

# MA'ĀRIFUL-QUR'ĀN

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**Volume 3**

(Sūrah Al-Mā'idah, Al-An'ām & Al-A'raf)

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تَفْسِيرٌ  
مَعَارِفُ الْقُرْآنِ

Tafsīr  
Mā'ariful-Qur'an



Sūrah Al-Mā'idah

سُورَةُ الْمَائِدَةِ

Sūrah Al-An'am

سُورَةُ الْاَنْعَامِ

Sūrah Al-A'raf

سُورَةُ الْاَعْرَافِ

# TRANSLITERATION SCHEME

Arabic Letter	Name of Letter	English Transliteration
ا	الف -- Alif	a
ب	باء -- ba	b
ت	تاء -- ta	t
ث	ثاء -- tha	th
ج	جيم -- jim	j
ح	حاء -- ha	h
خ	خاء -- kha	kh
د	دال -- dal	d
ذ	ذال -- dhal	dh
ر	راء -- ra	r
ز	زاي -- za	z
س	سين -- sin	s
ش	شين -- shin	sh
ص	صاد -- sad	ṣ
ض	ضاد -- dad	ḍ
ط	طاء -- ta	ṭ
ظ	ظاء -- za	ẓ
ع	عين -- 'ayn	'
غ	غين -- ghayn	gh
ف	فاء -- fa	f
ق	قاف -- qaf	q
ك	كاف -- kaf	k
ل	لام -- lam	l
م	ميم -- mim	m
ن	نون -- nun	n
ه	هاء -- ha	h
و	واو -- waw	w
ء	همزة -- Hamzah	'
ي	ياء -- ya	y

## Short Vowels

: Fathah	a
: Kasrah	i
: Dammah	u

## Long Vowels

ا	: Shortened Alif	ā
آ	: Maddah Alif	ā
ي	: Maddah Ya	ī
و	: Maddah Waw	ū

## Diphthongs

اي	: Alif and Ya	ay (also ai in some cases)
او	: Alif and Waw	aw (also au in some cases)

# Sūrah Al-Mā'idah

(The Repast)

[This Sūrah is Madinite (Madanī). It has 120 Verses and 16 Sections]

## Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ  
إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرِ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ  
يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١﴾

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful.

O those who believe, fulfill the contracts. The cattles have been made lawful for you, except that which shall be recited (mentioned) to you, provided that you do not treat hunting as lawful while you are in Iḥrām. Surely, Allah ordains what He wills. [1]

## Background of revelation and a summary of subjects

This is the initial verse of Sūrah al-Mā'idah. As agreed upon, Sūrah al-Mā'idah is a Madanī (Madinite) Sūrah and also the last among all Madanī Chapters (Sūrah) so much so that some revered elders have identified this as the last Sūrah of the Qur'ān itself. On the authority of narrations from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar and Sayyidah Asma' bint Yazīd, it appears in the Musnad of Aḥmad that Sūrah al-Mā'idah was revealed to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم while in travel riding the she-camel named 'Aḍbā'. As explained in the introduction to this *Tafsīr* in Volume 1, there used to be a sense of being under some heavy weight, extraordinary and unexplained, at a time the *Waḥy* (revelation) came to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. So, this is what happened as customary. When the she-camel could bear the phenome-

non of unusual weight no more, he dismounted from her back. This journey is obviously the journey he made to perform his last Ḥajj as supported by some relevant reports. The Last Ḥajj took place in the tenth year of *Hijrah*. After his return from there, his blessed life in the mortal world lasted for about eighty more days. In al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ, commentator Ibn Ḥayyān has said that some portions of Sūrah al-Mā'idah were revealed during the journey of Ḥudaybiyah, some others during the journey of the Conquest of Makkah and still others during the journey of the Last Ḥajj. This tells us that Sūrah al-Mā'idah has been revealed during the final stages of the revelation of the Qur'an - though, it may not be the very last Sūrah.

Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī on the authority of Abū 'Ubaydh, cites a narration of ibn Ḥabīb and 'Aṭīyah ibn Qays رضى الله عنهم اجمعين in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said:

المائدة من اخرالقران تنزيلا فاحلوا حلالها وحرموا حرامها

Sūrah al-Mā'idah is from what has been revealed towards the last stage of the revelation of the Qur'an. So, take what has been made lawful there as lawful for ever and take what has been made unlawful there as unlawful for ever.

Referring to Mustadrak al-Ḥākim, Ibn Kathīr cites a similar narration from Sayyidnā Jubayr ibn Nufayr in which he has been reported to have called upon Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها soon after Ḥajj. She asked him: "Do you read Sūrah al-Mā'idah, O Jubayr?" He submitted: "I do." Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah then said: "This is the last Sūrah of the Holy Qur'an. The injunctions about things lawful and unlawful in it are *Muḥkam* (of established meaning). The probability of any abrogation (*Naskh*) does not exist there. So, be specially particular about them."

Like Sūrah Al-Nisā', Sūrah al-Mā'idah too carries many subsidiary injunctions relating to dealings and contracts. Accordingly, Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī notices subject homogeneity in Sūrah al-Baqarah and Āl-'Imrān because both of them mostly feature injunctions relating to Principles, Doctrines, Unicity, Prophethood, Doomsday and similar other basic concerns of importance. As for subsidiary injunctions, they appear there as corollaries. Regarding Sūrah al-Nisā' and Sūrah al-Mā'idah, it can be said that they are homogeneous subject-wise because both of

them describe subsidiary injunctions. Any description of basic principles appears there by implication. In Sūrah al-Nisā', emphasis has been laid on mutual dealings, particularly on rights servants of Allah have on each other (*Huqūq al-'Ibād*). Then, in it, there are details of the rights of the husband and the wife, the rights of orphans and the rights of the parents and other relatives. In the very first verse of Sūrah al-Mā'idah, there appears the instruction to stand by all dealings made and pledges given. The words of the Verse: *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ* (O those who believe, fulfill the contracts) command that all such commitments must be met. Therefore, Sūrah al-Mā'idah is also referred to as Sūrah al-'Uqūd (*Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt*).

