

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE QUR'AN

Translation offered by
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Introductory Note: *The Blessings of the Qur'an*

Numerous keys are available to us to open the deeper meaning that lives within us; the words of the Holy Qur'an are such keys. The original Arabic resonances bestow grace through portals of expansive meaning, but even in translation some of the inherent blessing can be known. We offer here a journey with these meanings. We especially wish to thank Mahmoud Mostafa and Amira Abd El-Khalek, early readers of this text, for their insightful assistance, and dear Hamida Battla for her continual encouragement, and all the dear friends who have supported the unfoldings of this endeavor with their love.

Please note that within this text, each paragraph indent indicates a new verse (*ayah*, “sign”). And throughout, the word indicating “God,” *Allah*, will be translated sometimes as “God” and sometimes as “Divine Reality,” to remind us not to constrict our view but recognize the Infinitude of the Divine Reality we sometimes may speak of as “God.” Likewise for related pronouns, sometimes “He,” or “He/She” or “It” may be used in order to stretch our comprehension. All words in Arabic have a gender grammatically ascribed to them as they do in French and Spanish, etc. Although *Allah* is referred to with the third person masculine pronoun *Hu* (*Huwa*), it is universally understood that *Allah's* Essence is beyond gender or indeed any qualification. In this translation occasionally *Hu* will be used and sometimes “He/She” or “It” in an attempt to avoid the mistake of attributing human gender to That which is beyond all our attempts at definition, limitless in subtle glory.

When we are struck by the Lightning of Love during storms of intense grace, or when a key is provided to open an inner doorway for Divine Grace—that through which our own

intrinsic spirit was formed—meanings may pour forth from within us, nourishing us afresh. We are not merely a molded substance of earth and water and synapses, but palpable beings of heart divined by the Eternal Spirit from which we were created. We know more than we know.

As Shams of Tabriz, the beloved mentor of Jalaluddin Rumi has said, “the Qur’an is a love-letter.” May it continue to be, as it has been for many centuries, of blessed companionship, an opening towards Divine Reality, for all who approach it with an open heart.

May it be love!

With love,
Camille



Al-Fatiha

(The Opening)

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim

With the Name of God, the Infinitely Compassionate and Continually Merciful—

Praise is God’s, Sustainer and Cherisher of all worlds—
the Infinitely Compassionate and Continually Merciful,
Sovereign of the Day of Recognition—

You alone do we worship and serve; You alone do we ask
for help.

Guide us on the clear path,

the path of those who have received Your blessing; not the
path of those who have brought stringency upon themselves,
nor of those who wander into confusion.



Al-Baqarah

(The Cow)

In the Name of God, the Infinitely Compassionate,
the Infinitely Merciful

[*Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim*]

Alif. Lam. Mim.

This book, let there be no doubt, is a guidance for all the God-conscious,

those who trust in the Unseeable-Unnamed, who are rooted steadfastly in prayer, and who open-heartedly bestow from the sustenance We have provided for them,

and who trust in that which has been sent down to you, and that which was sent down before you, and who have reached certainty through nearness with the Hereafter—

they are following guidance from their Sustainer; it is they who attain felicity.

As for those who turn away in denial, it is the same to them whether you counsel them or you don't; they will not have faith.

God has covered over their hearts and the possibility of their turning, and their hearing, and veiled their sight; mighty is their chastisement.

Among the people there are those who say, "We trust in God and in the 'Day' of the Hereafter, but they do not really trust;

they would proudly deceive God and those who have faith, but they only deceive themselves and do not see it,

because in their hearts is disease, and God (the Unity of all existence) increases their disease; their torment is grievous,

because they are cut off by their deception.

When it is said to them, "Do not spread corruption on this good earth!" they say, "We only want to do good deeds."

Indeed, it is they who spread corruption, but they do not see it.

When it is said to them, "Trust as the others trust," they say, "Should we trust like fools trust?" No, surely, they are the fools; but they are unaware.

When they come face to face with those who trust, they say, "We trust," but when they are alone with those who have turned away in denial, they say, "We are with you; we were mocking them."

The Unity of God will render them ridiculous and extend the rope of their transgressions, so that they will wander further in their blindness.

These are those who have traded guidance for perplexity; their trade is without benefit. They have lost their way.

Their likeness is that of someone who has kindled a fire—when it lit up all around them, God took away their light and left them in obscurity, such that they cannot perceive.

Deaf, unable to speak, blind, they could not turn back to find the way.

Another likeness is that of a cloud heavy with rain from the heavens—within it are darkness and thunder and lightning—they put their fingers in their ears to keep out the crash of the thunder, stunned with fear of dying, yet God encompasses the deniers (those who attempt to conceal the Truth).

The lightning seizes their perception; when the light shines, they walk within it; when the darkness increases, they are stilled. If God willed, He/She could take away their capacity to hear and to see, for God has power over all things.

O humankind! Worship and serve your Sustainer, who created you and those who came before you, so that you may learn to be conscious of God,

who has made the earth a resting-place for you, and the

sky your canopy, and sent down rain from the heavens and so brought forth fruits for your sustenance; then don't claim that there is any power that could rival God, when you know.

And if you are in doubt as to that which We have sent down to Our servant, then produce a *surah* like it, and call your own witnesses besides Allah if your purpose is sincere.

But if you cannot—and surely you cannot—then fear the fire that burns humans (by their own kindling of it), and even hardened stones, that is prescribed for those in denial.

But give glad tidings to those who have faith and do the deeds of wholeness and reconciliation that for them are gardens beneath which rivers flow. Whenever they are nourished with its fruits they say, “Why, it is this with which we were fed beforehand,” for they are given corresponding gifts; and they have there pure partners, and there they abide forever.

Truly, God does not disdain using metaphors, for the lowly or the exalted. Those who have faith know it is Truth from their Sustainer. But those who are in denial say, “What does God intend by this metaphor?” Through it He causes many to wander in confusion and many He guides to the clear path; but He does not cause any to lose their way except those who have already fallen into transgression.

Those who break the bond with God after it has been pledged, and who break apart what God has enjoined to be held together, and spread corruption upon good, fruitful land—it is they who are in loss, themselves.

How can you turn your back on God in denial, seeing that you were without life and He gave you life? Then He will cause you to die, and will bring you to flourishing life again, and again to Him you will return.

It is He who has created for you all things on earth, and He brought together His design, arranging in proportion the seven heavens, and of all things He is the Knower.

Behold, your Sustainer said to the angels, “I will create a representative caretaker on earth.” They said, “Will you place

there one who will spread corruption and shed blood; while we praise You and glorify Your Purity?” He said, “Truly, I know what you know not.”

And He taught Adam all the Names; then He displayed all before the angels and said, “Tell Me the names of these if you speak the truth.”

They said, “Glory be to You, we have no knowledge except that which You have taught us: it is You who are the All-Knowing, the Most Wise.”

He said, “O Adam! Tell them their names.” When he had told them, God said, “Didn't I tell you that I know the hidden reality of heaven and earth, and I know what you reveal and what you conceal.”

And We said to the angels, “Bow down to Adam,” and they bowed down. Except for Iblis—he refused, full of pride—he was in the state of the deniers (who turn away from Truth).

We said, “O Adam! Dwell in tranquility, you and your partner, in the Garden; and eat of the abundance as you will, but do not approach this tree (of separation), or you will find yourself in a state of darkness.”

