The result was that corruption spread throughout the nation. The Muslims are being directed to take heed of this, and to entrust positions of responsibility only to those who are capable of shouldering the burden of such positions. The major weakness of the Israelites was that they had completely lost their sense of justice. They pursued either personal or national interests at the cost of honesty equity, reasonableness and good faith. After informing the Muslims of the iniquity of the Jews, God now warns them against committing similar injustices. They should rather declare what is right in the face of friend and foe alike, and judge between people with justice and equity.

[59] Believers! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and those invested with authority among you; and then if you were to dispute among yourselves about anything refer it to Allah and the Messenger⁵⁴ if you indeed believe in Allah and the Last Day; that is better and more commendable in the end.

[60] (O Messenger), have you not seen those who claim to believe in the Book which has been revealed to you and in the Books revealed before you, and yet desire to submit their disputes to the judgement of *taghut* (the Satanic authorities who decide independently of the law of Allah), whereas they had been asked to reject it.⁵⁵ Satan seeks to make them drift far away from the Right Path.

54. This verse is the cornerstone of the entire religious, social and political structure of Islam and the very first clause of the constitution of an Islamic state. It lays down the following principles as permanent guidelines:

(1) In the Islamic order of life, God alone is the focus of loyalty and obedience. A Muslim is the servant of God before anything else.

(2) Another basic principle of the Islamic order of life is obedience to the Prophet (peace be on him).

(3) In the Islamic order of life the Muslims are further required to obey their fellow Muslims invested with authority (ulu al-amr). These include all those entrusted with directing Muslims in matters of common concern. Hence, persons "invested with authority" include the intellectual and political leaders of the community, as well as administrative officials, judges of the courts, tribal chiefs and regional leaders.

(4) In an Islamic order the injunctions of God and the way of the Prophet (peace be on him) constitute the basic law and paramount authority in all matters. Whenever there is any dispute among Muslims or between the rulers and the ruled the matter should be referred to the Qur'an and the Sunnah and all concerned should faithfully accept the judgement that is thus arrived at.

55. Taghut clearly signifies here a sovereign who judges things according to criteria other than the Law of God. It also stands for a legal and judicial system which acknowledges neither the sovereignty of God nor the paramount authority of God's Book.

[61] When they are told: "Come to that which Allah has revealed, and come to the Messenger," you will notice the hypocrites turning away from you in aversion.

[62] But what happens when some misfortune visits them because of their own misdeeds? Then they come to you swearing by Allah, saying: "We wanted nothing but to do good and to create harmony (between the two parties)."

[63] As for them, Allah knows what is in their hearts. Leave them alone, admonish them, and say to them penetrating words about themselves.

[64] (And tell them that) We never sent a Messenger but that he should be obeyed by the leave of Allah. If whenever they wronged themselves they had come to you praying to Allah for forgiveness, and had the Messenger prayed for their forgiveness, they would indeed have found Allah All-Forgiving, All- Compassionate.

[65] But no, by your Lord, they cannot become true believers until they seek your arbitration in all matters on which they disagree among themselves, and then do not find the least vexation in their hearts over your judgement, and accept it in willing submission.

[66] Had We enjoined upon them: "Slay yourselves," or "Leave your habitations," very few of them would have done it; yet if they had done as they were admonished, it would have been better for them and would have strengthened them;

[67] whereupon We would indeed grant them from Us a mighty reward, and

[68] guide them to a Straight Way.

[69] He who obeys Allah and the Messenger-such shall be with those Whom Allah has favoured - the Prophets, those steadfast in truthfulness, the martyrs, and the righteous.⁵⁶ How excellent will they be for companions!

[70] That is a bounty from Allah, and Allah suffices to know the truth.

[71] Believers! Be ever prepared to encounter (the enemy); either advance in detachments or advance in one body (as the circumstance demands).⁵⁷

[72] Among you there is such, who lags behind, then if some affliction strikes you, he says: "Indeed Allah bestowed His favour upon me that I was not present with them."

[73] And if a bounty from Allah is given you, he says -and says as if there never was any affection between you and him - "Oh, would that I had been with them, I would have come by a great gain."

[74] Let those who seek the life of the Next World in exchange for the life of this world fight in the Way of Allah. We shall grant a mighty reward to whoever fights in the way of Allah, whether he is slain or comes out victorious.

[75] How is it that you do not fight in the way of Allah and in support of the helpless - men, women and children who pray: "Our Lord, bring us out of this land whose people are oppressors and appoint for us from Yourself, a protector, and appoint for us from Yourself a helper"?⁵⁸

56. This means that in the Hereafter they will be in the company of those blessed people. It does not mean, however, that any of them can ever attain the office of a Prophet by virtue of his righteous deeds.

57. This discourse was revealed after the Battle of Uhud when the tribes living around Madinah had been greatly emboldened by the defeat of the Muslims.

58. This refers to those wronged and persecuted men, women and children of Makkah and of other tribes in Arabia who had embraced Islam but were unable either to emigrate or to protect themselves from the wrongs to which they were subjected. These helpless people suffered many kinds of persecution and prayed to God to deliver them from their miserable state.

[76] Those who have faith fight in the Way of Allah, while those who disbelieve fight in the way of *taghut* (Satan). Fight, then, against the fellows of Satan. Surely Satan's strategy is weak.

