Al- Baqarah

Introduction

As described in the introduction of the Qur’an the surahs are divided into two categories Makkan and Madinan. These are further sub-divided into groups of surahs forming pairs. We have already read surah Al-Fatihah which was revealed in Makkah. The first Madinan part starting from this surah consists of four surahs in two sub-divided groups. The first group consists of surah Al-Baqarah and surah Al-Imran, with surah An-Nisa and surah Al-Maida forming a pair in the second group.

The first surah of the Madinan group Al-Baqarah is the largest surah and it comprises nearly two and a half ajza of the Qur’an. It has 286 ayat divided into forty ruku’s and is the most important surah of the Qur’an as Prophet Mohammad (Peace be upon him) said in a hadith, “Everything has a high peak, and Al-Baqarah is the high peak of the Qur’an.” [1]

And we can say that every phenomenon has a climax and the climax of Qur’an is surah Al-Baqarah. This surah can also be called ‘Surah-tul-Ummatain’, the surah of two Ummahs, because it discusses the present Muslim ummah as well as the former Muslim Ummah of Children of Israel.

The Madinan phase started with the Hijrah, and this surah was the first to be revealed in this phase with almost two third of the Qur’an already revealed in Makkah. This surah was revealed gradually step-by-step in a seventeen month time period between the start of Hijrah and the battle of Badr.

This surah can be divided into nearly two equal parts according to its subjects. The first part consists of 152 ayat divided into eighteen ruku’s, and the second part of 134 ayat is divided into twenty two ruku’s.
The first part addresses the former Muslim Ummah, *Bani Israel* (Children of Israel) who like Muslims were also acquainted with the Unity of Allah, Prophethood, Revelation, the Hereafter and the angels. Nearly ten ruku’s out of eighteen in this part address *Bani Israel* starting from the 5th *ruku* and then again in the 15th *ruku* of this surah.

With two third *Qur’ān* already revealed, the first four *ruku’s* of this surah naturally discuss the basic theme of the *Makkan* phase. The first two of these describe the philosophy of the *Qur’ān*. In the third *ruku* Allah has described the position of a man in this universe i.e. On what basis was he raised to the position of *Vicegerency*. It also discusses the struggle between the forces of good and forces of evil, struggle of a man with his ownself and the forces of *Satan*. The remaining four *ruku’s* of this part discuss the changing of the *Qiblah* from *Jerusalem* to *Makkah*.

*Jerusalem* was the center of *Jewish* attention, the former Muslim Ummah for nearly two thousand years and it was of great significance to them but the substitution of *Jerusalem* with *Ka’bah* [2] led to the removal of *Bani Isreal* from their position as a Muslim Ummah and were replaced by the Ummah of Prophet Muhammad( *Peace be upon him*).

The second part addresses the present Muslim Ummah. At *Makkah* Islam was mainly concerned with the propagation of its fundamental principles and the moral training and had nothing to do with the obligations or prohibitions except *Salah*. But here in *Madinah* starting from the *Hijrah*, the *Sharia’h* (The code of law derived from the *Qur’ān* and from the teachings and example of Mohammad *Peace be upon him*) of Islam was revealed. Allah issued directives on social, cultural, economic, political and legal matters. Firstly these directives included the obligations like *Zakah*, and *Siyam* and prohibitions on drinking alcohol and consuming *Riba*, which continue in surah *An-Nisa* and surah *Al-Maida*, and secondly they also discuss *Jihad*, *Infaq* (spending in the way of Allah) and *Qitaal* in the cause of Allah respectively.
The knowledge about *Tafsir* (Commentary on the Qur'an), of an *ayah* is not possible without occupying oneself with their contextual background and explanation of the reasons for their revelation because various *ayat* were revealed at a particular time in history and in certain circumstances. So in order to know whether the revelation has a specific implication for the particular occasion it was connected with, or whether it is of a general nature and needs to be applied by all Muslims at all times; some special knowledge of the circumstances that surround the message is also necessary for fuller understanding of its meaning and interpretation.

“*Alif Lam Mim*” These letters in Arabic are known as *huruf al-muqatta’at*. They are fourteen in number and appear in the beginning of twenty nine surahs of the Qur’an. Although much has been said about these letters but the general consensus is that these are among those things whose knowledge Allah has kept only for Himself. Some of these surahs begin with a single letter like *Qaaf*, others with two, three or four letters with surah Maryam starting with five letters, viz. ‘*Kaf-Ha-Ya-Ain-Suad*’.

This is the Book; in it is guidance sure without doubt to those who fear Allah

*This is the Book of Allah - ‘Al-Kitab’, in which there is no doubt. This Book is based wholly on truth and there is no doubt that it is a revelation from Allah and nothing contained in it can be subject to doubt. Further Allah says; it is guidance for those who have Taqwa – fear of Allah.*

The root meaning of *Taqwa* is piety and righteousness, but here this meaning does not adequately render the positive content of this expression, rather it refers to those people who guard themselves against evil, fear Allah’s punishment, and abandon those things which can earn Allah’s displeasure.

This Book is the guidance for those *Muttaqun* who are always in search of the truth; these are the people who pray to Allah, ‘*O Allah! Guide us to*
The Right Way’. There sole desire is to be guided towards the way of success. This is the relation between surah Al-Fatihah and this surah. Surah Al-Fatihah ended with the prayer: “Allah guide us to The Right Way” and this surah begins with the answer to that prayer, ‘This is the Book; in it is guidance sure without doubt to those who fear Allah’, meaning the guidance they were asking for is this Book.

Although this Qur’an is guidance for all humanity but only those people who possess certain qualities can benefit from its guidance. The first of these qualities is the urge to search for truth, and then they should be able to distinguish between good and evil, should be careful to fulfill their duty to Allah and guard themselves against evil. On the other hand a person, who does not have the urge to save himself from evil and the Day of Judgment, is incapable of deriving any benefit from the guidance of the Qur’an.

Who believe in the Unseen are steadfast in prayer and spend out of what we have provided for them. One more quality of the Muttaqun (righteous people) is that they believe in the unseen i.e. they believe in the existence of that which is beyond the reach of human perception and who knows that ultimate reality lies beyond the realm of our senses. One of the most famous sages in ancient China was a wise philosopher named Confucius [2] who said,

‘There is nothing more real, than what cannot be seen and there is nothing more certain than what cannot be heard’.

Al-Ghayb (The Unseen) denotes all those phases in the reality which are hidden from man’s senses and which are beyond the scope of human observation and thinking. According to Qur’an, those people who believe in this Unseen reality are the ones who can really benefit from its guidance, but this will remain a closed Book for all those whose minds cannot accept this fundamental premise.
Another trait of Muttaqun is that they establish Salah because they don’t only proclaim their faith verbally but also prove it by practical obedience to Allah, and they spend out of the bounties Allah has given them. This includes all types of obligatory charity and supererogatory spending to earn the pleasure of Allah.

Then Allah says;  *Who believe in this Revelation which is sent to you (O Muhammad) and the Revelations which were sent before you* It is not possible that one who believes in Al-Ghayb, establishes Salah, gives charity without believing in what the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and the previous Messengers were sent with. They believe in what has been revealed to Mohammad (peace be upon him) and also all the Scriptures (Torah, Injeel and Zabur) and Prophets before him. And about the Hereafter they have unflinching certitude. The word used here is ^^^L^i Yuqinun) meaning they not only believe in the Hereafter but are deeply convinced that this is not their only existence, rather they are going to be raised up, and that an end to this earthly life will just be a beginning for an eternal life.

*They are on guidance from their Lord and it is these who will prosper.*

*i.e. Those people who believe in Al-Ghayb, establish Salah, give Zakah, believe in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and all the books and Messengers before him, and are convinced about the Hereafter are the ones who are on true guidance and will be successful.*

As described in the introduction, the Tafsir of an ayah depends upon the reasons and circumstances of its revelation, whether it is revealed for a specific purpose, contain a general meaning or both. Here we see that this ayah specifically describes the characters and beliefs of the Companions (May Allah have mercy on them) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) who were trained and taught by Muhammad (Peace be upon him) the
greatest teacher in all Mankind, like Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali (May Allah be pleased with them all). This is the group of people who have really benefited from the guidance of Qur’an, and these are the ones whose attributes and qualities are given here. And if you take this ayah generally then it means that any person who believes in Al-Ghayb, establishes Salah, gives Zakah, believes in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and all the scriptures and Messengers before him, and is convinced about the Hereafter, is the one who will attain the true guidance of the Qur’an. One should possess all the qualities discussed here as prerequisites to tread on the path towards the understanding of the Qur’an.

Three types of people have been described in first two ruku’s. Firstly those who are on true guidance from their Sustainer, Secondly those who have denied the truth and in the end Allah mentions the hypocrites. We have already discussed the traits of the believers, here in the following ayat the behavior of a disbeliever is given.

As to those who reject faith it is the same to them whether thou warn them or do not warn them; they are not going to believe. This ayat talks about those people who have denied the truth, who do not believe in the Unseen or in the Hereafter, for them it is the same whether thou warn them or do not warn them, they are not going to believe.

This ayat was revealed specifically for those Kuffar in Makkah who were the first ones to be called towards the message of Allah. Otherwise if we take this ayat in a general sense, it will mean that all those who did not enter Islam at the time this ayat was revealed will never ever believe in this Qur’an, but it was for those people who kept on rejecting the truth for twelve years of preaching of Prophet (Peace be upon him) at Makkah. They knew it was the truth but they did not want to accept it because of sheer arrogance and hatred they had for Prophet Muhammad (Peace be
upon him). For such disbelievers Allah says; O’ Muhammad(Peace be upon him) it is alike for them whether you warn them or not they are not going to believe.

Allah has sealed their hearts and their hearing, their eyes are covered, and there is a grievous punishment for them. Because of their arrogance and constant denial of the truth Allah has put a seal on their hearts, hearing and sight, and they could neither see the guidance nor hear, comprehend or understand. Allah has placed a covering on their sight, meaning eyes, and so they do not see. The Prophet(Peace be upon him) preached to these people for more than twelve years, they were so close to guidance but still very far. These people even included Prophet’s(Peace be upon him) uncles, Abu Lahab and Abu Talib. They knew what Muhammad(Peace be upon him) is teaching is the truth but not only denied it but barred others from the path of Allah. For such people Allah says; He has put a seal on their hearts as a punishment of their disbelief. But this does not mean that their disbelief is a consequence of Allah, sealing their hearts. Instead Allah seals and closes their hearts and ears as a consequence of their denying the truth, and a grievous punishment and suffering awaits them.

We already mentioned that the first four ayat describe the Muttaqun, the next two ayat describe the disbelievers. Afterwards, Allah describes the hypocrites who show their belief and hide their disbelief. Allah says; There are some people who say: "We believe in Allah and the Last Day" yet they are not true believers. And they say what their hearts do not profess. This ayat specifically describes two types of people, the hypocrites and the Jews of Madinah. Soon after the Battle of Badr occurred and Allah gave victory to Islam and its people, an Islamic state started to emerge
and when the message of Islam reached the hearts of the people of Madinah, most of the Jews and others from the people of the Book pretended to be Muslims and follow Islam but infact they were liars who had hatred for Islam and Prophet Muhammad\textit{(Peace be upon him)}. These Jews used to say that we believe in Allah and the Hereafter just like Muslims, but they had hatred for Prophet Muhammad\textit{(Peace be upon him)}, so Allah says that these hypocrites utter false statements from their tongues but in reality they are not believers. Allah revealed surah Munafiqun and surah Taubah on hypocrites of Madinah. He also mentioned them in surah Qitaal when the hypocrites who had enmity in their hearts demanded a surah to be revealed for Qitaal\textsuperscript{[4]} and did not want to obey the Messenger of Allah\textit{(Peace be upon him)}. These hypocrites emphasized their belief in Allah and the Hereafter when it was not the case. We mentioned the specific implication of this ayat but generally this ayat refers to all those who have traits like those of the hypocrites.

Whenever there is a revolutionary movement three types of people always emerge, People who will accept that ideology, then those who will reject it, and a third group who will neither show acceptance nor rejection, and will wait and see which direction the wind blows. These are the hypocrites, whose deeds are different from what they show and what they utter is different from what they have in their hearts.

\textit{They try to deceive Allah and the believers. However, they deceive none except themselves yet they do not realize it.} These hypocrites try to deceive Allah and the believers. They think that their outward belief will help them with Allah and that they will save themselves and mislead Allah and the believers by what they utter but infact they deceive themselves and they perceive it not.
In their hearts is a disease; and Allah has increased their disease and they shall have painful punishment for the lies they have told. Allah says, that in the hearts of these hypocrites there is a disease i.e. a disease of deception and doubt which goes on to develop into Nifaq (Hypocrisy), which is one of the major sins and takes a person to reside in the Hellfire forever, and Allah increases their disease i.e. their deception and their shameful behavior. This has always been the sunnah of Allah, if a person is a believer and he follows the right path then Allah makes his way easy for him, but if he is a hypocrite or a disbeliever and follows the footsteps of the Devil, then Allah makes his wrong deeds seem good to him and lets him grope blindly in the darkness. These are the people for whom there will be painful punishment because of the lies they have been uttering.

We have already mentioned that three types of people emerge whenever there is a call to a revolutionary movement. The third type of people are those who neither accept the call nor reject it; rather they try to make peace between believers and the disbelievers, between good and evil. They want to make peace not for the sake of the truth but only to save their own skins, because Allah has commanded to fight against the kuffar until the Batil is distinguished from the Haqq and they know that if they have to fight against the disbelievers than they will have to spend from their wealth and even lay down their lives in the cause of Allah. They don’t want to follow the Commandments of Allah and want to make friends with both the believers and with Allah’s enemies and that is an act of mischief because they deceive the believers in believing what they don’t believe. Allah says; When it is said to them: "Make not mischief on the earth" they say: "Why we only want to make peace!". And they believe, the Muslims and Prophet Muhammad(Peace be upon him) are the ones who create mischief. Infact they are the ones who create mischief on earth, although in their ignorance, they do not see it to be mischief.
Be aware! They are the ones who make mischief but they do not realize it. This is the decree of Allah for such hypocrites that they are themselves mischief mongers and spreading corruption but they don't realize it. They are such because they don't want to follow the Deen of Allah, they don't want to fashion their lives on earth according to the commandments of Allah and this in itself is mischief, because it is a rebellion against Allah, The Master of the universe, and whosoever disobeys Allah or commands that Allah be disobeyed, he has committed mischief on earth. But the hypocrites because of their ignorance don't realize it to be a mischief.

When it is said to them: "Believe as the others believe" i.e. Believe just as the believers like Abu Bakr, Umar, Ibn Muadh, and Sad Ibn Muadh (May Allah be please with them all) have believed. They say: "Shall we believe as the fools believe?" (May Allah curse the hypocrites). Meaning, the Companions (May Allah be pleased with them) of the Prophet (Peace be upon him). They think that these people who have believed in Islam and are thereby risking their lives and have exposed themselves to all kinds of risks and tribulations are merely fools. These believers who had to leave their homes leaving their families behind or were expelled from Makkah, who suffered persecution for Allah’s sake and fought and were killed, these in the sight of the hypocrites were the fools and fanatics. Allah says; Be aware! They themselves are the fools, if only they could understand. Allah has affirmed that these hypocrites are the ones who are fools but they do not know because they are unaware of their degree of deviation and ignorance.

When they meet the believers they say: "We are believers" i.e. They pretend to be their friends. But when they are alone with their Shayatin,
they say: "We are really with you, we were only mocking the believers".

The meaning of Shaytan in Arabic means rebellious, the one who is despaired from the mercy of Allah. In this ayat the word Shaytan is used for the chiefs of the Jews of Madinah. These hypocrites were very close to the Jews of Madinah, and whenever they were with them they said we are with you, we only ridicule people and deceive them i.e. the believers.

Allah answers the hypocrites; *Allah will throw back their mockery on them* i.e. it is not they who mock at the believers but Allah mocks at them, meaning Allah will punish them similar to the act of evil they have committed. Further Allah says; *He leaves them increasing in their deviation to wander blindly.* This is the Sunnah of Allah, He gives them respite and lets them increase in their arrogance and deviation if they do not want to follow the right path.

*These are the people who have purchased error and falsehood in exchange for guidance.* They were given guidance when Allah revealed Qur’an but they went further in their misguidance and abandoned guidance. They believed and then disbelieved and preferred deviation to guidance of the Qur’an. But Allah says; *their bargain is of no use to them nor were they rightly guided,* because of their Nifaq. [5]

\(^1\) when it illuminated all around him Allah took away the light (their eyesight) and left them in utter darkness: they could see nothing.

Allah has given two similes in the following few ayat. There are two scholarly opinions regarding these similes. One opinion is that the both of these similes discuss the third category of the people meaning the Munafiqun. The other opinion is that the first simile given in this ayah gives an example of the Kuffar, and the second simile(2: 19) is regarding the Munafiqun. We have already discussed how Allah describes the Kuffar (2:6, 7) who have gone so far in their arrogance and evil that Allah
has sealed their hearts and their eyesight. For those disbelievers Allah says; their example is that of a man who kindled a fire, when it lighted all around him Allah took away their light and left them in utter darkness so they could not see.

This is a situation which was commonly experienced by the Arab travelers in the desert. They used to travel at night because of the high temperatures during the day and if they became lost in the desert, they used to kindle a fire to find their way, but if suddenly they lose their eyesight, they will again find themselves left in the darkness.

The fire which lights and illuminates the surroundings is infact the Hidayah given to the Prophet Muhammad(Peace be upon him), but these disbelievers out of their jealousy do not want to accept the guidance, so Allah took away their eyesight and left them in darkness of Jahiliyyah(Ignorance).

They are deaf, dumb and blind, and they will never return, O’ Muhammad(Peace be upon him) to the right path because Allah has taken away their sights, but it is not the eyes which have grown blind, infact it is their hearts which are blind.

Or another example is that of a dark storm-cloud in the sky charged with thunder and lightning. They press their fingers into their ears at the sound of each stunning thunderclap for fear of death: Allah is encircling the unbelievers from all sides.

Allah gives another parable for the hypocrites, an example of a rainstorm in the sky, that brings darkness, thunder and lightning. They put their fingers in their ears, to keep out the stunning thunderclap for fear of death, and they think that its sound will take away their hearing. But know that Allah has already encircled the disbelievers from all sides i.e. they cannot hide from the punishment of Allah. The rainstorm here refers to the Qur’an which was revealed as a blessing to the world, and the thunder
and lightning that the rainstorm brings, refers to the trials and tribulations that a revolutionary movement confronts.

_The lightening almost snatches away their sights and whenever they see some light, they start going in that direction but when it is dark, they stand still._ Meaning the hypocrites, that whenever they see Muslims and Islam being victorious they come to acquire the share but as soon as Muslims suffer a calamity they disassociate themselves from the believers. _And if Allah willed he could taken away from them, their hearing and their sight._ Verily Allah is All Powerful.

Whenever a revolution takes place, it has to face a lot of trials, tribulations and difficulties, and the people involved in that struggle may have to risk their lives, give up their wealth, sacrifice their careers and businesses, in order to succeed in their struggle. But within these people there are those who want to be a part of that struggle but they don’t want to risk their lives or their properties like the hypocrites of Madinah. Whenever Muslims faced a calamity or were called upon to wage war against the disbelievers, they would make excuses in order to save themselves from all the trouble. But when Islam and its people became victorious, they started to follow them and make tall claims about their sincerity.

We have already discussed what Allah has revealed for these hypocrites (2: 8, 9, 10). They claim that they believe in Allah and the Hereafter but the truth is that they are liars. And they make friends with the leaders and the elite among Jews, hypocrites and the idolaters who are opposed to Islam and its followers.

Allah described the hypocrites in surah Hajj in these words,

“There are some people who worship Allah standing on the verge of faith (half faith and half disbelief). When such a person is blessed with good fortune he is content; but if he encounters a trial he turns back headlong; thus losing both this world and the Hereafter, which is a clear-cut loss.”
There are some people who worship Allah, keeping themselves on the borderline of faith. If there is good fortune they are satisfied with Him, and follow the believers but whenever they face difficulties, are called upon to spend from their wealth, fight in the cause of Allah, they turn their backs losing this world and the Hereafter, and that is surely a great loss.

Foot Notes

[2] Ka’bah, the central, cubic, stone structure, covered by a black cloth, within the Great Mosque(Masjidu/ Haraam) in Makkah, Saudi Arabia. The sacred nature of the site redates Islam: The holy Qur’an says that the Ka’bah was built by Adam (Peace be upon him) and rebuilt by Abraham (Peace be upon him) and the descendants of Noah (Peace be upon him). Also known as the House of God, it is the center of the circumambulations enformed during the Haajj, the Pilgrimage, and it is toward the Ka’bah that Muslims face in their prayers. Around the Ka’bah is a restricted area, haram, extending in some directions as far as 12 mi, into which only Muslims may enter.
[3] Confucius (circa 551-479 B. He sometimes went by the names Kong Zi though he was born - Kong Qiu - styled Zhong Ni. He was born in the village of Zou in the country of Lu. This chinese man was a well-known leader in hiloso hy and he also made many wise hrases and theories about the law, life, and the government. [Encyclo edia Britannica]
[4] The scriptures that Allah mentions in the Qur’an are as follows:
1. The Scrolls that were revealed to Abraham ( Peace be upon him)
2. The Torah that was revealed to Moses ( Peace be upon him)
3. The Psalms that were revealed to David ( Peace be upon him)
4. The Gospel that was revealed to Jesus ( Peace be upon him)
5. The Qur’an that was revealed to Muhammad ( Peace be upon him) and which has been reserved to this day in its original form.
[5] The believers were asking: "Why is not a Surah revealed allowing us to fight?" But when a decisive Surah carrying the order of allowing them to fight is revealed, you saw those in whose hearts was a disease looking at you like the one under the shadow of death. Woe to them! (Surah Muhammad, ayah 20).
[6] Nifaq means to show belief and conceal evil. Tbn Jurayj said of the hy ocrite that, "His actual deeds are different from what he ublicizes, what he conceals is different from what he utters, his entrance and resence are not the same as his exit and absence.l (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, (Al-Baqarah) : 8)
As mentioned earlier, the third ruku gives us the summary of the call towards the Qur'an. In this ayah Allah (SWT) says, "O Mankind), meaning that this message is not only for a particular race or region but for the whole Mankind. Unlike other Messengers who came prior to the advent of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) were sent to their respective people and nations but Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was not sent to a particular tribe, race or set of people, but rather to all Mankind.

(21) “O mankind! Worship your Lord, who hath created you and those before you, so that you may acquire righteousness.” The word used here is Ibadah (Worship), which means total obedience to Allah (SWT) by carrying out what He has commanded with all sincerity, submissiveness and love. If a person is obedient but not sincere or he is sincere but not obedient then this will not be accepted of him as Ibadah. A person should worship Allah (SWT) with all humility and submissiveness, as this is the only purpose of the creation of man as Allah (SWT) says,

‘I have not created Jinns and mankind except to worship Me’.

This is the sole purpose of the creation of the Jinns and the humans. Allah (SWT) commands His servants to worship Him alone who is their Creator and Sustainer, and He also created those who came before them. A person tends to follow his forefathers religion and prefers it instead of truth when it comes to him. But Allah (SWT) says, that it is He who has created them as well as their forefathers and the message given to you is the same as was given to them. Therefore, worship Allah (SWT) alone so that you may acquire Taqwa (righteousness) and save yourself from the displeasure of Allah (SWT) and His punishment.
TA/ho has made this earth a resting place for you and raised the sky as a canopy over you, and He sends down rain from the sky and creates from it different kinds of fruits, grains and vegetables as means of sustenance for you. Then do not set up rivals with Allah (SWT). Meaning that Allah (SWT) is the creator, the Sustainer, the Owner and the Provider of this life and the hereafter. Hence, He alone deserves to be worshipped and no one and nothing is to associated with Him. This is the essence of Tawhid, that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah (SWT), so obey Him, worship Him and submit yourself to Him with all humility and sincerity.

If you are in doubt as to whether the revelations that we have sent down on Our servant Muhammad (SAW) are from Us or not then produce similar to what he has brought to you. The second article of faith is Prophethood (Risalah), that is to believe in the messenger hood of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Here Allah (SWT) says that if you think that Muhammad (SAW) has forged it then bring something similar to it. This is a general challenge to all especially the Arab disbelievers who were so eloquent in their language to bring a surah even similar to the smallest surah of the Qur'an. And Allah (SWT) says, using the help of all your witnesses among humans and the Jinns, if you are truthful." i.e. Your hearts have already accepted that it is from Allah (SWT) and not a speech of any human being, but because of your arrogance and pride you don’t want to proclaim it. This is what Allah (SWT) says that if you really are truthful in your doubts about this Qur'an then produce only one surah like it.

(24) "Then if you cannot produce a surah like it, and you can never do so. This statement of Allah (SWT) is in itself a miracle of the Qur'an. Every word and meaning of the Qur'an is unsurpassable, it is true, just and full of guidance. It is not poetry which only contain description of women, horses or alcohol or might be in praise of them but it does not bring any
benefit to anyone and is full of insignificant descriptions and repetitions. But as for the Qur’an, it is full of guidance and wisdom. Every part and word of it brings some benefit and the more you read it the more fruitful and beautiful it becomes. That is why not a single poet, no matter how eloquent he is in Arabic language has accepted the challenge and succeeded till to date. Even to bring something like surah Kausar, the smallest surah of the Qur’an is not possible because Allah (SWT) says these disbelievers will never be able to surpass the eloquence of this Qur’an. And Allah (SWT) says, "So let them fear the Hellfire prepared for them, whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for the unbelievers." Stones refer to the idols which were worshipped instead of Allah (SWT).

(25) "O’ Muhammad (SAW) give glad tidings to those who believe and do good deeds, that for them will be gardens under which rivers flow. Whenever they will be given fruits to eat from that garden, they will say This is similar to the one we were given before, resembling each other, meaning they will have dates, grapes and pomegranates in Jannah, similar in shape but different in taste. They will also have therein purified spouses and they will abide therein forever." This is the basic call of the Quran. Belief in Tawhid Al-Ibadah which is to worship none except Allah (SWT), belief in the Qur’an, that it was revealed by Allah (SWT) to His servant Prophet Muhammad (SAW) with all sincerity, and if you have doubts then bring a surah like that of Qur’an if you are truthful. But if you still disbelieve, then prepare for a painful punishment. On the other hand, those who have believed will have a reward from their Lord and will abide in Jannah forever.

(26) "Verily, Allah (SWT) is not ashamed to set forth a parable even of a mosquito, or even lesser than that. " The Qur’an employs similes in many places to explain certain truths or to drive home important points of the message, by likening it to something well known or describing it in a pictorial manner.
For example, it uses similes and metaphors to describe the eternal bliss of heaven and the terrible agony of hell, but in this earthly life, none can form even remotely a precise idea of that bliss or agony. So Allah says that He is not ashamed of giving examples even of mosquitoes or even more insignificant of the creatures.

The believers believe in these parables whether they concern large or small matters, because they know from their fitrah that it is the truth from their Lord. --And those who deny the truth, they say, what does Allah (SWT) intend by this parables and examples. By it Allah (SWT) causes many to stray and many He leads towards the right path. -- This is because these hypocrites deny the parables and similes given by Allah (SWT) which they know are true, thus He misguides them, and those Muttaqun, (God fearing) who save themselves from evil, Allah (SWT) guides them. But also know that --Allah (SWT) does not misguide except those who are Fasiqun s --

(27) -- Those who break Allah's (SWT) Covenant after accepting it, and who cut aside what Allah (SWT) has ordered to be united and cause mischief on earth. It is they who are the losers -- The Qur'an relates an event of a covenant taken from all the humans administered by Allah (SWT) known as the Primordial Covenant (Ahd Alast). The ayah relating to this states:

When thy Lord drew forth from the children of Adam -from their loins - Their descendents, and made them testify concerning themselves: 'Am I not your Lord?'^They replied, Surely! We do testify!... "4

The question here arises as to when and from whom this oath was taken. Apparently, this event took place before creation of the material realm, that is, in the realm of spirits (Aalam-e-Arwah). The covenant was taken from the souls (Arwah) of the human beings by Allah (SWT) before they were sent to the physical world.
So these Fasiqun who have rejected this covenant after their souls have accepted it are the ones who are doing mischief on this earth, and it is they who are the losers.