Then Satan (who provokes separation) made them stumble, forsaking that state of felicity in which they had been abiding. We said, “Descend; you with discord between yourselves, on earth will be your dwelling and where you will find your footing and provisions for a while.”

Then the human beings learned words of inspiration from their Sustainer—their Sustainer turned towards them, for He/She is Ever-Accepting of Repentance, the Continually Merciful.

We said, “All of you descend from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you guidance from Me, whoever follows My guidance, they shall not fear, nor shall they grieve.

But those who turn away in denial and reject Our Signs, they shall be companions of the fire—abiding within it.

O children of Israel! Deeply remember the blessings I have

bestowed upon you, and fulfill your covenant with Me as I fulfill My covenant with you, and do not be in awe of anyone or anything but Me.

And trust in what I send down, confirming the truth of that which is already with you, and do not be the foremost among those who turn away from its truth; do not exchange My Communications for a pittance; of Me, of Me be conscious.

And do not cover over truth with falsehood, and do not hide the truth when you know;

and be steadfast in prayer, and in charity, and bow in prayer with all those who are humble.

Do you enjoin other people to be righteous and honest and forget to be so yourselves? And yet you meditate upon the Scriptures—will you not try to understand?

Seek help in steadfast patience and prayer; it is a great challenge for all but those who approach in humility,

those who know with certainty that they will meet their Sustainer and Cherisher, and that to Him/Her they will return.

O descendants of Israel (of “he who struggles with God”), deeply remember the blessings with which I gifted you, above all creatures.

And be conscious of a day when no soul shall avail another, nor shall intercession be accepted, nor ransom, nor succor arrive.

And remember when We delivered you from Pharaoh’s people, who afflicted you with cruelty, slaughtering your sons and only letting your women live—a mighty trial from your Sustainer!

And remember We split the sea for you, saving you, and caused Pharaoh’s people to drown before your eyes.

And remember when We apportioned for Moses forty nights, and, while he was absent, you turned towards the calf, erring in darkness.

Yet, even after that, We erased your sin with forgiveness, that you might be grateful.

And remember We gave Moses the Scripture—the Criterion of discernment—so that you might be guided rightly.

And remember Moses said to his people, “O my people! You have wronged your own selves by worshipping the calf, so turn towards your Maker, let your egos die (coming to know your real self); that would be better for you in the sight of the One who made you. And thereupon He/She turned towards you, for He/She is Ever-Turning Towards those in repentance, Continually Merciful.

And remember when you said, “O Moses, truly we will not trust in you until we see God clearly apparent!” Whereupon mighty thunder and lightning stunned you, as you looked,

but We raised you up again after you had been as though dead, so that you might be grateful.

And We covered you with clouds to comfort you with shade, and sent down to you manna of bounty and quail of consolation: “Partake of the wholesome things We provide for you as sustenance.” And they did no harm to Us, but only themselves did they wrong.

And remember We said, “Enter this land, and eat of its abundant provision as you will, but enter the gate humbly, and say, ‘Remove from us the burden of our sin,’ and We shall forgive you your errors and magnify those who do that which is good and beautiful.”

But the wrong-doers corrupted the words We had sent down, and so We sent down calamity from the heavens upon those wrong-doers, because of their erring ways.

And remember, Moses prayed for water for his people; We said, “Strike the rock with your staff”—and twelve springs gushed forth from within it. Each tribe knew its own place for water. So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by God, and do not act wrongly by spreading corruption on this good earth.

And remember when you said, “O Moses, we can’t keep eating just one kind of food; pray to your Lord for us that He

might bring forth from the earth its produce—its herbs and its cucumbers, its garlic, its lentils, and onions.” He said, “Will you trade that which is better for that which is less? Return then in shame to Egypt, and then you can have that which you are wanting.” And so they covered themselves with shame and misery; they drew towards themselves the stringency of Divine Reality, because they continually rejected the Communications of God and slayed His Messengers, without reason; they kept opposing God and acting unjustly.

Truly, those who have faith, and those who follow the Jewish faith, and the Christians, and the Sabians—all who have faith in Divine Reality and the Day of the Hereafter and do the deeds of wholeness and reconciliation—shall have their recompense with their Sustainer; they shall have no fear, neither shall they grieve.

And witness! We accepted your firm covenant, and raised high above you the Mountain of Sinai: “Hold fast with all your strength to that which We have given you, and deeply remember it; that you might be steadfast in consciousness of God.”

But then you turned away; had it not been for the bountiful favors of God and His/Her tender mercy to you, you would surely have been among the lost.

For you knew well those among you who turned aside from the sacredness of the Sabbath, and We said to them, “Be ashamed in confusion (as those of false pretense)!”

And We made them an example for their time and for all those who come after, and a warning for those who would be vigilant in God-consciousness.

And witness, Moses said to his people, “Behold, God commands you to sacrifice a cow.” They said, “Do you take us for fools?” He said, “I seek refuge in God from such ignorant foolishness.”

They said, “Pray to your Lord for us, to make clear what it is”; he answered, “He indicates that the cow shall be neither

too old nor too young, of a useful, middle age. Now do that which you are commanded.”

They said, “Pray on our behalf to your Sustainer to ask what color.” Moses answered, “Behold, He says it is to be a golden yellow cow, bright of hue, pleasing to the beholder.”

They said, “Ask on our behalf for your Sustainer to make clear to us what exactly she is, for to us all cows are similar. If God wills, we might then be guided.”

Moses answered, “He says it is to be a cow neither trained to plow the earth nor to water crops, sound without blemish.” They said, “At last you have brought the whole truth.” Then they offered her in sacrifice, though they were almost incapable of doing it.

Because you had slain a soul and then blamed each other—although God will always reveal whatever you conceal—

We said, “Strike that with part of it.” And so, God brings the dead to life, and shows His Signs to you, so that you might understand.

And yet, even after this your hearts were hardened and became like rocks, or even harder, for among rocks there are some from which rivers gush forth, and others that when struck crack open so that from them water pours forth; and there are some that fall down in awe of God. And God is not unmindful of what you do.

Can you then hope that they will put their trust in you? Seeing that some of them have heard the Word of God and yet corrupted it knowingly, even after having understood it?

And see, how when these meet people of faith, they say, “We have faith,” but when they come together, privately, they say to each other, “Will you divulge to them what God has disclosed to you, allowing them to use it in argument against you, before your Lord?” Won’t you understand?

Don’t they know that God knows what they keep secret and what they reveal?

And there are among them those who are illiterate, who

do not know the Book, but only their wishful desires, and their conjectures.

Then woe to those who write the Book from their own hands, and then claim, “This is from God,” in order to acquire some gain. Woe to them for what their hands have written! And woe to them for whatever they may have gained!

And they say, “The fire won’t touch us but for a few days.” Say, “Have you taken a promise from God—for He never breaks His promise—or do you say about God what you do not know?”

No—those who seek to earn through wrong-doing, and are encircled by their sins—they are companions of the fire, and there abide.

Whereas those who have faith and do the deeds of wholeness and reconciliation, they are companions of the garden—there do they abide.

And behold, We accepted this covenant from the children of Israel: to worship none but God, to act beautifully towards your parents, your relatives, the orphans, and the helpless; to speak beautifully with the people; to establish steadfast prayer and offer the charity that purifies. And yet, except for a few of you, you turned away; and still you disregard it.

And behold, We accepted your covenant to shed no blood among you, nor to drive anyone among you from your homes, and this you solemnly agreed; you can bear witness to it.