[77] Have you not seen those who were told: "Restrain your hands, and establish the Prayer, and pay the *Zakah*"? But when fighting was enjoined upon them some of them feared men as one should fear Allah, or even more, and said: "Our Lord, why have You ordained fighting for us? Why did You not grant us a little more respite?" Say to them: "There is little enjoyment in this world. The World to Come is much better for the God-fearing, and you shall not be wronged even to the extent of the husk of a date- stone."⁵⁹

[78] Wherever you might be, death will overtake you even though you be in massive towers. And when some good happens to them, they say; "This is from Allah"; whereas when some misfortune befalls them, they say: "This is because of you." Say: "All is from Allah." What has happened to these people that they seem to understand nothing?

[79] Whatever good happens to you is from Allah; and whatever misfortune smites you is because of your own action. We have sent you to mankind, (O Muhammad), as a Messenger, and Allah is sufficient as a witness.

59. Were they to serve God's religion and spend their energy in that cause, they would surely be rewarded by Him.

[80] He who obeys the Messenger thereby obeys Allah; as for he who turns away, We have not sent you as a keeper over them!

[81] They say (in your presence): "We obey" but when they leave your presence a party of them meets by night to plan against what you have said. Allah takes note of all their plots. So, let them alone, and put your trust in Allah. Allah is sufficient as a Guardian.

[82] Do they not ponder about the Qur'an? Had it been from any other than Allah, they would surely have found in it much inconsistency.⁶⁰

[83] Whenever they come upon any news bearing upon either security or causing consternation they go about spreading it, whereas if they were to convey it to either the Messenger or to those from among them entrusted with authority, it would come to the knowledge of those who are competent to investigate it." But for Allah's bounty and mercy upon you, (Weak as you were), all but a few of you would surely have followed Satan.

60. The Qur'an itself is a strong, persuasive testimony to its Divine origin. It is inconceivable that any human being should compose discourses on different subjects under different circumstances and on different occasions and the collection of those discourses should then grow into a coherent, homogeneous and integrated work, no component of which is discordant with the rest. It is also inconceivable that such a work would be permeated throughout with a uniform outlook and attitude, a work manifesting remarkable consistency in the mood and spirit of its Author, a work so perfect that it would never require any change or revision.

61. This was a period of turbulence and upheaval and many rumours were rife in Madinah. Occasionally, baseless and exaggerated reports circulated and seized the whole city and its outlying areas with alarm and consternation. At other times some cunning enemy tried to conceal the dangers threatening the Muslims by spreading soothing reports. The common people were not aware of the far-reaching consequences of rumour-mongering. As soon as they heard something, they ran about spreading it everywhere. This rebuke is addressed to such people. They are warned against spreading rumours and are directed to convey every report they receive to responsible quarters.

[84] So, [O Messenger), fight in the Way of Allah. You are responsible only for yourself. And rouse the believers to fight, for Allah may well curb the might of the unbelievers. Indeed Allah is the Strongest in power and the Most Terrible in chastisement.

[85] He who intercedes in a good cause shall have a share in its good result, and he who intercedes in an evil cause shall have a share in its burden. Allah watches over everything.

[86] When you are greeted with a salutation then return it with a better one, or at least the same. Surely Allah takes good count of everything.

[87] There is no god but Allah. He will certainly gather you all together on the Day of Resurrection - the Day regarding which there can be no doubt. Whose word can be truer than Allah's?

[88] What has happened to you that you have two minds about the hypocrites even though Allah has reverted them owing to the sins that they earned? Do you want to lead those to the Right Way whom Allah let go astray? And he whom Allah lets go astray, for him you can never find a way.

[89] They Wish that you should disbelieve just as they disbelieved so that you may all be alike. Do not, therefore, take allies from them until they emigrate in the Way of Allah; but if they turn their backs (on emigration), seize them and slay them wherever you come upon them.⁶² Take none of them for your ally or helper,

[90] unless it be such of them who seek refuge with a people who are joined with you by a covenant,⁶³ or those who come to you because their hearts shrink from fighting either against you or against their own people. Had Allah so willed, He would certainly have given them power over you and they would have fought against you. If they leave you alone and do not fight against you and offer you peace, then Allah does not permit you to harm them.

[91] You will also find others who wish to be secure from you, and secure from their people, but who, whenever they have any opportunity to cause mischief, plunge into it headlong. If such people neither leave you alone nor offer you peace nor restrain their hands from hurting you, seize them and slay them wherever you come upon them. It is against these that We have granted you a clear sanction.

[92] It is not for a believer to slay another believer unless by mistake. And he who has slain a believer by mistake, his atonement is to set free from bondage a believing Person⁶⁴ and to pay blood-money to his (that is, the slain person's) heirs,⁶⁵ unless they forgo it by way of charity. And if the slain belonged to a hostile people, but was a believer, then the atonement is to set free from bondage a believing person. And if the slain belonged to a (non- Muslim) people with whom you have a covenant, then the atonement is to pay the blood-money to his heirs, and to set free from bondage a believing person.⁶⁶ But he who cannot (free a slave) should fast for two consecutive months.⁶⁷ This is the penance ordained by Allah.⁶⁸ Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

62. This is the verdict on those hypocrites who claimed to be believers but also, in fact, had their affinities with a belligerent, non-Muslim nation; they were the ones who actually participated in acts of hostility against the Islamic state.