This Sūrah, specially its opening verse, has a special bearing on matters relating to mutual dealings and contractual agreements. Therefore, when the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم sent Sayyidnā 'Amru ibn Ḥazm as the 'Āmil (Governor) of Yaman, he gave him a written decree of appointment at the head of which he had this verse written (*Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīt*).

### Commentary

The first sentence of the first verse of this Sūrah is so comprehensive that its proper discussion would deservedly go beyond thousands of pages. In fact, Muslim scholars and jurists have done exactly that. The verse says: *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ* (O those who believe, fulfill the contracts). Here, the very form of address: *يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا* (O those who believe ...) helps to divert attention to the very crucial nature of the subject for the command being given here is centrally required by one's faith. Then comes the command: *أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ* (fulfill the contracts). The word, 'al-'uqūd', used in the Qur'an is the plural form of *al-'aqd*, the literal meaning of which is to tie. A contract which ties two individuals or groups to each other is also known as 'aqd. Thus, *al-'uqūd* takes the meaning of *al-'uhūd* or contracts.

Commentator Ibn Jarīr has reported the consensus of revered exegetes among the *Ṣaḥābah* and *Tābi'īn* on this approach. Imām al-Jaṣṣāṣ explains that 'aqd (contract) or 'ahd (pledge) or *Mu'āhadah* (pact) are all applied to a transaction in which two parties have placed the responsibility of doing or not doing something on each other and to which both of them agree and are bound by. According to our recog-

nized practice, this is what a contractual agreement is. Therefore, the essential meaning of the sentence is: Take the fulfilling of mutual contracts to be binding and necessary.

Now, we have to determine the nature of contracts meant here. The interpretations of commentators appear to be different, though outwardly only. Some say that it refers to the Covenant of Allah under which His created beings are bound to believe in and obey Him, or they refer to pledges Allah has taken from His created beings regarding His revealed injunctions of things lawful and unlawful. This is what has been reported from Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه. Others say that here it means the contracts people enter into with each other, such as, the Contract of Marriage and the Contract of Buying and Selling. Commentators Ibn Zayd and Zayd ibn Aslam have taken this very line of interpretation. Still others take contracts to mean sworn alliances and pacts which the tribes of *Jāhiliyyah* entered into with each other for mutual assistance when needed. This is also the position taken by Commentators such as Mujāhid, Rabī' and Qatādah. But, the truth is that there is no contradiction or difference in what they have said. Instead, all these varied contracts come under the Qur'ānic word, "*al-'uqūd*", appearing in this verse and the instruction to fulfill all of them comes from the Qur'ān itself.

Therefore, Imām Rāghib al-Isfahānī has said that all kinds of contracts and binding agreements are included under the imperative of this word. He further divides these into three kinds as given below:

1. The Covenant which human beings have with their Creator who is Lord of all the worlds, such as, the pledge to believe in Him, to obey Him, or to observe the restrictions imposed by Him on matters and things lawful and unlawful.

2. The vow or promise or commitment one enters into with one's own self, such as, to commit to fulfill a vow (*nadh'r*) for something, or to bind oneself on oath that something will be done.

3. The contract that one human being enters with another which includes all contracts which bind two persons or two groups or parties or governments.

So, in the light of this verse, strict adherence to all permissible pro-

visions and conditions which have been mutually agreed upon is mandatory and all parties must observe and fulfill these. This covers all international pacts and treaties between governments, bilateral agreements, all commitments, alliances, charters between groups and parties, also all sorts of contracts and deals between two human beings ranging from marriage, business, partnership, leasing, gift deed to many other bi-partite human dealings. Please note that the restriction of 'permissible' imposed a little earlier has a reason, for entering into a contract against the dictates of the Shari'ah, or accepting it, is not permissible for anyone.

### The Logic of the Lawful

After the initial declaration of the general rule in the first sentence of the verse, its particular details appear in the second sentence where it has been said: أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ بِهِنَا الْإِنْعَامُ (The cattle have been made lawful for you ...). The word, '*bahimah*' (بهيمة) used here is applied to animals usually considered to be devoid of understanding because people usually do not understand their speech which thus remains obscure. Imām al-Sha'rānī says: The name '*bahimah*' is not given to an animal just because it has no sense and everything sensible remains obscure for it - as people commonly think. But, the truth is that no animal or beast, not even trees and rocks, can be taken to be devoid of sense as such - of course, subject to the difference in its degrees. They do not have the same measure of sense as human beings do. This is the reason why human beings have been obligated to observe the precepts and injunctions revealed for them. Animals have not been so obligated, otherwise Allah has given to every animal sense and awareness within the limits of its needs - even to all trees and rocks, for that matter. This is why everything glorifies Allah in its own way: *وَأَنَّ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ*: That is, 'there is nothing which does not but glorify Him with His praise' (17:44). How then, without sense, would it have ever recognized its creator and master and how would it have, thus, been able to engage in the act of glorifying Allah?

The word, '*al-An'am*', used in the text is the plural form of *na'am* (grazing livestock). Eight kinds of domestic animals or cattles such as the camel, the cow, the buffalo, the goat which have been described in Sūrah al-An'am are called the An'am. Since the word, '*bahimah*'

(animal) was general, the word, 'Al-An'ām' (the cattle) has made it particular. So, the meaning of the verse comes to be that 'eight kinds of domestic animals have been made lawful for you.' Under the discussion about the word, 'al-'uqūd', you have already read a little earlier that it includes all kinds of contracts. One of these is the pledge Allah Almighty has taken from His created beings that they would observe the restrictions of the lawful and the unlawful. The present sentence is referring to this particular pledge when it says that Allah has made the cattle lawful for you and they can be eaten after having been slaughtered in accordance with the Islamic manner.