And yet, even after this, it is you who slay one another, and drive some among you from their homes, helping one another in wrong-doing against them, out of spite. And if they come to you as captives, you ransom them, though you had no right to send them away. So is it only part of the Book in which you have faith, and you turn away from the rest? But what is the recompense of those among you who behave like this, except disgrace in this world, and on the Day of Standing, a mighty chastisement? For God is not unmindful of what you do.

Those are the ones who purchase the life of this world with

the Hereafter—but this will not lighten their torment, nor shall they be helped.

For truly, We entrusted unto Moses the Divine Scripture, and caused Messenger after Messenger to follow him; We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear Signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit. Yet whenever a Messenger comes to you, with what you may not like, are you not proudly insolent? Some of them you have denied, and others you kill!

They proclaim, “Our hearts are already full of knowledge!” No, but God has turned away from them because they have turned away. Little faith do they have.

Whenever there comes to them a Scripture from God, confirming what is with them—even though long ago they had prayed for victory over those who deny the Truth—when there comes to them that which they should recognize, they deny it. But God’s denial is the recompense of those who are in denial.

Miserable is the price for which they have bartered their souls, for they deny what God has sent down, in proud envy that God should send down His Grace to any of His servants, as pleases Him. And thus have they brought upon themselves intense stringency upon stringency; a shameful suffering comes to those who cover over the Truth.

For when they are told, “Trust in what God has sent down,” they say, “We have faith in what was sent down to us”; yet they reject anything else, even if it is Truth confirming what is with them. Say, “Why, then, have you killed the prophets of God who came before, if you were people of faith?”

And there came to you Moses, with clear Signs; and then, in his absence, you worshipped the calf, and acted wrongfully.

And remember We accepted your covenant, and We raised the Mountain of Sinai high above you: “Hold firmly to what We have entrusted to you, and pay attention to it.” They say, “We have heard, but we disobey”—for their hearts are filled with love of the calf, because of their ungrateful denial. Say: “Calamitous are the commands of your faith—if such a state

is any kind of faith.”

Say: “If the Abode of the Hereafter is especially for you with God, and not for anyone else, you should long for death, if you are sincere.”

But they will never seek it, because of what their hands have wrought that goes before them; and God knows full well the wrong-doers.

And you will indeed find them, of all people, most covetous of life, even more than idolators; each one wishes he could live a thousand years, even though such a long life could not distance torment from him—for God sees well all that they do.

Say: “Whoever fights against Gabriel (the angel who restores wholeness to that which has been broken)—for he brings down the revelation to your heart by God’s will, a confirmation of that which came before, and guidance and glad tidings for those who have faith—

“whoever opposes Divine Reality and Its angels and messengers, including Gabriel and Michael—truly, the Divine Reality opposes those who ungratefully deny the Truth.”

For clear messages have We sent down to you; and none turn away but those who are willfully perverse.

Isn’t it so that every time they make a covenant some of them throw it away? No, truly, many of them are faithless.

And when there has come to them a Messenger from Divine Reality, confirming what was with them, some of those who received the Book before threw the Scripture of God away, behind their backs, as though they were unaware,

and they have followed what the wicked ones used to practice who challenged Solomon’s power—for it was not Solomon, but the wicked who taught people magic and such things as came down at Babylon through the two (fallen) angels, Harut and Marut—although these two never taught anyone anything without first declaring, “We are but a temptation to wickedness; do not deny the Truth!” And they learned from them the means to sow discord between spouses. But they

could not so harm anyone except as God might allow, and so they acquired a knowledge that was of harm to themselves, rather than what could have been of benefit, even though they knew that those who purchased it would have no share of the happiness of the Hereafter. And miserable was the price for which they sold their own souls—had they but known it!

And had they kept their trust and been vigilant in consciousness, how much better would have been the recompense from their Sustainer—had they but known it!

O you who have attained to faith, do not say disrespectfully (to the Messenger), “Listen to us,” but rather say, “Be patient with us,” and listen (yourselves), for grievous torment awaits those who deny the Truth.

Neither those who deny the Truth from among those of the Book nor the polytheists would like to see any goodness from your Sustainer bestowed upon you. But God will choose for His special Mercy whomever He will—for God is Gloriously Magnificent in the bestowal of favored blessing.

None of Our Communications do We abrogate or consign to oblivion without replacing it with something better or similar. Don’t you know that God has Power over all things?

Don’t you know that to God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth? And other than Divine Reality you have no protector or help?

Would you question the Messenger as before Moses was questioned? Whoever chooses to turn from trust to denial has already strayed from the sound path.

Out of selfish envy, many of the followers of earlier revelation would like to turn you back from faith to denial, even after the Truth has become manifest to them; but forgive and forbear until God shall accomplish His purpose. For God has Power over all things.

And be steadfast in prayer and constant in purifying charity. And whatever good you send forth for your souls, you shall find it with God. For God sees well all that you do.

And they claim, “None shall enter the Garden unless he be a Jew,” or “a Christian.” Those are their wishful beliefs. Say, “Produce your proof, if what you say is true.”

Surely no; whoever surrenders his or her whole self to Divine Reality in a beautiful way, he or she will receive recompense from his or her Sustainer—all such need have no fear, neither shall they grieve.

The Jews say, “The Christians have no valid ground to stand upon”; and the Christians say, “The Jews have no valid ground to stand upon.” Yet they both follow the Book. Those who were without knowledge have said the same thing as they say. But it is God who will judge between them on the Day of Standing, with regard to all that about which they disagree.

And who could be more unjust than one who forbids the remembrance of God’s Name in any of the houses of worship of God, one who even strives to ruin them? They should not even enter them except in awe. For them there is nothing but disgrace in this world, and in the Hereafter mightily grievous suffering.

To God belong the East and the West, and wherever you turn, there is the Face of God. Behold, God is Infinite, All-Knowing.

They say, “God has taken unto Himself a son.” Glory be to God, subtle beyond all—no, to Him/Her belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth: everything is in humble, devoted service to Him/Her.

He/She is the Originator of the heavens and the earth; and when He/She wills a thing to be, He/She but says to it, “Be!”—and it is.

And those without knowledge say, “Why doesn’t Divine Reality speak to us, or show a Sign to us?” Even so, those before them spoke similar words—their hearts are alike. Indeed, We have made clear the Signs to people of inner certainty, those who are steadfast in nearness.

Truly, We have sent you as a Messenger with joyful tidings

of the Truly Real and with cautions. And you shall not be held accountable for the companions of the burning fire (of desire and covetousness).

For never will the Jews be pleased with you, nor the Christians, unless you follow their dictates of religion. Say, “God’s guidance is the only guidance.” And truly if you were to follow their wishes after the knowledge that has come to you, you would have none to protect you from God, none to bring you support.

Those unto whom We have entrusted the Book, and follow it as it ought to be followed, it is they who have faith in it; those who choose to turn away in denial—it is they who are in loss.

O children of Israel! Remember deeply [*zhikr*] the blessings with which I gifted you, and how I favored you above the worlds.

Then be conscious of the Day when one soul shall not be of help to another, nor shall compensation be accepted from anyone, nor shall intercession be of any use, nor shall they be aided.

And remember that Abraham was tried by his Lord with words of commanding power which he fulfilled—He said, “I will make you a leader of the people.” And he implored, “And also from my offspring!” He answered, “But My Promise is not reached by those who are oppressors.”