63. The exception here does not relate to the injunction that they should not be taken as friends and supporters; it rather relates to the injunction that the believers should seize and slay them. What is meant is that if a hypocrite takes shelter among an unbelieving people with whom the Muslims have an agreement he should not be pursued into that territory.

64. Since the person killed was a believer, expiation of the sin required the emancipation of a Muslim slave.

65. The Prophet (peace be on him) has fixed the blood-money at either 100 camels, 200 oxen or 2,000 heads of cattle. If someone wished to pay this in another form the amount would be determined with reference to the market value of the animals mentioned above.

For instance, for those who wished to pay blood-money in cash, the fixed amount in the time of the Prophet (peace be on him) was 800 dinars (8,000 dirhams). In the time of Caliph 'Umar the amount of blood-money was fixed at 1000 golden dinars (12,000 silver dirhams). It should be noted, however, that this amount relates to an unintentional rather than a deliberate homicide.

66. *The legal injunctions embodied in this verse are as follows:*

(1) *If the victim was a resident of the Domain of Islam (Dar al- Islam), the assassin is not only required to pay blood-money but also to emancipate a slave by way of expiation.*

(2) *If the victim was a resident of the Domain of War (Dar al-Harb), the assassin is only required to emancipate a slave.*

(3) *If the victim was a resident of a non-Muslim country which had treaty relations with an Islamic state, the assassin is required to emancipate a slave and also to pay blood-money. The amount of blood-money, however, depends on the terms stipulated in the treaty between the Muslims and the territory to which the victim belonged.*

67. *This means that he should observe uninterrupted fasting for the entire period. If a man breaks his fast for just one day without a legally valid reason, he will be required to resume fasting afresh.*

68. *This shows that what has been prescribed is an act of repentance and expiation rather than a penalty inflicted on a criminal. Penalization is essentially devoid of the spirit of repentance and of the urge to self-reform. A penalty is suffered under duress, usually with resentment, and leaves behind repugnance and bitterness. On the contrary, what God wants is that the believer who has committed a sin should wash away its stain from his soul by supererogatory worship, by acts of charity, and by a meticulous fulfilment of the duties incumbent upon him. Such a person is required to turn to God in remorse and repentance so that his sin may be forgiven and his soul secured against the recurrence of similar errors.*

[93] And he who wilfully slays a believer his reward is Hell, where he will abide. Allah's wrath is against him and He has cast His curse upon him, and has prepared for him a great chastisement.

[94] Believers! When you go forth in the Way of Allah, ascertain and distinguish (between friend and foe), and do not say to him who offers you the greeting of peace: "You are not a believer," If you seek the good of this worldly life, there lies with Allah abundant gain. After all, you too were such before, but then Allah was gracious to you. Discern, then, ⁶⁹ for Allah is well aware of what you do.

69. *In the early days of Islam the greeting of al-salam 'alaykum ("peace be on you") was a distinguishing symbol of the Muslims. When a Muslim greeted another Muslim with this expression it signified that he was a member of the same community, that he was a friend and well-wisher, one who wished peace and security, from whom one need entertain no fear of hostility and towards whom, in return, one should not behave with hostility. This was particularly important in those days because there were no distinctions in dress, language and so on by which the Muslims could be conclusively marked off from others.*

The Muslims also encountered a strange problem on the battlefield. Whenever a Muslim was in danger of being harmed inadvertently by other Muslims during fighting, he resorted to either the Islamic greeting (al-salam 'alaykum) or to pronouncing the Islamic creed. "There is no god save Allah" (la ilaha illa Allah) in order to indicate that he was their brother-in-faith. The Muslims, however, often suspected this to be merely a ruse of the enemy and

therefore, sometimes, disregarded the utterance of the Islamic greeting or of the Islamic creed, and killed such people. The purport of the verse is that no one has the right to summarily judge those who profess to be Muslims, and to assume them to be lying for fear of their lives. At least two possibilities exist: the claim may either be true or it may be false. The truth can only be ascertained by proper investigation. While it is impossible to investigate a person's case properly during fighting, and this might enable him to save his life by lying, it is equally possible that an innocent, true believer might be put to death by mistake.

[95] Those believers who sit at home, unless they do so out of a disabling injury, are not the equals of those who strive in the Way of Allah with their possessions and their lives. Allah has exalted in rank those who strive with their possessions and their lives over those who sit at home; this even though to each Allah has promised some good reward, He has preferred for a mighty reward those who strive (in the Way of Allah) over those who sit at home.

[96] For them are ranks, forgiveness, and favours from Him. Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

[97] While taking the souls of those who were engaged in wronging themselves,⁷⁰ the angels asked: "In what circumstances were you?" They replied: "We were too weak and helpless in the land." The angels said: "Was not the earth of Allah wide enough for you to emigrate in it?" For such persons their refuge is Hell - an evil destination indeed;

[98] except the men, women, and children who were indeed too feeble to be able to seek the means of escape and did not know where to go –

[99] maybe Allah shall pardon these, for Allah is All-Pardoning, Most Forgiving.