Thus believers have been exhorted to obey this injunction by staying within its limits. They should not take it upon themselves, as do the fire-worshippers and the idolators, to declare the very slaughter of these animals as absolutely unlawful, for this is raising an objection against the wisdom of the Creator and certainly an open ingratitude for His blessing. Nor should they become like some other meat-eating people who would, totally unfettered, go about eating all sorts of animals. Rather than do something like that, believers must eat from animals Allah Almighty has made lawful to eat under the Law given by Him. Similarly, they should abstain from animals which have been declared unlawful to eat. The reason is that Allah Almighty is the Creator of the Universe. He knows the nature and the properties of all animals and He is also aware of the effects they bring about when in the human body. He, in His grace, makes what is good and pure openly lawful for human consumption, things which leave no ill effects on physical health and moral strength. Similarly, He forbids unclean and impure animals which are either harmful for human health or contribute metabolically into the generation of evil morals. Therefore, there are a few things exempted from this general rule. These are as follows:

1. The first exemption is contained in: **إِلَّا مَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْكُمْ**. It means: Except animals which have been declared unlawful in the Qur'an, that is, dead animal or the swine.

2. The other exemption appears in: **غَيْرِ مَجْلَى الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ**. It means: Quadruped animals are lawful for you and wild game too. But, in the state when you have entered into the garments of *Ihrām* with the in-

tention of doing Ḥajj or 'Umrah, hunting becomes a crime and sin. Stay away from it.

### Living under the Authority and Wisdom of the Creator

Towards the end of the verse, it was said: **إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ** which means that Allah Almighty ordains what He wills. Nobody has the right to ask questions or take exception in obeying it. This statement is perhaps indicative of an element of wisdom - that the permission given to human beings to slaughter and eat some animals is no act of injustice. The Creator and Master who has made all these life forms is also the One who has formulated, in His perfect wisdom and insight, the law that the lower form shall be the sustenance of the higher. The soil of the earth is food for trees and trees are food for animals and animals are food for human beings. There is no higher form of creation in this world, therefore, human beings cannot become food for anyone.

#### Verse 2

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْلُوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا  
الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا أَمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنْ  
رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَا  
نُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا  
عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ  
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾

O those who believe, do not violate (the sanctity) of the Marks of Allah, nor of the sacred month, nor of the sacrificial animal, nor of the garlands, nor of those proceeding to the Sacred House, seeking the grace of their Lord, and Pleasure. When you are out of Iḥrām, you may hunt. And malice against a people for their having prevented you from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, should not cause you to cross the limits. Help each other in righteousness and piety, and do not help each other in sin and aggression. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is severe at punishment. [2]

### Linkage of Verses

The first verse of Sūrah al-Mā'idah emphasized the fulfillment of contracts. Included among these contracts is the contract or pledge to abide by the restrictions of the lawful and the unlawful as ordained by Allah Almighty. The second verse cited here describes two important articles of this contract. The first relates to the sanctity of the signs, symbols or hallmarks of Allah with the specific instruction to stay away from desecrating them. The second article recommends an even-handed dispensation of justice to everyone, your own or not your own, friend or foe, which has been combined with a corresponding prohibition of any counter injustice inflicted in return for some injustice done.

### Background

There are some events which form the background of the revelation of these verses. Let us go to them first so that the subject of the verse becomes fully clear to us. One of these is the event of Hudaibiyah the details of which have been taken up by the Holy Qur'an elsewhere. This relates to the sixth year of Hijrah when the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Companions decided to perform 'Umrah.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ entered into the *Ihrām* of 'Umrah with more than one thousand of his Companions and left for Makkah al-Mu'azzamah. After having reached Hudaibiyah close to Makkah al-Mu'azzamah, he sent a message to the Makkans that he was coming in with his group to perform 'Umrah and not for any aggressive designs. He requested that they be allowed to perform 'Umrah. The disbelievers of Makkah, not only that they refused it, they put forward many hard conditions and challenged them to agree to a treaty which stipulated that all Muslims will undo their *Ihrām* they were in at that time and go back. When they come next year to perform their 'Umrah, they would be required to come without any arms, stay for three days only, perform 'Umrah and leave. Besides these conditions, there were many others agreeing to which was obviously very much against the self-respect of Muslims. But, obeying the orders of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, everyone returned in peace. After that, it was in the month of Dhu-al-Qa'dah of the Hijrah year 7 that this missed 'Umrah was performed again with full observance of the conditions imposed under the Treaty.

However, the events at Hudaibiyah and the insulting conditions

imposed there had planted seeds of discord in the hearts of the Companions against the disbelievers of Makkah. Then there came up the other incident when Ḥātim ibn Hind, one of the disbelievers of Makkah, came to Madīnah al-Tayyibah with his trading goods. After having sold his goods, he left his baggage and his attendant outside Madīnah and came to visit the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and expressed his desire to enter the fold of Islam, in all hypocrisy, so that Muslims are satisfied. But, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم had, well before he came to him, told his Companions on the strength of revelation that a man was coming to them who would talk in the words of the Satan. And when he went away, he said that the man came with disbelief and returned with deception and treason. Leaving the company of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, this man went straight out of Madīnah where the livestock of the people of Madīnah were grazing. He drove them away with him. The noble Companions came to know about this somewhat late. When they went out after him, he was gone out of their reach. Then it was in the seventh year of Ḥijrah, when they were going with the Holy Prophet ﷺ to perform the *Qada'* of 'Umrah they had missed at Ḥudaybiyah, they heard someone reciting Talbiyyah at some distance. When they looked, they discovered that the same Ḥātim ibn Hind who had decamped with the animals belonging to the people of Madīnah was right there going for 'Umrah with the same animals going with him as sacrificial animals. At that time, the noble Companions thought of attacking him and taking their animals back by killing him off right there.