(28) "How can you deny Allah’s existence, and He brought you from the state of non-existence to life, then He will cause you to die and again bring you to life. and unto Him you will return." The question arises as to the reality of two creations and two deaths. The answer to this enigma lies in understanding that the original creation (creation ex nihilo) was that of our souls (before they were aligned with the material body). The realm of the first creation was in a realm known as Aalam al-Amr which was created before the creation of the physical realm. This is the realm which existed before the Big Bang. It is at this time that the Primordial Covenant took place and thereafter the souls were put to sleep. This was the first death. Thereafter, after the Big Bang the material realm came into being. This realm is known as Aalam al-Khalq. Human beings have been created in this realm with a material body fused with the spiritual soul. This is the first revival of life. When Allah (SWT) causes us to die here on earth, this will be the second death. Once our souls return to Allah (SWT) and are brought back to life in the hereafter, this will be the second revival. Hence, the process of two deaths and two resuscitations is explained in this way.

(29) "It is Allah (SWT) who has created for you all that is on earth. .. There is a hadith of Prophet (SAW) who said, 'This world has been created for you and you have been created for the Hereafter.' Meaning that Allah (SWT) has created this universe for man. This subject will be discussed in the following ayat in great detail. Then Allah (SWT) says -He turned towards the Heaven and made them seven Heavens, and His knowledge encompasses all His creations."
And remember the time when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a Khalifah (vicegerent) on earth". The angels said, "Will You place therein those who will make therein mischief and shed blood, while we glorify You with praises and sanctify You". Allah said, I know, what you don't know."

This ayah gives the true nature of man and his position in the universe. The modern civilization has reduced the position of man to that of an animal, and those who lead an animal existence, who only follow their animal desires that dominate their minds, and do not reflect upon the true status given to man by Allah (SWT). But Allah (SWT) says that we have placed man as a vicegerent on earth, and has made him the best of all creations. In another ayah Allah (SWT) says, "0' Iblees! What prevented you from prostrating yourself to the one whom I have created with My own hands". 5 This subject, Allah (SWT) willing, will further be discussed in surah Bani Israel.

(31) "Allah (SWT) taught Adam (ASW) the names of all things, and then presented those names to the angels and said, Tell me the names of these things taught to Adam (ASW), if you really are true in what you say. The names Allah (SWT) talks about here are the two forms of knowledge, that which is revealed and that which is humanly acquired. Revealed knowledge is what was revealed by Allah (SWT) to His Prophets (ASW) which is unchanging and above question. Knowledge that is derived from our five senses and our own thinking, observation and experience is the Acquired knowledge which is subject to error and can be questioned. These both forms of knowledge were given to Adam (ASW) which matured with the passage of time, just like a seed which with all its stages grows into a tree. This does not in any way mean that he was given the knowledge of Modern science and technology, but Allah (SWT) gave him and his children the faculties through which they could attain this knowledge with the passage of time.
Further Allah (SWT) says to the angels to tell the names, the two forms of knowledge taught to Adam (ASW) if they are truthful. This does not imply that the angels were raising objection against making man a vicegerent on earth, rather it was just an inquiry out of curiosity.

(32) "All the angels replied, Glory be to You, 0' Allah (SwF). We have no knowledge except the knowledge that you gave us." This indicates that the angels are not given the knowledge of everything. They were created for the specific purpose of serving Allah (SWT) and carrying out His commands. Some angels are in a state of constant worship of Allah (SWT), prostrating before Him and never raising their heads. While man was given the faculties to obtain a vast treasure of knowledge. This is the basic difference between humans and other creations of Allah (SWT), He did not gave this knowledge to any other of His creations except the humans, and thus Allah (SWT) says that "I know and you know not' and the angels only have the knowledge about the subject or things they are appointed to administer by Allah (SWT).

(33) "Allah (SwF) said, 0' Adam (ASW) tell them the names and when he told them all the names, Allah (SwF) said to the angles, Did I not tell you that I know the Ghayb(unseen), in the heavens and the earth, and I know all that you reveal and all you have been concealing." This signifies the virtue of Adam (ASW) over the angels who were ordered by Allah (SWT) to devote themselves to man's service and whenever man wanted to take use of the knowledge and powers given by Allah (SWT), they have to co-operate with him and allow him to do whatever he likes whether right or wrong. This can be understood by an example of how the employees work under an appointed viceroy or governor of a particular government. When the Queen of England appointed the British viceroy in Delhi, all the employees were thus ordered to obey him, whether he was doing it right or not, as long as the
Queen permits him to exercise his authority. Similarly Allah (SWT), the sole Sovereign has ordered the angels, to obey the humans and serve them devotedly by His permission but if humans transgress the limits set by Allah (SWT) then it is the same angels who are ordered to destroy him or put an end to his life.

(34) "And remember the time when We said to the angles, prostrate before Adam (ASW) and they all prostrated except Iblees, who refused in his arrogance and became a disbeliever. Iblees was apparently included in this command with the angels, although he was not one of them and was a Jinn, as Allah says in surah Kahaf:

"All prostrated themselves except Iblees, who was one of the Jinns.

Although Iblees was a dweller of Paradise and was allowed to be with the angels due to his obedience and worship of Allah, he was not from the angelic community, rather he was a Jinn. His name was Azazeel but he was called Iblees, meaning one who has lost all hope for Allah's mercy. The Jinn are created from fire whereas the Angels are created from light (noor). Unlike the angels, who are bound to serve and obey Allah (SWT), the Jinn are not free from sins. In this respect, they are more like humans: they may be obedient or disobedient to their Creator, and at this time he became proud and refused to obey, because Allah (SWT) made humans superior to all His creations which made Iblees jealous and arrogant and thus he rejected the command of Allah (SWT) to prostrate to Adam (ASW) which by default made him amongst the disbelievers.

(35) "We said to Adam, 0' Adam (ASW) dwell with your wife in Paradise." There is a difference of opinion among Muslim scholars whether this Paradise was in the heavens or on this earth. Most of the scholars believe that it was in the heavens and then afterwards they were sent down to this earth. But it was not the Paradise which the believers will dwell in after
resurrection, because once someone enters into that Paradise he will live therein forever. Allah (SWT) allowed Adam (ASW) and Eve (ASW) to reside in this Paradise for a while in order to test them and give man a glimpse of what he will get if he obeys Allah (SWT) and if he does not, then he will be deprived of it. Further Allah (SWT) says to Adam (ASW) and Eve (ASW), "Eat both of you from this garden with pleasure and delight of things therein, from wherever you will, but don't go near this tree or you both will be among the wrongdoers."

There are conflicting opinions over the tree mentioned here but in fact this is the knowledge which does not bring any benefit, rather it was just a test from Allah (SWT) to see how far they would follow His instructions. So Allah (SWT) ordered them not to go near that particular tree or else they will be amongst the wrongdoers.

(36) "But Iblees made them slip from the garden and got them out of that state in which they had been in. We said, now you go down from here and you will be enemies to each other." This means that Iblees and Adam (ASW) became enemies forever. Iblees prayed to Allah (SWT) to grant him life till the Last Day so that he can prove that these Humans whom Allah (SWT) has chosen above him and all creations, are disobedient to Allah (SWT), and thus he became an enemy to Adam (ASW) and his progeny. This is the basis of the struggle between good and evil, truth and falsehood. Iblees being an enemy to Mankind is understood, but one might wander how Adam (ASW) and his progeny are enemies to Iblees and his followers. The fact is that the very Fitrah of a man on which he was born, makes this enmity incumbent on him. Then Allah (SWT) says "Earth will be your dwelling place and means of provisions and livelihood for an appointed time." i.e. When you will be resurrected for the final reckoning.

(37) "Then Adam (ASW) received some sentences from Allah (SWT) and repented, and Allah (SWT) pardoned him and accepted his repentance. Verily, He is the Accepter of
Repentance and Most Merciful." When Adam (ASW) committed that act of disobedience, he wanted to repent and return to Paradise but he could not find the words to use them in his prayers, so Allah (SWT) bestowed His mercy and blessing on Adam (ASW) and taught him the words, with which he could pray and ask for repentance. They both prayed: "Our Lord! We have wronged our souls. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we shall certainly be of the losers." Indeed there is no deity to worship except Allah (SWT), the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.

(38) "And We said, get down all of you from here. There will come to you a guidance from Me, those who follow and accept it shall have nothing to fear or to regret."

The word used here is , which means going down from a higher place to a lower one, and is also used for settling down in a place. We will discuss this Allah willing in the coming sections.

...Those who disbelieved and belie Our signs, are the people of Hellfire and they will dwell in it for ever - i.e. They will remain in hell forever and will not find a way out of it.

As mentioned earlier, there are two forms of knowledge, acquired and revealed. We already read about the acquired knowledge in the ayah where Allah (SWT) mentions the names which He taught to Adam (ASW). Here Allah (SWT) mentions the Revealed knowledge, when He says to Adam (ASW), "There will come to you a guidance from Me." This guidance is the knowledge which Allah (SWT) reveals to His selected servants in order to guide people.

The first four rukus of this surah have been completed which give a brief summary of the Makkan Qur'an. The next ten rukus are directly addressed to the former Muslim Ummah, The children of Israel. These ten rukus can be divided into two parts, the first part upto seven ayat encourages the children of Israel to embrace Islam. In the second part
running through nine ayat, Allah (SWT) criticizes them for their sins and acts of disobedience.


- O children of Israel⁹ remember My favors to you which I bestowed upon you and fulfill your covenant with Me, so that I fulfill My covenant with you, and you should fear none except Me.

This is the call given to children of Israel to embrace Islam and believe in the unlettered Prophet (SAW). In surah Al-A'raf, in respond to Moses (ASW) prayer to Allah (SWT) to bestow His Mercy on children of Israel, Allah (SWT) says, "Special mercy is assigned to those who follow the unlettered Prophet (SAW) - whom they shall find described in the Torah and the Injeel."

i.e. Only those who believe in Prophet Muhammad (SAW) will the ones who will prosper. And for that Allah (SWT) asks to fulfill your covenant, which you had made and believe in this Prophet (SAW) help him and honor him.

(41) "And believe in My revelations, which testifies and confirms that which is with you. Qur'an confirms that Torah and Injeel, given to Moses (ASW) and Jesus (ASW) respectively, were also revealed by Allah (SWT). And Allah (SWT) says don't become the first ones to disbelieve in this Qur'an and Prophet Muhammad (SAW) after you have heard about him in your scriptures. And do not charge a small price for my ayat." i.e. Do not sell your faith only for this world and its wealth which is bound to extinction. And Allah (SWT) warns them not to disbelieve and "Fear Me and Me alone".

(42) "And don't mix truth with falsehood or knowingly conceal the truth." Allah (SWT) forbade the Jews from hiding the truth, which is that they knew that Muhammad (SAW) was the final Messenger, they have been waiting for and about whom they have been told in their scriptures, but instead they hide it and spread falsehood. Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) description
could be found in Torah and Injeel but these Jews and Christians distorted their scriptures and hid the knowledge of it.

(43) "And establish Salah and give Zakah. Allah (SWT) commanded them to pray Salah behind Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and give Zakah to him. Salah and Zakah have always been an integral part of Shar’iah in Islam. The Prophets of children of Israel laid stress on performing the Salah, but they became very negligent of their duties. And Allah (SWT) says to them; Bow down before Allah (SWF) along with those who bow down in worship." Allah (SWT) orders them to pray Salah in congregation, with the Muslims of Madinah whom they saw bowing and prostrating.

(44) "Do you enjoin others to be righteous and forget to practice it yourself. The Jews and the hypocrites used to command people to pray and fast but they themselves would not practice them and do not act on what they call others to. So Allah (SWT) reminds them of their behavior, that the one who enjoins righteousness to others should be the first to obey and act on that command. And Allah (SWT) says; Even though you read your scriptures. Don't you understand." This means that these Jews used to command others to fulfill their covenant and pray and give zakah which they read in their scriptures, but they themselves would not believe in Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Qur’an revealed to him. They have no sense of truth at all and they became blind from the lies and falsehood they spread.

(45) "Seek Allah's (SWF) help with patience and prayers (Salah), it is indeed very hard to be patient and be punctual in Salah but except for those people who fear Allah (SWF)." Allah (SWT) commanded His servants to use patience and Salah for the good of this life and to save themselves from the hellfire. Allah (SWT) says it is indeed very hard to follow this command but those who follow
Allah’s (SWT) commandments, should know that the reward with Allah (SWT) is much more than this worldly life and they should fear Allah (SWT) alone.

(46) "Those who believe that they will have to meet their Lord and that they have to return to Him." Indeed Salah and Patience are hard to follow but those people who know that they have will return to Allah (SWT) and meet Him, it becomes easy for them to perform the acts of obedience and refrain from the prohibitions.

Foot Notes
[1] Surah A-Za,iji'at, ayah 56.
[2] Fitrah is also associated with Islam and being born as a Muslim. His is when fiyeb is viewed in respect to shahidab - that there is no god but Al1h and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Al1h - which makes a person a Muslim. Fitrah, in this sense, is the faculty, which He has created in mankind, of knowing Allah. It is the natural constitution with which the child is created in his mother's womb, whereby he is capable of accepting the religion of truth. Islam is also called din al-fitrah, the religion of human nature, because its laws and its teachings are in full harmony with the normal and the natural inclination of the human fitrah to believe in and submit to the Creator. Furthermore, since this fitrah comes from Allah, it naturally follows that only laws capable of guiding man back to it must also come from Allah.
[3] Fasiq means transgressor, disobedient, who is rebellious in nature, against the commandments of Allah.
[5] Surah Sad (38) 2 75.
[8] Israel is the word of Hebrew language which means Abdullah, "the slave ofAllah (SWT)", and it is the title given to Jacob (AS) by Allah (SW 1 and his progeny is called the children of Israel.
In the previous two rukus, we read how Children of Israel were given the call to embrace Islam and accept Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as Messenger of Allah (SWT), and thus fulfill the covenant (Surah Al-Araf: 157) that they made with Him. From here on, through the several sections that follow, brief mention of the major incidents that happened in Jewish history are given. Allah (SWT) reminds the Children of Israel the favors that He bestowed upon them and their forefathers, and how He preferred them above all nations, sent them Messengers from among them and revealed His books to them. He also reminds them of the evil deeds and falsehoods that they committed. There are several incidents concerning Jews, which are discussed here briefly. The detail of these incidents is given in the Makkah part of the Qur’an.

(47) “O’ children of Israel!, remember the blessings and favors that I bestowed upon you, and I preferred you and raised you above all other nations.”

At one time in history, Allah (SWT) chose the Jews above all other nations. Because they were the only one who possessed the truth from Allah (SWT) and were given the Books revealed to Messengers among them. This status was not granted to any other people except them because at that time they were entrusted with the task of directing others to the truth and were expected to serve and worship Allah (SWT).

(48) “And be mindful of the day when no soul shall in the least avail another, no intercession shall be accepted, no ransom will be taken, and no help shall be given to them. As we will read in the following sections, the Jews believed that they will be saved from the hellfire as they are the chosen ones, and this is the major reason which corrupted their beliefs and they did not remain mindful of the hereafter. So Allah (SWT) states that those people who do not believe in the Messenger (SAW) of Allah (SWT) and the Qur’an, then on the Day of Judgment their lineage, nor intercession of their leaders will help them and no ransom will be accepted of them. Further Allah (SWT) states, on that day no one will have the authority to help them and they will be helpless themselves. Everyone shall face his own
accountability, and no one will bear others burden, whether it be parents, children, relatives or their leaders.

(49) "And remember when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh who afflicted you with severe torment, killing your sons and sparing your daughters, which was a tremendous trial from you Lord." Meaning, Allah (SWT) did you a favor by saving you from the persecution and torture from the hands of the people of Pharaoh, and it was a trial for you as Allah (SWT) wanted to see whether you are grateful to Allah (SWT) or not.

(50) "And remember, We divided the sea for you and saved you and drowned Pharaoh's people within your very sight." When Moses (ASW) along with Children of Israel escaped Pharaoh, he went out in their pursuit but Allah (SWT) helped Moses (ASW) and the Children of Israel escape by parting the sea and letting them cross it. On the other hand, Allah (SWT) drowned Pharaoh and his followers in the sea while the Children of Israel watched, bringing relief to their hearts and humiliation to their enemy.

(51) "And remember when We called Moses (ASW) for forty nights, and in his absence you took the calffor worship, and thus became evildoers."

(52) "Even after that We forgave you, so that you might become grateful."

(53) "And We gave Moses (ASW) the Book (Torah) and the criterion of right and wrong so that you might be rightly guided." When Moses (ASW) was summoned to Mount Sinai, he was given the Torah by Allah (SWT) which is a criterion i.e. it contains the understanding and guidance of religion which differentiates the truth from falsehood.

(54) "And remember when Moses (ASW) said to his people: "0 my people! You have indeed wronged yourselves by your worship of the calf so turn in repentance to your Creator and kill yourselves." Allah (SWT) ordered that those who worshipped the calf be killed by those who did not worship it.. This is the punishment of Shirk in Islam, just as
it was given in Torah, which states that seventy thousand of them were killed. The total number of the children of Israel was six hundred thousand when they left Egypt with Moses (AS), and out of those seventy thousand worshipped the calf, in the absence of Moses (AS) when he went to meet his Lord at Mount Sinai. Moses (AS) ordered those who did not worship the calf to kill all those seventy thousand people, with every tribe killing his own men, whether they be their parents, brothers, or relatives, and this is what is meant by killing themselves. And Allah (SWT) says; ‚It will be better for you in the sight of your Creator.’ i.e. killing the wrongdoers among you will be best for you in His sight. " Then He accepted your repentance; for surely He is oft-returning, Most Merciful." For Allah (SWT) is very Merciful to his servants, and He forgave all of them i.e. those who were killed as well as those who remained alive.

(55) "And remember when you said: ‘0’ Moses (AS)! We shall never believe in you until we see Allah (SWT) with our own eyes,” a thunderbolt struck you while you were looking on and you fell dead.” The seventy men which Moses (AS) took with him to Mount Sinai demanded that they will not believe in Allah (SWT) until they see Allah (SWT) publicly with their own eyes. So Allah’s (SWT) wrath fell upon them and a thunderbolt struck them while they were looking, and they all died.

(56) "Then We raised you again after your death, so that you may be grateful.” Allah (SWT) reminds the children of Israel of His favors that He bestowed on them. He raised them after they died when lightening struck them because of their demand that they wanted to see Allah (SWT), and when Moses (AS) prayed to Allah (SWT), He forgave them.

After recounting the calamities that Allah (SWT) saved the Children of Israel from, He mentions the favors that He bestowed upon them. The Israelites, six hundred thousand in number, left Egypt and came to the Sinai desert. They had a very long journey in the desert without having any shade to save themselves from the scorching heat, nor they had any food and drink.

(57) "We even provided you the shade of clouds”. Allah (SWT) bestowed His mercy on them and provided for them shade of clouds, so as to save them from the heat
in the desert. He saved them from Pharaoh, parted the sea for them and
drowned their enemies. Further Allah (SWT) says, "We sent down for you Manna and
Salwa, and said: "Eat of the good things We have provided for you"."
The Manna, something like a seed which was whiter than milk and sweeter
than honey, used to rain down on Children of Israel like snow flakes when dew
fell. Manna provided sufficient food even when eaten alone, because it was so
nutritious. As for the Salwa, it was a bird that looked like a quail. They used
to come in thousands and Israelites would catch as many of them as they
could for a day. And Allah (SWT) says; "Eat from the pure things which We have given
you." referring to Manna and Salwa. But in spite of these favors they violated
Allah's (SWT) commandments. However, Allah (SWT) says; "By violating our
commandments they did not harm Us, but they harmed their own souls." i.e. Allah (SWT)
commanded them to be grateful of what He has given them and perform acts of
worship but they rebelled and became ungrateful.

(58) "And remember when We said, Enter this town and eat whatever you wish to your hearts."
Most of the scholars agree that the city mentioned in this ayah is
Jericho (Ariha). After the period of wandering extended over forty years, Allah
(SWT) allowed them to conquer the holy land in Jerusalem. Jericho was the first
town captured by them. And Allah (SWT) said, "Eat bountifully therein with pleasure
and delight wherever you wish." When they conquered the holy land, Allah
commanded them to "Enter its gate bowing down in humility and say, Hittah (seeking
Allah's (SWT) forgiveness)." But instead, they entered while their heads were
raised with defiance and arrogance and distorted the words. And Allah (SWT)
says to the Children of Israel, if you show humility and submissiveness, "We
shall forgive you your sins and We shall increase the provisions for the righteous among you."
Here it is important to point out that when Muhammad (SAW) entered Makkah
after victory, his forehead was touching the hair of his horse with humility and
total submissiveness to Allah (SWT). Such was the virtue of our Prophet (SAW). A
verse of Al-Farazdaq poem fits him very much and the best one to be said of:
"He casts his eyes modestly but the eyes of others are cast down due to his
solemnity, and words issue out of his mouth only while he is smiling."
"Allah says; But the wrongdoers changed Our Words from that which they were asked to say." Instead of Hittah, they distorted Allah's (SWT) words and mocked at His command and said Hintah, meaning, grain, seed or barley. This shows the worst kind of rebellion and disobedience to Allah (SWT) and that is why Allah (SWT) unleashed His punishment upon them, when He said, "So We sent down a scourge from heaven as a punishment for their transgression."

"And Remember the time when Moses (ASW) prayed for water for his people." There was not enough water at that time in the desert to suffice for six hundred thousand people, and there was also a shortage of food for which Allah (SWT) gave them Manna and Saiwa. They started cursing Moses (ASW) for their condition and started to remember the time when they were in Egypt, under Pharaoh's rule when although they were slaves, they used to have grains, barley, wheat and lentils to eat. And so they became ungrateful to their Lord. They came to Moses (ASW) and asked him to pray to his Lord for water. Allah (SWT) says; "We said: 'Strike the rock with your staff.' Thereupon We caused twelve springs to come out of that rock. Each tribe was assigned its own drinking-place." The number of springs were twelve because the Israelite tribes were also twelve in number. Allah (SWT) bestowed another favor on them by providing one spring for each tribe so that they will not fight each other for water. And Allah (SWT) commanded them, "Eat and drink of what Allah (SWT) has provided and do not create mischief in the land." i.e. Do not commit acts of disobedience which in return might cause the favors to disappear.

"Remember when you said: 'O' Moses (ASW)! We cannot endure one kind of food; call on your Lord to give us a variety of food which the earth produces, such as green-herbs, cucumbers, garlic, lentils, and onions.' Allah (SWT) gave them Manna and Saiwa, a good pure, beneficial, nutritious and easily acquired food, but they became ungrateful and demanded Moses (ASW) for something different. They asked Moses (ASW) to exchange this type of food for an inferior type that consists of vegetation i.e. a diet consisting of lentils, onions, garlic and herbs, which they used to eat when they were in Egypt. "Moses (ASW) asked. Would you exchange the better for the worse?." i.e. Allah (SWT) gave you a food easily acquired, living an easy life and still you want to have inferior things instead of that which is better in sight of Allah
Moses said to the Children of Israel: “If that’s what you want, then go back to some city; there you will find what you have asked for.” i.e. what you are asking for is easy, as it is available in abundance in any city, so go and settle down in any town or city, and you will get what you are asking for. “They were covered with humiliation and misery; they drew on themselves the wrath of Allah.” This is a very important ayah which indicates that the Children of Israel were plagued with humiliation, and that will continue, meaning it will never cease. “This was because they went on rejecting the signs of Allah and slaying His messengers without just cause. Furthermore, it was the consequence of their disobedience and transgression.” Allah says, that the reason of their humiliation is the great crimes that they have been doing which are also recorded in their own history. They defied the truth, disbelieved in Allah’s ayat, rejected Allah’s Messengers and killed them and for that Allah penalized them with humiliation and misery, and descended upon them His wrath only because they rebelled and transgressed the bounds set by Allah.

(62) “Those who believe (in the Qur’an) and those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures) and the Christians and the Sabians.” Sabians belonged to a monotheistic religion which followed John the Baptist but nothing can be said about them for sure. Some say they are the same group called Subbi which lives in Iraq at present time, but if one examines their beliefs, it does not seem likely that they are the same Sabians that Qur’an has mentioned. And Allah says: “who believe in Allah and the last day and work righteousness shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.” Allah stated that the earlier nations who were righteous and obeyed Allah received their due reward for their good deeds. And this shall remain the case till the Day of Judgment. So whoever believes in Allah, His Messenger, the Day of Judgment, and does righteous deeds will have his rewards with Allah, and they shall acquire eternal happiness and shall neither fear nor shall they be grieved.

Some wrong headed and evil mongers in our time have tried to deceive people arguing erroneously from this ayah. They say that to achieve salvation one does not need to believe in the Prophet Muhammad and the two articles of faith discussed here i.e. belief in Allah and in the hereafter, are enough for
ones salvation. On the other hand this ayah makes it clear that it is not giving the detail of all the articles of faith which one should believe in. Those are mentioned elsewhere at numerous places. In fact this ayah clarifies the misconception that the Jews had, that they are the chosen ones and only they would enter the Paradise. On the contrary Allah (SWT) says that your salvation does not depend upon your lineage or your race but on the basis whether you are righteous or not.

As far as the belief in Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is concerned, we would like to point out the fact that, in the sixth ruku of this surah, Allah (SWT) invites the Jews to accept Islam by believing in the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) in order to achieve salvation and eternal bliss. So how can it be that the belief of a person is complete without believing in Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The context of this ayah clarifies that those people who were Jews, Christians or Sabians, and followed their own Prophet before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and they believed in Allah (SWT) and the hereafter, did righteous deeds will have their rewards from Allah (SWT). But once Allah (SWT) revealed Qur’an to Prophet Muhammad (SAW), it has become incumbent on a person to believe in him and the last revealed Book, along with other articles of faith.

(63) "Remember 0’ Children of Israel when We took a covenant from you and when We lifted the Mount (Sinai) over your heads." Moses (SAW) had been away for forty days and his people were becoming restless, for they did not know that Allah (SWT) had extended his time by a further ten days. On his return Moses (SAW) saw his people worshipping the calf statue. Allah (SWT) punished the people who worshipped the calf as we have already seen, then Moses (SAW) went to speak to his Lord with seventy men from the Children of Israel. They repented to their Lord, and made a firm covenant with Him. Allah (SWT) stated that when He took this pledge from them, He raised the Mount of Sinai above their heads, so that they strongly affirm the pledge that they gave to Allah (SWT) and abide by it with sincerity and seriousness.

A lot of supernatural phenomena were shown to the Children of Israel and to the previous generations, but not to this present Muslim Ummah as Allah (SWT) says that the only miracle given to this Ummah is the Qur’an which in itself is the greatest miracle.
Further Allah (SWT) said to them; “Hold firmly to what We have given you (meaning the Torah). And follow the commandments therein, so that you may guard yourself against evil.” This means that you should read Torah and implement it. ”So that you may fear Allah.”

(64) “Then after that you turned away.” Yet after that firm covenant that the Children of Israel made with Allah (SWT), they rebelled and broke their pledge. “Had it not been for the grace of Allah.” Meaning, by forgiving them and by sending His Prophets and Messengers to them. “Indeed you would have been among the losers.” i.e. in this world and the hereafter.

(65) “You very well know the story of those amongst you who transgressed in the matter of the Sabbath.” Sabbath is for Saturday. Allah (SWT) commanded the Israelites that they should rest and worship on this day and were required to abstain from worldly pursuits. This commandment was so strict that the violation of the Sabbath day was to be punished by death⁶. This story relates to the torment that Allah (SWT) sent on the village that disobeyed Him, and broke their covenant to observe the sanctity of Sabbath Day. This story is explained in detail in surah Al-Araf. In return of their rebellion and deviation, Allah (SWT) punished them and said, “Be you monkeys despised and rejected”.