[100] He who emigrates in the Way of Allah will find in the earth enough room for refuge and plentiful resources. And he who goes forth from his house as a migrant in the way of Allah and His Messenger, and whom death overtakes, his reward becomes incumbent on Allah. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.⁷¹

70. The reference here is to those who, instead of going to the battlefield, stayed behind along with the unbelievers, despite no genuine disability. They were satisfied with a life made up of a blend of Islamic and un-Islamic elements, even though they had the chance to emigrate to Dar al-Islam and thus enjoy a full Islamic life and had also been invited by Dar al-Islam to emigrate, thereby ensuring the safety of their faith.

71. It should be understood clearly that it is only permissible for a person who believes in the True Faith enjoined by God to live under the dominance of an un-Islamic system on one of the following conditions. First, that the believer strives to put an end to the hegemony of the un-Islamic system and to have it replaced by the Islamic system of life, as the Prophets and their early followers did. Second, that he stays in a land where an un-Islamic system prevails because of his inability to depart from that land, but he is utterly unhappy at living under such a system.

[101] When you go forth journeying in the land, there is no blame on you if you shorten the Prayer, ⁷² (especially) if you fear that the unbelievers might cause you harm. Surely the unbelievers are your open enemies.

[102] (O Messenger), if you are among the believers and rise (in the state of war) to lead the Prayer for them, let a party of them stand with you to worship, keeping their arms. When they have performed their prostration, let them go behind you, and let another party who have not prayed, pray with you, remaining on guard and keeping their arms, ⁷³ for the unbelievers love to see you heedless of your arms and your baggage so that they might swoop upon you in a surprise attack. But there shall be no blame upon you if you were to lay aside your arms if you are either troubled by rain or are sick; but remain on guard. Surely Allah has prepared a humiliating chastisement for the unbelievers.

[103] When you have finished the Prayer remember Allah - standing, and sitting, and reclining. And when you become secure, perform the regular Prayer. Prayer is enjoined upon the believers at stated times.

[104] Do not be faint of heart in pursuing these people: if you happen to suffer harm they too are suffering just as you are, while you may hope from Allah what they cannot hope for. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

72. Shortening the Prayer (qasr) while travelling in peace-time consists of praying two rak'at at those appointed times when one is normally required to pray four rak'at. The form of qasr during the state of war has not been specified. Prayers should, therefore, be performed as circumstances permit.

73. This injunction regarding prayer in the state of either fear or insecurity (khawf) refers to the condition when an enemy attack is anticipated, but the fighting has not yet begun.

[105] (O Messenger), We have revealed to you this Book with the Truth so that you may judge between people in accordance with what Allah has shown you. So do not dispute on behalf of the dishonest,

[106] and seek forgiveness from Allah. Surely Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

[107] Do not plead for those who are dishonest to themselves; ⁷⁴ Allah does not love him who betrays trust and persists in sin.

[108] They can hide (their deeds) from humans, but they cannot hide (them) from Allah for He is with them even when they hold nightly counsels that are displeasing to Allah. Allah encompasses all their doings.

[109] You pleaded on their behalf in this worldly life but who will plead with Allah on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection, or who will be their defender there?

[110] He who does either evil or wrongs himself, and then asks for Allah's forgiveness, will find Allah All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

[111] He who commits a sin, commits it only to his detriment. Surely Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

[112] But he who commits either a fault or a sin, and then casts it upon an innocent person, lays upon himself the burden of a false charge and a flagrant sin.

[113] (O Messenger), but for Allah's favour and mercy upon you, a party of them had resolved to mislead you, yet they only misled themselves, and could not have harmed you in any way.⁷⁵ Allah revealed to you the Book and Wisdom, and He taught you what you knew not. Great indeed has been Allah's favour upon you.

74. Whoever commits a breach of trust with others in fact commits first a breach of trust with his own self.

75. Even if some people succeeded in their design to obtain from the Prophet (peace be on him) a wrong judgement in their favour by presenting a false account of facts, the real loss would have been theirs rather than the Prophet's (peace be on him). For the real culprits in the sight of God are the perpetrators of that fraud and not the Prophet (peace be on him). Whoever obtains a judgement in his favour by tricking the courts deludes himself into believing that by such tricks he can bring right to his side; right remains with its true claimant notwithstanding the judgements that might be obtained by fraud and deception.

[114] Most of their secret conferring are devoid of good, unless one secretly enjoins charity, good deeds, and setting the affairs of men right. We shall grant whoever does that seeking to please Allah a great reward.

[115] As for him who sets himself against the Messenger and follows a path other than that of the believers even after true guidance had become clear to him, We will let him go to the way he has turned to, and We will cast him into Hell - an evil destination.

[116] Truly it is only associating others with Allah in His Divinity that Allah does not forgive, and forgives anything besides that to whomsoever He wills. Whoever associates others with Allah in His Divinity has indeed strayed far away.

[117] Rather than call upon Him, they call upon goddesses, and call upon a rebellious Satan⁷⁶

76. No one sets up Satan as his "god" in the sense that he makes him the object of his ritual worship and declares him to be God in so many words. The way to make Satan one's god is to entrust one's reins to him and let oneself be drawn helplessly in whichever direction Satan wants; the relationship between the two becomes, then, one of worshipper and worshipped, This shows that either absolute, unreserved obedience to or blind following of anybody is tantamount to worshipping him, so that whoever indulges in this kind of absolute obedience is guilty of worshipping a "god" other than the One True God.