The third event came to pass in the eighth year of Ḥijrah when Makkah al-Mukarramah was conquered in Ramaḍān al-Mubārak and the entire Arabian peninsula came under Islamic rule. The disbelievers of Makkah were set free by the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم without any revenge. They went about doing everything they used to do with complete freedom to the extent that they even kept observing their pagan customs of Ḥajj and 'Umrah too. At that time some noble Companions thought of taking their revenge for what had happened at Ḥudaybiyah. These people had stopped them from doing 'Umrah to which they were entitled on all counts, as permissible and justified. Why, they thought, should they now allow their Ḥajj and 'Umrah on any count which were all impermissible and unjustified? Why not attack

them, take their animals and finish them off?

These events have been narrated by Ibn Jarīr on the authority of 'Ikrimah and al-Suddi. It was on the basis of some of these events that the present verse was revealed. Through it, Muslims were told that holding the signs of Allah in esteem was their own bounden duty. Malice and hostility against an enemy was no reason to disturb this standing rule. This was absolutely impermissible. Even fighting during the sacred months was not permissible. Also not permissible was stopping sacrificial animals from reaching the Hāram or taking them away forcibly. As for the disbelievers who have donned the *Ihram* garments and who, in their estimation, have embarked on their pilgrimage to seek the good pleasure of Allah Almighty (though, because of their disbelief, this is a mistaken notion, yet) the sanctity of the signs of Allah demands that they should not be confronted in any way. Then there was the case of people who had stopped Muslims from performing their 'Umrah. Any effort to avenge their past hostility against Muslims in the form of Muslims stopping them from entering into Makkah or from performing their rites of Hājj was not permissible. This is so because this amounts to Muslims doing an injustice in return for an injustice to them which was not permissible in Islam. We can now go to a detailed explanation of the verse.

### Commentary

The first sentence of the Verse says: **يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْلُوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ** (O those who believe, do not violate [the sanctity of] the Marks of Allah). Here the word, *Sha'ā'ir* has been translated as 'Marks.' This is the plural form of *Sha'īrah* which means mark, sign or symbol. Therefore, *Sha'ā'ir* and *Sha'īrah* signify things perceptible through the senses which symbolize something. As such the Marks (*Sha'ā'ir*) of Islam would be deeds and actions recognized as symbolic of one's being Muslim in faith. These are quite common such as *Ṣalāh*, *Adhān*, Hājj, Circumcision and Beard in accordance with the *Sunnah*. The *Tafsīr* or explanation of the Qur'ānic expression **شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ** (*Sha'ā'irullāh*: The Marks of Allah) as it appears in this verse has been reported in varying words. But, the clearest of them is what has been reported from Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and 'Atā' on whom both be the mercy of Allah. Imām al-Jaṣṣāṣ finds their statement as a compedium of all explanations. According

to this statement, "Sha'a'irullah" means all obligations the limits of which have been set forth by the Shari'ah of Islam. In this verse, the essence of the meaning is that one should not violate the sanctity of the marks of Allah. One form of such violation could be a total dismissal of what one has been obligated with. Under the second form, one may act in accordance with these obligations by electing to obey some injunctions and leave out others ending up with a compliance which remains incomplete. A third form could be that one starts transgressing the appointed limits and keeps going farther beyond. The Qur'anic statement: لَا تُجْلُوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ (do not violate [the sanctity of] the Marks of Allah) forbids all these three forms.

The Holy Qur'an gives the same instruction elsewhere in a different mode as follows:

وَمَنْ يُعْظِمِ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ

And whoever exalts the Marks of Allah, then this is from the fear of Allah in hearts. (22:32)

The part of the sentence which follows in the verse under study gives details of a particular kind of the Marks of Allah, that is, the Marks that concern the rites of Hajj.

The text says:

وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا أَمِينِ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ  
فَضْلًا مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا

It means: Do not violate its sanctity by fighting and killing during the months in which it is prohibited. This refers to the four months during which mutual fighting was legally prohibited. They are Dhul-Qa'dah, Dhul-Hijjah, Muḥarram and Rajab. Later on, this injunction was abrogated as agreed under the overwhelming consensus of 'Ulamā'. In addition to this, command was given that there should be no violation of the sanctity of sacrificial animals within the Ḥaram of Makkah, specially of the band round their necks placed there as a symbol of sacrifice. One form of violating the sanctity of these animals could be that they are stopped from reaching the Ḥaram or are snatched away. The second form could be that of using the animals for a purpose other than sacrifice, such as using them to ride or milk. The

verse has declared all these form as impermissible.

The text then prohibits the violation of the sanctity of those who have left their homes to embark on a journey to *al-Masjid al-Ḥarām* with the intention of performing Ḥajj - for their purpose on this journey is to seek the blessing and pleasure of their Lord. Not violating the sanctity of such people means that they should neither be stopped during their journey nor should any pain be caused to them.

After that it was said: *وَأَنكَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا*. It means: And when you get released from the *Ihrām*, you may hunt. In other words, the limit of the prohibition of hunting during the state of *Ihrām* appearing in the first verse has been declared by saying that your release from the *Ihrām* neutralizes the in-*Ihrām* prohibition of hunting which has now become permissible.