And behold! We made the House (*al-Bayt*; the Kaaba, the innermost heart) a place of return and gathering for humankind, and a sanctuary; take then the place where Abraham stood as your place of prayer. And We covenanted with Abraham and Ishmael that they should sanctify My House for all who walk around it, for all who abide there in retreat, and those who bow and prostrate themselves.

And behold, Abraham prayed, “O my Sustainer, make this a land of tranquility, and feed the people with its fruitfulness—those among them who trust in God and the Last Day.” He [God] said, “Those who turn away from the Truth

and are ungrateful—for a little while will I allow them to enjoy their pleasure, but they will eventually be compelled into the torment of the fire—a terrible journey’s end.”

And behold Abraham and Ishmael raised up the foundations of the House: “O our Sustainer, accept this from us; for You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing!

“O our Sustainer, make us both surrender ourselves unto You! And make out of our offspring a community who will surrender themselves to you. And show us our ways of worship and turn with mercy toward us, for You are Continually Re-Turning, Accepting of Repentance, Continually Merciful.

“O our Sustainer, raise up from amidst our offspring a Messenger from among themselves who will convey to them Your Signs and convey to them knowledge of the Book and wisdom, and cause them to grow in purity: for You are the Exalted, Most Dear, the All-Wise.”

And who would turn away from the Way of Abraham but those who demean their souls with foolishness, since We purified him and raised him high in excellence in this world, and truly, in the Hereafter he will be among those who have done the wholesome good.

When his Sustainer said to him, “Surrender yourself to Me,” he said, “I wholeheartedly surrender to the Sustainer and Cherisher of the Worlds.”

And this was the legacy Abraham left to his children, and so did Jacob: “O my children! God has granted you a clear, pure Way; then do not die without being surrendered.”

No, but you even bear witness that when death came to Jacob, behold, he said to his children, “What will you worship after I am gone?” They answered, “We will worship your God, the God of your forefathers, Abraham, Ishmael, and Isaac—the one Divine Reality, towards which we bow in surrender.”

Now those people have passed away. They shall reap the fruit of what they did, and you of what you do. You shall not be asked about what they did.

And they say, “Be a Jew,” or “a Christian,” “if you would be guided.” Say: “No; the Way of Abraham, who turned aside from that which is false, and was not of those who join others with God!”

Say: “We have faith in the Divine Reality, and that which has been bestowed upon us, and that which was sent down to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants, and that which was entrusted to Moses and Jesus, and that which has been entrusted to all the prophets from their Sustainer: we make no distinction between any of them, and to Him/Her we bow in surrender.”

So if they have faith like you have faith, then they are guided; but if they turn away, it is they who have cut themselves off, but God will suffice you, for He/She is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

(Say, “Our faith is) immersion in God. And who could give a more beautiful hue than God? It is He/She whom we worship and serve.”

Say, “Will you argue with us about God, when He/She is our Sustainer as well as your Sustainer? Unto us will be our deeds and unto you yours. It is to Him/Her alone that we are sincerely in service.”

“Do you claim that Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and their descendants were ‘Jews’ or ‘Christians?’” Say, “Do you know more than God? And who could be further from the right way than one who conceals evidence bestowed by God? But God is not unmindful of what you do.”

Now those people have passed on; their deeds will be accounted to them and unto you what you have earned; and you will not be asked about their deeds.

The foolish among the people will question: “What has turned them away from the orientation of prayer to which they were accustomed?” Say, “To God belongs the East and the West. He/She guides whom He/She wills to a broad straight Way.”

And thus have We willed you to be a community of balance,

so that you might bear witness to the Truth for humankind, and the Messenger might be a witness to Truth for you. And We appointed the *qibla* (orientation for prayer), to which you were accustomed, so that those who follow the Messenger might be discerned from those who turn on their heels—it was a great challenge except for those guided by God. And never would God make your faith futile, for God is to all humankind Most Kind, Continually Merciful.

We have seen you often turn your face toward heaven seeking nearness; and now we shall turn you towards a *qibla* through which you will be pleased. Turn then your face toward the Sacred House of Prostration and Prayer: wherever you are turn your face in that direction. People of the Book know well this is the Truth from their Sustainer. And God is not unaware of what you do.

Even if you were to bring all the Signs to the people of the Book, they would not follow your orientation for prayer, nor are you to follow their orientation for prayer, nor do they follow each other's orientation for prayer. And if you were to follow their wishes, after all the knowledge that has come to you, you would indeed be among the wrong-doers.

They to whom We have given the Book know it as they know their own children; but see how some of them conceal the Truth which they know.

The Truth is from your Sustainer. So do not be in doubt.

For each is an orientation toward which his or her face is turned by God, of which He/She is the goal. Strive then to attain the Good. Wherever you may be, God will bring you all together, for God has Power over all things.

From wherever you go forth, turn your face toward the Sacred Place of Prostration [*al-Masjid al-Haram*]. This is indeed the Truth from your Sustainer. And God is not unaware of what you do.

So from wherever you begin, turn your face toward the Sacred Place of Prostration, and wherever you are, turn your

face there, that there might be no argument among you and the people, except those who are inclined to act unjustly; fear them not, but be in awe of Me, that I might complete My favors upon you, and you might be guided.

Even so We have sent a Messenger to you from among yourselves, conveying our Messages, and purifying you, and conveying to you knowledge of the scriptures and wisdom, and new knowing.

So remember Me—and I remember you. And give thanks; do not turn away with ingratitude.

[*Fa thkuroonee athkurkum; Washkuroo lee wala takfuroon.*]

O you who have faith, seek help through steadfast patience and prayer, for God is with those who patiently persevere.

And do not say of those who are killed on God's Way, "They are dead." No, they are alive, but you do not perceive it.

And surely, We shall try you by means of danger, and hunger, and loss of possessions, and lives, and fruitfulness, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere—

those who when calamity afflicts them say, "Truly, to God we belong, and truly, to Him/Her we are returning."

It is they upon whom are greetings of blessing from their Sustainer, and tender Mercy, and it is they who are clearly guided.

Behold, As-Safa and Al-Marwah are among the Symbols of God. So if those who come to the House on pilgrimage or a devoted visit lower their wings to encompass them as they walk, no wrong do they do. And if anyone does more good than one is bound to do—surely God is One Who Recognizes Gratitude, All-Knowing.

Behold, if anyone covers over the clear revelation of Signs and the Guidance We have sent down, after We have made it manifest to humankind through the Book—these it is from whom God will turn His/Her blessings far away, and whom all who can judge will reject.

Except for those who experience a turning of heart and

make amends, and make known the Truth—it is toward them I turn, for I am the Acceptor of Repentance, Oft Re-Turning, the Continually Merciful.

Behold, as for those who cover over the Truth and die in denial and ingratitude, their portion is the driving away of God's blessing, and that of the angels, and all humankind.

They will persist in that; their suffering will not lighten, nor will respite come to them.

And your God is One God; there is no god but He/She—the Infinitely Compassionate, the Continually Merciful.

Look around you!—In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of night and day; in the sailing of ships through the sea for the benefit of humankind; in the waters which God sends down from the skies, giving life thereby to the earth that was dead; in the creatures of all kinds which He/She spreads there; in the changing of the winds and the clouds that follow them in service, between sky and earth—truly, these are signs for people who reflect.

Yet there are people who still choose to worship others as equal with God—they love them as they should love God. But those who have faith are overflowing in their love of Divine Reality, beyond all else. If only the wrong-doers could see, they would see the terrible suffering incurred—that God is the Creator of all Power, and that Divine Reality is stringent in the bestowal of correction.