[118] upon whom Allah has laid His curse. He said (to Allah): "I will take to myself an appointed portion of Your servants"⁷⁷

[119] and shall lead them astray, and shall engross them in vain desires, and I shall command them and they will cut off the ears of the cattle⁷⁸ and I shall command them and they will disfigure Allah's Creation.”⁷⁹ He who took Satan rather than Allah for his guardian has indeed suffered a manifest loss.

77. This shows that Satan is determined to lay his claim to a portion of man's time, of his effort and labour, of his energies and capacities, of his material belongings, and of his offspring, and would somehow trick him into devoting a sizeable portion of all these to his cause.

78. The reference here is to a superstitious Arabian custom, it was customary among the Arabs that after a camel had given birth to five or ten young to slit her ears and let her go in the name of their deity; they considered it forbidden to put her to any work. Likewise, the male camel that had generated ten offspring was consecrated to some deity. The slitting of ears symbolized this consecration.

79. To alter God's creation in some respect does not mean changing its original form. Hence the alteration of God's creation, which is characterized as Satanic, consists in using a thing not for the purpose for which it was created by God. In other words, all acts performed in violation either of one's true nature or of the intrinsic nature of these other objects are the result of the misleading promptings of Satan. These include, for instance, sodomy, birth control, monasticism, celibacy sterilization of either men or women, turning males into eunuchs, diverting females from the functions entrusted to them by nature and driving them to perform the functions for which men were created.

[120] Satan makes promises to them and fills them with vain hopes, but Whatever he promises them is merely delusion.

[121] For these people, their abode shall be Hell and from there they shall find no way of escape.

[122] But those who believe and do good, We shall cause them to enter the Gardens beneath which rivers flow. Here they will abide for ever. This is Allah's promise in truth and whose word is truer than Allah's?

[123] It is neither your fancies nor the fancies of the People of the Book which matter. Whoever does evil shall reap its consequence and will find none to protect and help him against Allah.

[124] Whoever does good and believes- whether he is male or female-such shall enter the Garden, and they shall not be wronged in the slightest.

[125] And whose way of life could be better than that of he who submits his whole being to Allah, does good, and follows exclusively the way of Abraham whom Allah took for a friend?

[126] Whatever is in the heavens and in the earth belongs to Allah; Allah encompasses everything.

[127] They ask you to pronounce laws concerning women.⁸⁰ Say: "Allah pronounces to you concerning them, and reminds you of the injunctions which were recited to you in the Book about female orphans whom you do not give what has been ordained for them and whom you wish to marry (out of greed)," and the commandments relating to the children who are weak and helpless. Allah directs you to treat the orphans with justice. Allah is Well aware of whatever good you do.

80. The actual query about women is not spelled out directly. The judgement pronounced a little later in response to that query, however, makes it abundantly clear what the query was.

[128] If a woman⁸¹ fears either ill-treatment or aversion from her husband it is not wrong for the husband and wife to bring about reconciliation among themselves (by compromising on their rights),⁸² for reconciliation is better. Man is prone to selfishness, but if you do good and are God-fearing, then surely Allah is aware of the things you do.

[129] You will not be able to treat your wives with (absolute) justice not even if you keenly desire to do so. (It suffices in order to follow the Law of Allah that) you do not wholly incline to one, leaving the other in suspense.⁸³ If you act rightly and remain God-fearing, surely Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

81. The actual response to the query begins here. The question is how a person who had more than one wife can comply with the injunctions to be just and equitable towards all of them. Is a person obligated by Islam to feel equally towards each of his wives, to love each to an equal degree, and treat each of them equally even in respect of sexual relationship? Such questions are especially relevant with regard to a husband one of whose wives might be, say, afflicted with either sterility or permanent sickness or who is incapable of sexual intercourse. Does justice demand that if a person fails to live up to the standards of equality mentioned above he should renounce his first wife in order to marry another woman? Moreover, where the first wife is disinclined to agree to the annulment of marriage is it appropriate for the spouses to make a voluntary accord among themselves, according to which the wife, towards whom the husband feels relatively less attracted, voluntarily surrenders some of her rights and thereby persuades her husband not to repudiate the marriage? Would such an act be against the dictates of justice?

82. It is better for the spouses to come to a mutual understanding so that the wife may remain with the same man with whom she has already spent a part of her life.

83. Some people point out that the Qur'an in one breath stipulates justice as the necessary condition for plurality of wives and in the next declares it to be impossible. On this basis they conclude that the Qur'an has itself revoked the permission to marry more than one wife. There is, therefore, absolutely no justification for having a plurality of wives. Such an inference would have been justified had the Qur'an merely said that "You will not be able to treat your wives with (absolute) justice." But the Qur'anic statement is followed by the direction: "...do not wholly incline to one, leaving the other in suspense." This leaves no grounds at all for the blind followers of Christian Europe to force an interpretation of their liking on the verse.