(66) “Thus, We made their fate an example to their own people and to succeeding generations, and a lesson for the Muttaqeen.” i.e. Allah (SWT) made them an example for those who lived at their time, as well as a reminder for those to come, by preserving their story. The punishment that this village suffered was because of their rebellion and disobedience of the commandments of Allah (SWT). Hence Allah (SWT) says, those who have Taqwa should be aware of their evil behavior, so that this punishment does not befall them as well.

(67) “And remember when Moses (ASW) said to his people: “Allah (SWT) commands you to sacrifice a cow”.” The Israelites had become accustomed to cow-worship, and in order to outgrow and overcome this, they were ordered to slaughter a cow. So their faith was being tested and they wanted to stay away from this and thus
They replied, "do you make fun of us?". Moses (ASW) answered, "I seek refuge with Allah from being one of the ignorant." i.e. I am the Messenger of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet, so how can I do such an ignorant act just to make fun of you.

The Israelites tried to shelve away from this issue and started asking unnecessary questions, and this was why Allah (SWT) made it even more difficult for them.

They said, "Request your Lord, to give us some details of that cow". Moses (ASW) replied, "Allah (SWT) says, the cow should neither be too old nor too young but of middle age" i.e. It is neither too old nor too young for breeding i.e. when it is strongest and fittest.

Do, therefore, what you are commanded!

"They said, "Request your Lord again", "to clarify for us her color." Moses (ASW) replied, "Allah (SWT) says, the said cow should be of a rich and bright yellow color which is pleasing to the eyes."

"Again they said, "Request your Lord to clarify for us the exact type of cow, for us all cows look alike, if Allah (SWT) wills, we shall be rightly guided."

Moses (ASW) replied: "Allah (SWT) says, the said cow should have neither been used to till the soil nor water the fields, without markings of any other color." This meant that the cow does not suffer from any defects. ... Then they said "Now you have brought us the accurate description,". And Allah (SWT) says, " Then they slaughtered her, after they had nearly declined." i.e. after all the questions and queries the Jews were still reluctant to slaughter the cow because of their stubbornness and obstinacy.

... And remember when you killed a person from amongst you and started disputing each other as to who killed him, and Allah (SWT) brought forth what you concealed."

"We said, "Strike the dead body with a piece of the slaughtered cow." They struck him with it and he came back to life, and disclosed the story of the crime. " That's how Allah (SWT) brought the dead to life to show you His Signs so that you may understand."
Allah (SWT) made this incidence proof against the Jews who did not believe that resurrection will occur. That is why Allah (SWT) showed them His signs so that they may understand that as Allah (SWT) brought this dead person to life, He will also bring you to life again in the hereafter.

(74) "But even after seeing that, your hearts became hard like a rock or even harder." Here Allah (SWT) criticized the Jews because they witnessed great signs and miracles from Allah (SWT) including bringing the dead person to life. But still their hearts became so hard and stubborn that they were unlikely to accept any admonition with no hope of their hearts ever softening. Unfortunately, Muslims today are also in the same situation. We have the greatest miracle, the Qur'an, but if we do not obey Allah (SWT) and follow His Messenger (SAW) we may also meet the same fate, and our hearts (Allah forbid) may become hard. The ayah continues, "For there are some rocks from which rivers gush out, and there are some which break asunder and water comes out of them, and there are some which fall down with the fear of Allah (SWT). And Allah (SWT) is not unaware of what you do."

(75) "Do you, O' Believers, still hope that they will believe in what you say." This ayah addresses the Muslims and tells us about the Jews of Madinah. It continues, "When some of them have already heard the word of Allah (SWT) and perverted it knowingly after they understood it." i.e. These Jews already knew from their scriptures that what Muhammad (SAW) brought is the truth, but they distorted their books, being fully aware of their erroneous interpretations and distortion of their scriptures.

(76) "When they meet the believers they say: "We too are believers,"" This ayah also refers to the Jews of Madinah. Further Allah (SWT) says, "But when they meet each other in private they say: "Would you disclose to the believers what Allah has revealed to you. So that they may use it as an argument against you before your Lord? Have you no sense"

When some of the Jews met the Muslims they believed that Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah (SWT), but was only sent for the Arabs, and they told them the prophecies present in Torah about the advent of Prophet Muhammad
And when the Jews met each other they would say, do not tell the prophecies of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to the Muslims and that we were waiting for him and whose coming we find foretold of in our Book. Therefore, do not believe in him and deny him. They thought that if they tell the Muslims of the prophecies, then they might use it as an argument against them before Allah (SWT) on the Day of Judgment. And they thought that Allah (SWT) does not know what they hide. So Allah (SWT) says;

Do they not really know that Allah knows what they conceal and what they reveal.” Even if they do not reveal to the Muslims, what they conceal, still Allah (SWT) knows what they reveal in front of the Muslims and what they say to each other when they are alone.

Among them there are some illiterates who do not know their Holy Book; they follow their own desires and do nothing but conjecture." There were also a lot of illiterate Jews in Madinah, who did not know how to read or write, and because they lacked knowledge they fabricated the whole religion out of their desires and they used to read into their scriptures what they wanted. The same can be said for the Muslims today, most of them recite the Qur'an but they do not know what its meanings are. They spend long years learning science and literature but are not prepared to even learn Arabic so that they can understand the Qur'an when they read or listen to it.

Another reason for the Jews not to learn their Books was their wishful thinking. As we will read in the following ayat, they thought of themselves as the chosen ones and that they will not enter the hellfire except for a few days. Similarly the Muslims today have also fabricated some beliefs that as they are from the Ummah of Muhammad (SAW) their salvation is guaranteed and the Prophet (SAW) will intercede for them.

Woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say: "This is from Allah (SWT)" so that they may sell it for a petty price!” This is another category people within the Jews, the rabbis. They altered the Book of Allah (SWT), changed it and wrote another book with their own hands. They interjected into it their interpretations of the scriptures and then said, "This is from Allah (SWT). And
they did this for a petty price. The small amount here means this life and all that it contains. So Allah (SWT) says, "Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for what they have earned" i.e. Because of what they have written with their own hands - the lies, falsehood and the alterations, they only earn a little in this world and hellfire will be their abode in the hereafter.

The Jews say: "The fire shall not touch us except for a few days."

The Jews believed that the Fire of hell will not touch them except for a few days, then they will be saved from it. They say it will only touch them for forty days then they will enter the Paradise, just by virtue of being Jews. So Allah (SWT) says, "O' Muhammad (SAW) say, "Have you taken a covenant from Allah (SWT) which He would not break, Or do you say of Allah (SWT) what you do not know""

Meaning, that if Allah (SWT) had made a promise that you would remain immune from the fire of hell, then Allah (SWT) would not break His promise. However, such a promise does not exist and they say about Allah (SWT) such things which they do not know themselves.

Yea! Those who commit evil and become encircled in sin are the inmates of hellfire; they shall live thereforer." The Jews believed that they will be saved from the hellfire even if they commit evil deeds, but on the contrary, Allah says; Whosoever does an evil deed, and abides deliberately in his error will be among the inmates of hellfire.

As for those who believe and do good deeds, they will be the residents of Paradise and live therein forever." It means, that those who perform good deeds that conform with the Islamic law, and are Muslim, they will enter Paradise for eternity. They will receive their reward in the Hereafter i.e. they will be in Allah's (SWT) presence. That is salvation in the highest degree and the pinnacle of felicity in the hereafter.

Foot Notes

[1] This happened at Mount Sinai, where Moses (AS) was summoned by Allah after their exodus from Egypt, and was given the ten commandments.
[4] The word used here is which we already read in previous sections meaning to settle down or come from a higher place to a lower one.
Latest researches have revealed a small group of religious community numbering about 2000 people, in lower Iraq in Basra. In Arabic they are called 'Subbi'. They claim to be Gnostics, of Knowers of great life. Their book is Ginza which is in Aramaic dialect. They have theories of darkness and Light as in Zoroastrianism.

Exodus, 31: 12-17.
(83) "Remember, We took a covenant from the Children of Israel." Allah reminds the Children of Israel about the commandments He gave them to obey. "You shall worship none but Allah". The first and the foremost commandment given to them as well as every other Prophet is to Worship Allah alone and not to associate partners with Him.

"Be good to your parents, relatives, orphans and destitutes." After Allah's right comes the right of the parents. Allah commanded His servants to be kind and compassionate towards one's parents and relatives, give the orphans their due right and give charity to the poor, and to one who does not find what he needs to spend on himself or his family. "Speak fair to the people." This includes commanding good and forbidding evil, as well as say good words and be lenient with them. "Establish Salah, and pay 'Zakah." Allah also commands them to establish salah and give the obligatory charity.

"But you broke the covenant, except afew of you, and you paid no heed. " Allah informs us that the Jews, except a few among them, ignored these orders, i.e. they intentionally contravened them.

(84) "Also remember another covenant which We took from you: That you shall not shed blood among yourselves and you shall not expel your own people from your homes." Allah reminds the Children of Israel of another covenant. Allah commanded them in Torah, not to kill or fight with each other, nor drive the other out of their homes. When the Jews entered the Holy Land of Jerusalem with Prophet Moses (AS), they divided into groups, each tribe governing its own state, and when they fought each other, they would kill one another; take them as prisoners, and drive them out from their land. So Allah reminds them of their disobedience and transgression. " You confirmed it and you are witness to it", i.e. you testified that you made the covenant and you were witnesses to it but you still broke it.

(85) Yet there you are, killing your own people, expelling a group amongst you from their homes. When the Jews divided into tribes and fought each other, each tribe would kill Jews from the other tribe and expel them from their homes. This was clearly prohibited by Allah in Torah, but they ignored His
commandments. "B acking each other with sin and aggression", i.e. they would help their enemies against each other. "A nd if they come to you as captives, you trade them for ransoms." Allah also commanded the Jews to ransom their brethren if they were captured. But instead they would help their enemies against other Jews, and kill them and capture them as prisoners and when the war ended they would ransom them, but Allah says: " whereas their expulsion was unlawful for you to begin with. " So they did not follow Allah's commandments in the first place Who prohibited them to fight but later on they would ransom their brethren, and say, that we are fulfilling the rulings of the Torah. Therefore, Allah reminded them of this when He said: " Do you believe in a part of your Holy Book and reject the rest?", thus acting on one commandment of Torah and rejecting the other parts of it. This commandment is not only for the Jews but also applicable to the Muslims of today. They accept a part of Deen and reject the other. Allah prohibits in the Qur'an the consumption of Riba (interest), gambling, drinking alcohol or committing Zina (adultery), but unfortunately, most of the Muslims today indulge in these grievous sins some way or the other. Although they believe in the Qur'an, offer salah, pay Zakah, and know that what they are doing is wrong, but still persist in their sins, just like the Jews who followed part of the Torah and ignored the other. And this is why Allah says: " So what other punishment do such people among you, who behave like this, deserve, than disgrace in this world and to be driven to severe punishment on the Day of Judgment. Allah is not unaware of what you do."

(86) "Such are the people who trade the life of this world at the expense of the Hereafter." i.e. they prefer the life and attractions of this world to the Hereafter. Therefore, Allah says: "so neither their punishment shall be lightened nor shall they be helped", meaning their punishment will never stop and they will not find any helper who will save them from the eternal torment in the Hell.

(87) "To Moses We gave the Book (Torah) and sent after him other Prophets in succession." Allah sent Messengers and Prophets after Moses (AS), who followed his Law, then Allah sent the last Prophet among the Children of Israel,
Isa (AS) the son of Mary (AS), and the continuous chain of Prophets came to a halt among the Children of Israel after nearly fourteen hundred years.

"Then We gave Isa (AS), the son of Maryam (Mary), clear Signs." Along with Injeel, Allah also gave miracles to Isa (AS). These included bringing back the dead to life, forming the shape of birds from clay and blowing into them after which they would become living birds by Allah's leave, healing the sick and foretelling the Unseen. "and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit." The 'Holy Spirit here signifies the angel Gabriel who brought this revelation.'

"Why is it that whenever there came to you a Prophet with a message which did not suit your desires, you became so arrogant that some you called impostors and others you killed!"

Prophets were sent to the Children of Israel with clear signs and miracles, but instead of believing in them, they became more defiant and treated them in the worst manner, rejecting some of them and killing the others, like Yahya (John the Baptist) and Zakariyah (AS). They did all this because the Prophets commanded them to follow what was against their own desires; so they became arrogant, rejected them and even killed some of them.

(88) "They say: 'Our hearts are in secure wrappers'." That is to say, they say, "our hearts are covered and sealed. We have every type of knowledge, so we don't need the knowledge you claim to receive from Allah and your preaching is not going to affect our hearts."

"But the fact of the matter is that Allah has cursed them for their disbelief." i.e. Allah says that it is not they who do not believe, rather it is Allah who has sealed their hearts because of their arrogance and deviance. "So little is that which they believe." i.e. they do not believe in the real sense.

(89) "And when there has come to them a Book from Allah confirming the Holy Books of Torah and Gospel which they already have." This means that the Qur'an which Allah sent down to Muhammad (SAW) came confirming what is with them, i.e. the previous Books viz. Torah and Injeel (Gospel). Further Allah says, "Even though before this they used to pray for victory against the unbelievers." The Children of Israel were foretold in their Scriptures the coming of the Last Prophet, Muhammad (SAW). They used to invoke Allah to aid them
by his arrival, so that he could end the dominance of the unbelievers. They used to say to the unbelievers, "A Prophet shall be sent before the end of this world and we, with his help, will defeat you." "When there came to them that which they very well recognize, they knowingly rejected it." But when Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (SAW), they rejected him and denied what they used to say about him, and lied that this is not the Prophet we told you about because he did not bring anything that we recognize. That is why Allah says, "Allah’s curse is on such disbelievers."

(90) "Miserable is the price for which they have sold their souls." i.e. the Jews knew that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the prophet they have been waiting for, but they hid the truth about him in their books. And so Allah says that they have bartered the truth for falsehood, which indeed is a poor and nasty deal. "They deny Allah's revelation merely because of their grudge". The Jews thought that because they are the best of all human races, and most of the previous Prophets have been sent to them, therefore, Allah would sent the Last Prophet (SAW) also from within them, but when Allah sent a Prophet from different people (Arabs), whom they despised, then they decided to reject him because of their envy and grudge "that Allah should send His grace on whom He pleases from His servants". Further Allah says, "They have drawn on themselves wrath upon wrath", meaning they acquired Allah's anger when they denied Isa (AS), and multiplied it when they have rejected Muhammad (SAW). "and for such disbelievers there is a disgraceful punishment." i.e. there will be disgrace and humiliation for them in this world and the Hereafter.

(91) When they are asked to believe in what Allah has revealed, they reply: "we only believe in what Allah has sent to us (i.e. Torah), and we reject what is beside that," meaning, when the Jews and People of the Book are asked to believe in what has been revealed to Muhammad (SAW), and follow him, they say that we will only follow our own books, and that is enough for us to believe, and this is the path we choose for ourselves. Allah says, "while it is the truth confirming their own scriptures!". i.e. they knew that it is the truth, and what has been revealed to Muhammad (SAW) confirms the scriptures given to them. Further Allah says, "Ask them, 'if you sincerely believe in what was sent to you,
why did you kill the Prophets of Allah who were sent to you from amongst yourselves before?". If you say that you will only believe in the Prophet of your own race and that which was revealed to you, then what about the Prophets We sent you, they were all from among yourselves, who brought scriptures from your Lord, but still you disbelieved them, and killed them.

(92) "Moses came to you with clear Signs, no sooner was he away from you, then you committed evil by worshipping the calf." i.e. Moses (AS), came with clear signs and miracles and with the message that no deity is worthy of worship except Allah, but as soon as Moses (AS), left for Mount Sinai, the Children of Israel started worshipping the Calf, which they made with their own hands, and thus became Zalimun (Unjust).

(93) Remember that when We took a Covenant from you and We lifted the Mount Sinai over your heads saying: "Take firmly what We have given you and listen to Our Commandments," Allah reminds the Jews of breaking their covenant and transgression they made when Allah brought Mount Sinai over their heads and commanded them to obey and follow the Torah which was revealed to Moses (AS). But Allah says, "you replied: 'we have heard but we will not obey.' " They should have said that we have heard and we submit ourselves to your commandment, but instead they changed the words and said, we have heard but we will not obey. This is because, "So much was the love of that calf in their hearts due to their unbelief." i.e. due to their disbelief, they imbibed the love of the calf deep into their hearts. Then Allah says, 0' Muhammad (SAW), tell them: "If you are real believers, then why does your faith prompt you to do such evil things?" meaning how can you claim that you believe, while you have committed the evil of breaking the covenant, disbelieving in Allah's ayat, killing and rejecting the Messengers and worshipping the calf instead of Allah.

(94) Say 0' Muhammad (SAW): "If the Home of the Hereafter is exclusively for you and not for the rest of mankind, then wish for death if you are true in your claim!" The Jews had an illusion that the Paradise is reserved for the Children of Israel alone and not for the rest of the Mankind. This same belief reflect the Muslims today. They think that if they are born as Muslims, they will by
default enter the Paradise but it is what the Jews had, nothing but an illusion. Allah says to the Jews that if you really think that you are the chosen one and Paradise is you abode then long for death, if you really are truthful in your claim. Those who really care for the Hereafter, neither set their hearts on worldly life nor are they afraid of death. The condition of the Jews was the opposite if this.

(95) "But they will never wish for death." Allah asked the Jews to invoke death if they are truthful, but they did not accept the challenge, as they knew that what they claim are all lies, and if they were sure that they are true, they would have accepted the challenge. "Because they are fully aware of the consequences of what they have sent before them for the Hereafter." i.e. they know what they have earned and forwarded for the Hereafter, so they wish they could delay it, as much as possible. "Allah is well acquainted with the wrong-doers." i.e. Allah certainly knows who are the evil-doers.

(96) "You will find them the greediest of men for life, even greedier than the idolaters and pagans. Each one of them wishes that he could be given a life of a thousand years." The Jews know what evil they have done and what reward they are going to get from their Lord. Therefore, they are so keen to remain alive, that they do not care whether they live honorably or with humiliation, and they wish they could delay the Hereafter, even more eager than the infidels and pagans who do not have a divine Book. Allah says, "But the grant of such a life will not save them from the punishment." i.e. a long life will not save them from the torment they are going to face, even if they could live for thousand years. And in the end everyone has to die and will get his reward, and the Jews know that the only reward they will have with Allah is total loss and severest punishment. Because "Allah is watching whatever they do."

(97) "Say 0 Muhammad: "Whoever is the enemy of Gabriel, should know that he revealed this Qur’an to your heart by Allah’s command." The Jews believed that the Last Prophet, prophesized in their scriptures will be among the Jews, but when Allah sent Muhammad (SAW) as Messenger from among the Arabs, they denounced angel Gabriel as their enemy, because they believed that instead of
bringing the revelation to one of the Jews, Gabriel brought it to Muhammad (SAW). But Allah says that Gabriel is only His Messenger, and he brought the Qur'an to Muhammad's (SAW) heart, only by Allah's command. And Allah states, "Which confirms previous scriptures, and is a guidance and good news for the believers." Here it suggests that the actual enmity of the Jews was not directed towards Gabriel but against the revelation he brought which confirmed their scriptures, and if they would have believed in it would have been guidance and good tidings for them.

(98) "Let them know that whoever is an enemy to Allah, His angels, His Messengers, Gabriel and Michael" meaning, whoever believes in Allah, is required to believe in all His Messengers. But whoever rejects any of His Messenger, then indeed he has rejected Allah and all His Messengers. "Allah is an enemy to such unbelievers." i.e. whoever takes His Messengers as enemies, then he has taken Allah as his enemy.

(99) "We have sent down to you clear revelations: no one can deny them except the transgressors." i.e. clear signs have been sent to Muhammad (SAW) which confirm his prophethood, but the Jews reject it because of their envy and transgression.

(100) "Has it not been the case that every time they made a covenant, a group of them threw it aside?." Allah reminds the Children of Israel about the covenants they broke, especially about Muhammad (SAW), about which they were informed beforehand in their scriptures, but they hid the facts and thus Allah says, "But the fact is that most of them are faithless." i.e. there is not a single covenant that they make, but they break it and cast it aside.

(101) "Whenever there came to them a Messenger from Allah confirming their own Holy Book, a group from those to whom the Holy book were given cast off the Book of Allah behind their backs as if they knew nothing about it." When Prophet Muhammad (SAW) came, the Jews disputed and questioned his prophethood and tried to prove it from Torah, but the fact was that the Qur'an revealed to Muhammad (SAW) and their scriptures confirmed each other.
Although Allah says they recognize Prophet Muhammad (SAW), as they recognize their own sons, yet they abandoned the Holy Books and hid the facts because of their enmity and jealousy.

The Jews tried to deny the Prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) supposedly with the help of Torah, but it also confirmed the coming of the Last Prophet and Last of the divine Books, the Qur’an. Therefore they indeed abandoned their own Books and took to the Book of Magic and Sorcery which indeed did not conform to the Qur’an. That is why Allah revealed the following ayah.

(102) **"And accepted what the devils falsely attributed to the kingdom of Solomon."** The devils at the time of Solomon (AS) used to ascend to the heaven and eavesdrop on the news regarding the Unseen matters, then they would convey it to the soothsayers, adding a lot of lies in it. The soothsayers then recorded these words in books which were later on hid by Prophet Solomon (AS). After his death the devils tempted the people to dig out those books, buried under Prophet Solomon’s (AS) throne. Then these devils made the Children of Israel believe that Solomon (AS) was a sorcerer and he ruled and controlled the kingdom with this magic (May Allah curse the Jews for what they say). When Allah revealed the Qur’an, the Jews disputed in these matters, and did not believe Solomon (AS) to be a Prophet of Allah. That is why Allah says, "Not that Solomon was an unbeliever, it was the devils who were unbelievers." That it was not Solomon (AS) who ruled with magic and sorcery, but it was the devils who taught them as Allah states, "They taught witchcraft to the people and that which was revealed to the two angels, Harut and Marut in the city of Babylon." This means that the devils taught the Children of Israel sorcery and magic, and Allah sent two angels Harut and Marut to Babylon, as a test for them who would teach the people magic, but as Allah says, "Yet these two angels never taught magic to anyone without saying: "We have been sent to tempt you; do not renounce your faith." i.e. they did not teach them anything without saying that it is a test from your Lord. When someone came to them to learn magic, they would discourage him an warn him that he would become a disbeliever, but Allah says, "Those people kept on learning, from the angels, the magic which could cause discord between husband and wife." i.e. inspite of the
warnings from the angels, the people continued to learn magic and indulge in evil acts that included the separation of spouses. "Although they could harm none with it except with Allah's permission" meaning, the sorcerers' magic never brings harm to anyone except by Allah's leave. "They learned, indeed, what harmed them and did not profit them." This in effect meant that it harmed their religion even more, and did not benefit them at all. "Even though they knew fully well that the buyers of magic would have no share in the happiness of the Hereafter." i.e. they knew that it was prohibited in Torah, but still they persisted in learning the magic. Thus Allah says, "Surely, they sold their souls for a bad price, if they could understand it!. " That what they preferred i.e. magic and sorcery, instead of faith and belief in the Messenger of Allah (SAW), is indeed a loss in this world and in the Hereafter; but they did not comprehend and understand.

Foot Notes

[2] After the Jews were ousted from Jerusalem, during the reign of Nabu Kad Nazar, they settled in Babylon, and that is when Allah sent these angels to them.
(104) "O' Believers, do not say, Ra'ëena' (O' Our shepherd) But say Unzurna' (pay attention to us) and listen to him carefully." In this ayah Allah (SWT) addresses the Muslim Ummah as a whole. He describes the behavior of the Jews and the hypocrites in manners of speech, and forbids the believers imitating their behavior. When the Jews and the hypocrites used to meet the Prophet (SAW), and the Muslims, they would greet them with ambiguous words, which would change the meaning of the original expression. They would say to the Prophet 'Ra'ëna', which means 'O' our Shepard 

(105) The unbelievers among the People of the Book, and the idolaters, would never wish that any good be sent down to you, O' Muhammad (SAW), from your Lord." Allah (SWT) describes the enmity of the disbelievers against the Muslims, whether they be from the idolators or from the People of the Book. Allah (SWT) says, that they wish that no good or guidance, meaning the Qur'an, comes from your Lord to the Muslims. But Allah (SWT) says, .Allah (SWF) chooses for His special Mercy whom He pleases, and Allah's (SWr) bounty and grace is infinit.

(106) "We do not abrogate any of Our verses of the Qur'an or cause it to be forgotten except that We substitute it with something better or similar." While the basic message of Islam always remains the same, the legal rulings have varied throughout the ages, and many prophets before Muhammad (SAW) brought particular codes of law for their respective communities, which evolved gradually with the maturity of mankind. When the message of Islam was presented to the Arabs it came as something new for them, and different from their way of life. The Qur'an touched on a variety of subjects, among them beliefs, history, stories of the
prophets, Day of Judgment, Paradise and Hell, and many others, particularly
the code of conduct and the legal rulings. So to allow the people especially the
Arabs to adjust to the new prescriptions, Allah (SWT) brought these important
changes gradually, and in this process sometimes an injunction or ruling
previously revealed was replaced with a new one or similar to it, whether it was
from the Qur’an itself or from the previous scriptures. This process is known as
‘Al-Nasikh wa Al-Mansukh’. Further Allah (SWT) says, ‘...Don't you know that Allah
(SWT) has full power over everything?” that is to say, He can abrogate and replace
what He wills, whether from the Qur’an or from the previous Books.

(107) "Do you not know that to Allah (SWT) belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth,
and that besides Allah (SWT) you have no protector or helper." i.e. Allah (SWT) is the
supreme authority, He alone owns the heavens and the earth, He decides in
them whatever He wills, He forbids and repeals whatever He wills and upholds
whatever He wills, and there is no protector or helper besides Him.

... Do you intend to ask questions from your Messenger, as Moses (AS) was questioned
before?.” The Jews constantly used to ask Prophet Moses (AS) foolish and
unnecessary questions just for the purpose of being difficult. Allah (SWT)
criticized the Jews for their behavior and thus forbade the believers to ask
unnecessary questions from the Prophet (SAW) about the matters that did not
occur yet or those for which Allah (SWT) did not reveal any ayaäh. But those
matters about which He has revealed, will duly be explained by His Prophet
(SAW). The general instruction therefore was "don't ask many questions about
them, for they might become a burden for you, which you would not be able to
implement". The Messenger of Allah (SAW) also did not like such questions, as
stated in a hadith, that when Prophet (SAW) was explaining his Companions
(RAA) that Allah (SWT) has ordered them to perform Hajj, a man asked, "Every
year, 0’ Messenger of Allah?”; The prophet (SAW) did not answer him, but he
repeated his question three times; Then the Prophet (SAW) said, "No. Had I said
yes, it would have been ordained, and you would not have been able to act on
it’. This is why Anas bin Malik (IAA) said, "We were forbidden from asking the
Messenger of Allah (SAW) about things. So we were delighted when a Bedouin
man would come and ask him while we listened. "-. Allah (SWT) says, "But whoever chooses disbelief for faith, he indeed has lost the direction of the Right Way." i.e. whoever prefers disbelief to faith, then he has strayed from the right path, to the path of ignorance and misguidance.