Being deliniated in the verse under reference is a particular part of the contract which is operative between every human being and the Lord of all the worlds. Some of it has already been identified upto this point. The first out of these is the instruction to uphold the inviolable dignity of the Marks of Allah as sacrosanct and to guard against any chances of their being desecrated. Then come some details concerning the Marks of Allah which belong to Ḥajj. Here, the instruction given is that nothing should be done to stop them and that effort should be made to stay away from any action which desecrates them.

The statement which follows after that takes up the second part of the contract in the following words: *وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا*. It means: There were those people who had stopped you from entering Makkah and performing your 'Umrah and after that event at Hodaybiyah, you were returning all sad and angered. Now that you have power in your hands, let things not turn in a way that you start taking revenge for what happened in the past by stopping them from entering the House of Allah and the Sacred Mosque and performing their Ḥajj - because this is injustice and Islam does not favour avenging injustice by inflicting counter injustice. Instead of that, it teaches the doing of justice in return for injustice done and upholding it under all odds. It is true that those people, under the sway of their power and position at that time, had stopped Muslims from entering the Sacred Mosque and performing 'Umrah, quite unjustly indeed. But, the

retaliation for this injustice can hardly be that Muslims now go about using their power to stop them from carrying out their Hajj rites.

The Qur'ān teaches that friend and foe should be treated equally on the scale of justice. It commands Muslims to do nothing but justice as a matter of obligation, no matter how deadly the enemy and no matter how serious the pain inflicted. That Islam guards the rights of enemies is certainly one of the peculiar qualities of Islam which does not answer one injustice by another, rather elects to do justice in return.

### The Qur'ānic Principle of Mutual Cooperation and Assistance

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ  
اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ .

And help each other in righteousness and piety, and do not help each other in sin and aggression. And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is severe at punishment.

This is the last sentence of the second verse of Sūrah al-Mā'idah. Here, the Holy Qur'ān has given such a wise verdict on an elemental question of human life that it can be confidently taken as the moving spirit behind any reliable world order on which depends the prosperity and survival of all human beings. As such, acting in accordance with the Qur'ānic principle of Mutual Cooperation and Assistance is the only way to the betterment of the human beings. Every sensible person already realizes that things get done in our world through the cooperative efforts of all human beings. This is how the system keeps running. A solitary person, no matter how smart, powerful or rich, cannot procure what he needs to sustain his life single-handedly. One lone person cannot go through all the stages of growing and processing his ready-to-eat food, nor can he cope up with the countless steps required in growing cotton, manufacturing cloth and having a dress prepared to fit his measurements, nor can he move his things from one place to the other. Thus, it is not difficult to see that every human being needs hundreds and thousands of others to run his life. This mutual cooperation of theirs is what keeps the whole system going. Incidentally, this cooperation is not limited to the life of the world of our experience, it is also needed in the stages from death to burial - even

beyond, when one remains depending upon those he left behind and who may pray for his forgiveness and do things the reward of which keeps reaching him after his death.

Great is the majesty of Allah who, in His perfect wisdom and power, set up such a formidable system of this world, a system where every human being needs the other. The poor man needs the rich while the richest of the rich need the poor worker to handle jobs with labour and skill. The traders need consumers and consumers need traders. The home owner needs a team of technicians having expertise in many areas in order to build a house and they, in turn, need him. If this universal element of need was not there and mutual assistance remained dependant on moral superiority of persons and parties, just imagine who would have been working for whom. The whole thing would have fallen flat for we have been seeing what has happened to common moral virtues and ethical values in this world of ours. Even if this division of labour could have been enforced as some law made by some government or international organization, the fate it would have met would have been no different than the fate of all sorts of laws proliferating the many national and international forums of the world where the law rests at peace in acts while the bazars and offices are run by shadow laws of bribery, nepotism, neglect of duty and apathy of application. We have to salute the framework of doing things given to us by the wisest of the wise, the power of the powers, who placed in the hearts of people of different inclinations to have the ability and desire to run their lives with a particular line of work as its pivot. Had it been otherwise and some international organization or a government chose to assign fields of work among people making someone a carpenter, others iron-mongers or janitors or managers of water and food supplies, who would have become so obedient to such commands from governments and institutions as to sacrifice all personal considerations and jump right into the line of work chosen for them?

So, it is Allah Almighty who has put into man's heart the inclination towards and liking for whatever work or role for which He has created him. Now he takes the service he is doing as his lifework without any legal compulsion and it is through this that he earns his living. The end product of this firmly established system is that all

human needs are easily satisfied at the cost of small cash. It may be ready-to-eat food or ready-to-wear clothes or ready-to-use furniture or a turn-key home - one can buy all this at some affordable price. Without the benefit of this system, even a billionaire would have failed to acquire a single grain of wheat despite being ready to stake all his wealth. In order to visualize the outcome of this natural system, think of one of your stays in a hotel where you enjoy the benefit of so many things without blinking. Only if you were to analyse how this works, you will notice that the food you eat there is comprised of courses featuring eatables and seasonings from many countries, china and cutlery and furniture from many more, and managers, chefs and stewards from still others. The tiny morsel of food which reaches your mouth is the result of the combined contribution of millions of machines, animals and human beings - and it is only after that, that you have been able to pamper your palate. Take another example. You come out of the house to go to some place a few miles away. You may either cannot walk all that distance or you do not have the time to do so. You find a taxi cab or a bus nearby without realizing that these vehicles have been assembled with components from many parts of the world and with drivers and conductors from as many. What things and what people stand there to wait on you and serve you! Just pay the fare and be on your way! No government has forced them to provide these for you. Working behind this scheme of things is the natural law ingrained into the human heart as a creational imperative by none but the great master of all hearts Himself.