[130] But if the two separate, out of His plenty Allah will make each dispense with the other. Indeed Allah is Most Bounteous, Most Wise.

[131] All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth belongs to Allah. We enjoined upon those who were given the Book before you, and also yourselves, to have fear of Allah. But if you disbelieve, then bear in mind that all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth belongs to Allah. Allah is Self-Sufficient, Most Praiseworthy.

[132] To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; and Allah suffices for help and protection.

[133] If He wills, He has full power to remove you, O mankind, and bring in others in your place.

[134] He who desires the reward of this world let him know that with Allah is the reward of this World and also of the World to Come. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

[135] Believers! Be upholders of justice, and bearers of witness to Truth for the sake of Allah, even though it may be against yourselves or against your parents and kinsmen, or the rich or the poor, for Allah is more concerned with their Well-being than you are. Do not, then, follow your own desires lest you keep away from justice, If you twist or turn away from (the Truth), know that Allah is well aware of all that you do.

[136] Believers! Believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Book He has revealed to His Messenger, and in the Book He revealed before.⁸⁴ And whoever disbelieves in Allah, in His angels, in His Books, in His Messengers and in the Last Day,⁸⁵ has indeed strayed far away.

[137] Allah will neither forgive nor show the Right Way to those who believed, and then disbelieved, then believed, and again disbelieved, and thenceforth became ever more intense in their disbelief.

[138] Give tidings of painful chastisement to the hypocrites

[139] who take the unbelievers for their allies in preference to the believers. Do they seek honour from them whereas honour altogether belongs to Allah alone?

84. To ask the believers to "believe" might at first sight seem strange. The fact is, however, that belief as used here has two meanings. In the first instance, belief denotes that a man has preferred to acknowledge the soundness of God's true guidance, to distance himself from the fold of those who disbelieve, and to join the camp of the believers. In the second instance, however, belief denotes firm faith, a man's believing in the Truth with all his heart, with full earnestness and sincerity. This verse is addressed to all those who are "believers" in the first sense of the term, and they are asked to transform themselves into true believers, i.e. believers in the second sense.

85. Kufr has two meanings. One signifies categorical rejection. The other signifies that pretence of belief even when one's heart is not fully convinced or one's conduct is flagrantly opposed to the demands of one's belief.

[140] Allah has enjoined upon you in the Book that when you hear the Signs of Allah being rejected and scoffed at, you will not sit with them until they engage in some other talk, or else

you will become like them. Know well, Allah will gather the hypocrites and the unbelievers in Hell - all together.

[141] These hypocrites watch you closely: if victory is granted to you by Allah, they will say: "Were we not with you?" And were the unbelievers to gain the upper hand, they will say: "Did we not have mastery over you, and yet we protected you from the believers?" It is Allah Who will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection, and He will not allow the unbelievers, in any way, to gain advantage over the believers.

[142] Behold, the hypocrites seek to delude Allah, but it is He Who has subjected them to delusion. When they rise to Prayer, they rise reluctantly, and only to be seen by people. They remember Allah but little.

[143] They dangle between the one and the other (that is, faith and unbelief), and belong fully neither to these nor to those. And he whom Allah lets go astray, for him you can find no way.⁸⁶

86. Here an important fact has been stated about the person who has remained undirected to the Truth despite his acquaintance with the Book of God and the life of the Prophet (peace be on him). His case is of a person who was so averse to the Truth and so infatuated with error that even God let him go forth along the same erroneous direction that he had chosen for himself, a person on whom the door of true guidance was shut and the way towards error was made smooth and easy by God. It is virtually beyond the power of human beings to direct such a person to the Truth.

[144] Believers! Do not take the unbelievers as your allies in preference to the believers. Do you wish to offer Allah a clear proof of guilt against yourselves?

[145] Surely the hypocrites shall be in the lowest depth of the Fire and you shall find none to come to their help,

[146] except those who repent and mend their ways and hold fast to Allah and devote their faith exclusively to Allah. Such shall be numbered with the believers and Allah will certainly bestow on the believers a great reward.

[147] Why should Allah deal chastisement to you if you are grateful to Him and believe? Allah is All-Appreciative,⁸⁷ All-Knowing.

[148] Allah does not like speaking evil publicly unless one has been wronged.⁸⁸ Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

[149] (Even though you have the right to speak evil if you are wronged), if you keep doing good - whether openly or secretly - or at least pardon the evil (then that is the attribute of Allah). Allah is All-Pardoning and He has all the power to chastise.

[150] There are those who disbelieve in Allah and His Messengers and seek to differentiate between Allah and His Messengers, and say: "We believe in some and deny others," and they seek to strike a way between the two.

[151] It is they, indeed they, who are, beyond all doubt, unbelievers; and for the unbelievers We have prepared a humiliating chastisement

87. *In the context of the God-man relationship, when the word shukr is used in respect of God, it denotes God's appreciation of man's service and obedience. When it is used in respect of man, it denotes his acknowledgement of God's benefaction and his feeling of gratitude to Him.*

88. *The one who has been wronged is justified in speaking out against the person who has done wrong to one.*

[152] For those who believe in Allah and His Messengers, and do not differentiate between them, We shall certainly give them their reward. Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

[153] The People of the Book now ask of you to have a Book come down on them from heaven; indeed they had asked of Moses even greater things than this, for they said: "Make us see Allah with our own eyes" - whereupon a thunder-bolt suddenly smote them for their wickedness. Then they took to worshipping the calf after Clear Signs had come to them. We forgave them, and conferred a manifest commandment upon Moses,

[154] and We raised the Mount high above them and took from them a covenant (to obey the commandment), and ordered them: "Enter the gate in the state of prostration."⁸⁹ And We said to them: "Do not violate the law of the Sabbath," and took from them a firm covenant.