(109) "Many among the people of the Book wish they could somehow turn you back to unbelief." i.e. They recognize the virtues of the believers and their Prophet (SAW) because they know that these believers are on the right path, and they want them to be deprived of the blessing of Allah (SWT) due to their selfishness as Allah (SWT) says, "Due to their selfish envy, even after the truth has become quite clear to them." . It was clear to them that Muhammad (SAW) is the Messenger of Allah (SAW), but still they do not believe in him due to their selfishness and envy. Further Allah (SWT) commands Muhammad (SAW), "Forgive them and bear with them." With the arrival of the Messenger of Allah (SAW) in Madinah, the struggle between Islam and unbelief entered a new phase. Although the Muslims held only a tiny piece of the land, the whole of Arabia, under the leadership of the Quraysh moved against them, bent upon their extermination. In these circumstances the very survival, let alone the success, of this small group of believers depended upon several factors. Firstly, they had to prepare themselves to resist with both courage and the force of arms, the threat of the Quraysh by which they intended to eliminate the Islamic movement. And secondly, they had to deal with the Jews of Madinah. So Prophet (SAW) signed a treaty with them for the time being, so that the main focus of the Muslims remained the Quraysh of Makkah. Therefore, the Messenger of Allah (SAW) used to forgive them and was patient with them, until Allah (SWT) allowed them to fight, and that is when Allah (SWT) says, ...until Allah (SWF) brings about His decision, rest assured that Allah (SWT) has power over everything."

(110) "Establish Salah and pay Zakah, and whatever good you send ahead of you to the hereafter for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah (SWT); surely Allah (SWF) is watching all your actions." Allah (SWT) commands His servants to do good deeds, to establish Salah and give Zakah, which would bring benefit to them in this life and most
importantly in the hereafter. Allah (SWT) assures that their deeds will not go in vain, because He is not unaware of the actions of any person.

(111) "They say: "None shall enter paradise except he who is a Jew or a Christian." These are the false hopes of the People of the Book. They think that only they are going to enter the paradise, and they say that they are the children of Allah (SWT) and His loved ones, but Allah (SWT) answers them, "These are their vain desires." Then Allah (SWT) says, "Say 0’ Muhammad (SAW): "Let us have your proof if you are right in your claim."" i.e. bring anything from your Books if Allah (SWT) really did say what you claim that you are His loved ones, and that it is only you who will enter the Paradise.

(112) "Yea! Whoever submits his wholesome to Allah (SWT) and is good to others will be rewarded by his Lord, he will have nothing to fear or to regret." Here the word 'self', translates the word 'Wajh', which is a very comprehensive Arabic word, but here it means 'the whole inner self of a man'. So a person who submits himself entirely to Allah (SWT), performs good deeds and is good to others, then Allah (SWT) says his abode will be Paradise, and such persons will have no fear or regret anything on the Day of Judgment.

(113) "The Jews say: "The Christians are not on the right track," and the Christians say: "It is the Jews who are not on the right track," yet both read their Holy Books. Allah (SWT) explains the disputes between the People of the Book. They would disbelieve in each others Prophets and Books. The Jews would deny Jesus (AS) even though he was mentioned in Torah, and the Christians would deny Moses (AS) whereas Allah (SWT) revealed in Injeel(Bible) that the Prophethood of Moses (AS) and the Torah came from Allah (SWT). "And those who have no knowledge of their Holy Books say like to what both of them say." This refers to the Arabs, who said the Muhammad (SAW) was not following anything, just like the People of the Book said to each other. So Allah (SWT) says for all of them, "Allah (SWT) will judge between them in their dispute on the Day of Judgment."
(114) "Who is more unjust than he who prevents people from the Masajid (place of worship i.e. a mosque) of Allah (SWT) and forbids the mention of His name therein." The general interpretation of this ayah would be as it is. But specifically this ayah refers to the Quraysh of Makkah, who prevented the Prophet (SAW) and his Companions (IAA) from praying near the Ka'bah in Masjid Al-Haram and performing Umrah. And strives to ruin them?" refers to those people who prevent others from remembering Allah (SWT) in the Mosques, especially the Quraysh who would prevent the Muslims from remembering Allah (SWT) at the Ka'bah. It is not proper for such people to enter in them except with His fear. i.e. why should these idolaters be permitted to enter Masjid Al-Haram when they are not its guardians, and these idolaters hindered the people from Masajids of Allah (SWT) and wanted to destroy them. So they do not have the right to enter it except if they have fear of Allah (SWT) i.e. they embrace Islam. "For them there is disgrace in this world and grievous punishment in the Hereafter." They breached the sanctity of the House and brought filth to it by placing idols, and thus invoked others besides Allah (SWT) in it. Therefore, there is humiliation for them in this world and a severe torment awaits them in the Hereafter.

(115) "To Allah (SWT) belong the East and the West; whichever direction you turn your face there is Allah’s (SWF) countenance." The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) was first commanded to face Bayt Al-Maqdis (Mosque of Al-Aqsa) in his prayers. He faced it while in Madinah for nearly ten months. But he would supplicate to Allah (SWT) for he liked to face the Qiblah of Abraham (AS) i.e. Ka'bah at Makkah. The Jews of Madinah were happy at that time that the Muslims are facing their Qiblah. But later on Allah (SWT) fulfilled Prophet Muhammad’s (SAW) wish and directed him to face the Ka'bah at Makkah. The Jews were disturbed by this development and used to say "what happened to the Qiblah, the Muslims used to face”. So Allah (SWT) mentions this ayah here, before the actual directive of changing the Qiblah, in order to assert that east or west, whether it is Bayt Al-Maqdis or the the Ka'bah, both belong to Allah (SWT) and whichever direction you face you will find the presence of Allah (SWT). But it does not mean that Allah (SWT) is everywhere, rather it means that whichever direction you face for prayers it is as though you are worshipping Him. "Surely Allah (SWF) is All-
Embracing and All-Knowing." i.e. His knowledge encompasses everything, and He is not unaware of the deeds of His servants.

(116) "They say: "Allah (SWT) has begotten a son"." This ayah refutes the Christians and their like among the Jews (May Allah’s curse be upon them) who believed that Jesus (AS) or U2air (AS) is Allah’s (SWT) son, and the Arab idolators claimed that the angels are Allah’s (SWT) daughters. But Allah (SWT) refutes them both and says, "Glory be to Him" i.e. He is above all and more perfect than such claims. Allah (SWT) says, "Rather to Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth". meaning, Allah (SWT) is the Supreme Authority and the Creator of everything that is in the heavens and the earth, so how can it be that one of His creation be His son? Further Allah (SWT) says, "All are subservient to Him." i.e. everything in the heavens and the earth serves Him and is obedient to Him.

(117) "He is Badi' (Originator) of the heavens and the earth." Literally, the word Bida’ means something new, which never existed before. So it means that Allah (SWT) created the heavens and the earth when nothing like them existed. And Allah (SWT) says, "When He decrees a thing, He only says, "Be," and it is." This demonstrates His complete authority and ability over al His creations. This ayah also refers to the birth of Jesus (AS) as Allah (SWT) says, "This similitude of Jesus before Allah (SWT) is as that of Adam. He created him from dust then said to him. "Be" and he was•". Thus Allah (SWT) informs us that He created Jesus (AS) similarly, refuting their claims of him being His son.

(118) "Those who have no knowledge ask: "Why does Allah (SWT) not speak to us face to face or send us a sign?"" This ayah refers to the Arab idolators who demanded that Allah (SWT) speaks to them directly so that they can hear Him, or cause them to see some extraordinary sign, that would convince them whatever Muhammad (SAW) is preaching. But Allah (SWT) says, "The same demand was made by those before them." i.e. these misguided people do not demand something new, rather these demands and objections have been raised over and over again. Whenever Allah (SWT) sent a Messenger to His people, they demanded a sign to be shown. So Allah (SWT) says, "there hearts are alike". meaning, what these idolators demand is
the same as that of the misguided people in the past. "We have already shown clear
signs to those whose faith is firm." i.e. We have already vindicated the truth of our
Messengers and the objections raised have already been dealt with.

(119) "Verily We have sent you (O' Muhammad) with truth as a bearer of glad tidings and a
Warner." Allah (SWT) has sent Muhammad (SAW) as a witness, an announcer of
good news to the believers and a warner for all those who disbelieve in Allah's
(SWT) ayat. ..But you will not be questioned about the dwellers of the blazing fire." i.e. O'
Muhammad (SAW) you will not be held responsible for the disbelief of the people,
and your duty is only to convey the message properly and in the right earnest.

(120) "The Jews and the Christians will never be pleased with you, until you follow their faith",
meaning they will never be pleased with you O' Muhammad (SAW) until you
follow their practices and beliefs. They have themselves distorted the words of
Allah (SWT) and now the real cause of their unhappiness is that you did not
resort to hypocrisy and corruption in the religious matters like them and
instead you stick to what pleases Allah (SWT) and fulfill His commandments. So
they are not going to follow you because of their jealousy and arrogance, and
rather wish that you follow them. Allah (SWT) says, "0' Muhammad, tell them 8
"Allah's (SWT) guidance is the only guidance;" i.e. the guidance that Allah (SWT) sent to
Muhammad (SAW) is the true guidance, and that is the straight and perfect
religion. "And if you follow their desires after the knowledge has come to you, then there shall
be none to protect you or help you from the wrath of Allah (SWT)."

Although this ayah apparently addresses Prophet Muhammad (SAW) its ruling in fact applies to his
entire U,n,nah, and it is a warning for them against imitating the ways and
methods of the Jews and the Christians.

(121) "Those to whom We have given the book and who read it as it ought to be read, they are the
ones who believe in it." The Arabic word 'Tilawah' has two meanings; 'to recite' and
'to follow' .. So this ayah would mean that those among the people of the Book
who adhered to the Books Allah (SWT) revealed to His Prophets and followed
what was therein, will believe in you O' Muhammad (SAW) and what has been
revealed to you i.e. the Qur'an. ..As for those who reject it, they are for sure the losers."
That is to say, those who reject the Messenger and the message he brought, their abode will be the hellfire, as the Prophet (SAW) said: "By He in whose hand is my soul! There is no member of this Ummah, Jew or a Christian, who hears of me, yet does not believe in me—but will enter the fire" 8.

(122) "0' Children of Israel! Remember the special favor which I bestowed upon you, that I preferred you above all other nations." We already discussed this ayah in the start of surah Al-Baqarah, where Allah (SWT) reminds the Children of Israel of the exalted status they were bestowed by Allah (SWT).

(123) "Guard yourselves against the day when one soul shall not avail another, no ransom shall be taken, no intercession shall profit anyone, and no help shall be given." These last two ayat repeat ayat 47 and 48 (except for a slight variation, which does not affect the sense), and thus the argument of the favors on the Children of Israel discussed in between these ayat is beautifully rounded off in a bracket.

The next four sections discuss the changing of Qiblah from Jerusalem to the Ka'bah in Makkah and thus the favor Allah (SWT) bestowed upon the Arabs in succeeding to the spiritual inheritance of Abraham (AS).

(124) "Remember that when Abraham (AS) was tested by his Lord with certain commands." This ayah refers to the idolators and the People of he Book who pretended to be the followers of Abraham (AS), while in reality they do not follow him, and thus Allah (SWT) reminds them of the commands and trials that He tested Abraham (AS) with. "which he fulfilled." i.e. Abraham (AS) was truthful and obedient to Allah's (SWT) commands and he sacrificed everything which is valued in life, and encountered every kind of danger in the way of the truth. ..Allah (SWT) said: "Surely, I will make you the leader of mankind." When Abraham (AS) passed successfully through all these trials, Allah (SWT) exalted him to this status and made him a role model for all the people, and a leader whose conduct and path are to be imitated and followed. ""What about my offspring?" Asked Abraham." When Allah (SWT) made Abraham (AS) a leader, he prayed to his Lord that the leaders thereafter be chosen from his offspring. Abraham's (AS) supplication to Allah (SWT) was
accepted but, "Allah (SWT) said, "My promise will not apply to the evil doers."" i.e. Allah's (SWT) promise of the leadership within Abraham's (AS) progeny is limited to those of his descendents who are righteous, and the unjust people from his offspring will not deserve His promised grace.

(125) "Remember when We made the House a place of assembly and a place of safety for mankind." Allah (SWT) honored the Sacred House and made it a place of resort and a safe place for all those people who visit it. "and take the station(Maqam) of Abraham (AS) as a place of prayer." Most of the Scholars are of the opinion that Maqam is the stone of Abraham (AS) which he was standing on while building the Ka'bah. As its walls became higher, Abraham (AS) could not reach them, so his son Ishmael (AS) brought a stone on which he could stand and place the stones on the wall. This Maqam is still marked near the Ka'bah and everyone performing the Pilgrimage prays next to this stone after finishing the Tawaf (Circumambulating) of the Ka'bah. ..We entrusted Abraham and Ishmael to purify Our House for those who walk around it, who meditate in it, and who bow and prostrate in prayers."
The purification of the House was not only cleansing from physical impurity but also from the false beliefs and filth of associating partners with Allah (SWT).

(126) "And remember Abraham said: "My Lord make this a City of Peace and feed its people with fruits, those of them who believe in Allah (SWT) and the Last Day.” Abraham (AS) prayed to his Lord to make this city of Makkah a place of security and to grant sustenance therein for the believers only. However, He said: "As for those who do not, I shall also provide for them in this life." When Abraham (AS) prayed to his Lord to provide his offspring peace and sustenance, he excluded the transgressors and the unjust people because of the assertion of Allah (SWT) that His promise will not be for the evil doers. But Allah (SWT) removes Abraham's (AS) misunderstanding that while the leadership will be bestowed upon the righteous only, the means of livelihood will be given to both the believers and the disbelievers. And Allah (SWT) says, "Though in the Hereafter I shall drag them to the torture of Hellfire and it is an evil destination indeed!" i.e. although Allah (SWT) is providing the disbelievers with provisions (assorted food and fruits) but this is only for an appointed time in this terrestrial existence and then they will be the inmates of the hellfire forever.
(127) "Abraham and Ishmael raised the foundations of the House (with praying) "0' Lord! Accept this from us". Abraham (AS) and Ishmael (AS) were doing a good deed, and still they prayed to their Lord to accept this from them. This is the attitude and modesty of a true believer, that even if he is doing a good deed, he still fears Allah (SWT) and is afraid that his good deeds might not be accepted by him. And ..You are the one who hears all and knows all."

(128) "Our Lord! make us both Muslims (submitting to you), and make our descendants a nation that will be Muslims (submissive to You)." The Arabic word used in this ayah is 'Muslim' i.e. submitting himself to the will and obedience of Allah (SWT). Thus a Muslim is one who surrenders himself totally to Allah's (SWT) command and obedience and not associate anyone with Him. So Abraham (AS) supplicated to his Lord to make them Muslims and also to have an offspring who are Muslims i.e. worships Him alone and is obedient to Him. Prophet Abraham (AS) and Prophet Ishmael (AS) supplicated, "Teach us our rites of worship." i.e. show us the ways and rituals through which we can worship you. There is a hadith that when Abraham (AS) supplicated, angel Gabriel came down and showed him the rituals of worship like As-Safa and Al-Marwah, Mina and Arafat. He also showed the foundations of the Sacred House, where Prophet Abraham (AS) and his son raised the walls of the House. And they prayed; "And accept our repentance; surely, You are the Acceptor of repentance, the Merciful."

(129) "0' Lord! send amongst them a Prophet of their own." Abraham (AS) invoked Allah (SWT) to send a Messenger from his offspring: "Who shall recite to them Your Revelations and teach them the Book." i.e. the Qur'an revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). "and the Wisdom." Some exegetes believe that it is the 'sunnah' of the Prophet (SAW) and others opine that it means 'deep understanding and comprehension of the religion', but both meanings are correct. "and purify them." i.e. purification of man's life in its totality of sin. "Surely, You are the All-Mighty, the Wise," i.e. Allah (SWT) is able to do anything, and nothing surpasses His ability and power.
"Who but a foolish would renounce the faith of Abraham?" Abraham (AS) worshipped Allah (SWT) with sincerity and he did not call upon others besides Allah (SWT). This is the faith and practice of Abraham (AS) so Allah (SWT) says whoever abandons his path is in fact committing injustice against himself by deviating from the truth. "Verily, we chose him in this world and in the hereafter he will be among the righteous." i.e. Allah (SWT) chose Abraham (AS) as His Messenger and a leader of the upright, and he will surely be amongst the righteous persons in the Hereafter.

"When his Lord asked him: "Be a Muslim," he answered: "I have become a Muslim to the Lord of the worlds." Allah (SWT) commanded Abraham (AS) to submit himself to Him and be obedient to Him and Abraham (AS) perfectly adhered to Allah's (SWT) commands.

This was the legacy that Abraham left to his sons and so did Jacob, when he said: "O my sons! Allah (SWT) has chosen for you this Deen, therefore, die not except as men who have submitted to Him" Abraham (AS) advised his children to follow this Deen i.e. Islam, and so did his grandson Jacob (AS). They ordered their children to adhere to righteous deeds and worship none besides Allah (SWT) as long as you live so that it may be that Allah (SWT) will endow you with the favor of dying upon the same path i.e. living throughout life till the last breath as Muslims.

"Were you present when death approached Jacob? He asked his sons: "Who will you worship after me?" They replied: "We will worship the One Who is your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac (AS), and to Him we all submit as Muslims." This ayah criticizes the Arab idolators as well as the disbelievers amongst the People of the Book. They thought that they were following the Deen of Abraham (AS) and his progeny but Allah (SWT) says that those whom they profess to follow were true believers in Allah’s (SWT) divinity and they did not associate partners with Him unlike these idolators and submitted themselves totally in His obedience.

"They were a people that have passed away. They shall reap the fruits of what they did, and you shall for what you do. You shall not be questioned about what they did."
This ayah denies the Jewish belief that they are the chosen ones because of their relationship with the Prophets or the righteous people. On the other hand, Allah (SWT) says this relationship will not benefit you unless you perform good deeds yourself that bring you some benefit in the Hereafter.

(135) "Jews and Christians say: "Be Jews or Christians, then you shall be rightly guided."

The Jews and the Christians used to come to the Prophet (SAW) and say that 'the guidance is only what we follow. Therefore, follow us 0' Muhammad (SAW) and you will be rightly guided.' So Allah (SWT) says, "0' Muhammad, say: "By no means! We follow the faith of Abraham, the upright one; and he was not one of the idolators."" i.e. we do not need to follow what you call us to, rather we follow the straight path of our father Abraham (AS), which was infact the path what all the Messengers from the beginning of divine revelation believed in.

(136) "Say: "We believe in Allah (SWF) and that which is revealed to us; and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants, and that which was given to Moses, Jesus and other Prophets from their Lord." The Jews and the Christians said they the guidance is what they follow, but Allah (SWT) refutes them and directs the believers to say that we believe in what was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and also the previous Prophets of Allah (SWT) and that is the true guidance from Him. And they say; "We do not discriminate any of them." i.e. we don't make any distinction between them by following some and rejecting the others; instead we believe in all of them. "and to Allah (SWT) we have surrendered ourselves." i.e. we have submitted to Allah's true faith in ^^^^^^^^.

(137) "So, if they accept Islam like you, they shall be rightly guided; if they reject it, they will surely fall into dissension (divide into differing factions." i.e. if the disbelievers also believe in all of Allah’s (SWT) Messengers and His Books, submit themselves to Allah’s (SWT) will and do not associate partners with Him, then they will be on the straight path, but if they continue disbelieving after the truth has already been presented to them then they will find themselves divided into different factions. And Allah says; "Allah (SWF) will suffice you against them." i.e. Allah (SWT) will
aid the believers against the idolators and disbelieving People of the Book. "And He hears and knows everything - He is Omniscient".

(138) "(We take on) Allah's own dye; and who has a better dye than Allah's?" In this ayah dye or color means 'Deen of Allah (SWT)' \(^{11}\). "And it is He whom we worship." The main purpose and the message of all the Messengers and their followers has always been that we will serve Allah (SWT) alone.

(139) "Say, O' Muhammad: "Would you dispute with us concerning Allah (SWT)," i.e. would you dispute with us in the fact that we obey Allah (SWT) and have submitted ourselves to Him and we do not associate any partners with Him. "who is our Lord and your Lord as well?" i.e. Allah (SWT) alone is the Lord of the universe and He has full control over us and you. "We shall be accountable to Him for our deeds and you for yours." i.e. we don't believe in what you worship and we will only be accountable for our deeds and you will be responsible for your actions. "to Him alone we are devoted." Again the same principle of the Prophets and their followers is reiterated, that Allah (SWT) alone should be worshipped.

(140) "Do you claim that Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob and their descendants were all Jews or Christians?" Allah (SWT) refutes the claims of the Jews and the Christians that Abraham (AS) and all the Prophets after him followed their religion whether it be Judaism or Christianity. "Are you more knowledgeable than Allah (SWF)?" i.e. Allah (SWT) has the best knowledge of whether they were Jews or Christians. "Who is more wicked than the one who hides the testimony he has received from Allah (SWF)?" The Books Allah (SWT) revealed to the People of the Book testified that Prophet Abraham (AS) and his descendents were neither Jews nor Christians but they hid the truth from the people. Therefore Allah (SWT) says; "Allah (SWF) is not unaware of what you do." i.e. you may be able to hide the truth from others but Allah (SWT) is not unaware of your intentions and actions.

(141) "Fhey were a people that have passed away. Fhey shall reap the fruits of what they did, and you shall for what you do. You shall not be questioned about what they did." We already mentioned this ayah above where Allah (SWT) refutes the claims of the People of
the Book that they will be saved because they are the Prophets' descendents.
But Allah (SWT) says that their relationship will be of no avail until they imitate them in obeying and submitting themselves to Allah (SwT).

Foot Notes
[1] Ra'eena means 0’ our Shepard, It is also an evil remark in Hebrew Language. The jews used the expression as a derisive pun.
[2] The Arabic words ‘nasikh' and ‘mansukh' are both derived from the same root word ‘nasakha’ which carries meanings such as 'to abolish, to replace, to withdraw, to abrogate'. The word nasikh (an active participle) means 'the abrogating', while mansukh (passive) means 'the abrogated'. In technical language these terms refer to certain parts of the Qur'anic revelation, which have been 'abrogated' by others. Naturally the abrogated passage is the one called 'mansukh' while the abrogating one is called 'nasikh'.
[5] Quraysh were the descendants of Fahr bin Malik bin An-Nadr bin Kinana. They branched out into various tribes, the most famous of whom were Jumah, Sahm, 'Adi, Makhzum, Tayim, Zahra and the three septs of Qusai bin Kilab: 'Abdud-Dar bin Qusai, Asad bin 'Abdul 'Uzza bin Qusai and 'Abd Manaf bin Qusai. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: "Allah selected Ishmael from the sons of Abraham,Kinana from the sons of Ishmael, Quraysh from the sons of Kinana, Hashim from the sons of Quraysh and He selected me from the sons of Hashim."
[7] Tilawah has two meanings 'to recite' as in the ayah 'O Lord, appoint from among them a Prophet who shall recite to them Your Revelations.' (2:129) and it also means 'to follow' as in surah As-Shams where Allah (SWT) says: 'By the Moon as she follow him'.91:2
(142) "The fools among the people will say: "What has turned them from the Qiblah which they faced before?""

Before the directive of change in Qiblah, Prophet Muhammad (SAW) faced Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) in his prayers for nearly 16 months, but he would supplicate to Allah (SWT) to change the Qiblah from Jerusalem to Makkah. So Allah (SWT) fulfilled his wish and commanded the believers to face the Ka'bah instead of Jerusalem. This did not go well with the Jews who used to criticize the believers that what made them change their Qiblah from Bayt Al-Maqdis to the Sacred House i.e. the Ka'bah. But Allah says, "Say: To Allah belong both East and West" This subject has already been mentioned before in ayah 115 where Allah (SWT) states that whether you face Bayt Al-Maqdis or the the Ka'bah, every location belongs to Allah (SWT). And "He guides whom He wills to the straight path."

(143) "Thus have We made of you an Ummah justly balanced" The substitution of Jerusalem with Ka'bah led to the removal of Children of Israel from their position as a Muslim Ummah and were replaced by the Ummah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and it was by following the guidance that this Muslim Ummah achieved those excellences which led to their appointment as the 'Wasat Ummah'. The word Wasat means "'ust' or 'the best and the most honored', thus meaning the best and the most just Ummah. Further Allah (SWT) says; "That ye might be witnesses over the nations and the Messenger a witness over yourselves." Allah (SWT) says that He has made the Muslims the best nation ever. Hence, the Muslim Ummah will be the witness over all the nations on the Day of Judgment and the Messenger will be a witness over them i.e. the Prophet as Allah's (SWT) representative will bear witness to the fact that he conveyed the message to the Muslims which he was sent with and the Muslims will bear witness that they have conveyed the message to the rest of Mankind. "And We appointed the Qiblah which you used to observe only to test those who followed the Messenger from those who would turn on their heels. Allah (SWT) commanded the Muslims to face in the direction of Jerusalem at first, then changed the Qiblah to the Ka'bah so as to test who will follow and obey the Messenger and who will revert from his religion. It was indeed a hard test except for those whom Allah (SWT) has guided." i.e. indeed the change of Qiblah was a very hard test for the Muslims especially
those who had converted from Judaism to Islam, but not for those who believed in the truth of the Messenger (SAW) with certainty and sincerity. "And never would Allah (SWT) make your faith of no effect." The Jews questioned about the status of those who prayed facing Bayt Al-Maqdis and died before the Qiblah was changed. So Allah (SWT) says that their reward will not be lost i.e. the reward of the prayers that you prayed facing Bayt Al-Maqdis will be given to you—"For Allah is Compassionate and Merciful to mankind".

(144) "We see the turning of your face to the heavens." Allah’s Messenger (SAW) used to supplicate to Allah (SWT) for change in the direction of the Qiblah and he would look up to the sky awaiting Allah’s (SWT) command. So Allah (SWT) fulfilled his wish and said; "Now We will turn you to a Qiblah that will please you. So turn your face in the direction of the Sacred Mosque." This is the actual commandment of the change in Qiblah. The Prophet (SAW) was leading Dhuhr prayer in the house of Bishr bin Bara’ when this commandment of change in the direction of the Qiblah was revealed 3. The Prophet at once turned his face towards the Ka’bah and so did all those who were following him in the prayer. Further Allah (SWT) states; "Wherever you are turn your faces in that direction." i.e. Allah (SWT) commands the Muslims to face the Ka’bah from wherever they are, be it the east, west, north or the south. "The people of the book know well that that is the truth from their Lord." Allah (SWT) says that the People of the Book knew that He is going to change the Qiblah from Jerusalem to Makkah. They were foretold in the scriptures given to them but they withheld its knowledge as they did in other matters. But Allah (SWT) says: "Allah (SWT) is not unaware of what they do". Allah is watching over all their actions.

(145) "Even if you give every proof to the people of the Book, they will not accept your Qiblah." Allah (SWT) describes the stubbornness of the Jews and the Christians, that even if Prophet Muhammad (SAW) gives them every proof, still they are not going to accept the Ka’bah as their Qiblah. "Nor will you accept theirs." i.e. this indicates that as much as the People of the Book follow their desires, the Prophet (SAW) adheres to Allah’s (SWT) commands, obeying Him and pleasing Him. Further Allah (SWT) says; "Neither of them are the followers of each other’s Qiblah."
i.e. the People of the Book not even followed each others' Qiblah in Jerusalem. The Jews prayed facing towards the western part of the temple built by Solomon (AS) while the Christians held the eastern part of the temple to be more sacred. "If, after all the knowledge you have been given, you yield to their desires then surely you will be among the wrongdoers." Although this Ayah address the Prophet (SAW) as an individual, in fact it also includes his Ummah.

(146) "The people of the Book know this as they know their own sons; but some of them conceal the truth which they themselves know." i.e. The People of the Book know that Prophet Muhammad (SAW) is the final Messenger they were waiting for and what Allah (SWT) revealed to him is the truth. They recognize him as they know their own sons, but they deliberately conceal the truth from the people.

(147) "The truth is from your Lord so be not of those who doubt." Allah (SWT) strengthens the hearts of the Prophet (SAW) and his Companions (IAA) that what Allah (SWT) has revealed to you is the truth, so do not become like those who doubt. The truth is from your Lord: therefore never doubt it.

(148) "Everyone has a direction towards which he turns, therefore, emulate one another in good deeds." This ayah refers to the followers of the various religious traditions. It means that every religious community has a Qiblah which they face in their prayers. But Allah's (SWT) appointed Qiblah i.e. the Ka'bah, is what the believers face. This can also be taken in a general sense: 'to each is a goal to which he turns'. So emulate one another in good works. "Wherever you are, Allah will bring all of you together; Allah (SWT) has power over all things" i.e. Allah (SWT) will gather you on the Day of Resurrection, wherever you are on earth, even if your bodies have turned to dust and disintegrated completely.