Not far is the example of what the socialist countries did when they did away with this natural arrangement by taking over the function of telling people what they will do in their lives. In order to do this, they had to, first of all, do away with human freedom through coercion and injustice resulting in the killing and imprisonment of thousands and thousands of people. Those who remained behind were coerced into working like the parts of a machine, as a result of which, it can be conceded that production did increase at some places, but it must also be granted at the same time that this increase came at the cost of a gross demolition of the free choice of human beings. Thus, the deal did not turn out to be economical. Look at the natural arrangement in contrast. Here, everyone is free and restricted at the same

time - restricted in the sense of being devoted to particular jobs and roles on the basis of natural dispensation of dispositions. Since this restriction or compulsion comes from nowhere but from natural disposition, nobody feels being coerced. People who would themselves come forward to do the toughest labour or the most menial job, people who would even make efforts to get such jobs, are found everywhere during all times. The same people would, if a government started forcing them to do these jobs, just start running away from it enmasse.

In a nutshell, the universal world order revolves round mutual cooperation. But, let us not forget the other side of the picture which is very much there. For example, if this mutual cooperation were to be seriously practiced to carry out activities of crime, theft, robbery, killing and vandalization resulting in big, powerful and organized associations of thieves and robbers, then, this very mutual cooperation can destroy the whole system. This tells us that mutual cooperation is a two-edged sword which cannot only hurt you but it can also knock out the universal order of things. Since the world we live in a mix of good and bad, it was not unlikely that people would start using the power of mutual cooperation to infest human society with crimes, killings, destruction and general loss. Incidentally, this is no more a matter of likelihood, instead, it is an open fact of life for the whole world to see. Thus, it was as a reaction to this situation that theorists of the world laid the foundation of groups and nations based on different ideologies in order to have security for themselves. The idea was to use the power of mutual cooperation in favour of a particular group or people by offering an allied defence against another group or people who attacked them.

### **The Formation of Separate Nations**

According to 'Abd al-Karīm al-Shahristānī in *Al-Milal-wa-al-Nihal*, in the beginning when human population was not much, four nations came into being in terms of East, West, North and South. People living in each of these directions started taking themselves as one nation while taking others as other nations. And it was on this basis that they established their mutual cooperation. Later, when the population of the world became larger, the idea of nationalism and multilateralism on the basis of geneology, family ties and tribal affiliations became a

working principle among peoples of all directions. The whole system of Arabia rested on the basis of such tribal and geneological affinities, so much so that these were sufficient grounds to go to wars against each other. Banū Hāshim was one nation, Banū Tamīm was another and Banū Khuzā'ah still another. Among the Hindus in India, this division on the basis of the high caste and the low caste still persists unchanged.

The modern period of European nations did nothing to retain their geneological distinction, nor did they give any credence to the geneological peculiarities of the rest of the world. When they gained ascendancy in the world, all geneological and tribal groupings were eliminated, separate nations were raised on the basis of regions, provinces, homelands and languages - almost by placing a piece of humanity on each such altar. The fact is that this is the form that prevails in most parts of the world. The limit is that Muslims too - of all the peoples the least likely - fell a victim to this modern voodoo of community organization. As if the division as Arabs, Turks, Iraqis and Sindhis were not enough, they went on dividing and sub-dividing themselves into Egyptians, Syrians, Hijazis, Najdis, Panjabis, Bangalis, and so many others who started identifying themselves as separate nations or nationalities or peoples. Since all affairs of their governments were run on this basis, regional or provincial prejudice went deep into their response patterns and peoples of all regions or provinces began relating to each other on this basis - that became their idea of mutual cooperation.

### **The Teaching of the Qur'ān about Nationalism and Universalism**

Then came the Holy Qur'ān reminding human beings of the lesson they had forgotten. The initial verses of Sūrah al-Nisā' clearly declared that all human beings are the children of one father and mother. The noble Prophet, Sayyidnā Muḥammad صلى الله عليه وسلم made this all the more clear when he publicly announced during the famous address of his last Hājj that no Arab is superior to a non-Arab nor a white to a black. Superiority depends on nothing but *Taqwā*, on the fear of Allah and obedience to Him. It was this teaching of the Qur'ān which gave the call of "إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ" (Believers are brothers - 49:10) and it was in

one stroke that the jet blacks of Ethiopea were related to the reds of Turkey and Byzantium and the lineally less endowed non-Arabs to the Qurayshī and Hashmī Arabs as brothers to each other. The concept of nation and brotherhood was established on the basis that those who believe in Allah and His *Rasūl* are one nation and those who do not so believe are the other. It was this foundation which cut asunder the family ties of Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab from the noble Prophet ﷺ while joining it with Sayyidnā Bilāl from Ethiopea and Sayyidnā Suhayb from Byzantium. Finally, came the proclamation of the Qur'an: كَلَّفَكُمْ كَلْفَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُّؤْمِنٌ (64:2). It means that Allah created all human beings, then, they split in two groups - some became disbelievers and some others became believers. A practical demonstration of this Qur'anic classification was visible during the battles of Badr, Uḥud, Aḥzāb and Hunayn when a blood brother who elected to stay away from the obedience of Allah and His *Rasūl* found that his bond of mutual cooperation with his believing brother stood severed and he could no longer escape the stroke of his believing brother's sword.

Stated in the verse of the Qur'an cited above: وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ is this very principle of mutual cooperation and assistance. Being so reasonable and correct, it exhorts people to cooperate in deeds which are righteous and matters which are motivated by the fear of Allah and forbids them from extending their cooperation to anything sinful and aggressive. Just consider that the noble Qur'an has not suggested here that one should cooperate with Muslim brothers and not with non-Muslims. Instead of that, it declares that righteousness and the fear of Allah are the bases on which cooperation is to be extended for this is the real foundation on which rests any cooperation among Muslims themselves. It clearly means that no help is to be extended even to a Muslim brother if he is acting contrary to truth or is advancing towards injustice and aggression. Rather than help him in what is false and unjust, effort should be made to hold his hands against indulging in the false and the unjust for this, in reality, is helping him at its best - so that his present life as well as his life in the Hereafter is not ruined.