[155] (They have incurred Allah's wrath) for their breaking the covenant, and their rejection of the Signs of Allah, and for slaying Prophets without right, and for saying: "Our hearts are wrapped up in covers"⁹⁰ - even though in fact Allah has sealed their hearts because of their disbelief, so that they scarcely believe-

[156] and for their going so far in disbelief as uttering against Mary a mighty calumny,

[157] and their saying: "We slew the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary," the Messenger of Allah⁹¹ - whereas in fact they had neither slain him nor crucified him but the matter was made dubious to them⁹² -and those who differed about it too were in a state of doubt. They have no definite knowledge of it, but merely follow conjecture; and they surely slew him not,

89. *See al-Baqarah 2: 58-9.*

90. *Whenever the Messengers of God tried to admonish the Israelites, they said point-blank that no matter what argument or evidence the former might adduce in support of their message, they would remain unmoved.*

91. *Their criminal boldness had reached such proportions that they even attempted to put an end to the life of the person whom they themselves knew to be a Prophet, and subsequently went around boasting of this achievement. Were we to refer to Surah Maryam 19:16-40, along with the relevant notes, it will be clear that the Jews recognized Jesus to be a Prophet. Despite this, they carried out the crucifixion of someone who, in their belief, was none other than Jesus.*

92. *This verse categorically states that Jesus was raised on high before he could be crucified, and that the belief of both the Jews and the Christians that Jesus died on the cross is based on a misconception. Before the Jews could crucify him God raised Jesus up to the heavens.*

The person whom the Jews subsequently crucified was someone else rather than Jesus, someone who for one reason or another was mistaken as Jesus.

[158] but Allah raised him to Himself. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

[159] There are none among the People of the Book but will believe in him before his death⁹³ and he will be a witness against them on the Day of Resurrection.

[160] Thus, We forbade them many clean things which had earlier been made lawful for them⁹⁴ for the wrong-doing of those who became Jews, for their barring many from the Way of Allah,

93. The text lends itself to two meanings. We have adopted the first meaning in our translation. If we accept the alternative meaning, the verse would mean: "There is no one among the People of the Book who, before his death, will not believe in Jesus."

94. This may refer to the regulation mentioned in Surah al-an 'am 6:46 that all beasts with claws and the fat of both oxen and sheep were prohibited to the Jews. It might also refer, however, to the highly elaborate set of prohibitions found in Judaic Law. To restrict the choice of alternatives in a people's life is indeed a kind of punishment for them.

[161] and for their taking interest which had been prohibited to them, and for their consuming the wealth of others wrongfully as for the unbelievers among them, We have prepared a painful chastisement.

[162] Those among them who are firmly rooted in knowledge and the believers, they believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you. (Those who truly believe) establish the Prayer and pay *Zakah*, firmly believe in Allah and in the Last Day, to them We shall indeed pay a great reward.

[163] (O Muhammad), we have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the Prophets after him, and We revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and the offspring of Jacob, and Jesus and Jacob, and Jonah, and Aaron and Solomon, and We gave to David Psalms.

[164] We revealed to the Messengers We have already told you of, and to the Messengers We have not told you of; and to Moses Allah spoke directly.

[165] These Messengers were sent as bearers of glad tidings and as warners so that after sending the Messengers people may have no plea against Allah.⁹⁵ Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

95. God's purpose in raising the Prophets was to establish His argument against mankind. God did not want criminals to have any basis on which to plead that their actions were done in ignorance and that no arrangement had been made to guide man to the Truth.

[166] (Whether people believe or not) Allah bears witness that whatever He has revealed to you, He has revealed with His knowledge, and the angels bear witness to it too, though the witness of Allah is sufficient.

[167] Those who denied this Truth and barred others from the way of Allah have indeed strayed far away.

[168] Likewise, Allah will neither forgive those who denied the Truth and took to wrongdoing nor will He show them any other way

[169] save that of Hell wherein they will abide. And that is easy for Allah.

[170] O people! Now that the Messenger has come to you bearing the Truth from your Lord, believe in him; it will be good for you. If you reject, know well that to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.⁹⁶

[171] People of the Book! Do not exceed the limits in your religion,⁹⁷ and do not attribute to Allah anything except the Truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was only a Messenger of Allah, and His command that He conveyed unto Mary,⁹⁸ and a spirit from Him⁹⁹ (which led to Mary's conception). So believe in Allah and in His Messengers and do not say: "(Allah is a) trinity."¹⁰⁰ Give up this assertion; it would be better for you. Allah is indeed just One God. Far be it from His glory that He should have a son.¹⁰¹ To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and in the earth. Allah is sufficient for a Guardian.

96. Mankind are being informed that their Lord is not at all unaware of the wickedness in which they indulge, nor does He lack the capacity to deal severely with those who violated His commands.