Then would those who are followed free themselves of followers—they would see the penalty and cut off all relations with them.

Then those followers would say, “Would that we had a second chance, so we could have cut ourselves off from them as they have cut us off.” And so will God show them the result of their deeds as nothing but regrets, nor will there be a way for them out of that fire.

O humankind! Partake of what is lawful on earth and good; and do not follow the path of Satan, the insolent, perverse one,

for he is a known enemy of yours;

for he urges you towards what is corrupt and full of shame, and that you should speak of God what you do not know.

When it is said to them, “Follow what God has sent down from on high,” some answer, “No, we follow the ways of our forefathers.” What? Even if their ancestors were without wisdom or guidance?

The parable of those who turn away in denial is like that of creatures to whom a shepherd cries out, but who hear nothing of the call. Deaf, dumb, and blind, they are empty of understanding.

O you who have faith, partake of the wholesome things that We have provided for you as sustenance, and give thanks to God, if it is He/She you worship and serve.

He/She has prohibited for you only carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that over which any other name than God's has been invoked; but if one is forced by necessity, without willful waywardness, nor going beyond limits, then he or she is without error, for God is Oft-Forgiving, Continually Merciful.

Truly, those who conceal what God has sent down in the Book, trading it for some miserable gain—they are filling their bellies with fire. God will not speak to them on the Day of Standing, nor purify them; grievous is their chastisement.

It is they who choose error in exchange for guidance and suffering instead of forgiveness—how they persist with the fire!

And so it is; for Divine Reality is sending down the Scriptures with Truth [*bil Haqq*]; indeed, those who argue about it cut themselves off, withdrawing far distant.

True righteousness is not in turning your faces towards the East or the West. Truly righteous is one who trusts in the Divine Reality, in the Day of the Hereafter, and the angels, and Revelation, and the exalted prophets; one who spends of what has been given to one—out of love for Him/Her—upon one's near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer,

and those who beg, and for the freeing of human beings from slavery; and is steadfast in prayer, and offers purifying charity; they who keep their promises whenever they promise, and are patient in suffering and in difficulty, and in time of danger; it is they who have proved themselves true, and it is they, they who are conscious of God.

O you who have faith! The law of making things equal is prescribed for you in cases of killing—the free (is responsible) as one who is free, one who is a slave as a slave, and the female as a female. If any remission is made by his or her fellow human being, then grant any honorable demand, and make reparations to him or her with handsome gratitude. This is a lightening from your Sustainer and Cherisher, and an act of Mercy. But for the one who willfully goes beyond the bounds of what is right is grievous suffering.

For in the law of just restitution there is life for you, O you of insight—that you might remain conscious of God.

It is prescribed, when death approaches any of you, if he or she is leaving behind any goods, that he or she make a bequest to parents and near of kin according to what is just; this is due from those who are conscious of God.

If anyone intentionally alters the bequest after hearing it, the sin of it shall be upon those who alter it—indeed, God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

If, however, anyone fears that the testator has made a mistake or is responsible for a wrong, and brings about a peaceful settlement among the parties, he or she incurs no sin. Truly God is Oft-Forgiving, Continually Merciful.

O you who have attained to faith! Fasting is ordained for you as it was ordained for those before you, so that you might remain conscious of God—

during a certain number of days—but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number may be from later days, and, for those who can, a substitute of feeding one who is in need. But whoever gives more good than he or she is bound

to do, is doing good to himself/herself; and if you fast it is goodness for yourselves—if you but knew!

Ramadan is the month in which the Quran was sent down, as a guidance to humankind, clearly evident—for guidance and discernment. And so everyone of you who is present during that month should fast throughout it, but if anyone is ill or on a journey, the prescribed period may be later days. God wills ease for you; He/She does not will difficulty for you, but wants you to complete the prescribed number of days; and glorify Him/Her for He/She has guided you—and perhaps you will be grateful.

And if My servants ask you about Me—truly, I am near. I respond to the one who calls Me whenever he or she calls Me; let them then respond to Me, and trust in Me, that they might follow the well-guided way.

Open for you on the night of the fasts is lying with your women. They are as a garment for you and you are as a garment for them. God knows how you were secretly behaving among yourselves, but He turned toward you and erased your error in forgiveness; so now it is open for you to lie with your spouse, and enjoy what God has made lawful for you, and eat and drink (during the nights of the fast) until the white streak of dawn appears distinct from its black; then stay with your fast until the night comes. But do not lie with your spouses during the period you are dwelling in retreat in the mosques. Those are the bounds set by God—so do not approach them. In this way, God makes His signs clear to humankind, that they might remain conscious of Divine Reality.

And do not eat up another's property wrongfully, nor let it fall to legal judgement in order that you might devour wrongfully, knowingly, of abundance that belongs to others.

They ask you about the new moons. Say, "They are indicators of time-frames for humankind, including the pilgrimage." Righteousness does not consist in entering dwellings from behind, but true righteousness is being conscious of God. And

so enter dwellings through their appropriate doors, and remain conscious of God, that you might be happy.

And struggle in God's Way against those who struggle against you, but do not transgress unjustly, for God does not love aggressors,

and fight against those wherever you encounter them, and clear them out from where they have cleared you out—for oppression is worse than war. But do not fight against them near the Sacred Place of Prostration, unless they fight you there, but if they do fight you, fight against them, such is the earning of those who consciously conceal the Truth.

But if they cease—witness, God is Oft-Forgiving, Continually Merciful.

And so challenge them until there is no more oppression, and justice and the Way of Divine Reality prevails; but if they cease, all opposition shall cease, except against those who willfully do wrong.

The month that is sacred, as the month that is sacred—and for all that is sacred, there is the law of balance. And if anyone goes beyond your limits, go beyond his or her limits as he or she has gone beyond yours—and be in awe of God, and know that God is with those who are in awe of Him/Her.

And spend in the Way of God, and do not let your own hands throw you into destruction. Do the good and beautiful—truly, God loves the doers of the good and beautiful.

And complete the pilgrimage, and the lesser visit of devotion, in service of Divine Reality. But if you are kept from it, make a gift in sacrifice, as best you may find; and do not cut off the hair from your head until the offering reaches the place of surrender. And if anyone among you is ill or suffering because of his head, in exchange, fast, or give true charity, or offer acts of devotion; and when you are well and secure again, if one wishes to complete the sacred visit or the pilgrimage, he or she may make an offering, as best he or she can find—or if not able, he or she can fast three days during the pilgrimage and

seven days upon his or her return, ten days in all, this for those who are not abiding within the Sacred Place of Prostration; and be conscious of God, and know that the Divine Reality is rigorous in responding step by step.

The pilgrimage shall be during the months indicated for it, and whoever engages in the pilgrimage during those shall, while on pilgrimage, refrain from vulgar speech, from all harmful actions, and from arguments; and whatever goodness you may do, God is aware of it. And take provision for the journey, but truly the best provision is God-consciousness—so keep conscious of Me, O you of inner knowing!

Yet you will be doing nothing wrong if you seek to gather some bounty from your Sustainer. And when you flow forth from Arafat (the heights of “Gnosis”), remember [*zhikr*] God at that holy, pure place of perception, and remember Him/Her as the One who guided you after you had lost your way;

and surge onward with all the people who surge onward—and ask God to forgive you your errors, for truly, God is Oft-Forgiving, Continually Merciful.