(149) "From whatever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque." To emphasize its importance Allah (SWT) repeats His command to face Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque) from wherever one is in the world. Further Allah states; "This is in fact a commandment from your Lord." i.e. it has always been ordained by Allah (SWT) that the final Qiblah of the believers would be the
And Allah says, "Allah is not unaware of what you do." He (SWT) is never heedless of what you do.

(150) "So Whatever place you come forth, turn your face towards the Sacred Mosque, and wherever you are, face towards it." Again Allah (SWT) repeats His command to all Muslims to turn in the direction of the Ka'bah for the third time. And Allah (SWT) says, "So that people will not have any argument against you." This refers to the People of the Book. They knew in their Books that the Last Prophet (SAW) will later on be commanded to face the Qiblah of Abraham (AS), so if Allah had not commanded the Prophet (SAW) to face the Ka'bah instead of Jerusalem, then they would have used this as an argument against the Muslims and for denying the prophethood of Muhammad (SAW). "Except those among them who are wrongdoers." This refers to the idolators of Makkah. ...Do not fear them; fear Me." i.e. do not fear these stubborn and unjust people but fear me alone. "So that I may perfect My favors to you and that you may be rightly guided." The favors here refer to the leadership and the guidance from which the Children of Israel were deposed and those were bestowed upon the Ummah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

(151) "Just as We bestowed Our favor upon you." Here the favor refers to Prophet Muhammad (SAW). "When We sent among you a Messenger of your own who recites to you Our revelations, sanctifies you, teaches you the Book and wisdom, and teaches you that which you did not know." This is an answer to the prayer of Prophet Abraham (AS) and Ishmael (AS), when they supplicated to their Lord to send a Messenger amongst their descendants; "0' Lord! send amongst them a Prophet of their own. Who shall recite to them Your Revelations and teach them the Book, and the Wisdom, and purify them. Surely, You are the All-Mighty, the Wise." So Allah accepted Prophet Abraham’s (AS) supplication and sent Prophet Muhammad (SAW) amongst their offspring who recites the Book of Allah (SWT) to the believers, purifies them, teaches them the Book and the Wisdom and also that which they were not aware of.

(152) "Therefore, remember Me, and I will remember you." Remembering Allah (SWT) means to remember His commands and Allah (SWT) says, He will remember you
i.e. He will reward and forgive you. There is a hadith in which the Messenger of Allah is reported to have said:

"Allah (SWT) the Exalted said, '0' son of Adam! If you mention Me to yourself, I will mention you to Myself. If you mention Me in a gathering, I will mention you in a gathering of the angels (or said in a better gathering). If you draw closer to Me by a hand span, I will draw closer to you by forearm’s length. If you draw closer to Me by a forearm’s length, I will draw closer to you by an arm’s length. And if you come to Me walking, I will come to you running."  

Allah (SWT) states, "Be grateful to Me and never disbelieve Me." i.e. thank Allah (SWT) and be grateful to Him for all the favors and blessings He bestowed upon you.

We mentioned in the introduction of Al-Baqarah that this surah can be divided into nearly two equal parts according to its subject-matter content. The first part which mainly addressed the Children of Israel ends here, and now the second portion of the surah begins in which Allah (SWT) addresses the believers, who from hereon are given the instructions and directions that are essential for their training and which will enable them to discharge the duties of the position of leadership they were entrusted with.

(153) "0 You who believe! Seek My help with patience and prayer. Surely, Allah (SWT) is with those who are patient." For bearing the burden of responsibility of religious leadership Allah (SWT) directs the believers to seek help with prayer and patience. A prayer will train a person in discipline and other moral qualities while patience is needed to avoid sins and prohibitions and in performing acts of worship and devout servitude to Him.

(154) "Do not say about those who are slain in the cause of Allah (SWT), that they are dead. Nay, they are alive." This ayah indicates that the persons who are martyred in the way of Allah (SWT) are alive and enjoying eternal life and He also provides them with sustenance. Further Allah (SWT) says, "you do not perceive it." i.e. the states and events that take place after the physical death are beyond the reach of ordinary human perception.

(155) "We shall surely test you with fear and famine, with loss of property, lives and fruits." Allah (SWT) tests His bondsmen with bounties and sometimes with calamities
and afflictions, so that the earnest and sincere believers can be distinguished from those who are lacking in zeal and genuine belief. These trials present themselves in the normal situations of life - famine, losing friends and family, loss of wealth and property and loss of fruits i.e. sudden calamity in gardens and farms—and one has to realize in what manner one is being tested. So one should face all eventualities by remembering Allah (SWT) and thanking Him in every situation. And Allah (SWT) says, "But give glad tidings to those who endure with patience." These trials provide the real test of life and the only way to succeed in them is through patience and steadfastness.

(156) "Who, when afflicted with calamity, say: "We belong to Allah (SWT) and to Him we shall return."" i.e. a believer is one who observes patience when he faces adversity calamities and afflictions and knows that his body and soul belongs to Allah (SWT) and that He will surely resurrect him on the Day of Judgment for recompense.

(157) "Such are the people on whom there are blessings and Mercy from Allah (SWT)." The believers who remember Allah (SWT) and thank Him even in the time of stress and afflictions will earn His blessings and mercy. And Allah (SWT) says, "And they are the ones that are rightly guided." i.e. Allah (SWT) guides them to the straight path.

(158) "Verily! Safa and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah (SWT). So anyone who performs Hajj or Umrah to the House, there is no blame if one goes around both of them. And anyone who does good voluntarily should know that surely Allah knows and appreciates." Prophet Abraham’s (AS) wife Hajar ran between Safa and Marwah in search of water for young Ishmael (AS) and begged Allah (SWT) for His help. Allah (SWT) answered her prayers and made the fountain of Zamzam bring forth its water for Hajar and her son. Allah (SWT) also laid down for all the Muslims to briskly walk or run between Safa and Marwah during Hajj and Umrah till the Day of Judgment.

(159) "Those who conceal the clear proofs We have sent down and the guidance after We have made it clear for the people in the book." This ayah refers to the Jews who distorted their Books and hid the truth from their own common people. And to maintain their fake superiority and popularity they would approve corrupted and
deviated beliefs and conceal the truth. For such people Allah (SWT) says, "On them shall be Allah's (SWT) curse and the curse of those entitled to curse."

(160) "Except those who repent, reform and let the truth be known; I will accept their repentance, for I am the Receiver of Repentance, the Merciful." i.e. the doors of Allah’s (SWT) mercy are always open to His servants. He will always forgive one who repents and mends his erring ways and proclaims the truth as Allah (SWT) wishes it to be proclaimed. He is the Relenting One, the Merciful.

(161) "Surely those who are unbelievers and die while they are unbelievers, they are the ones on whom is the curse of Allah (SwT), the angels and all mankind."

(162) "They will live in it forever, neither their punishment shall be lightened nor shall they be given respite."

The above ayat state that those who persist in their disbelief until death will be deprived of His mercy and they will have eternal curse of Allah (SWT), His angels and the believers until the Day of Judgment and after that their abode will be the hell and the torment of hellfire which will never be decreased, nor shall they be given respite.

(163) "And your Allah is one Allah (SwT), there is no god but He, The Most Gracious Most Merciful." i.e. Allah (SWT) is the only deity worthy of worship and He has no partners or equals and He is Ar-Rahman and Ar-Raheem—the Compassionate, the Merciful.

(164) "Surely, In the creation of the heavens and the earth." This ayah gives the proofs that Allah (SWT) is the only deity, He is the creator of the heavens and the earth and of all the creatures in them and they all testify to the Oneness of Allah (SWT). And the structures, mountains, valleys, deserts and seas within them display His ineffable creativity spread out before us. And "In the alternation of the night and the day." i.e. the coming of day and night one after the other and "In the sailing of the ships through the ocean for the profit of mankind." People travel from one shore to another carrying goods and food so people benefit from it. And "In the rain which Allah sends down from the skies, with which He revives the earth after its death and
spreads in it all kinds of animals." Another sign of Allah's (SWT) Omnipresence and Greatness is the rain which He sends down from the sky and invests life therewith in the lifeless and brings forth grains and fruits for His creatures of every variety that flourish in this world. And there is also a sign, "In the change of the winds and the clouds between the sky and the earth that are made subservient." i.e. sometimes they bring the mercy of Allah (SWT), and sometimes trouble and torment. "There are signs for people who are wise." It is only those who give deep thought to Allah's (SWT) signs who can know their true significance and the metaphysical inner reality that lies beneath the outward surface of things. In all the variegated natural phenomena mentioned in this Ayah are signs and portents of divine existence for people who understand and have discerning minds.

(165) "There are some who worship other deities besides Allah (SWT)." i.e. they associate rival and equals with Allah (SWT), worshipping them and attributing some of exclusive properties and powers of Allah (SWT) to them. And "they love them as they should love Allah." i.e. Allah is the Supreme Authority who prescribes what is lawful and what is unlawful and only He defines the rights and duties for His subjects. But there are people who ascribe some of these attributes to other ideologies, institutes or persons, who are more dearer to them than the love of Allah (SWT). At another place Allah (SWT) says; "0 Prophet, tell them: If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, your relatives, the wealth that you have acquired, the business in which you fear a loss, and the homes which you like are dearer to you than Allah, His Messenger, and making Jihad in His Way, then wait until Allah brings about His decision. Allah does not guide the transgressors." 7 In contrast Allah (SWT) describes the attitude of the believers; "whereas the believers are strong in love for Allah." i.e. a true believer's only priority should be to please Allah (SWT) and love Him most by fearing Him, obeying His commandments and be ready to sacrifice all other affections for His sake, whether it is one's wealth and property, nation, ideology or one's family. And Allah (SWT) says; "If those who are unjust could visualize when they will see the chastisement, they would come to know for sure that all powers belong to Allah." i.e. if these disbelievers could see the punishment that they would face in the Hereafter because of the partners they ascribe to Allah (SWT), then they would never return to the
deviation of setting up rivals and equals to Allah (SWT). "And that Allah is stern in retribution." This is as Allah (SWT) stated in another ayah; "Who could be more unjust than the one who is reminded of the revelations of his Lord and he turns away from them? Surely We shall take vengeance on such criminals." 8

(166) "On that Day those leaders who were being followed will renounce those who followed them." The misguided leaders, saints and the Jinn who led people astray in the world will disown their followers on the Day of Judgment as Allah (SWT) says; "Once the matter has been decided (on the Day of Judgment), Satan will say (to his followers): "In fact, the promises which Allah (SWT) made to you were all true; I too made some promises to you but failed to keep any of them. However, I had no power over you. I just invited you, and you accepted my invitation. Now! Do not blame me, but blame yourselves. I cannot help you, nor you can help me. I reject what you did before; that you associated me with Allah (SWT). Certainly such wrongdoers will have painful punishment."" 9 Then Allah (SWT) says; "And when they see Allah's (SWT) chastisement and punishment, they will denounce each other, but will not find a way to escape from the fire.

(167) "The followers will say: "If it could be possible for us to live again, we would renounce them as they have renounced us today." Allah (SWT) describes the condition of the idolators in the Hereafter, when they will denounce the idols and leaders they used to follow and will wish they could return to this world, when they used to worship them so that they can denounce them as they have denounced them and instead worship Allah (SWT) alone. "Thus Allah (SWT) will show them the fruits of their deeds." i.e. their deeds will become nothing but dust and will be of no avail. Thus Allah (SWT) says; "They will sigh with regret, and shall not be able to come out of the Hellfire."

Foot Notes
[1] i.e. Afternoon prayer. Scholars have differed in this matter, some say it was the Asr prayer and not the Dhuhr prayer. Allah knows the best.
[2] Presently this place is known as Masjid alQiblatain (or the Mosque with two Qiblahs), and is situated in Madinah, a few kilometres from Masjid an-Nabi. It is one of the oldest Mosques in the world, and uniquely contains two mihrabs - one in the direction of bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem), and the other towards Makkah.

[5] In Masjid Al-Haram near Ka’bah, it is now a well which gushed out by Allah’s divine power in the form of a spring for the sake of Prophet (SAW), Ishmael (AS) and his mother. Water is still flowing out of it in immense quantity.

[6] The meaning of these two names is explained in the beginning of Surah Al-Fatiha.


"O Mankind! Eat of what is lawful and clean on the earth" Allah (SWT) is alone the Sustainer of all creation and He has allowed His servants to eat any of the lawful things on earth and avoid unlawful things. Unlawful things are not only those prohibited by Allah (SWT) but even lawful things acquired unlawfully - by usurpation, by theft and cheating etc. And Allah (SWT) says: "And do not follow the footsteps of Satan." i.e. do not follow the ways and methods with which he misguides people and follow only the way of Allah (SWT) which has been shown by the Prophet (SAW). --Surely he is your open enemy." i.e. the Satan invites his followers towards sin and immorality so that they may become the inmates of Hellfire.

(169) "For he commands you what is evil and shameful and that ye should say of Allah that of which ye have no knowledge." The Satan commands his followers to commit evil acts like adultery, theft, gambling, usury and even worse than that i.e. saying something about Allah (SWT) without knowledge. Satan makes them believe in superstitions and baseless and unfounded customs as a part of their religion, although there is no proof that they are from Allah (SWT). Like the Jews who prohibited the meat of camel when it was not made unlawful by Allah (SWT) or the pagan Arabs who would prohibit some animals because of ascribing them to one of their idols and gods.

(170) "TA/hen it is said to them: "Follow what Allah (SwF) has revealed" they say: "Nay! we shall follow the ways of our fathers."" This ayah strongly condemns blind following of those traditions of the ancestors which do not tally with the Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Allah (SWT) states that when the disbelievers are asked to follow the way of Allah (SWT) and His Prophet (SAW), they say that we will only follow our forefathers who
also worshipped idols and were disbelievers. So Allah (SWT) says: "What! even though their fathers were void of wisdom and guidance." i.e. will they still follow their forefathers and imitate their practices even when they know that those whom they follow had no knowledge and guidance.

(171) "The parable of those who reject faith is as if one were to shout like a goat-herd to things that listen to nothing but calls and cries." i.e. a disbeliever is devoid of understanding and preaching before him is like preaching to the cattle - who only listen to the sounds but are incapable of understanding their meaning. So Allah (SWT) says, "Deaf dumb and blind they are void of wisdom." - those who cover themselves with the dark veil of ignorance are deaf, dumb and blind. That is to say, those who reject faith are like dumb driven cattle who can merely hear calls, but cannot distinguish intelligently between meaning and absurd discourse or subtle differences of values.

(172) "O' you who believe! eat of the good things that We have provided for you and be grateful to Allah (SWF), if you only worship Him." Allah (SWT) commands the believers to eat from the pure and lawful things He has provided for them on this earth, if they truly are His servants. Indeed, gratitude for Allah's (SWT) gifts is an important form of worship.

(173) "He has only forbidden you dead meat." i.e. dead animals who die before they are slaughtered but dead animals of the sea are excluded from the ruling as the Prophet (SAW) said: "Its water is pure and its dead are permissible." And "and blood and the flesh of swine" Whether slaughtered or not "and that on which any other name has been invoked besides that of Allah (SWT)." i.e. any Offerings or sacrifices in the name of anyone or anything other than Allah (SWT). - but if one is forced by necessity without willful disobedience nor transgressing due limits then he shall incur no sin. For Allah (SWF) is Oft-Forgiving
Most Merciful." Allah (SWT) has, however, permitted to eat from things which are prohibited in the time of utter necessity. For instance when it is needed for survival on account of an illness or when there is absolutely nothing lawful available. But the permission has been given on two conditions. Firstly one should not have a desire to eat what Allah (SWT) has prohibited, and secondly only that much should be taken which meets the bare minimum requirement for survival.

(174) "Those who conceal Allah’s revelations in the Book and purchase for them a miserable profit-they swallow into themselves nothing but fire." Allah (SWT) criticizes the Jews for concealing the prophethood of Muhammad (SAW). As mentioned earlier, the Jews recognized Prophet Muhammad (SAW) as a Messenger of Allah as they recognized their own sons but they hid the truth so that they might retain the joys and delights of this earthly life. --Allah (SWF) will not address them on the Day of Resurrection nor purify them and they will have a painful punishment." i.e. they have earned Allah’s (SWT) wrath so He will not look at them nor speak to them on the Day of Resurrection and will punish them with a severe torment. Grievous will be the penalty of rejecters of faith and Allah (SWT) will not purify them.

(175) "They are the ones who buy error in place of guidance and torment in place of forgiveness." Instead of believing in Prophet Muhammad (SAW), they rejected him and preferred error and misguidance over the truth and punishment over forgiveness because of their stubbornness and arrogance. --Ah! what boldness (they show) for the Fire!" i.e. They know what torture and woeful torment they will suffer but still persist in their misguidance and ignorance.

(176) "because Allah (SWF) sent down the Book in truth but those who seek causes of dispute in the Book are in a schism far (from the purpose)." i.e. Allah (SWT) sent
Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and His other Books to Prophets before him which brought guidance and truth and exposed falsehood. But they rejected the Messenger (SAW) and the Book revealed to him and those who disagree about it are in extreme schism and this is why Allah (SWT) says they deserved the torment and the punishment.

(177) "It is not righteousness that you turn your faces toward East or West" The theory and a complete holistic definition of piety and righteousness has been mentioned in this ayah and it gives a comprehensive and clear description of the righteous and Allah-fearing man. As for the context of this ayah is concerned, Allah (SWT) first commanded the Muslims to change the Qiblah from Bayt Al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) to the Ka'bah. This change did not go well with the Jews, but Allah (SWT) clarified the wisdom behind this change: that there is no real virtue in the mere act of turning your faces to the east or to the west in the prayer unless it is commanded by Allah (SWT). But Allah (SWT) says: - the righteous man is he who believes in Allah (SWT) and the Last Day, in the Angels and the Book and the Messenger; who for the love of Allah (SWT) gives his wealth to his kinsfolk, to the orphans, to the needy, to the wayfarer and to the beggars and for the redemption of slaves, who attends to his prayers (salah) and pays the alms-tax (zakah); who is true to his promises and fulfills all agreements and contracts and remains steadfast in trial and adversity and in times of war." Far from deadening formalism the real virtue and righteousness is that a person should obey all the salutary regulations, and should make his sincere motive the love of Allah (SWT) and the love of his fellow men for the sake of Allah (SWT). Here we have four elements of righteousness: (a) One's faith should be true and sincere, (b) one should be prepared to show it in deeds of charity and kindness to fellow men, and one must be a good citizen by supporting charitable institutions and social organizations, (c) one must pray regularly and pay obligatory annual poor-due, and (c) one must be steadfast and unshakeable in all
circumstances. It is clear, therefore, that righteousness is not merely a matter of void utterances, it must be found on strong Faith and constant practice. It must cover the person's thinking and action and extend to his inside and outside life, to his individual and corporate affairs\textsuperscript{2}. Further Allah (SWT) says: \textquoteleft Such are the people of truth and righteousness.\textquoteright i.e. whoever acquires the above qualities, only they are truthful in their faith and are pious and Allah-fearing.

(178) \textquoteleft 0' you who believe! the law of equality in retaliation is prescribed to you in cases of murder, the free for the free the slave for the slave the woman for the woman. But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain then grant any reasonable demand and compensate him\textquoteright. In this ayah the law of 'qisas \textsuperscript{3} i.e. the principle of equality of the value of human life, has been set forth in detail. Before the advent of Islam, the practice after a murder was a chain of brutal and bloodthirsty reactions. The families and the tribes of both the slayer and the slain used to engage themselves into a war, generation after generation and they would take the lives of innocent men, women and children from the clan of the murderer. Islam, through the Holy Prophet (SAW) put an end to this barbaric human behavior and gave a just and kind system of justice where the retribution of a murder is not to be determined by the rank of the slain or the murderer but with equality and justice. It has therefore, been clearly stated that the murderer himself shall be made to pay for the blood but the heirs of the slain have the choice to pardon the murderer if someone on his behalf pays them the blood price. And \textquoteleft with handsome gratitude.\textquoteright i.e. the heirs of the slain should accept the compensation in rightful manner. Allah (SWT) says: \textquoteleft this is a concession and a Mercy from your Lord.\textquoteright i.e. this concession in punishment is an alleviation from Allah (SWT) which was not allowed for any other nation. \textquoteleft After this whoever exceeds the limits shall be in grave penalty.\textquoteright This warning is for those heirs of the slain who accept the blood money and
still kill the murderer in retaliation. The whole penalty can be remitted if the aggrieved party agrees, out of brotherly love. In meeting that demand the culprit should equally be generous and acknowledge the good will of the other side. He that transgresses thereafter shall face stern punishment.

(179) "In the law of equality there is life to you O’ you men of understanding! that you may restrain yourselves." i.e. The purpose of ordaining penalty for the crime is to make people abstain from evil doing.

(180) "It is decreed when death approaches any of you if he leave any wealth that he make a bequest to parents and next of kin equitably, This is a duty incumbent on the righteous." When the ayah of inheritance in surah An-Nisa was revealed, this ayah was abrogated. So the deserving inheritors receive their fixed shares as prescribed by Allah (SWT) in surah An-Nisa and it is not incumbent anymore on Muslims to make a bequeath for their parents or their kin. But according to the sunnah of the Prophet (SAW), a person is allowed to make a will for charitable purposes and for those relatives that do not qualify as inheritors.

(181) "If anyone changes the bequest after hearing it the guilt shall be on those who make the change. For Allah (SWF) hears and knows all things." To alter or change a will is a major sin and guilty will be those who change it and the dead person who made the will is not to blame. And Allah (SWT) knows what the dead person had bequeathed and who are those who hide or change the will.

(182) "But if anyone fears partiality or wrong-doing on the part of the testator and makes peace between the parties; he incurs no guilt, for Allah (SWF) is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful." If any injustice has been done to the rightful heirs or those in whose favor the bequeath has been made then it is allowed to alter or
change the will to make a proper settlement between the parties, within the provisions of Islamic law and also respecting what the dead person had wished for. Allah (SWT) is Forgiving and Merciful.

(183) "O' you who believe! fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you" Allah (SWT) says that He has ordained fasting for Muslims as He ordained it for previous nations namely the Jews and the Christians. ...So that you may learn self-restraint." Fasting is a means for restraining and controlling the nafs⁴, which purifies the souls and cleanses them from the evil and ill behavior. Through fasting a believer is able to guard himself against evil.

(184) "(Fasting) for a fixed number of days. But if any of you is ill or on a journey the prescribed number (should be made up) from days later. For those who can do it (with hardship) is a ransom: the feeding of one that is indigent." The injunctions related to Fasting were revealed gradually. In the beginning Prophet Muhammad (SAW) instructed the Muslims to observe fast for every three days in a month but it was not made obligatory. Then the command of fasting in Ramadan was revealed but there was an option for a sick person, a traveler and for those who did not wish to fast, to pay Fidyah instead (feeding a poor person). But this concession was later abrogated in the next ayah. --But he that will give more of his own free will it is better for him" i.e. whoever can feed an extra person will be well rewarded. ...and it is better for you that you fast if you only knew." This was abrogated in the next ayah when fasting in Ramadan was made obligatory.

(185) "Ramadan is the month in which was sent down the Quran" The month of Ramadan is that in which the complete Qur'an was revealed to the Holy Prophet (SAW) in the night of decree (Layla-tul-Qadi). As mentioned earlier, Qur'an was revealed in two stages over a period of 22 years. At first,
Allah (SWT) sent the Qur’an down all in one go (i.e. in its totality) from the Preserved Tablet to the House of Might (Baytul-Izzah), which is in the heaven of this world. Then it came down in parts to the Messenger of Allah (SAW) in the context of the historical incidents that occurred over a period of twenty two years. …as a guide to mankind also clear signs for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong).” This Book is the guidance for Muttaqun (Allah-fearing and the righteous) who believe in it and follow its commands and it contains clear and unambiguous signs and criterion between right and wrong for those who understand and have discerning minds. …So everyone of you who is present during that month should spend it in fasting” This ayah abrogated the ayah that allows a person either to fast in Ramadan or pay Fidyah. …but if anyone is ill or on a journey the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later." This ayah indicates that a sick person or a traveller is allowed not to fast, but he will have to compensate the missed fast on other days. …Allah (SwT) intends every facility for you and He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period and to glorify Him in that He has guided you, so that you my be grateful to Him.” Allah (SWT) has made matters easier for His servants and through His mercy He allows a sick person or a traveller to refrain from fasting in Ramadan and then complete the number in other days, so that His servants glorify Him and be grateful to Him for these concessions. This shows that fasting in Ramadan has not only been prescribed as a form of worship or training of a Muslim but also to show gratitude for the great favor of the revelation of Qur’an in the holy month of Ramadan.

(186) "When my servants ask thee (O’ Muhammad) concerning Me. Tell them I am indeed close to them. I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on Me." Allah (SWT) is very near to a man, even nearer than the jugular vein. He is so near to His servants that He even answers those requests and prayers which a person does not express verbally but keep within the innermost
recesses of the heart. He hears every cry of help and gives to His devotee that which is best in his interest, known to Him alone in His infinite wisdom. This ayah further affirms the principle that Allah (SWT) is near and close to each person, and accordingly there is no need for any external link or intercession between servants and Him. Further Allah (SWT) says: --Therefore, they should respond to Me and put their trust in Me, so that they may be rightly guided." This means, a person should answer and reciprocate by acting on the commandments of Allah (SWT), and have firm belief in Him so that he may be guided to the right path and veridical knowledge.

(187) "Permitted to you on the night of the fasts is the approach to your wives." In the beginning Muslims who observed fast supposed that they were not allowed to eat, drink or have sexual intercourse with their wives after Isha prayer, but Allah (SWT) made the matters easier for them and allowed eating and drinking, along with having sexual activities, during any part of the night until the light of dawn is distinguished from the darkness of night. --They are your garments. And you are their garments." i.e. As clothes and the body are closed to each other, in the same way husband and wife are closely related to each other and a source of mutual comfort to each other. --Allah (SWT) knows what you used to do secretly among yourselves, but He turned to you and forgave you, so now have conjugal relations with them and seek what Allah (SWT) hath ordained for you -- Although Muslims used to refrain from sexual intercourse after Isha prayer, but still there were some Companions (RAA) who confessed to the Holy Prophet (SAW) that they had some food and had sexual intercourse with their wives during the Ramadan nights. So this ayah was revealed and Allah (SWT) forgave them and gave them permission to approach their wives during the night of Ramadan. Further Allah (SWT) says: --and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn appear to you distinct from its black thread, then complete your fast till the night
appears." The Muslims were given permission to eat, drink and have sexual intercourse in the night until the light of dawn is distinguished from the darkness of the night. The sunnah of the Prophet (SAW) indicate the encouragement of eating Suhur just before dawn. "But do not approach your wives while you are in retreat in the mosques." This ayah refers to those who stay in I'tikaf in a mosque. Allah (SWT) prohibited the Muslims to have sexual intercourse with their wives until one finishes his I'tikaf. "Those are limits (set by) Allah (SWT), do not ever violate them. Thus Allah (SWT) makes His revelations clear to mankind so that they may guard themselves against evil." Allah (SWT) has made clear His revelations to Mankind. He explained in detail what He has allowed and what He has prohibited in fasting. And He commanded His servants not to transgress the limits set by Him, so that they may acquire righteousness.

(188) "And do not eat up one another's properties by unjust means nor use it as bait for the judges with intent that you may eat up wrongfully and knowingly a little of other people's property." One should not try to grab the properties of others through illegal means or by bribing the judges. It may also be possible that the judge may decide in favor of the transgressor because of someone being more persuasive in presenting the argument, but it does not change the fact that the property unjustly earned by the transgressor remains unlawful for him. It is reported in the Two Sahihs (Bukhari and Muslim) that Umm Salamah narrated that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: "I am only human! You people present your cases to me, and as some of you may be more eloquent and persuasive in presenting his argument, I might issue a judgment in his benefit. So, if I give a Muslim's right to another, I am really giving him a piece of fire; so he should not take it." A judge is only a human and he may make a mistake but the unjust person will still be accountable on the Day of Judgment for acquiring
others properties unlawfully and the judgment of the authorities in any case does not change the reality of the true position.