97. The expression "People of the Book" refers here to the Christians and the word ghuluw denotes the tendency to exceed the limits of propriety in supporting one doctrine or another. While the fault of the Jews was that they had exceeded the limits of propriety in rejecting and opposing Jesus, the mistake of the Christians was that they had gone beyond the proper limits in their love for and devotion to Jesus and held him to be son of God, nay God Himself.

98. What is meant by sending the "command" to Mary is that God ordered Mary's womb to become impregnated without coming into contact with the human seed. In the beginning the Christians were told that this was the secret of the fatherless birth of Jesus. Later on, under the misleading influence of Greek philosophy, they equated this with the Logos, which was subsequently interpreted as the Divine attribute of speech. The next step in this connection was the development of the notion that this Divine attribute entered into the womb of Mary and assumed the physical form of Jesus. Thus there developed among the Christians the false doctrine of the Godhead of Jesus, and the false notion that out of His attributes, God had caused His attribute of Speech to appear in the form of Jesus.

99. Here Jesus himself is called "a spirit from God". The same idea is also expressed elsewhere in the Qur'an: "And We supported him with the spirit of holiness" (surah al-Baqarah 2:87). The import of both verses is that God endowed Jesus with a pure, impeccable soul. He was, therefore, an embodiment of truth, veracity, righteousness, and excellence. This is what the Christians had been told about Christ. But they exceeded the proper limits of veneration for Jesus, the "spirit from God" became the "spirit if God", and the "spirit of holiness" was interpreted to mean God's own Spirit which became incarnate in Jesus. Thus, along with God and Jesus, there also developed the third person of God - the Holy Ghost.

100. *It is urged that the Trinitarian doctrine, whatever its forms, should be abandoned. The fact is that Christians subscribe simultaneously to the unity and the trinity of God. The statements of Jesus on this question in The Gospels, however, are so categorical that no Christian can easily justify anything but the clear, straightforward doctrine that God is One and that there is no god but He. The Christians, therefore, find it impossible to deny that monotheism is the very core of true religion. But the original confusion that in Jesus the Word of God became flesh, that the Spirit of God was incarnate in him, led them to believe in the Godhead of Jesus and of the Holy Ghost along with that of God (the Father). This gratuitous assumption gave rise to an insoluble riddle: how to combine monotheism with the notion of trinity.*

101. *This is the refutation of the fourth extravagance in which the Christians have indulged. Even if the reports embodied in the New Testament are considered authentic, the most that can be inferred from them, (particularly those embodied in the first three Gospels), is that Jesus likened the relationship between God and His servants to that between a father and his children, and that he used to employ the term "father" as a metaphor for God. But in this respect Jesus was not unique. From very ancient times the Israelites had employed the term "father" for God. The Old Testament is full of examples of this usage. Jesus obviously employed this expression in conformity with the literary usage of his people. Moreover, he characterized God not merely as his own father but as the father of all human beings. Nevertheless, the Christians exceeded all reasonable limits when they declared Jesus to be the only begotten son of God.*

[172] Neither did the Messiah disdain to be a servant of Allah nor do the angels who are near-stationed to Him; and whoever disdains to serve Him, and waxes arrogant, Allah will certainly muster them all to Himself.

[173] He will grant those who have believed and done good deeds their rewards in full, and will give them more out of His bounty. He will bestow upon those who have been disdainful and arrogant a painful chastisement; and they will find for themselves neither any guardian nor helper apart from Allah.

[174] O people! A proof has come to you from your Lord, and We have sent down to you a clear light.

[175] Allah will surely admit those who believe in Him and hold fast to Him to His mercy and bounty, and will guide them on to a Straight Way to Himself.

[176] People ask you to pronounce a ruling concerning inheritance from those who have left behind no lineal heirs (*kalalah*).¹⁰² Say: "Allah pronounces for you the ruling: should a man die childless but have a sister,¹⁰³ she shall have one half of what he has left behind; and should the sister die childless, (but have a brother), he shall inherit her.¹⁰⁴ And if the heirs are two sisters, they shall have two-thirds of what he has left behind.¹⁰⁵ And if the heirs are sisters and brothers, then the male shall have the share of two females. Allah makes (His commandments) clear to you lest you go astray. Allah has full knowledge of everything."

102. *There is disagreement about the meaning of the word kalalah. According to some scholars, it means one who dies leaving neither issue nor father nor grandfather. According to others, it refers to those who die without issue. But the majority of jurists accept the opinion of Abu Bakr who held the former meaning to be correct. The Qur'an also seems to support this, for here the sister of the kalalah has been apportioned half of the inheritance although had his father been alive, the sister would not have inherited from him at all.*

103. *The apportioned shares of inheritance mentioned here are those of brothers and sisters, whether related through both parents or through a common father only. Abu Bakr gave this interpretation in one of his pronouncements and none of the Companions expressed any dissent. This view is, therefore, considered to be supported by consensus (ijma).*

104. *This means that if there is no other legal heir the brother will receive the entire inheritance. In the presence of other heirs (such as husband), the brother will receive all the residual inheritance after the other heirs have received their apportioned shares.*

105. *The same also applies to more than two sisters.*