And when you have completed your rites of devotion, continue to keep God in remembrance [*zhikr*], as you would keep your own parents in remembrance; no, with an even more intensely heartfelt remembrance. For there are people who pray, “O our Sustainer, give us in this world...”—and such shall have no portion in the Hereafter.

But there are, also, those who pray, “O our Sustainer, grant us goodness in this world and goodness in the Hereafter, and safeguard us from suffering through the fire.”

These shall have their nourishment in return for that which they have sought, and God is quick to account.

And remember [*zhikr*] God during the designated days. But if anyone readies to depart in two days, he (or she) shall merit no error; and he or she who stays longer shall merit no error—if he (or she) is conscious of God. And so be conscious of God, and know that unto Him/Her you shall be gathered.

There is a kind of person whose views on the life of this world may please you greatly, and he cites God as witness to what is in his heart, and is most adept in argument.

But whenever he prevails, he spreads corruption on this good earth, causing the destruction of cultivated land and society; and God does not love corruption.

And whenever he is told, “Be conscious of the Divine Reality,” his misplaced pride drives him into error, so that the fire suffices him—what a terrible abode.

But there is also a kind of person who would give up his own self, seeking harmonious alignment with Divine Reality; and God is Infinitely Kind and Tender toward His servants.

O you of faith, enter wholeheartedly into the peace of surrender; and do not follow the footsteps of one who is arrogant and corrupt [*shaytan*], for he is clearly your enemy.

And if you should stumble in error after clear signs have come to you, know that God is Almighty, the All-Wise Restorer of Soundness.

Are these people waiting for God to come upon them in the shading clouds, together with the angels—even though by then all will have already been decided? To God all authority returns.

Ask the descendants of Israel how many a clear message We have given them—and if anyone alters God’s beneficence, turning away after it has reached him or her, truly, the Divine Reality is stringent in response.

To those who turn away from the Truth in denial, the life of this world is alluring, and so they mock those who trust in the Divine Reality, but those who are conscious of the Divine Reality will be far beyond them on the Day of Standing (and Rebirth). For God bestows sustenance upon whom He or She wills, beyond all reckoning.

All humankind were once one single community, (but when they differed) God uplifted the prophets as bringers of glad tidings and as warners and through them bestowed Revelation

from on high, conveying the Truth—so that it might decide between people regarding all about which they had come to differ. Yet the people who had received Revelation, after clear signs had come to them, out of mutual jealousy came to differ among themselves about the Truth. But God guided the faithful to the Truth about which they had differed, for God guides to a clear way the one who wills it.

Do you think you could enter the Garden without enduring such as came to those who went before you? They met with suffering and adversity, and so shaken were they that the Messenger, and the faithful with him, would cry out, “When will God’s help come?” O, truly, God’s help is near!

They will ask you as to what they should spend on others. Say, “Whatever of goodness you spend shall be first for your parents, and for close relatives, and for the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer; and whatever good you do, truly, God knows well.”

Struggle is prescribed for you, even though it may be distasteful to you; but it may well be that you dislike something even though it is good for you, and it may well be that you love something that is harmful for you; and God knows, while you know not.

They will ask you about fighting during the sacred month. Say, “Fighting during it is a grievous thing, but denying people access to the Way of God, and denying the Divine Reality, and access to the Sacred Place of Prostration—and driving out its people from it—is more grievous in the sight of God; for oppression is worse than war. They won’t stop battling you until they turn you away from faith, if they can; and if any of you turns away from his/her faith and dies in denial, their efforts will bear no fruit in this world, nor in the Hereafter—they will become companions of the fire, there to abide.

Truly, those who have faith and those who have renounced evil and are striving in God’s Way—they have the hope of God’s Infinite Compassion—for God is Oft-Forgiving,

Continually Merciful.

They will ask you about intoxicants and gambling. Say, “In both there is great harm and also some benefit for people, but the harm they cause is greater than the gain. And they will ask you about what they should spend (on others). Say, “More than what is due.” In this way God makes clear His/Her messages to you that you might reflect—

for this world and the Hereafter. And they will ask you about orphans. Say, “To do that which sets things right and is honest is best.” And if your affairs become intermixed—(regard) them as your own siblings; for God distinguishes between one who spoils things and one who makes things better. And if God had willed, He/She could have given you difficulties. Indeed, He/She is Almighty, Truly Wise.

And do not marry idolatrous women (who set other things up in importance before God), until they find tranquility and security in faith. For any faithful servant (of God) is better than a woman who ascribes divinity to other than the Divine Reality, even though she may please you greatly. And do not give women in marriage to men who set other things up in importance before God, before they find faith, for a faithful servant is better than a man who ascribes divinity to other than the Divine Reality, even though he may please you greatly—these draw you into the fire, whereas the Divine Reality draws you into the Garden and forgiveness by Its easing. And He/She makes clear His/Her signs to humankind, so that they might remember.

And they will ask you about the monthly flowings. Say, “It is a vulnerable, painful state. So give women space during their monthly flowings, and do not go in unto them until they are refreshed; and when they are refreshed, go in unto them as God has counselled you.” Truly God loves those who turn toward Him/Her; and He/She loves those who purify themselves.

Your women are for you a sustaining wealth; so seek that sustenance as you will, but before you do, prepare—for your

soul—be conscious of God, and know that you will come face to face with Him/Her. And share joy with those who have faith.

And do not make God an excuse, as concerns your oaths, against doing good, or acting rightly with conscious awareness, or encouraging peace among people; for God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

God will not call you to account for oaths you have voiced impulsively, but for the intention your hearts hold, for God is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

For those who have made an oath of being apart from their women, a waiting of four moons is prescribed, but if they return, God is Oft-Forgiving, Infinitely Merciful.

If, however, they are intent upon divorce, God is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

And women who have been freed from their bond shall wait in regard to themselves for three moons. It is not lawful for them to conceal what God has created in their wombs, if they trust in God and the Day of the Hereafter—and their husbands have the right to take them back during that period if their husbands gently seek peace and reconciliation. The women shall have the same rights to the rights of the men, according to what is equitable, but men have a greater (responsibility) in regard to them; and God is All-Powerful, the Infinitely Wise Healer.

A divorce may be invoked twice, after which the marriage must be resumed in fairness or dissolved in a good way. It is not lawful for you to take back any of what you have ever given to your women, unless both (partners) are concerned they may not be able to keep to the bounds set by God; and so if you fear that either may not be able to keep within the bounds set by God, there shall be no sin for either if the wife gives back (what was gifted) in exchange for her release from bond (from her husband). These are the bounds set by God, so do not transgress them; for they who transgress the bounds set by

God—it is they, they who are the wrong-doers.

And if he divorces her (a third time), she shall not be lawful unto him again until after she has married another man, and then if those divorce, there shall be no sin upon either if the (first couple) return to each other—provided they both consider that they will be able to keep within the bounds set by God—for these are the bounds set by God which He/She makes clear to people of inner knowing.

And so, when you divorce women and they approach the end of their term of waiting, then either keep them in a just manner, or let them go in a just manner. But do not keep them against their will to hurt them—for he who does so sins against himself. Do not take these messages of God lightly, and remember the blessings with which God has graced you, and all the Revelation and the wisdom He/She has bestowed upon you from on high through which to counsel you. And remain conscious of God, and know that God has full knowledge of everything.