Foot Notes

[3] Literally, qisas means "equal" or "balanced". In the book Tafsir al-Qurthubi, qisas is also explained as "to follow the track of mark", and it comes therefore to mean that the treatment of the offender should be the same as his offence. Qisas, according to Islamic legal terminology, is "specified punishment imposed by Shari'a as an obligation to be implemented in order to carry out the right of mankind."
[4] Nafs (pl. Anfus or Nufus) lexically means soul, the psyche, the ego, self, life, person, heart or mind. (Mu'jam, Kassi).
[5] Eating and drinking during the night of Ramadan. Its time starts from Isha until the light of dawn, but preferred time according to the Sunnah is just before dawn.
[6] Retreat in the Mosque during the last ten days of Ramadan. One confines himself to the mosque and devotes one’s whole time to prayer and meditation along with the prescribed religious duties.
[7] Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim Cf. Tafsir Ibn Kathir, explanation of Surah AL-Baqarah, ayah 188..
"They ask you concerning the new moons. Say: they are but signs to mark fixed periods of time in the affairs of men and for pilgrimage." In Arabs different kinds of superstitions and customs were connected with the phases of the moon. They also used to perform some superstitious practices and rituals as they thought that the different phases of the moon affected their fortunes. Therefore, the Arabs questioned the Prophet (SAW) about them. Allah (SWT) informed them that these phases of the moon are nothing but a calendar which help regulate some acts of worship e.g. calculating the iddah (i.e. the period of time for a divorced woman) and fixing the time for Hajj (Pilgrimage). "It is no virtue if you enter your houses from the back."

Another of their superstitious customs was that the Arabs, after putting the 'Ihram' did not enter their houses through the regular doors, but used back entrances to get into their abodes and thought they were doing a righteous deed But Allah (SWT) warned them that your superstitious beliefs have nothing to do with virtue. Instead "it is virtue if you fear Allah (Swr)." i.e. the real virtue is that you follow what Allah (SWT) has commanded you to do. And Allah (SWT) says: "Enter houses through the proper doors and fear Allah (Swr) that you may succeed and prosper." This ayah puts an end to the false belief of entering the dwellings from the back side when in a state of Ihram.

"Fight in the cause of Allah (SwF) with those who fight against you." This was the first ayah revealed in Madinah regarding fighting. When the enemies of Islam found that the light of this message was sweeping darkness from every corner, the disbelievers vowed to annihilate it. So in the way of Allah (SWT), the Prophet (SAW) and his followers were instructed to put an end to the activities of the disbelievers and fight those who wanted to destroy the true devotees of Allah (SWT) in order to stop the advancement
and progress of Allah's (SWT) religion. "but do not exceed the limits. Allah does not like transgressors." i.e. A Muslim should be fighting for Allah (SWT) alone and not for any other purpose and he should not transgress the limits set by Allah (SWT) and His Prophet in this connection. These prohibitions are indicated in a hadith narrated by Buraydah that Allah's Messenger (SAW) said: "Fight for the sake of Allah (SWT) and fight those who disbelieve in Allah (SWT). Fight, but do not steal (from the captured goods), commit treachery, mutilate (the dead), or kill a child, or those who reside in houses of worship." ¹ In another hadith Allah's Messenger (SAW) also forbade killing innocent women and children.²

(191) "And slay them wherever you catch them and turn them out from where they have turned you out." Allah (SWT) commanded the Muslims to fight the disbelievers as they fought them and drive them out of the places from where they expelled them. "For Fitnah (tumult and oppression) is worse than killing." Islam means peace and advocates harmony in the human society and teaches us to tolerate and accommodate other creeds and avoid killing and destruction, but when people resort to disbelief in Allah (SWT), associate with Him partners, create mischief, hinder common believing men from Allah's (SWT) path, then this is much greater evil and more disastrous than killing. Therefore, it is lawful to use force against such disbelievers in order to restore peace and freedom for worship of Allah (SWT) and eliminate lawlessness, because Islam has no room for willful aggressors and cunning mischief-mongers. "but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque unless they (first) fight you there, but if they fight you slay them. Such is the reward of those who are unbelievers and suppress faith." Allah (SWT) commanded the Muslims not to fight the disbelievers in the area of the Sacred Mosque, except for self defense. It is reported in the two Sahihs that the Prophet (SAW) said : "Allah (SW7) has made this city a sanctuary since the day He created the heavens and the earth. So, it is a sanctuary by Allah's
(SWT) decree till the Day of Resurrection. Fighting in it was made legal for me only for an hour in the daytime. So, it (i.e. Makkah) is a sanctuary, by Allah's (SWT) decree, from now on until the Day of Resurrection. Its trees should not be cut, and its grass should not be uprooted. If anyone mentions the fighting in it that occurred by Allah's Messenger (SAW), then say that Allah (SWT) allowed His Messenger, but did not allow you. ”

(192) "But if they desist Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful." i.e. If the disbelievers stop fighting with the Muslims and repent and accept Islam, then Allah (SWT) will forgive their sins.

(193) "Fight against them until there is no more oppression and Allah (SWT) supremacy is established." Allah (SWT) has commanded the Muslims to fight against the disbelievers until there is no more oppression, Shirk (associating partners with Allah (SWT)) and mischief prevalent on the face of the earth and Allah's Deen becomes dominant over all other religions. As Allah (SWT) says: "It is He Who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth so that he may proclaim it over all religions, much as the Polytheists may dislike it." The root of evil is in polytheism. The actual purpose of fighting in the way of Allah (SWT) is to dislodge Polytheism, persecution, corruption and mischief which suppress freedom and do not allow people to choose between truth and falsehood so that they may willingly believe in Allah (SWT) and follow His commandments. Further Allah (SWT) says: "If they desist, let there be no hostility except against the oppressors." i.e. if they stop committing shirk and making mischief than cease fighting with them and do not treat them unjustly.

(194) "The Sacred month for the Sacred month and so for all things prohibited there is the law of equality." The four sacred months are Muharram, Rajab, Dhul-Qa'dah and Dhul-Hijjah. Since the time of Abraham (AS), robbery, theft
and every kind of violence and war was prohibited during these sacred months. But Allah (SWT) said: "If then anyone transgresses the prohibition against you, you transgress likewise against him." i.e. if the disbelievers attack you in these Sacred months then you do the same with them and fight against them. "But fear Allah (SWT)" i.e. Although, you are allowed to fight against the disbelievers in self defense during these Sacred months but you should not transgress the limits set by Allah (SWT) and obey Him and fear Him only because Allah (SWT) says: "And know that Allah (SWT) is with those who restrain themselves." i.e. those who have Taqwa (Piety) and are righteous.

(195) "And spend of your substance in the cause of Allah (SWF) and make not your own hands contribute to your destruction but do good." This ayah implies that if a person does not spend in the way of Allah (SWT) especially when fighting against the enemies of Allah (SWT) then he will bring himself to destruction in this world and in the hereafter. A Man’s life and his possessions are not his own. They belong to Allah (SWT). Man only holds them as a trust. He should not use them to please himself. He must spend of his wealth and possessions and even readily give his life in the way of Allah (SWT) to promote His cause. "For Allah (SWF) loves those who do good." Muhsin (derived from ihsan) is he who acts well, does good deeds and spends in the way Allah (SWT). Allah (SWT), therefore, says that He loves the Muhsin who spends in His cause and to attain His love.

(196) "And complete the Hajj or Umrah in the service of Allah (SWF)...." After describing fasting and Jihad, Allah (SWT) commands the Muslims to complete their Hajj and Umrah once they start their journey towards the Sacred Mosque. "But if you are prevented (from completing it)...." i.e. if one is not able to complete the Hajj because of illness or encounter with an enemy. Ath-Thawri said: "Being prevented entails everything that harms a person". 5 "send an offering for sacrifice such as you may find...." i.e. If one is
prevented from completing the Hajj or Umrah then he should offer a sacrifice in the place where he is prevented, whether that is within the Sanctuary or outside, and he should give the meat to the poor in the place where he is, even if he is outside the Sanctuary. If he cannot find anyone around him, it should be taken to the poor of the Haram or to the poor around any of the villages. This is the ruling of majority of the scholars including Imam Sh’afi (iA) and Imam Malik (^A). According to the Hanafi school of thought the place of sacrifice refers to the bounds of the Holy Sanctuary, so according to them the animal should be sent for sacrifice within the boundaries of Masjid Al-Haram. The animals to be sacrificed include camels, cows, goats and sheeps. "And do not shave your heads until the offering reaches the place of sacrifice. And if any of you is ill or has an ailment in his scalp (necessitating shaving) (he should) in compensation either fast or feed the poor or offer sacrifice." Allah (SWT) has commanded the Muslims who perform Umrah or Hajj, not to shave their heads until the sacrifice has reached the Haram (Holy Sanctuary). But those who because of any illness have to shave their heads before that, then they should either fast for three days, feed the poor (six persons) or offer a sacrifice. "and when you are in peaceful conditions (again) if anyone wishes to continue the Umrah on to the Hajj he must make an offering which he can afford." This is known as Hajj Tamattu' i.e. performing Umrah and Hajj on the same journey. In the pre-Islamic era, Hajj Tamattu' was considered a great sin and a separate journey was to be performed for each ritual but Allah (SWT) declared this law as void and allowed those coming from abroad to perform Hajj and Umrah in the same journey, except for those who lived within the bounds of the Holy Sanctuary. Allah (SWT) also commanded the person performing Tamattu' to offer a sacrifice which he can easily afford. "but if he cannot afford it then he should fast three days during the Hajj and seven days on his return making ten days in all." For those performing Tamattu' who cannot afford to offer a sacrifice then they should fast for three days during the Hajj and
seven days when he gets back home making ten days in all. He should fast before the 'Day of Arafah' (9th of Dhul-Hijjah) but if he cannot then he can also fast during the 'Days of Tashriq' (11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah). "This is for those whose household is not in (the precincts of) the Sacred Mosque." i.e. the residents of the area of Haram (Makkah) are not allowed to do Tamattu'. "And fear Allah (SWT) and know that Allah (SWT) is strict in punishment." Allah (SWT) warns those who do not obey His commandments and commit what He has prohibited. So one should have fear of Him and know that He is stern in retribution.

(197) "Pilgrimage (Hajj) is in the appointed months." Shawwal, Dhul-Qad'ah and the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are the well known months and the Ihram for Hajj can only occur during these months and is not allowed before that. "If anyone undertakes that duty therein let there be no obscenity or sexual relations nor wickedness nor wrangling in the Hajj." Allah (SWT) has legislated certain restrictions on a person in the state of Ihram. A person who assumes Ihram for Hajj or Umrah is not allowed to have sexual intercourse with his wife or even conversation which may stimulate sexual desire. Further he should also refrain from disobedience of Allah (SWT) by committing any of the prohibitions and from quarrelling with his Muslim brothers. "And whatever good you do be sure that Allah (SWT) knows it." i.e. If they do righteous deeds and obey Allah's (SWT) commandments and refrain from what He has prohibited then He will surely reward them on the Day of Resurrection, as He knows everything. "And take a provision with you for the journey." i.e. to plan and carry sufficient provisions for the journey so as not to become destitute and be a burden on others. "but the best of provisions is Taqwa (righteousness). So fear Me 0' men of understanding!" i.e. If the men of understanding desire increase in provision, here and in the Hereafter, then they should excel in humbleness, obedience and Taqwa.
(198) "It is no crime in you if ye seek of the bounty of your Lord (during Pilgrimage)"

There was another misconception in the pre-Islamic era that they did not like to conduct business activities during the days of Hajj. But Allah (SWT) removed this misconception and allowed persons performing Hajj to conduct businesses in order to earn their livelihood. "Then when you pour down from (Mount) Arafat celebrate the praises of Allah (SWF) at the Sacred Monument"

Between Arafat and Mina there is a place called Mu2dalifah where Prophet Muhammad (SAW) offered a long prayer. Since then it has become a Sacred monument and the pilgrims are commanded in this ayah to follow the example of their Prophet (SAW). "and celebrate His praises as He has directed you even though before this you went astray." Allah (SWT) reminds the believers of the favors he bestowed upon them by teaching them the rituals of Hajj and guiding them and surely they were in error before this guidance came to them i.e. the Qur'an.

(199) "Then pass on at a quick pace from the place whence it is usual for the multitude so to do and ask for Allah's (SwF) forgiveness." The Quraish before Islam used to remain in the Sanctuary near Mu2dalifah and did not proceed to Arafat with other people because they said that "it is below are dignity to go to Arafat like other people as we are the custodians of the Ka'bah'. But Allah (SWT) commanded His Prophet (SAW) and his followers to stand at Arafat with other people and then proceed from there. They were also commanded to ask for Allah's (SWT) forgiveness for the wrong things you have been committing. "For Allah (SwF) is Oft Forgiving Most Merciful."

(200) "So when you have accomplished your holy rites celebrate the praises of Allah as you used to celebrate the praises of your fathers or with far more heart and soul." Before the advent of Islam the Pagans, after performing the rituals of Hajj would gather in assemblies at Mina and praise their forefathers and remember their deeds which is against the spirit of Hajj. Hajj is for the glory of
Allah (SWT) and not for praise of the self or the forefathers. Therefore, Allah (SWT) commanded them to give up such traditions and instead glorify Him and praise Him far more than they used to praise their forefathers. "There are men who say: "Our Lord! give us (Your bounties) in this world!" but they will have no portion in the hereafter." In this ayah Allah (SWT) criticizes the people who only supplicate to Him for worldly goods and wealth, ignoring the affairs of the Hereafter. But Allah (SWT) says that if you only supplicate for the good things in this world then you would lose the higher things in the Hereafter, the best of which is the Paradise.

(201) "And there are men who say: "Our Lord! give us good in this world and good in the hereafter and defend us from the torment of the fire!"" In this ayah Allah (SWT) praises His servants who supplicate to Him for the good of this life as well as in the next which include safety from the torment of hellfire, Paradise and easy questioning and evaluation on the Day of Reckoning.

(202) "To these will be allotted the share of what they have earned and Allah (SWT) is swift in reckoning." i.e. Our good or bad deeds go before us for the judgment of Allah (SWT) and they will be witnesses for or against us. So whatever a person sends forth, he will surely find it with Allah (SWT) and surely He is quick in taking account. In short, our spiritual account is mounting up, both on the debit and credit side. In worldly accounts our profits and losses may be delayed. But in Allah’s (SWT) book, there is no delay. Our actions go before us.

(203) "Celebrate the praises of Allah (SWT) during the Appointed Days." The Appointed days are the 'Days of Tashriq' (i.e. 12th, 13th and 14th of Dhul-Hijjah.). Allah (SWT) commands the believers to praise Him and glorify Him during these days in chanting His Dhikr and supplicating to Him. "but if anyone hastens to leave in two days there is no blame on him and if anyone stays on there is no
blame on him if his aim is to do right." It is optional for the Pilgrims to leave in
the second day or to extend their stay and leave on the third day. The
real thing that matters is not the number of days they stay at Mina but
whether they have spend those days in remembering Allah (SWT) or
indulging in other matters. "Then fear Allah (SWT) and know that you will surely
be gathered before Him." The true believer should always remember Allah
(SWT), safeguarding himself with full awareness of His laws and knowing
for certain that all shall be gathered before Him on the Day of Judgment.

(204) "There is the type of man whose speech about this world’s life may dazzle you and
he calls Allah (SWT) to vouch for what is in his heart." In this ayah Allah (SWT)
describes the characteristics of a hypocrite. They are the people who use
religion in order to gain worldly benefits as it is in their own selfish
interest to do so. For them it is not divinely ordained right and wrong
that matters, they just go by what makes a favorable impression on the
listener. They have no problem in painting a glowing picture on the
outside, despite the fact that in their hearts they hide the wickedness of
wolves and thus lack true sincerity. And in order to show their sincerity
to the believers they call Allah (SWT) as their witness about what is in his
heart; but Allah (SWT) says: "yet is he the most contentious of enemies." i.e. he
alters the truth and is the most quarrelsome of all. So in fact he is the
deadliest of Muslim’s opponents.

(205) "When he turns his back his aim everywhere is to spread mischief through the earth
and destroy crops and cattle." There is bound to be a dichotomy between the
words and the actions of the hypocrites and double-faced people. Their
words are empty and fabricated and contradict their own deeds and they
spread mischief everywhere destroying the crops and livestock whenever
they get an opportunity. "But Allah (SWT) does not love mischief." i.e. Allah (SWT)
does not like people with these characteristics of a hypocrite.
(206) "When it is said to him "Fear Allah" he is led by arrogence to (more) crime." i.e. when the hypocrites who deceive through their speech and words are asked to fear Allah (SWT) and mend their ways, they out of their pride and egotism increase in their arrogence and refuse to adhere to the truth. That is to say, vanity carries them off to sin and they persist in misdemeanors. "Enough for him is Hell, an evil bed indeed (to lie on)!" i.e. Hellfire is enough for the hypocrite as a punishment-a horrible resting place indeed.

(207) "And there is the type of man who would sell himself to earn the pleasure of Allah (SWT)." After describing the characteristics of a hypocrite Allah (SWT) mentions the qualities of a Momin (true believer). Allah (SWT) states that a believer is the one who is ever ready to sacrifice his life and his possessions to attain the pleasure of Allah (SWT). This ayah includes every Mujahid in the way of Allah (SWT) as Allah (SWT) states in another ayah: "Indeed Allah (SWT) has purchased from the believers their persons and their wealth and in return has promised them paradise, they fight in the cause of Allah (SWT) and slay and are slain. This is a true promise which is binding on Him mentioned in Torah, the Injeel (Gospel) and the Qur'an, and who is truer in fulfilling his promise than Allah. Rejoice, therefore, in the bargain which you have made, and that is the supreme triumph." 7 Further Allah (SWT) says: "and Allah (SWT) is compassionate to His servants." i.e. to such believers who endeavour to find favor with Allah (SWT).

(208) "0' you who believe! Enter into Islam whole-heartedy" Allah (SWT) commands the believers to surrender and submit with perfect belief and deep conviction i.e. to obey Allah's (SWT) commandments and refrain from its prohibitions without any consideration for one's own interests and
reservations. But one who accepts and practices Islam only to the extent that it does not clash with one's everyday life does not enter into Islam whole-heartedly. "And follow not the footsteps of the Satan, for he is an open enemy to you." i.e. Avoid what Satan commands you to do as he invites people to become the dwellers of Hellfire because of his enmity towards the children of Adam (A5). Satan is indeed man's sworn enemy.

(209) "If you falter after clear signs have come to you." i.e. if you deviate from the religion when Allah (SWT) has already sent clear signs and miracles, the greatest miracle of them being this Qur'an. "Then keep in mind that Allah (SWT) is Mighty, Wise." i.e. Allah (SWT) has total authority and might to punish the criminals and He is Wise in His decisions.

(210) "Are they waiting for Allah (SWT) to come down to them in the shadow of clouds, along with the angels." Meaning what else are those who doubt Allah’s (SWT) religion waiting for, but that Allah (SWT) Himself should appear, along with all the angels. i.e. on the Day of Judgment. "And make His decision known." At that time there will be no more chance left for the disbelievers and even if they believe in Allah (SWT) when they see Him with their own eyes and the angels then their belief and submission will be of no use to them because that will be the time of final Judgment and verdict. As Allah (SWT) says: "Ultimately all matters will be presented to Allah (SWT) for decision." To Allah (SWT) shall all things return.

(211) "Ask the Children of Israel how many clear signs We have given them." The Children of Israel were shown many great signs by Allah (SWT). Yet, most of them disobeyed His commandments and ignored His favors and preferred their own whims and fancies over the guidance. "Anyone who tampers with the boon of Allah (SWT) after it has come to him, should know that Allah (SWT) is strict in retribution." Allah (SWT) favored the Children of Israel over
other nations and provided them with provision and wealth and showed them the straight path but they changed Allah’s (SWT) favors by being ungrateful and by preferring disbelief over true guidance. Verily Allah (SWT) will severely punish all those who disobey Him.

(212) “The life of this world is alluring to those who reject faith and they scoff at those who believe.” The disbelievers accumulate all the worldly splendors in this life and amass wealth but refrain from spending it in the way of Allah (SWT). Instead they look down upon the true believers and scoff at them for spending their lives and wealth in the way of Allah (SWT) to earn His pleasure and remain bereft of things of worldly importance. "But the righteous will be above them on the Day of Resurrection." i.e. the disbelievers may be enjoying the worldly pleasures in this transitional period but on the Day of Resurrection it will be the faithful who will be exalted and in the highest ranks, while the disbelievers will be humiliated terribly. "for Allah (SWT) bestows His abundance without measures on whom He wills." i.e. Allah (SWT) provides sustenance to whomever He wishes without any count or measure in this world and in the Hereafter.

(213) "Mankind was one single nation and Allah (SWT) sent Messengers with glad tidings and warnings and with them He sent the Book in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed." Allah’s (SWT) Deen is one. Yet men differ among themselves, each interpreting the divine religion his own way, so that it may fit in the way they themselves see it. In this way different sects, all claiming allegiance to one divine religion, came into existence. But in the beginning there was only one Deen and humans began their life in full light of divine truth. When Allah (SWT) created Adam (AS), He showed him the right path i.e. Islam, and all were one community. But after Adam (AS), people started to sway away from the right path and developed difference of opinion among themselves. Therefore, Allah (SWT)
sent His Messengers to proclaim the truth on earth and gave them the Divine Books so as to judge between the people who differed. "But the People of the Book after the clear Signs came to them did not differ among themselves except through selfish contumacy and envy of one another." Allah (SWT) showed the Jews and the Christians clear signs and miracles, yet they disputed among themselves on various accounts and remained attached to their self-generated interpretations of the religion. They say that why should we accept what is taught to us by another when we have a perfectly good religion of our own. This behavior causes them to deny the truth and makes them proud and prejudiced. "Allah (SWT) by His Grace guided the believers to the truth concerning that wherein they differed. For Allah (SWT) guides whom He wills to the straight path." While the people of the Book disputed each other over the matters of religion, Allah (SWT) guided the Uninah of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) to the truth by His leave and knowledge. And He guides from among His creations to whom He wills towards the right path of Islam.

(214) "Do you think that you shall enter Paradise without any trials as came to those who passed away before you?" i.e. the only way to enter Paradise is through tests and trials in the real vicissitudes of life. This involves much pain, sorrow, suffering and self-sacrifice like the trials suffered by the nations before this Uninah. "They encountered suffering and adversity and were so shaken in spirit that even the Messenger and those of faith who were with him cried: "When (will come) the help of Allah (SWT) ?"" i.e. they were made subject to such tremendous trials and hardships that they invoked Allah (SWT) for help and relief from the suffering. And Allah (SWT) says: "Ah! verily the help of Allah (SWT) is (always) near!." 

(215) "They ask you what they should spend (in charity). Say: Whatever you spend that is good is for parents and kindred and orphans and those in want and for wayfarers."
Islam encourages the believers to spend in the way of Allah (SWT). Every Muslim must follow the divine commandments as to how the bounties of Allah (SWT), given to him, should be shared with other needy Muslims and strive for the everlasting reward. This ayah also tells us the order in which charity should be given. First, in the list, are the parents, then the kinsfolk, the orphans, the needy and then the wayfarer. "And whatever you do that is good Allah (SWT) knows it well." i.e. Allah (SWT) knows whatever one performs of the good works and He will reward them according to their deeds.

(216) "Fighting is prescribed for you and you dislike it." In this ayah Allah (SWT) made it obligatory for the Muslims to engage in Jihad against the enemies of Allah (SWT) but people disliked it i.e. it was heavy on their hearts. "But it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you love a thing which is bad for you. But Allah (SWT) knows and you know not." i.e. one might consider something to be good yet it is not beneficial for him and he might dislike something which in fact is for his own good because of the limited knowledge he has but Allah (SWT) has all knowledge and He knows what is good for His bondsmen and what is not beneficial for them.

(217) "They ask thee concerning fighting in the Prohibited Month. Say: "Fighting therein is a grave offence, but graver is it in the sight of Allah to prevent access to the path of Allah to deny Him to prevent access to the Sacred Mosque and drive out its members. Tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter." A group of Muslims under the leadership of Abdullah bin Jahsh (RA) killed one of the disbelievers of Quraysh, at the place of Nakhlah. The Muslims thought that it was the thirtieth of Jamad uth-Than^, the month before Rajab, but the new moon had already been sighted the evening before and it was the first day of Rajab. Now, Rajab is counted among the sacred months, and
Arabs considered it a great sin fighting in these months. Therefore, the polytheists started accusing the Prophet (SAW) and his Companions (RA) because of this violation. Allah (SWT) affirms the sanctity of the holy months in this ayah but He says that making mischief in the land, denying Him, debarring others from His path and oppression are far more greater crimes than fighting in the Sacred month. So as a matter of fact idolatry is worse than carnage. "Nor will they cease fighting you until they turn you back from your faith if they can" i.e. the disbelievers did not cease fighting with the Muslims in the Sacred months, instead they prevented them from visiting the Ka’bah and turned them out of their houses, and tormented them with extreme forms of cruelty, in their efforts to force Muslims to forsake their faith. And Allah (SWT) says: "And if any of you turn back from their faith and die in unbelief their works will bear no fruit in this life and in the Hereafter, they will be Companions of the Fire and will abide therein" i.e. those who were weak in faith, could not bear the pressure and lost their faith in Allah (SWT). So Allah (SWT) says that those who turned their backs and died in that state, will be the losers in this life and in the Hereafter and their abode will be Hellfire forever.

(218) "Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought (and strove and struggled) in the path of Allah (SWT) they have the hope of the Mercy of Allah (SWT)." On the other hand, Allah (SWT) describes the characteristics of the believers who were persecuted, exiled and struggled for Allah’s (SWT) sake but still remained devoted to Allah (SWT) through all torment and oppression in the hope of His Mercy and Pleasure. And Allah (SWT) says: "and Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful." Those who are sincerely devout and struggle and fight for the cause of Allah (SWT), may hope for Allah’s (SWT) mercy. Allah (SWT) is Forgiving and Merciful.
(219) "They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say: "In them is great sin and some profit for men; but the sin is greater than the profit."" This was the first injunction concerning intoxicants and gambling but it did not explicitly prohibit them until the ayat in surah An-Nisa and surah Al-Maidah were revealed on this subject. The ayah continues, "They ask you how much they are to spend; say: "What is beyond your needs."" i.e. Allah (SWT) is encouraging the believers to spend in His way whatever one can spare i.e. after fulfilling one's own needs and of his family and relatives. "Thus Allah (SWT) makes His Signs clear to you, in order that you may consider." i.e. Allah (SWT) has made His revelations clear for all to understand, so that one might reflect upon this worldly life and the Hereafter.

(220) "(Their bearings) on this life and the Hereafter. They ask you concerning orphans. Say: "The best thing to do is what is for their good, if you mix their affairs with yours they are your brethren, but Allah (SWT) knows the man who means mischief from the man who means good."" The Companions (IA) asked the Prophet (SAW) about the properties of the orphans getting mixed up with their properties, so this ayah was revealed and Allah (SWT) commanded them to do what is best in the orphans interest sincerely and allowed them to join their food with that of the orphans but still Allah (SWT) warned them at the same time that He knows those whose intent is to cause mischief and those who mean good for the orphans. "And if Allah (SWT) had wished He could have put you into similar difficulties." i.e. if Allah pleased, He could afflict you. So to deal justly with them is best. And "He is indeed Exalted in Power, Wise"

Foot Notes
[5] Ibid.
[6] The root of mujahedeen is J-H-D (ٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖـٖ~)~(~) meaning "effort" in general; however, the particular verb stem of J-H-D from which both jihad and mujahid are derived means "to exert effort against" or "to struggle". Mujahid is
originally, therefore, someone who struggles but in the ayah mentioned 9:111), a mujahid refers to a fighter or a warrior, fighting in the way of Allah SWJ i.e. Qitaalfi Sabilillah.