According to a narration from Sayyidnā Anas appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has been

reported to have said: 'انصر اخاك ظالماً او مظلوماً' (That is: Help your brother, just or unjust). His Companions who were soaked in the teaching of the Qur'an were surprised. They asked: 'Yā Rasūl Allah (O Messenger of Allah) as for helping the oppressed brother, that we understand. But, what does 'helping the oppressor' mean?' He said: 'Stop him from doing injustice - this is helping him.'

This teaching of the Qur'an helped establish that righteousness (*birr*) and the fear of Allah (*Taqwā*) are the real criterions on which it raised the edifice of Muslim nationalism and to which it invited the peoples of the world as the common denominator of mutual cooperation and assistance. Contrary to this were sin and aggression (*ithm* and '*udwān*') which were declared to be serious crimes and cooperation in these was prohibited. To describe the positive criterions, two separate words of *Birr* and *Taqwā* were used. According to a consensus of commentators, the word, *Birr* at this place means the doing of deeds which are good. This has been translated here as righteousness. The word, *Taqwā* means abstinence from what is evil. The word, *Ithm* has been used here in an absolute sense meaning sin and disobedience, whether it relates to rights or acts of worship. As for '*Udwān*', it lexically means the crossing of limits, that is, injustice and aggression.

About cooperating in what is righteousness and the fear of Allah, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said: الدال على الخير كفاعله which means: The reward of the person who shows someone the path of righteousness is very much the same as if it was taken personally. Ibn Kathīr has reported this ḥadīth with reference to al-Bazzār. In addition to that, it appears in the Ṣaḥīḥ of al-Bukhārī that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that whoever invites people to true guidance and righteous conduct shall receive a reward equal to all those who would heed to the call and act right - without the least cut from the reward of such people. As for the one who invites people to the path of error or sin, he or she will be earning the same amount of sin fully equal to the sins of all those who got involved with the filth of sin because of the inviter to sin - without any decrease in the count of such sins.

Citing Ṭabarānī, reports Ibn Kathīr: The Holy Prophet ﷺ said that anyone who joins up with an unjust person to assist him goes out of the fold of Islam. It is on the basis of this guidance that the righteous

elders of the community have strictly abstained from accepting any office or service in the courts of unjust rulers - for this amounts to assisting them in their acts of injustice. Tafsīr Rūh al-Ma'ānī, while explaining the noble verse: فَلَنْ أَكُونَ ظَهيرًا لِّلْمُجْرِمِينَ : 'I will never be a helper for the criminals - 28:17', has reported a ḥadīth in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that a call will go forth on the Day of Judgement citing the oppressors and the unjust and their helpers, so much so that all those who have handled chores even as insignificant as setting up the pens and inkpots of the unjust and the oppressive will all be rammed into a steel coffin and thrown into the Hell.

This is the teaching of the Qur'ān and Sunnah which aimed at spreading the virtues of righteousness, justice, sympathy and good-mannerliness throughout the world by presenting every single individual of the community as a living herald and model of the truth. And conversely, in order to eradicate crimes, injustices and oppressions, the same teaching had converted every member of the community into a kind of soldier who was bound to do his duty under all circumstances, whether watched or unwatched - because of the fear of Allah in his heart. The whole world saw the outcome of this wise teaching and grooming during the blessed period of the noble Companions and their Successors. Even in our day, when war threatens a certain country, departments of civil defence are established which impart some level of training for all its citizens. But, nothing of the sort gets done when it comes to the eradication of crimes, to making people promoters of good and blockers of evil. It is obvious that an objective like this cannot be achieved by military parades or civil defence exercises. This is the ultimate art of living which can only be learnt and practiced in educational institutions which, unfortunately, seem to have become strangers to spiritual and social refinements. This is very much true about the great qualities of righteousness and the fear of Allah which seem to be all banned in modern day educational institutions while the admittance of sin and high-handedness is all too open. What can the police do when a whole people throw away the concerns of the lawful and the unlawful and the right and the wrong on their backs and turn crime-oriented? Today we see the graph of crime rising high - theft, robbery, sexual offences, killings and destructions are taking place everywhere. That the legal machinery can do nothing to root out

these crimes is because of their failure to take advantage of the Qur'anic solution suggested above, that is, the governments are far removed from this Qur'anic system, and that they, particularly those who hold power into their hands, demur from adopting the principle of righteousness and the fear of Allah as the aim of their life - even though they have to face a thousand other hardships as a result of such avoidance. It may be interesting if such deviationists would swallow their pride at least for once, even if this be on a trial basis. Let them, then, witness the spectacle of the power of Allah and how it blesses them and their people with good life filled with the best of peace and comfort.

On the other side, there were the masses of people who took it for granted that the eradication of crimes is the exclusive responsibility of the government. In fact, they have become used to keeping crimes covered up. The idea of coming up with true witnesses to confirm truth and eliminate crime is no more a favoured practice among them. Such people must understand that covering up the crime of the criminal and avoiding to put their witness on record is an abetment of crime which, according to the Holy Qur'an, is *Harām* (unlawful) and a grave sin indeed. Furthermore, it is also a flagrant disobedience of the Divine command: *وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ* (And help each other in righteousness and piety, and do not help each other in sin and aggression) (5:2).