And when you do divorce women, and they have come to the end of their waiting term, do not keep them from marrying other men if they have committed to each other in a just manner. This is a warning to all of you who have faith in God and the Final Day; it is the most virtuous way, and the purest. And the Divine Reality knows while you do not.

And mothers (who have been divorced) may nurse their children for two whole years, if they wish to complete the time of nursing; and it is incumbent upon he who has begotten the child to provide (during that time) in a just way for their sustenance and clothing. No human being shall be burdened with more than he or she is well able to bear; neither shall a mother be made to suffer because of her child, nor because of his child he who has begotten it. And the same obligation remains with his (the father's) heir. And if both (parents) decide in mutual consent and counsel, upon weaning (the child from the mother), they will incur no sin in it. And if you decide to

entrust your children to foster-mothers (for nursing them), you will incur no sin, provided you ensure the security, in a just way, of the child you hand over. But remain conscious of God, and know that the Divine Reality sees all that you do.

If any of you die and leave a spouse behind, they shall wait in regard to themselves for four moons and ten days. When they have fulfilled their time there is no blame if they bestow themselves in a wise and knowing way. And God is well aware of all that you do.

And there is no blame for you if you make an offer of betrothal, or hold it in your heart—God knows how you cherish them in your hearts—but do not make a secret contract with them unless you do so honorably; and do not commit to the tie of marriage until the prescribed period is completed. And know that God knows what is in your hearts, and take heed of Him/Her, and know that God is Oft-Forgiving, Continually Merciful.

You incur no sin if you divorce women while you have still not touched them or settled a dower upon them, but even then, make provision for them—the wealthy according to his means and he of tight finances according to his means—a provision in an equitable manner: this is an obligation upon all who would do the good.

And if you divorce them before having touched them, but after having settled a dower upon them, then (give them) half of what you have settled upon them, unless they forego their claim, or he in whose hand is the marriage tie gives up his claim (to his half). And to forgo what is due you is more in accord with God-consciousness. And do not forget grace towards each other; truly, God sees all that you do!

Cherish your prayers with vigilance, for in prayer is the best of balance—and stand before God in whole-hearted devotion.

And if you are frightened, troubled by danger, pray while walking or riding, and when you are again secure and tranquil, remember [*zhikr*] God as He/She has taught you, that you did not know.

And if any die and leave spouses behind, it is understood that they bequeath to their widows at least a year's maintenance without their being compelled to depart; if however they depart on their own, there is no error in whatever they may choose to do in regard to themselves, when held high in discernment—and God is Almighty, Most Dear, the Infinitely Wise Healer.

And divorced women shall, also, have maintenance in a goodly manner—this (provision) is incumbent upon all who are conscious of God.

In this way Divine Reality makes clear Its signs to you, that you might use your reason.

Aren't you aware of those who had to forsake their homes in the thousands, in fear of death—and God said to them, "Die." And yet then He/She restored them to life. For the Divine Reality is full of gifts for humankind, but most of them are ungrateful.

Then struggle to know (the flowing fountain of) the Way of God, and know that God hears and knows all things.

And who is it who will loan to God a beautiful loan, which God will double and multiply many times over? It is the Divine Reality who bestows constricted need or expanded abundance, and to It you will return.

Aren't you aware of those elders of the descendants of Israel, after the time of Moses, how they said to a prophet of theirs, "Raise up a king; we will fight in God's Way"? And he responded, "And if fighting is asked of you, might you perhaps refrain from that effort?" They answered, "And why would we not fight in God's Way, when we have been driven from our homelands?" Yet when struggle was asked of them, they turned back, except for a few of them; but God has full knowledge of those who do harm.

And their prophet spoke to those elders: "God has raised up Saul [*Talut*] now to be your king." They responded, "How can he rule over us when we have a better right to rule than he, and he has no great wealth?" He replied, "See—God has

raised him up above you, and endowed him with abundant knowledge and physical perfection. And God bestows His/Her dominion on whom He/She wills, for God is Infinite, All-Knowing."

And their prophet (Samuel continued) to speak to them, "Behold, it shall be a sign of his rightful dominion that you will be granted the Ark (of the Covenant—a heart) endowed by your Sustainer with tranquility [*sakinah*, "inner peace"] and with all that is enduring in the angel-borne heritage left behind by the House of Moses and the House of Aaron. In this indeed is a sign for you if you are of the faithful.

When Saul set forth with the forces, he said, "God will test you with the river. Whoever drinks of the water, he is not of me. For truly, those who do not drink of it—except a handful—are of me." Yet all but a few drank of it greedily. When they had crossed the river, he and the faithful ones with him, they (the faint-hearted ones) said, "We have no strength today against Goliath and his forces." But those who knew with certainty that they would meet God replied, "How often has a small host overcome a great host by God's permission, for God is with those who are patient in adversity."

And when they came face to face with Goliath and his forces, they prayed, "O our Sustainer, shower us with patience in adversity, and make our steps firm, and support us when we face people who are in denial of Truth."

By God's will, they overcame them, and David slew Goliath; and God gave him authority and wisdom and taught him what He/She willed. And if God did not restrain one group of people by means of another the earth would be full of corruption. But the Divine Reality is limitless in beneficence towards all the worlds.

These are the Signs of Divine Reality. We declare them to you in Truth [*bil Haqq*]. Truly, you are one of the Message bearers.

Such Messengers We endowed with gifts, some above

others. To some Divine Reality spoke; others He/She raised in degrees (of honor). To Jesus the son of Mary We gave clear Signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit [*Ruh al Quddus*]. If God had so willed, further generations would not have argued with each other, after clear Signs had come to them, but they chose to quarrel, some having faith and others denying. If Divine Reality had so willed, they would not have disputed with each other, but Divine Reality fulfills Its design.

O you who have faith, spend on others out of the bounties We have provided for you, before the Day comes when no bargaining, nor friendship, nor intercession (will avail). Those who cover over Truth, they are the ones in darkness.

God—there is no deity but *Hu*, the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting Source of all Being. No slumber can seize Him/Her nor sleep. All things in heaven and on earth belong to *Hu*. Who could intercede in His/Her Presence without His/Her permission? He/She knows what appears in front of and behind His/Her creatures. Nor can they encompass any knowledge of Him/Her except what He/She wills. His/Her throne extends over the heavens and the earth, and He/She feels no fatigue in guarding and preserving them, for He/She is the Highest and Most Exalted.

Let there be no compulsion in matters of faith. Right wayfaring stands clearly apart from error. Whoever turns away from the powers of evil and has faith in Divine Reality has grasped the most trustworthy handhold which shall never give way. And Divine Reality is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

Divine Reality is the Protector of those who have faith, leading them out of the depths of darkness into the Light. Whereas near to those who turn away from the Truth are the powers of evil that take them out of the light into the depths of darkness. It is they who are destined for the fire, there to abide.

Are you not aware of he who argued with Abraham about his Sustainer, because God had gifted him with kingship? Witness, Abraham said, “My Sustainer is the One Who Gifts

Life, and the One Who Gifts Death.” The king replied, “I gift life and gift death!” Abraham said, “God causes the sun to rise in the east. Make it rise, then, in the west.” And he who was intent on denying Truth was dumbfounded. For God does not guide people who are arrogantly unjust.