(221) "Do not marry unbelieving women (idolaters) until they believe." In this ayah Allah (SWT) prohibits the believers from marrying idolatresses, whether they be from the idol worshippers or from the people of the Book. "A slave woman who believes is better than an unbelieving woman even though she allure you." i.e. No matter how much an unbelieving women may please you, you should prefer a slave women who does not worship idols. "Nor marry (your daughters) to unbelievers until they believe. A man slave who believes is better than un unbeliever even though he allure you." Similarly Allah (SWT) commands the Muslims not to marry their daughters to unbelieving men and that a Muslim slave is better then an idolator, even if he is a wealthy person and pleases you greatly. "Unbelievers do (but) call you to the fire." The reason why the Muslims have been prohibited from marrying idolators is that they invite you to the fire of hell i.e. their love might make you love this life more than the Hereafter. "But Allah (SWT) beckons by His grace to the Paradise and forgiveness." i.e. If you follow Allah's (SWT) commandments and do not commit what He has prohibited then He will forgive your sins and will admit you to the Paradise by His grace. Further Allah (SWT) said: "and makes His Signs clear to mankind, that they may celebrate His praise." i.e. He makes plain His revelations to mankind, so that they may be mindful.

(222) "They ask you concerning women's courses. Say: it is discomfort, so keep away from women in their courses and do not approach them until they are clean. But when they have purified themselves you may approach them in the manner Allah (SWT) has ordained for you." Menstruation is a purifying process for a women and Muslims have been commanded not to go near their wives until they get purified. Once they are clean and purified Allah (SWT) commands the Muslims to approach their wives in only the manner ordained by Him i.e.
avoiding impurity and filth in sexual relations. And Allah (SWT) says: "For Allah (SIA(T) loves those who turn to Him constantly and cleanse and purify themselves." i.e. who repent for their sins and avoid sexual immorality.

(223) "Your wives are as a tillage unto you, so approach your tillage when or how you will." This ayah explains the previous ayah where Allah (SWT) says that approach your wives only in the manner ordained by Him and keep in mind that women are a field for her husband, who sows the seed in order to reap the harvest. Therefore, he should not cultivate it in a wasteful or unnatural way. "But do some good act for your souls beforehand and fear Allah" Doing good works for your souls means acting with the Hereafter in mind and our highest spiritual goal should be the hope to meet Allah (SWT) on the Day of Resurrection. We should be aware of the fact that in addition to this temporary life, there is also an eternal side to it that we should be striving for. "And bear in mind that you are to meet Him (in the Hereafter) and give (these) good tidings to those who believe."

(224) "Do not use Allah's name in your oaths as an excuse to prevent you from dealing justly, guarding against evil and making peace between people." Allah (SWT) prohibits the believers not to make an oath in His name as an excuse for not doing the right thing or refraining from guarding against evil or making peace between two parties. And keep in mind that "Allah hears and knows everything."

(225) "Allah (SIA(TF) will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths but for the intention in your hearts." i.e. Allah (SWT) will not hold anyone accountable for unintentional oaths, but He will call them to account for the vows made deliberately. There is neither an expiation for such an oath nor is there any punishment for them. "and He is Oft-Forgiving Most Forbearing." i.e. He forgives the mistakes of His servants made unintentionally.
(226) "For those who take an oath for abstention from their wives a waiting for four months is ordained." Such a separation between husband and wife is called 'ha' where a husband vows not to sleep with his wife for a certain period. But Qur'an ignores such oaths concerning disassociation with wives and gives four months for reconsideration and reconciliation. "If then they return Allah (SWT) is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful." i.e. if they return to their wives within the prescribed four months then Allah (SWT) will forgive them.

(227) "But if their intention is firm for divorce (then know that), Allah hears and knows everything." i.e. Fear Allah (SWT) and do not divorce your wives for unjustifiable reasons, for He knows everything.

(228) "Divorced women shall wait (keeping themselves from marriage) for three monthly periods." This ayah describes the iddah (waiting period) of a divorced woman. She is required to keep herself in waiting for three menstrual periods, before she can remarry if she wishes. "nor is it lawful for them to hide what Allah (SwF) has created in their wombs if they have faith in Allah (SwF) and the Last Day." i.e. if the woman finds out that she is pregnant then it is not lawful for her to hide that from her husband nor she should hide the knowledge of her menstruation cycles. And Allah (SwT) warns them not to conceal the truth in order to act according to their own desires. "And their husbands have the better right to take them back in that period if they wish for reconciliation." i.e. the door of reconciliation remains open. If the husband wants to take the wife back before the expiry of iddah (waiting period), he can do so. "And women shall have rights similar to the rights against them according to what is equitable." This ayah states that a women also has certain rights over her husband as he has rights over her. A woman should take care of her husband's property in his absence, look after the house and the children and should also take care of her appearance which pleases her husband.
Similarly a husband has the responsibility to spend on her food and clothing and taking care of her in all other affairs. That is why Allah (SWT) says: "but men have a degree (of advantage) over them." i.e. men are protectors and maintainers of women, therefore, they are given a degree of advantage over women physically and by means provided to them, as Allah (SWT) says: "Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because Allah (SWT) has given the one more strength than the other and because they support them from their means..." 1 “and Allah (SWT) is Exalted in Power Wise." i.e. Allah (SWT) is Mighty and all His decisions and orders are based on wisdom which may be not evident to us.

(229) "A divorce is only permissible twice." Before the advent of Islam one of the horrible practices of the Arab society was pronouncing the divorce as many times as a husband would wish. He would divorce his wife repeatedly and then take her back whenever he wished. This ayah put an end to this cruel practice and Allah (SWT) made the divorce thrice, where the husband is allowed to take her back after the first and the second divorce within the iddah (waiting period) but as soon as he divorces her for the third time his wife is separated from him permanently. "after that the parties should either hold together on equitable terms or separate with kindness." i.e. If a husband decides to take his wife back after the first or the second divorce then he can do so within the iddah, but if the divorce becomes final then he should let her go in kindness. "It is not lawful for you (men) to take back any of your gifts (from your wives) except when both parties fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah (SWT)." i.e. after a husband divorces his wife he is not allowed to take anything from the Mahr (dowry) or from the gifts he has given to his wife. "If you fear that they would be unable to keep the limits ordained by Allah (SWT), there is no blame on either of them if she gives something for her freedom." This is known as Khula in Islamic law i.e. if a wife dislikes her husband and cannot live with him...
then she is allowed to free herself from the marriage by giving up her Mahr totally or partially and the husband will have to accept that and divorce his wife. "These are the limits ordained by Allah (SWF), so do not transgress them. If any do transgress the limits ordained by Allah (SWF) such persons wrong themselves." The limits set by Allah (SWT) are the rulings and commandments set by Him. This ayah is also used to prove that pronouncing three divorces in one go are not allowed in Islam, and the Prophet (SAW) very severely denounced this practice.

(230) "So if a husband divorces his wife (irrevocably) he cannot after that remarry her until after she has married another husband and he has divorced her. In that case there is no blame on either of them if they reunite provided they feel that they can keep the limits ordained by Allah (SWF)." This ayah means that if a person divorces his wife for the third time then he cannot take her back and the decision will be irrevocable. Then if she marries another man who after having consummating the marriage divorces her in normal circumstances and not only for the reason so that she can marry her ex-husband, then it is allowed for her to marry her first husband provided that they can live together honorably. "Such are the limits ordained by Allah (SWF) which He makes plain to those who understand." i.e. it is incumbent on a believer to act according to the commandments given by Allah (SWT). These are the bounds by Allah (SWT) that must not be transgressed.

(231) "When you divorce women and they fulfill the term of their iddah, either take them back on equitable terms or set them free on equitable terms, but do not take them back to injure them or to take undue advantage." This ayah states that it is not lawful for a person to reunite with his wife within the iddah simply to harass her or punish her. So if a person really intends to take her back then he should do it with kindness and in a way that is better for both of them. Otherwise he should let her go in a graceful manner. "If anyone does that He
wrongs his own soul" i.e. he will be responsible for the consequences if he defies Allah's (SWT) commandments. Further Allah (SWT) says: "Do not treat Allah's (SWT) Signs as a jest but solemnly rehearse Allah's (SWT) favors on you and the fact that He sent down to you the Book and Wisdom for your instruction" i.e. Allah (SWT) has given you the Book and Wisdom for your guidance, therefore, it does not behove you to make a mockery of Allah's (SWT) revelations or to defy His prescribed laws. "And fear Allah (SWT) and know that Allah (SWT) is well acquainted with all things." i.e. Allah (SWT) warns you to be mindful of the fact that He is the knower of all things.

(232) "When you divorce women and they fulfill the term of their iddah, do not prevent them from marrying their husbands if they mutually agree on equitable terms." This ayah warns the Wali (guardian) and the relatives of a women not to prevent her from remarrying her husband who had divorced her once or twice but could not reunite with her within the waiting period, provided they can live on honorable terms with each other. "This instruction is for all amongst you who believe in Allah (SWT) and the Last Day." i.e. only a believer follows Allah's (SWT) commandments because if he does not believe in Allah (SWT) and does not fear His judgment, he will not be inclined to heed admonishment. And Allah (SWT) says: "This is more virtuous and chaste for you and Allah (SWT) knows whereas you do not know." i.e. obeying Allah's (SWT) commandments is the most cleaner and purer way.

(233) "The mothers shall breast-feed their offspring for two whole years if the father wishes the breast-feeding to be completed." In this ayah Allah (SWT) commands all the mothers to suckle their child only for two years and not beyond that period. "The reasonable cost of their maintenance and clothing will be the responsibility of the child's father." i.e. it is the responsibility of the father to provide the mother and his child with reasonable clothing and food according to his means. "No one should be charged with more than they can afford. Neither a mother
should be made to suffer on account of her child nor a father on account of his child. The father's heirs are under the same obligation.\(^1\) i.e. each must fulfill his part in the fostering of the child and both of them should not be burdened with more than their capability. "But if with mutual agreement they both decide to wean the child there is no blame on them. If you decide to have a foster-mother for your offspring there is no blame on you provided you pay what you have promised to pay in an honorable manner." \(^2\) There should be a mutual consent in whether they decide to wean the child or the father assumes the custody of the child and brings in a foster-mother for his offspring. In any case the father should kindly give the mother her expenses for the care and suckling of the child. "Fear Allah (SWT) and beware that Allah (SWT) observes your actions." \(^3\) i.e. Follow His commandments and do not commit what He has prohibited and be mindful of the fact that He sees all what you do.

\(^{234}\) "As for those of you who die and leave widows behind, let them abstain from marriage for four months and ten days." This is the prescribed iddah for a widow including the cases where the marriage was not consummated. But in case a widow is pregnant then her iddah goes up to the time of delivery of her child, whether it is just after the death of her husband or several months after that. "When they have reached the end of this period, there is no blame on you for what they do for themselves in a decent manner. Allah (SWT) is aware of what you do." i.e. when her waiting period ends then there is no offence for her if she adorns herself and accepts proposals for marriage in an honorable manner, and does whatever she chooses for herself, provided that it is lawful.

\(^{235}\) "There is no blame on you if you make an offer of betrothal or hold it in your hearts." Allah (SWT) has allowed for a person to make an indirect proposal of marriage to a widow, within her waiting period or conceal it in his heart until her iddah ends. "Allah (SWT) knows that you remember them in your
hearts, but do not make a secret contract with them except in terms honorable nor resolve on the tie of marriage till the term prescribed is fulfilled." i.e. do not make any promises or secret arrangements for marriage with her within the waiting period but it is allowed to make a decent insinuation like saying that 'I desire you for marriage' or informing her guardian of his intentions of marrying her. "And know that Allah (SWT) knows what is in your hearts and take heed of Him." i.e. do not think anything bad about them. "and know that Allah (SWT) is Oft Forgiving Most Forbearing." This means that Allah (SWT) will not let those who follow His commandments despair of His mercy.

(236) "There is no blame on you if you divorce women before the marriage is consummated or the dowry is settled." Allah (SWT) has allowed for a husband to divorce his wife before consummating the marriage or the payment of the dowry. "Pay them something anyhow, the rich man according to his means and poor according to his, a reasonable amount in all fairness." i.e. there should be some compensation for the women after the marital relation has been broken and the husband should give provision for the divorced woman, according to his means, whether he is rich or poor. And Allah (SWT) says: "This is an obligation on the righteous people." i.e. on those people who are keen to earn Allah's (SWT) pleasure by following His commandments.

(237) "And if you divorce them before consummation but after the fixation of a dower for them then pay half of the dower unless they remit it." i.e. Allah (SWT) has ordained for a husband who divorces his wife before the marriage is consummated but after the fixation of the dowry, to give his wife half of the dowry unless she wants to waive it in favor of her former husband. "Or it is remitted by him in whose hands is the marriage tie." i.e. if the husband wants to pay the dowry in full instead of giving half of it. "and the remission (of the man's half) is the nearest to righteousness." It refers to the husband giving up his half of the dowry and paying the woman in full. "And do not forget
liberality between yourselves." i.e. do not forget to show kindness to each other. "For Allah (SWT) sees well all that you do." Allah (SWT) is watching His servants and He will reward them according to their deeds.

(238) "Guard your Salah." Allah (SWT) has made it obligatory for all the Muslims to perform the five daily prayers⁴ in its fixed times. This is an extremely important tenet of Islam and has been enjoined with great emphasis both in the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). According to one of his sayings, it is the borderline between a Muslim and a non-believer. "especially the middle Salah." The word 'Wusta' means both middle and excellent. Thus Salat al-Wusta means the middle prayer as well as an excellent prayer. According to the majority of scholars the middle prayer (Salat al-Wusta) referred in this ayah is the Asr prayer. "and stand up with true devotion to Allah (SWT)." i.e. in humility and humbleness with full concentration and presence of mind.

(239) "If you are in danger, pray on foot or while riding." This is known as salat al-Khawf (Fear prayer). If there is intense fear while traveling or when one is in a battle or combat then if the time of prayer comes, it is lawful for him to perform salah standing on foot or riding and praying only one rak'ah behind the Prophet (SAW) whether facing the Qiblah or otherwise.⁴ "and when you are safe, remember Allah in the manner that He has taught you which you did not know before." i.e. say the prayer as Allah (SWT) has taught you through His Prophet (SAW).

(240) "Those of you who die and leave widows should bequeath for them a year's maintenance without causing them to leave their homes, but if they leave the residence on their own there is no blame on you for what they chose for themselves in a fair way. Allah (SWT) is Mighty, Wise."⁶ In this ayah Allah (SWT) commands the husband to bequeath maintenance for his wife (other than what a widow inherits) for
a year after his death and she should be allowed to remain in his house for that period. Or if she wants she is allowed to leave the house after her waiting period (i.e. four months and ten days) is over.

(241) "Reasonable provisions must also be made for divorced women. That is an obligation upon those who fear Allah (SWT)."

(242) "Thus does Allah (SwT) makes clear His Signs to you, in order that you may understand."

This is an extra grant to every divorced woman in addition to the dowry, whether the marriage was consummated or not.

From here we again return to the subject of Jihad. As mentioned earlier, this surah was revealed just before the Battle of Badr and the Muslims in Madinah who were expelled from Makkah were again and again asking the Prophet (SAW) to permit them to fight but when they were commanded to fight, some of them became reluctant and began to lose heart. So Allah (SWT) mentions the following incidents from the history of the Israelites to encourage them and to exhort them to do Jihad.

(243) "Did you not see those who abandoned their homes though they were thousands (in number) for fear of death. Allah (SWT) said to them: "Die." Then He restored them to life. For Allah (SwT) is full of bounty to mankind but most of them are ungrateful."

There is a difference of opinion amongst scholars as to whom this ayah refers. In Tafsir Ibn Kathir, it is said that these were a group of people who lived in some city in the time of the Children of Israel who fled their homes out of fear of the plague thinking that their flight would save them from death but death caught them up under Allah's (SWT) command and they all died in a brief time. Later on they were raised again to life when their Prophet Ezekiel (AS) supplicated for them. Whereas, Syed Abul A'la Mawdudi in his exegesis of the Qur'an gives an allegorical explanation for
this ayah. He says, this ayah refers to the exodus of the Children of Israel when they left Egypt in large numbers. Then Allah (SWT) commanded Prophet Moses (AS) to order them to fight and get back their holy land but they showed cowardice and refused to fight. Therefore, Allah (SWT) as a punishment let them wander in the desert for forty years till one full generation of Israelites died and replaced by a new generation brought up in the tough conditions of the desert life. Then Allah (SWT) gave them victory over their enemies and they conquered Philistine. Their former condition is described as death in this ayah and their later development as the restoration of life.

(244) "Fight in the way of Allah" In this ayah the believers are commanded to fight for the cause of Allah (SWT) and not to abandon Jihad. "and know that Allah (SWT) hears and knows all things"

(245) "Who will grant Allah (SWT) a goodly loan which Allah (SWT) will increase many fold." Goodly Loan signifies whatever one gives selflessly and it is given only for the pleasure of Allah (SWT). This ayah encourages Muslims to spend in the cause of Allah (SWT), whether it is for the propagation of Allah's (SWT) Deen, Islamic education or for Jihad. And Allah (SWT) says that for those who will give goodly loan to Him, He will repay them many times over provided that they gave the loan only for His pleasure. "Allah (SWT) alone can decrease and increase wealth" i.e. Allah (SWT) is the Sustainer and to restrict or increase the means of subsistence is exclusively in His hands. "and to Him you all shall return"

(246) "Have you not reflected on what the leaders of the children of Israel demanded from one of their Prophets after the death of Moses (AS). "Appoint for us a king," they said, "and we will fight in the cause of Allah (SWT)." The Prophet replied: "What if you refuse to fight when you are ordered to do so." They replied, "How could we refuse to fight in
the cause of Allah (SwT), while we along with our children were driven out of our homes."
But when, on their demand, they were ordered to fight, all refused except a few of them. Allah (SwT) knows the evildoers." After the Israelites left Egypt they remained on the straight path for a while but after that they started making innovations in the religion, neglecting the law and even took to idolatry. Prophets were sent to them by Allah (SwT) one after the other, but they neglected them and rejected them. Then the time came when there was no Prophet between them and because of their evil and disobedience, Allah (SwT) made their enemies overwhelm them, who captured many of them and took possession of a vast area including Egypt and Palestine. Then they prayed to Allah (SwT) to send a Prophet amongst them. Therefore Allah (SwT) appointed Samuel (AS) to be their Prophet. The Israelites then asked Samuel (AS) to appoint a king from them so that they could wage Jihad against their enemies and take back their land. But when Allah (SwT) appointed for them a King they refused to fight and only some of them kept their promise. This particular incident in this ayah has been mentioned here to fore-warn the Muslims in Madinah who were also making similar demands of allowing them to fight the Quraysh of Makkah, so that they can return back to their home land. Allah (SwT) warns them not to be like the Israelites who broke their promise and abandoned Jihad.

(247) "Their Prophet told them: "Allah (SwT) has appointed Saul ⁹ to be your king." They replied: "How can he be our king when some of us are more deserving than him. Besides he is not rich." The Prophet said: "Allah (SwT) has chosen him to rule over you and blessed him with knowledge and stature."" As mentioned in the previous ayah, the Israelites asked Samuel (AS) to supplicate his Lord to appoint a king for them so that they could fight under his command. Allah (SwT) appointed Saul to be their king whom He had given knowledge and physical strength. But the Children of Israel refused to accept Saul as
their leader as they said that he was not among the descendents of the house of the kings nor he was a wealthy person and belonged to a poor family. Though Saul was not rich but Allah (SWT) says He chose him because He had given him more knowledge, strength and patience than others. And "Allah (SWT) grants kingship to whom He pleases" i.e. Because of His infinite knowledge and Wisdom, He knows who deserves to be the king and who does not. "And Allah (SWT) is All-Embracing and All-Knowing."

(248) "Furthermore, their Prophet said to them: "The sign of his appointment as a king is that there will come to you the Tabut (Ark of the covenant) in which there is tranquility from your Lord and relics which the family of Moses (AS) and the family of Aaron (AS) left behind, and that Ark will be carried by the angels."" The Tabut (Ark of the covenant) was considered very sacred by the Israelites which contained remnants of the Tablets given to Moses (AS), his staff and the original copy of Torah written under the guidance of Moses (AS). It was so divinely blessed that whenever carried by the Israelites into the battlefield, Allah (SWT) rescued them from their enemies and thus gave them tranquility and peace of mind. When their enemies attacked them, they also took the Tabut with them along with the original Torah. Afterwards Prophet Samuel (AS) said to the Israelites that Allah (SWT) will give back to you the Tabut as a sign of the appointment of Saul as their king and it is said that the Allah (SWT) commanded the angels to carry the Tabut to the Israelites. That is why Allah (SWT) says: "Surely therein is a sign for you if you are true believers."

Foot Notes
[1] Surah An-Nisa (4) : 34.
[2] See Tafsir Ibn Kathir in his explanation of Al-Baqarah ayah 229 , Tuhfat Al-Ahwadhi 4: 363 and Towards understanding the Qur an by Syed Abu A la Mawdudi in explanation of this ayah..
[3] This ill-practice is known as Halalah, where a woman marries another man only to make her eligible for her ex-husband . If she then marries her first husband then their marriage will be void and null and it will be considered as an act of adultery.
[4] Namely Fajr (the morning prayer), Dhuhr (when sun starts declining), Asr (the middle or the afternoon prayer), Maghrib (evening), and Isha (night).

[6] According to the majority of the scholars this ayah is abrogated by the ayah 234 of this surah and ayah 12 of surah nisa (4). See Tafsir IEn Kathir.


[9] The first king of Israel, named Ta’ut in the Qur’an on account of his height and strength.
"When Saul marched forth with his army, he announced: "Allah (SWT) will test you at a certain river; anyone who will drink from its water shall cease to be my soldier, and those who will not drink to quench their thirst with its water except a sip or so from the hollow of their hands shall fight on my side." They all drank from it, inspite of this warning, except a few of them." The appointed king Saul took a test from the Israelites as they crossed the river so that to differentiate between those who are the real followers of the path of submission and truth, and those who are not. If they cannot resist themselves to quench their thirst for a while, how can they be disciplined enough to fight such a strong enemy. But the Israelites defied the commandment and quenched their thirst freely and only a few of them were found to be faithful. We should also mention here the virtue of the Companions (RAA) of the Prophet (SAW), when they were given a similar test by Allah (SWT) before the battle of Badr. There were given two alternatives at that time as Allah (SWT) said: "Remember, Allah (SWT) promised you victory over one of the two enemy parties and you wished for the one which was unarmed but Allah intended to prove the truth to be true according to His words and to cut off the roots of the unbelievers." One was that they attack the Quraysh caravan led by Abu Sufyan carrying great wealth amounting to 50 thousand gold Dinars guarded by only 40 armed men. This was the most safest and the most productive option from a worldly point of view. The other was to fight the well-equipped and well-armed Quraysh army of 1000 men coming from Makkah. But unlike the Israelites the Companions (RAA) showed the spirit of sacrifice and fidelity at this critical juncture and asked Allah’s Messenger (SAW) to lead them to the battlefield. When he and those with him who believed crossed the river, they said: "This day we cannot cope against Goliath and his warriors." But the believers, who knew they would meet Allah (SWT), replied: "It has often happened that a small group, by the grace of Allah (SWT), has vanquished a mighty army. Allah (SWT) is with those who endure with patience."

Even amongst those who were faithful there were some who were struck with fear when they saw the size and the strength of the army of Goliath, but there were also some who were determined to face all odds and fight the enemy because they had faith that Allah (SWT) will help them and strengthen them against their enemy. Indeed He is with the steadfast.
"When they advanced to face Goliath and his warriors, they prayed: "Our Lord! Fill our hearts with steadfastness, make our steps firm, and help us against the unbelievers." Amongst the army of Saul, those who had faith in Allah (SWT) prayed to Him to make them steadfast and not make them run away from the battle.

"By Allah's (SWT) will they routed them: and David slew Goliath, and Allah (SWT) gave him power and wisdom and taught him whatever else He willed." When the two armies faced each other, Goliath challenged any soldier from King Saul's army to single combat. Hearing this the Israelites were dismayed and daunted. King Saul offered the hand of his daughter in marriage but still no one came forward to fight. Then, to everyone's surprise, a youth stepped forward. A roar of laughter echoed from the enemy's side, and even Saul's men shook their heads. The young man was David, from the city of Bethlehem. As he was the youngest one, he was asked not to fight but help the army in other ways. Saul did not agree at first but when David (AS) persisted, he gave him the permission. When Goliath saw he despised him for his youth and laughed at him but to everyone's surprise David (AS) killed him with his slingshot and Allah (SWT) with this battle gave the Israelites the glory and honor they had lost for a long time. Then as promised Saul gave his daughter to David (AS) and later the kingship was also transferred to him in addition to the prophethood and wisdom granted to him by Allah (SWT). ...And did not Allah (SWT) check one set of people by means of another the earth would indeed be full of mischief but Allah (SWT) is full of bounty to all the worlds." i.e. when some nations or groups transgress the limits set by Allah (SWT) and make mischief on earth, then He replaces them by others as a counterweight.

"These are the revelations of Allah (SWT). We recite them to you in truth. Surely you are one of Our Prophets." This ayah categorically states the truth of the prophethood of Muhammad (SAW) and that which is revealed to him by Allah (SWT) i.e. the Qur'an.

"These are the Prophets, We have exalted some above others. To one of them Allah (SWT) spoke directly, others He raised to a lofty status. To Jesus (AS) the son of Mary (AS), We gave clear signs and strengthened him with the Holy Spirit." Allah (SWT) honors some Prophets.
over others but it is not for us to differentiate between any of them and thus argue and dispute with others in favor of one or the other. Rather it is only up to Allah (SWT) with His infinite knowledge and Wisdom to decide which Prophet is better, as they are all His creations. Here Allah (SWT) mentions Prophet Moses (AS) and Jesus (AS) to point out their distinguished positions. Moses (AS) was directly addressed by Allah (SWT), and Jesus (AS) was aided by miracles and assisted by the holy spirit. ..If Allah (SWT) had so willed succeeding generations would not have fought among each other after clear signs had come to them but they chose to wrangle some believing and others rejecting. If Allah (SWT) had so willed they would not have fought each other." i.e. Allah (SWT) has sent man on earth as a trial and He does not force His people to follow a fixed path nor does He impose guidance on any individual, otherwise if he had taken away the free will of action from His people then the trial would have become meaningless. Allah (SWT) sent His Messengers to guide the people, some believed and others rejected. If Allah (SWT) had willed, He could prevent His servants from going astray but as He says: ..but Allah (SWT) does what He wills."

(254) "0 you who believe! spend out of the sustenance which We have provided for you before the arrival of that Day when there will be no bargaining, friendship or intercession." Allah (SWT) commands His servants to strive to spend in His way out of the bounties that He has given them lest the day of Judgment arrives when no ransom will be accepted and no friendship will benefit them. ..It is the unbelievers who are wrongdoers." i.e. those who defy Allah’s (SWT) commandments and reject His Messengers are truly the wrongdoers.