Or (are you) like one who passed by a town deserted by its people, with its roofs fallen in, saying “How could God bring all this back to life after its demise?” And so God caused him to be as dead for a hundred years, and then brought him back to life, saying, “How long have you remained so?” And he answered, “I have remained but a day or part of a day.” Said (the Divine Reality): “No, you have remained like this a hundred years! But look at your food and drink—see how it is untouched by the passing of years, and your ass; that We might make of you a Sign for humankind. And observe bones of animals and human beings—how We arrange them and clothe them with flesh.” And when he had observed all this, he said, “I comprehend now that God has the power to will anything!”

And witness, Abraham said, “O my Sustainer! Show me how You give life to the dead.” Said *Hu*, “Do you not have faith?” Abraham answered, “Yes, but so that my heart might be completely secure, at rest.” Said *Hu*, “Take then four birds and teach them to come close to you; then place them separately on hills; then summon them—they will come flying to you. And know that God is Almighty, Truly Wise.”

The parable of those who spend their possessions in God’s Way is like a seed that sends forth seven ears, in each of which are a hundred grains. For God grants manifold increase to whom He/She wills. And Divine Reality is Infinite, All-Encompassing and All-Knowing.

Those who spend their possessions for the sake of God, and do not follow their spending with a show of their beneficence nor embarrassment (of the one to whom they gave), shall have their recompense with their Sustainer. And no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve.

A kind word and the veiling of another's want is better than a charitable deed followed by hurt. And God is Self-Sufficient, Most Forbearing.

O you who have faith! Don't nullify your charity by stressing your benevolence and hurting (the feelings of those to whom you give) as does one who spends his wealth only to be seen by people and has no faith in the Divine Reality and the Final Day: for his parable is like that of a hard rock with little earth upon it—then a rainstorm hits it and leaves it hard and bare. Such as these shall have no gain from all their efforts, for God does not guide people who deny the Truth.

And the parable of those who spend that which they are provided out of a longing for God to be well-pleased with them, and from out of their own inner certainty and nearness, is that of a garden on high, fertile ground—a rainstorm pours down upon it, and it brings forth redoubled fruitfulness; and if no rainstorm pours down upon it, light dew (arrives and is enough). And God sees all that you do.

Would any of you like to have a garden with date-palms and vineyards, through which running waters flow and all kinds of fruit abound within it, and then be overwhelmed by old age with only incapable children to look after it, and then have it be struck by fiery wind and completely scorched?! And so, God makes clear His/Her messages to you, so that you might reflect.

O you who have faith! Spend on others out of the good things you may have acquired, and out of that which We bring forth for you out of the earth; and do not choose for your charity the worst which you yourselves would not accept without diverting your eyes in disdain. And know that God is the One Who Is Truly Rich, the One Worthy of all Praise.

Satan threatens you with the prospect of poverty and bids you to be stingy, while the Divine Reality promises you forgiveness and abundance. And God is Infinite, All-Encompassing, All-Knowing;

He/She grants wisdom to whom He/She wills, and whoever is granted wisdom has indeed been granted abundant wealth, but none bears this in mind except those who are gifted with insight.

For whatever you may spend (on others) or whatever you may vow (to spend), truly, God knows it; and those who do wrong (by withholding) shall have none to support them.

And if you do deeds of charity openly, it is a blessing; but if you bestow it upon those truly in need in secret, it is even better for you, and it will rebalance some of the harm you have done. And God is well aware of all that you do.

It is not for you to make people follow a rightful path, since it is God alone who guides whom He/She will. And whatever of good you spend on others is for your own good, provided that you spend only out of a longing for the Face of Divine Reality. For whatever of good you may spend will be given back to you in full, and you shall not be wronged.

(And give) to the needy who, absorbed in God's cause, are unable to go about the earth (in search of livelihood). One who is lacking in awareness may think that they are free of want, because of their modesty—you can recognize them by their exceptional mark, they do not insistently go about begging of everyone. And whatever of good you may give, surely God knows.

Those who spend their possessions (for God's sake) by night and by day, secretly and openly, shall have their reward with their Sustainer. No fear need they have, neither shall they grieve.

Those who stuff themselves with usury behave as those whom Satan has confused with his touch; for they say, "Buying and selling is just a kind of usury, but God has made buying and selling lawful but usury unlawful!" And so whoever becomes aware of his or her Sustainer's admonition and desists may keep his or her past gains, and it will be for God to judge; but as for those who return to it—they are destined for the fire, there to abide.

God deprives usurious gain of blessing, whereas He/She causes charitable giving to increase with interest. And God does not love anyone who is stubbornly ungrateful and persists in corrupt ways.

Truly those who have come to faith and do the deeds of wholeness and reconciliation, and are constant in prayer, and bestow charity—they shall have their reward with their Sustainer. No fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve.

O you who have come to faith, remain conscious of the Divine Reality. And give up all that remains of usury, if you are of the faithful.

For if you don't, know that you are in conflict with God and His Messenger. But if you repent in your ways, you are entitled to your principal; you will do no wrong, neither will you be wronged.

If however, the debtor is in tightened circumstances, (grant him or her) a delay until it is easy. And it would be for your own good—if you but knew it—to forego it (entirely) out of charity.

And be in awe of the Day you will return to God and every soul will be repaid for what he or she has earned, and none shall be wronged.

O you who have faith, whenever you give or take credit for a certain term, put it down in writing. And let a scribe write it clearly and equitably between you; and let not the scribe refuse to write, as God has taught him—even so shall he write. And let the one who is taking on the debt dictate, and let him be conscious of God, his Sustainer, and not diminish anything of what he undertakes. And if he is weak in body, or mind, or not able to dictate himself, let the one who oversees his affairs dictate justly. And call upon two among your men as witnesses, and if two men are not available, then a man and two women of those with whom you are well-pleased as witnesses, so that if one should become confounded, the other might guide in recollection. And let the witnesses not refuse to give evidence when they are called. And do not be reluctant to write down

every contractual detail, be it small or great, noting the time when it falls due; this is more just in the sight of God, more straightforward as evidence, and more likely to keep you from being doubtful regarding it. If however ready merchandise is concerned—which you transfer directly from one to another—you won't be transgressing if you don't write it down. And have witnesses whenever you engage in trade with each other, but do not pressure either scribe or witness—for if you do, you would be going beyond bounds—and remain conscious of God, since it is through God that you come to know, and God has full knowledge of everything.

And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, pledge in trust hand to hand—and if you thus deposit a trust with one another, then let the one who takes on a trust fulfill it, and let him be conscious of God, his Sustainer. And do not cover over what you have witnessed—for truly one who conceals it, his heart goes astray—and God knows well all that you do.

Unto God belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. And whether you reveal what is within yourselves or conceal it, God will call you to account for it; and then He/She will forgive whom He/She wills, and will chastise whom He/She wills: for God has the power to will anything.

The Messenger and the faithful with him have faith in what has been revealed to him from on high by his Sustainer; they all have faith in God, and His angels, and His Revelations, and His Messengers, making no distinction between any of His Messengers. And they say, “We have heard and we pay heed. Grant us Your forgiveness, O our Sustainer, for with You is all journeys' end.

“Divine Reality does not burden any human being with more than he or she can bear; in his or her favor shall be whatever good he or she does, and against him or her whatever harm he or she does. O You Who Sustain and Educate us, do not take us to task if we forget or unwittingly do wrong. O our Sustainer, do not lay upon us a burden like that which You

placed upon those who lived before us. O our Sustainer, do not make us bear burdens which we do not have the strength to bear. And clear us of our errors, and grant us forgiveness, and bestow Your mercy upon us. You are our Supreme Cherisher and Protector; help us, then, when we face those who stand against Truth.”