(255) "Allah! there is no ilah (god) but He the Living, the Eternal." This ayah is known as Ayat Al-Kursi i.e. the ayah of the Throne. The Prophet (SAW) said that it is the greatest ayah of the Qur’an. In another hadith it is narrated from Ubayy bin Ka‘b that the Prophet (SAW) asked him which verse in the Book of Allah (SWT) was the greatest. He said, "Allah and His Messenger know best." He repeated it several times, then he said, "Ayat Al-Kursi." The Prophet (SAW) said, "Congratulations upon your knowledge, Abul-Mundhir. By the One in Whose hand is my soul, it has a tongue and two lips, and it glorifies the Sovereign (i.e. Allah) at the foot of the Throne" 3
Allah (SWT) states that He is the Only Lord of all creation, who has no partner whatsoever. He is Ever Living Who Sustains the whole universe. Every living creature relies on Him while He The Most High is in need of nothing. "Neither slumber nor sleep overcomes Him." He is aware of everything and nothing is hidden from His knowledge. This ayah is also a refutation of the beliefs of the Christians who think that Allah (SWT) created the heavens and the earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. In truth Allah (SWT) is free of such weaknesses and He is neither affected by slumber nor sleep. "To Him belongs all that is in the Heavens and the Earth." i.e. everything in the heavens and the earth and what is in between them is under His authority and control. "Who can intercede with Him without His permission." i.e. none can intercede or help on behalf of anyone else except if Allah (SWT) permits them. Therefore, neither the Prophets nor the angels or saints will dare to utter a word without the permission of the Lord of the Universe. "He knows what is before them and what is behind them. They cannot gain access to any thing out of His knowledge except what He pleases." i.e. nothing is hidden from Allah (SWT) and He has perfect knowledge of all His creations. And None of the creatures can attain His knowledge except what He conveys to them as He is the real source of all knowledge. As the angels said: ^"Glory to You," they replied, "we have no knowledge except what You have taught us: in fact You are the One who is perfect in knowledge and wisdom." ^ 4 Further Allah (SWT) said: "His throne extends over the heavens and the earth." The word 'Kursi' is translated into Throne as well as Authority. If we take it as authority then it will mean that Allah’s (SWT) authority extends over the heavens and the earth. On the other hand, most of the Salaf 5 treated the attributes of Allah (SWT) as they are without knowing the how of it, so it will mean that His throne extends over the heavens and the earth. Further Allah (SWT) said: "and guarding of these both does not fatigue Him." i.e. the preservation and the protection of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them is very easy for Allah (SWT) and it does not burden Him. And "He is the Exalted, the Supreme." Their guarding does not strain Him and He is the High, the Great.

(256) "Let there be no compulsion in religion." i.e. believing in Islam depends upon faith and will of a person and it will be meaningless if it is imposed by force.
Thus Islam does not force anyone to embrace it, rather a person has the liberty to live in an Islamic state as a non-Muslim, but they will have to comply with and submit to the socio-politico-economic system of that Islamic state. "Truth stands out clear from error." Allah (SWT) has shown all the evidences and proofs for Islam, thus there should be no doubt in any person's mind about the truth of Allah's Deen and the falsehood of what opposes it. "Whoever rejects Taghut (forces of evil) and believes in Allah (SWT) hath grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold that never breaks." The Qur'an uses the word Taghut for the forces of evil which rebel against Allah (SWT) i.e. all that turns one away from the path of Allah (SWT) and lead him into evil. This may be a King, a leader or even a whole system which does not govern according to the laws legislated by Allah (SWT) like capitalism and communism. Therefore no one can be a true believer in Allah (SWT) until and unless he denounces Taghut. Such are those who hold firmly to Allah (SWT) and the true religion with the strongest grasp that never breaks. And remember Allah (SWT) hears and knows all things."

(257) "Allah (SWT) is the Protector of those who have faith, He brings them from the depths of darkness and leads them forth into light." The Arabic word 'Wali' literally means protector, supporter or helper. A guardian or the one who exercises authority over someone is also called a 'Wali'. Thus here it means that Allah (SWT) is the helper and protector of the believers and an authority over them. He brings them out of the darkness of disbelief and evil into light of Truth. In this ayah Allah (SWT) mentioned the light in a singular form while the darkness in the plural, because disbelief comes in different shades of evil while there is only one truth. "Of those who reject faith their patrons are the Taghut (forces of evil). They bring them from light and lead them forth into the depths of darkness." While Allah (SWT) is the protector of the believers, the Taghut are the helpers of the disbelievers and they bring them out of the light of truth into the darkness of falsehood, and thus Allah (SWT) says: "They will be companions of the fire to dwell therein for ever." They are the heirs of Hell and shall abide in it forever.

(258) "Have you not seen the one whom Allah (SWT) had given kingdom, who argued with Abraham (AS) about his Lord. When Abraham (AS) said: "My Lord is He Who has power to
give life and to cause death." He replied: "I too have the power to give life and to cause death." Abraham (AS) said: "Well, Allah (SWT) causes the sun to rise from the east; just make it rise from the west." Thus the unbeliever was confounded; Allah does not guide the evildoers." The person referred to here is King Nimrod of Iraq, who disputed with Abraham (AS) about the existence of Allah (SWT). Nimrod denied the existence of Allah (SWT) who gave him the kingdom and instead of being grateful to Him he himself claimed to be the Lord. Abraham (AS) could not accept that and therefore Nimrod summoned Abraham (AS) before him for judgment and asked him to produce proof for Allah's (SWT) existence. When Abraham (AS) gave the evidence of the existence of Allah (SWT), Nimrod tried to refute it. But after the second argument he was perplexed and although the truth became clear to him, he did not accept it because of greed and arrogance. And decreed that Abraham (AS) be thrown into the fire. Indeed Allah does not guide the evil-doers.

(259) "Or like the one who passed by a town in ruin up to its roofs. He said: "How can Allah (SWT) bring it to life after its death?" So Allah (SWT) caused him to die for a hundred years then raised him up. Allah (SWT) asked: "How long did you remain (dead)?" Ezra (AS) replied: "Perhaps a day or part of a day." Allah (SWT) said: "Nay! You have remained here for a hundred years, now look at your food and drink, they have not changed and look at your donkey! And thus We have made you a sign for the people. Look at the bones, how We bring them together then clothe them with flesh." The person referred here is Prophet Ezra (AS) and the city mentioned is Jerusalem. After Nebuchadnezzar attacked Jerusalem in the late seventh century B.C, he destroyed the city completely along with the temple of Solomon (AS) and killed its people, and took half of them as prisoners. When Prophet Ezra (AS) passed by Jerusalem and saw its destruction he wondered if the people of this town could ever be brought back to life again. It should be noted that this question did not mean that Prophet Ezra (AS) did not believe in the resurrection, but he just wanted to see the reality with his own eyes. So Allah (SWT) made him die for a hundred years and then raised him again along with his donkey, so that he could witness how Allah (SWT) brings the dead back to life. That is why Allah (SWT) said: .When this all was shown clearly to him, he said: "I know that Allah (SWT) has power over everything."
"And remember when Abraham (AS) said: "My Lord! Show me how you give life to the dead." He (Allah) said: "Do you not believe?" Abraham (AS) said: "Yes! (I do believe) But I ask this to reassure my heart."" Prophet Abraham (AS) asked his Lord to show him how He will resurrect the dead in the Hereafter. As we mentioned in the previous ayah the Prophets asked Allah (SWT) for these types of miracles, not that they did not believe in the resurrection but rather to make their faith stronger by personal observation. Then .-Allah (SWT) said: "Take four birds; then cause them to incline towards you, (cut their bodies into pieces) and put a portion of them on every hill then call them back, they will come to you in haste. And know that Allah (SWT) is All-powerful and Wise."" Abraham (AS) took four birds as commanded by Allah (SWT), slaughtered them, mixed them together and placed those pieces on different hilltops. Then he called out to them, their blood and flesh flew to each other until they all came back to life by Allah’s will and they came flying to him at fast pace. After witnessing this miracle it became clear to Abraham (AS) that Allah does whatever He wills without hindrance because He is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

Here we return to the subject of spending in Allah’s cause, which began with ayah 245 of this surah, where Allah (SWT) exhorted the believers to spend in His Deen if they really have faith in Him and the Last Day.

The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah (SWT) is that of a grain that sprouts into seven ears, each bearing one hundred grains.” In this ayah Allah (SWT) gives an example of those believers who spend in His cause i.e. for Allah’s Deen that whatever they spend in the way of Allah (SWT) out of what He has provided them, will be returned to them multiplied by seven hundred folds in this world and the hereafter. This ayah indicates that Allah (SWT) grows the good deeds of a believer just like He grows the plant for whoever sows it in a fertile land. As Allah (SWT) says: --Allah (SWT) gives manifold increase to whom He wishes and Allah (SWT) is All-Embracing, All-Knowing." Allah (SWT) gives abundance to who He wills. He is Munificent and All-Knowing.

Those who spend their wealth in the cause of Allah (SWT) and do not follow their charity with reminders of their generosity or injure the feeling of the recipient, shall get their reward from their Lord, they shall have nothing to fear nor to regret." This ayah indicates that
charity should be only for the sake of Allah (SWT) and the donor should not expect a reward in this world and he should neither remind the recipient of the charity nor cause any harm to him. Even a mention of any favor may put the concerned person to shame or humiliation in the eyes of others so he should refrain from any such acts or words. In sum: one should not follow his/her spending with taunts and insults. Allah (SWT) promises such believers rewards in the Hereafter and they will have no fear on the Day of Judgment nor will they regret anything they have done in the path of Allah (SWT). They shall have nothing to fear or to regret.

(263) "Kind words and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury." A person spends in Allah’s cause for self purification, but if it causes injury to the recipient then his charity becomes meaningless. Instead Allah (SWT) exhorts His servants to be kind and gentle in their speech and forgive any shortcomings on the part of the beneficiaries. They should know that, "Allah is Self-Sufficient, Forbearing." i.e. He does not need their charities to give provision to His servants because He is not in need of His creation; rather all the creatures are in need of Him. So a kind word and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury. Allah is Self-Sufficient and Indulgent.

(264) "O you who believe! Do not make your charity worthless by reminders of your generosity or by injury to the recipients feelings, like those who spend their wealth to be seen by people and believe neither in Allah nor in the Last Day. Such is the behavior of a hypocrite who does not spend for the pleasure of Allah (SWT) but only for men to see, so that he can earn their pleasure and get worldly rewards from them. He neither expects any rewards from Allah (SWT) nor does he believe in the Hereafter. Their parable is like a hard barren rock covered with a thin layer of soil; a heavy rainfalls, leaving it just a bare stone. Such people will not gain any reward that they thought they had earned. Allah does not guide the unbelivers." i.e. as the heavy rain leaves the hard rock completely barren and bare, similarly Allah (SWT) will completely erase the deeds of the hypocrites who give charity just to show off and neither will Allah (SWT) guide them nor will they have any reward in the Hereafter. They shall gain nothing from their works. Allah does not guide the unbelievers.
(265) "The example of those who spend their wealth to seek the pleasure of Allah and to strengthen their souls" Allah (swt) gives another parable for those believers who spend in His cause only to attain His pleasure and for the purification of their souls. ...is like a garden on a high and fertile ground: when heavy rainfalls on it, it doubles its yield of harvest, and if no rainfalls, a light moisture is sufficient. Whatever you do is in the sight of Allah." The good deeds of a believer, performed with good intentions and devotion never become barren just like a garden on a hill-side which is always fertile and even if there is no rain, a little moisture is sufficient for it i.e. a believer still produces good works, gives charity and is satisfied with what Allah (swt) has given him even in lean times.

(266) "Does any of you wish that he should have a garden with date-palms and vines and streams flowing underneath and all kinds of fruit, while he is stricken with old age and his children are not strong that it should be caught in a whirlwind with fire therein and be burnt up? Thus Allah makes His revelations clear to you so that you may think over them." Allah (swt) gives yet another parable in this ayah which explains the condition of a person who enters the life after death without any provision for it. Suppose a person plants a garden full of fruits and streams gushing through so that it would provide him with provision in his old age. How unfortunate, then, is he when his beautiful garden is reduced to rubble towards the end of his days, just when he stands in greatest need of it and he does not have the strength to build another one because of his old age. Similar is the condition of a disbeliever on the day of judgment who when returns to Allah (swt), suddenly finds out that all his earnings are left behind in this world. And there will be no chance for him to earn anything for the Hereafter, just like the old man who lost his garden and his children are also unable to do anything because of their tender age. Thus Allah (swt) makes plain to us His revelations, so that we may give thought.

Foot Notes

[1] It is the Shari'ah river which flows between Jordan and Palestine according to Ibn Abbas.(At-Tabari 5: 340)
[5] Literally meaning predecessors or early generations. In Islam it means the people of the past, namely the first three generations of pious Muslims during and after the revelation of the Qur'an, i.e.the Companions of the Prophet (SAW), the Taabi'een (followers) and the Taabi Taabi'een (followers of the followers).
[6] Refer to the explanation of ayah 245 of this surah.
(267) "0 you who believe! spend in Allah’s (SwF) way the best portion of the wealth you have lawfully earned and that which We have produced for you from the earth, and do not pick out for charity those worthless things that you yourselves would not accept but with closed eyes. Bear in mind that Allah (SwF) is Self-Sufficient, Praiseworthy." In this important ayah Allah (SWT) enjoins on the believers to spend from the pure and the best things in His way that they have earned honestly and lawfully and from the produce of the earth i.e. from the fruits and the vegetables grown from the land. And He prohibits you to give for charity those worthless things which you will not even accept for yourselves, so why do you agree on that for Allah (SWT) who is independent of all wants and most worthy of all praise. One should always keep in mind that Allah is Self-Sufficient and Glorious.

(268) "Satan threatens you with poverty and prompts you to commit what is indecent." Satan holds the children of Adam (AS) from spending in the way of Allah (SWT) because of false fear of poverty and becoming poor and he encourages indecency and immoral acts. "while Allah (SwF) promises you His forgiveness and bounties, and Allah (SWF) is All Embracing, All Knowing." On the other hand Allah (SWT) calls you to the way of forgiveness and prosperity, instead of the evil on which Satan prompts you. Allah (SWT) is Munificent and All-Knowing.

(269) "He grants wisdom to whom He pleases and whoever is granted wisdom is indeed given a great wealth, but none will grasp the message but men of understanding." The Arabic word ‘Hikmah’ is translated into wisdom which means the knowledge to differentiate between the truth and the falsehood. Hence, anyone who has wisdom follows the path of Allah (SWT) and after fulfilling his basic needs from what he has earned, he spends whatever is left in the path of Allah (SWT) and does not follow the ways of the Satan who tells him to gather more and more wealth instead of giving it in charities for the pleasure of Allah (SWT). Yet none except men of discernment bear this in mind.
(270) "Whatever you spend in charity or whatever vow you make, surely Allah (SWT) knows it"
i.e. Allah (SWT) knows the intentions and the deeds of the believers such as
carities and vows. So those who intend to give the charity or vow for Allah's
(SWT) cause, then He will reward them for their deeds but those who disobey His
command and worship others besides Him then He says: "The wrongdoers shall
have no helpers." i.e. they will not find any help in the Hereafter who can protect
them from the punishment of Allah (SWT). The evil-doers shall have none to help
them.

(271) "If you disclose your charities, it is good, but if you conceal them and give them to the
poor, that is better for you. He will remove from you some of your sins. Allah
(SWT) is aware of
your actions." This ayah indicates that it is lawful to give charity in open
especially when it is done so as to set an example for the people to follow suit.
But Allah (SWT) says that it is better to conceal one's charity as it also saves him
from showing off and boasting. And as a result Allah (SWT), because of his virtue
and sincerity of performing good deeds secretly, promises to raise his rank and
forgive his sins. And He has knowledge of all the deeds of His servants. So to
give alms to the poor in private is better and will atone for some of your sins.
Allah has knowledge of all what you do.

(272) "(O Prophet) You are not responsible for their guidance, it is Allah (SWT) Who guides
whom He pleases. The Muslims generally disliked giving charities to their
polytheist relatives and other disbelievers, but later Allah (SWT) revealed this
ayah and they were allowed to give them charity and were told that they are
not responsible for the conversion of these people and their only responsibility
is to convey the truth to them. Further Allah (SWT) says: "Whatever wealth you spend
in charity, it is to your own advantage, provided you give to seek the pleasure of Allah (SWT).
Whatever wealth you spend for the sake of Allah (SWT), will be paid back to you in full, and you
will not be wronged." A person will be rewarded for his good intention. If he gives
charity only to attain the pleasure of Allah (SWT) then it will be for his own
benefit and it will be repaid to him in full on the Day of Judgment.
Charity is for those needy people who in Allah’s (SWT) cause are restricted and cannot move about in land (to earn their livelihood)." This ayah refers to those people who have dedicated themselves wholly for Allah’s (SWT) Deen. Allah (SWT) commands His servants to give charity to such needy people who are unable to earn their livelihood. Such was the example of the Companions of the Prophet (SAW). They were trained for the service of Islam and sometimes had to travel long distances for the propagation of Allah’s (SWT) Deen and to engage in Jihad against the enemies of Islam. Thus they had to devote themselves wholly for Allah’s (SWT) cause and had no time to earn their livelihood. "The ignorant think that they are wealthy on account of their modest behavior." i.e. the ignorant people who do not know their situation think that they are well-off because they are modest in their clothes and speech but the matter of fact is that they live from hand to mouth as they have devoted themselves for the service of Islam and thus do not have any spare time to earn their livelihood. And Allah (SWT) says: "You can recognize them by their look because they do not make insistent demands on people" i.e. these people do not importune men for alms and you will have to recognize them by the light of contentment on their faces and by the tone of their speech. "Whatever you spend on them, surely Allah (SWT) knows it." i.e. Allah (SWT) has full knowledge of the charities and alms you give and He will reward you accordingly on the Day of Judgment.

Those who spend their wealth in charity by night and day, secretly and openly, they will have their reward from their Lord. They shall have nothing to fear or to regret." Here Allah (SWT) promises great rewards for those of His servants who give charities in His way and seek His pleasure day and night. And on the Day of Judgment they will neither have fear of the punishment nor will they regret or grieve.

In the above section we read about the moral excellence and rewards of charity i.e. selfless giving of one’s wealth and property in the way of Allah (SWT). Now we come to its opposite i.e. Riba or Usury. On one hand charity, when practiced in the true Islamic spirit i.e. only with the intention of attaining the pleasure of Allah (SWT), makes us genuinely concerned for the destitute and the needy and leaves no place for parade and vanity. But on the other, Usury is the unlawful
obtaining of wealth from a person in need or distress and therefore forbidden in Islam.

(275) "Those who live on usury will not rise up before Allah (SWT) except like those who are driven to madness by the touch of Satan." Riba (Usury) literally means a growth or an addition. Technically it is the additional amount, collected over and above the capital given as a loan. Dealing with usury or interest of any sort is strictly prohibited in Islam. One who indulges in usury by any means incurs upon himself the severest punishment from Allah (SWT). The beloved Prophet Muhammad (SAW) also warned the Muslims against receiving or giving usury and considered dealing with the interest to be one of the major and the most abominable sins in Islam. In this ayah Allah (SWT) says that those who deal in usury will be resurrected from their graves as insane because this is how they behaved in this world i.e. they pursued their lust for money as if they were insane. And Allah (SWT) says: "That is because they claim: "Trading is no different than usury, but Allah has made trading lawful and usury unlawful." i.e. They claimed that when profit from capital in trade is lawful then why interest or Usury is prohibited. But Allah (SWT) says that He has made trade lawful and dealing in Usury or interest as unlawful for His servants. "He who has received the admonition from his Lord and thereupon desists, shall not be punished for the past. Their case is for Allah (SWT) (to judge). Those who pay no heed, they shall be the inmates of hellfire wherein they will live for ever." i.e. whoever used to indulge in usury and afterwards he repents then Allah (SWT) will forgive his past sins but those who even after gaining knowledge that usury is unlawful, still persist in it then they will be amongst the losers on the Day of Judgment and their final abode will be hellfire. They shall remain in it forever.

(276) "Allah (SWT) will destroy usury and will give increase to charity." This means that Allah (SWT) deprives the money or property earned by usury of all blessings because it is based on greed and selfishness. On the other hand, Allah (SWT) makes the charity grow and increases it as it is based on sympathy, generosity and compassion. "And Allah (SWT) does not love the disbelievers, sinners." i.e. those who try to attain other’s wealth by illegal means will be deprived of Allah’s love. He (SWT) bears no love for the ungrateful sinner.
(277) "Those who believe and do good deeds, establish regular prayers, and give regular charity will have their reward with their Lord." In this ayah Allah (SWT) praises those who worship Him alone and observe His rights and that of His creatures. They are the ones who establish salah, give 2akah and spend from their wealth on doing good deeds in the way of Allah (SWT). For such believers Allah (SWT) says: "They will have nothing to fear or to regret." i.e. Allah (SWT) guarantees their salvation in the Hereafter. They will be rewarded by their Lord and will have nothing to fear or to grieve.

(278) "0 you who believe! Fear Allah (SWT) and waive what is still due to you from usury if you are indeed believers." Allah (SWT) strictly warns His servants to waive what is due to be paid as Riba (Usury) by others and to stop dealing in it if their faith be true and sincere.

(279) "If you do not do then it take notice of war from Allah (SWT) and his Messenger, but if you repent then you shall have your capital sums. Deal not unjustly and you shall not be dealt with unjustly." This verse is an ultimatum by Allah (SWT) to those who indulge in Riba and warns them not to take anything other than their original capital without any addition or decrease in it. Otherwise be sure of a war declared by Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) against you. If you repent, you may retain your principal, wrongdoing none (with an increase) without being wronged (by suffering a loss).

(280) "If the debtor is in a difficulty, grant him time till it is easy for him to repay, but if you remit it by way of charity it will be better for you, if you only knew." Allah (SWT) enjoins on the believers to give more time to the debtors for the payment of the debts, if they are having a difficult time paying it back. But if the creditors waive the debt as alms then Allah (SWT) says it is better for them i.e. they will be rewarded by Allah (SWT) in this world and in the Hereafter as narrated by Abu Qatadah (IA) that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: "Whoever gives time to his debtor, or forgives the debt, will be in the shade of the throne (of Allah (SWT)) on the Day of Resurrection." 1
"Fear the Day when you shall all return to Allah (SWT), when every one shall be paid in full what they have earned and none shall be dealt with unjustly." i.e. those who refrain from evil and greed and do good, they will be rewarded by Allah (SWT) for their good deeds on the Day of Judgment. But those who wrong others and fleece them, they shall be punished and will suffer a great torment on that day. Every soul shall be requited according to its deserts. None shall be wronged.

"0 you who believe! when you contract a debt for a fixed period of time, write it down." Allah (SWT) commands the believers to write down all the transactions involving future payment so that there may be no chance of any dispute between the two parties. "Let a scribe write down faithfully between you. Let not the scribe refuse to write as Allah (SWT) has taught him so let him write." i.e. every contract of debt should be written down by a scribe with fairness and he should not refuse to write the contract, rather he should be grateful to Allah (SWT) for the art of writing He has given to him and should use it for His service. "Let him who incurs the liability dictate but let him fear his Lord Allah and not diminish aught of what he owes. If the debtor is mentally deficient or weak or unable himself to dictate let his guardian dictate faithfully." i.e. the debtor should dictate the scribe the money he owes and should not hide anything of what he owes to the creditor. But if he is unable to dictate it because of an illness or disability then it is allowed for him to appoint a guardian who should dictate on his behalf. Further Allah (SWT) has commanded the Muslims to appoint witnesses from among them who are honest, when dictating a debt or contract as He says: "And get two witnesses out of your own men and if there are not two men then a man and two women such as you choose for witnesses so that if one of them errs the other can remind her." i.e. two women take the place of a man when witnessing financial transactions because of the likely mental shortcoming in the form of forgetfulness. So if one forgets then the other could remind her of the testimony. "The witnesses should not refuse when they are called on (for evidence)." i.e. once a person is made a witness in a transaction, then he should not refuse to testify it if needed. "You should not be weary to write it (your contract) for a future period whether it be small or big, that is more just in the sight of Allah (SWT) more suitable as evidence and more convenient to prevent doubts among yourselves." i.e. One should not feel ashamed in writing down the contract with the date of payment even it is
for a very insignificant amount as it is convenient for both the parties and also helps repel any doubts in the future. "But if it be a transaction which you carry out on the spot among yourselves there is no blame on you if you do not write it down. But take witnesses whenever you make a commercial contract." i.e. Transaction carried out on the spot in everyday businesses like cash payment or delivery does not require a person to write them down but it is better if they do record them. "and let neither scribe nor witness suffer any harm. If you do (such harm) it would be wickedness in you." i.e. The scribe and the witness should neither be forced nor they should suffer any harm because of their testifying against the interests of any party. "So fear Allah (SWF), for it is Allah (SWF) that teaches you." i.e. He has given you the intellect to judge between right and wrong. "And Allah (SWF) has knowledge of everything." Have fear of Allah (SWT). He teaches you; He has knowledge of all things.

(283) "If you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then let there be a pledge taken." This ayah indicates that it is allowed for the creditor on behalf of the debtor, to hold a pledge as a security for the repayment of the debt whether on a journey or not. "If one of you entrusts the other then let the one who is entrusted discharge his trust, and let him fear Allah (SWF), his Lord." i.e. If both the parties trust each other then there is no harm on them if they do not write down the transaction or have witnesses present but they should fear Allah (SWT) and should not betray each other and the trustee should restore the pledge to its owner. "And do not conceal testimony, and whoever conceals it, surely his heart is sinful. And Allah (SWF) knows all that you do." i.e. one should not withhold testimony when asked to give it. He that withholds it will have a sinful heart. Allah (SWT) has knowledge of all your actions.

(284) "Fo Allah (SWF) belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth." This ayah states that Allah (SWT) is the Master of all that is in the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. "Whether you show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah (SWF) will call you to account for it." i.e. Allah (SWT) even knows those intentions and thoughts which a person conceals in his heart and consequently He will hold them accountable for whatever is in their hearts. This ayah was abrogated when Allah (SWT) revealed the following ayah: "Allah does not burden any human being with more than he can bear..." 2 Further Allah (SWT) says: "He forgives whom
He wills and punishes whom He wills." i.e. He is the sole Sovereign and has total authority to punish anyone or forgive anyone He wills. "For Allah (SWT) has power over all things."

Now we come to the last two ayat of this blessed surah which were revealed when Prophet Muhammad (SAW) went on the Isra journey. There are many excellent points with regard to the two ayat mentioned in the hadith of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It is narrated by Abu Masud (RA) that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: "Whoever recites the last two ayat in surah Al-Baqarah at night, they will suffice him." Allah (SWT) taught the Muslims to recite this prayer at a time when they were being persecuted and tortured and there was no place where those who believed in Him could live in peace.

(285) "The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believes in Allah (SWT), His angels, His books and His Messengers. (They say) "We make no distinction between one another of His Messengers." i.e. The Messengers and their followers believe in whatever has been revealed from Allah (SWT). They believe in the oneness of Allah (SWT) and that He is the only Sustainer. The believers also believe in all His Messengers and they do not differentiate between any of them nor do they reject any one of them. Further they believe in His angels and all the Books that Allah (SWT) revealed to His Messengers. "And they say: "We hear and we obey. (We seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord and to You is our return."" The believers also ask for Allah's (SWT) help and guidance and they humbly pray to Him for the forgiveness of their sins and they firmly believe in the accountability to Him on the Day of Judgment.

(286) "Allah (SWT) burdens not a person beyond his scope. He gets reward for that (good) which he has earned and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned." Firstly, Allah (SWT) does not charge a person with what is more than he can bear. Secondly, A person will be rewarded or punished only for the acts he is responsible for and not for those in which he has had no share—neither by intent nor actual action. In other words, each self shall be requited for whatever good and whatever evil it has done. "Our Lord! punish us not if we forget or fall into error." i.e. if we do any unintentional error or lapse into error. "Our Lord! Lay not on us a burden
like that which You did lay on those before us.” i.e. 0 our Lord save us and protect us from the trials and tribulations our predecessors were tested with. And “Our Lord! lay not on us a burden greater than we have strength to bear.” i.e. Do not test us with trials and tribulations that we cannot bear and subject us to only those trials that we can endure. “Pardon us and grant us forgiveness. Have mercy on us. You are our Protector; help us against the disbelieving people.” ’O Lord! Pardon us, forgive our sins and our errors, have mercy upon us and help us and protect us against those who reject and mock at Your religion and impugn Your oneness.

Foot Notes

[2] Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 286. (The arogation is recorded in Sahih Muslim 1: 115.)
[3] Fath Al-Ban 8:672