### Verse 3

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالْدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنْزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ وَالْمُنْخَفِقَةُ وَالْمُؤَفَّقَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَّةُ وَالنَّطِيطَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى النُّصَبِ وَأَنْ تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَامِ ذَلِكُمْ فَسُقُتِ الْيَوْمَ يَبْسُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمْ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ غَيْرِ مُتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمِهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

Prohibited for you are: the carrion, the blood, the flesh

of swine, and what has been invoked upon with (a name) other than that of Allah, and the animals dead by strangulation, dead by blow, dead by a fall, dead by goring, and that which a beast has eaten unless you have properly slaughtered it; and that which has been slaughtered before the idols and that you determine shares through the arrows. This is sin.

Today those who disbelieve have lost hopes of (damaging) your faith. So, do not fear them, and fear Me. Today, I have perfected your religion for you, and have completed My blessing upon you, and chosen Islam as *Dīn* for you. But whoever is compelled by severe hunger with no way out, having no inclination, then Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful. [3]

### Commentary

This is the third verse of Sūrah al-Mā'idah where a number of fundamental and subsidiary injunctions and rulings have been described. The first problem relates to lawful and unlawful animals. As for animals whose meat is harmful for human beings - whether physically, for it may pose the danger of disease in the human body, or spiritually, for it may hold the danger of spoilage in human morals or its many emotional states - these the Qur'ān has classed as evil declaring them to be unlawful. Then there are animals which have no physical or spiritual harmfulness, these the Qur'ān has declared to be good, pure and lawful.

The first prohibition in this verse is that of dead animals. These refer to animals which die without having been slaughtered, either because of some sickness or because of their natural death. The meat of such dead animals is extremely harmful for human consumption, not simply 'medically', but spiritually as well.

However, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم has exempted fish and locust as reported in *Aḥādīth* narrated in the Musnad of Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, Dārquṭnī and al-Baihaqī and elsewhere.

The second thing declared unlawful in this verse is blood. By saying: *أَوْ دَمًا مَسْفُورًا* (Or, flowing blood - 6:145) in another verse of the Holy Qur'ān, it was made clear that blood here means blood which flows. For this reason, liver and spleen, despite being blood, stand exempted

from the purview of this injunction. The *Ḥadīth* referred to a little earlier where fish and locust have been exempted from the purview of 'Maitah' or carrion also carries the exemption of liver and spleen from the definition of blood.

The third thing declared unlawful is the flesh of swine. 'Laḥm' or flesh means the whole body of the swine which includes fat, ligaments, everything.

The fourth prohibition is that of an animal which has been invoked upon with (a name) other than that of Allah (dedicated in this manner, or slaughtered). And, at the time of slaughtering it as well, the act of invoking any name other than that of Allah will amount to flagrant Shirk, which is the ascribing of partners, sharers or associates in the pure divinity of Allah. This animal, thus slaughtered, shall fall under the injunction of a dead animal with the consensus of Muslim jurists. This is what was done by the disbelievers of Arabia when they slaughtered animals invoking the name of their idols, or as some ignorant people would do when they would slaughter animals in the name of some saint or savant. It is also possible that someone does invoke the name of Allah at the time of slaughtering but actually offers it for one other than Allah making that sacrifice for the pleasure of whatever that non-Allah is. If so, this too, according to a consensus of Muslim jurists, is unlawful under the injunction of : مَا أَهْلَ لِعَبْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ (what has been invoked upon with [a name] other than that of Allah).

The fifth category made unlawful is that of an animal which has been strangulated to death, or which has choked itself to death while struggling out of some trap. Though *Munkhaniqah* (dead by strangulation) and *Mawqūdhah* (dead by blow) are included under the broad Qur'ānic term of 'Maitah'(carrion), but they have been mentioned here particularly because the people of *Jāhiliyyah* took them to be permissible.

The sixth category of animals is *Mawqūdhah* (dead by blow). It means an animal which has been killed by some hard blow, the kind of blow that comes from being hit by a staff, rod or rock. Should an arrow strike and kill its game in a manner that the arrow does not hit it with the sharp arrow head but does end up killing it just the same from the force of the blow itself, then, this too will be counted as *Maw-*

*qūdḥah* and will, as such, be unlawful. Sayyidnā 'Adī ibn Ḥātim رضى الله عنه said to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم : 'There are times when I hunt with an arrow heavy in the middle. If the game is killed with this arrow, can I eat it?' He said: 'If the animal has been killed by a blow from the heavy side of the arrow, it is included under *Mawqūdḥah* - do not eat it (and if it has been hit by the sharp-edged point and it has wounded the game, then, you can eat it). Al-Jaṣṣāṣ has reported this narration in *Aḥkām al-Qur'an* citing his own chain of authorities. Here, the condition is that the arrow should have been released from the bow after having said *Bismillāh*.

The game killed by a gun bullet has also been ruled by Muslim Jurists as included under the category of '*Mawqūdḥah*' and is, therefore, unlawful. Imām al-Jaṣṣāṣ reports from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar that he used to say: المقتولة بالبنده تلك الموقوده which means that an animal killed by gun shot is the '*Mawqūdḥah*'; therefore, it is unlawful. Imāms Abū Ḥanīfah, Shāfi'ī, Mālik and others are all in agreement with this view (al-Qurtubī).

The seventh category is called '*al-Mutaraddiyah*' (killed by a fall). It means that an animal which dies by falling from a mountain, mound or a high building, or which dies by falling into a well or some similar depth is also unlawful. Therefore, says a report from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd: If you see a game standing on top of a mountain and you shoot your arrow at it after reciting *Bismillāh* and the hit of the arrow causes the game to fall down and die, then, do not eat it.

Because, here too, the probability exists that the animal did not die with a hit from the arrow. May be, it died from the shock of the fall - if so, it will be counted under the category of '*Mutaraddiyah*' (dead by a fall). Similarly, if an arrow is shot at a bird and it falls down in water, its eating has also been prohibited for the same reason that probability exists that the hunted bird had died by drowning (al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

It should also be noted that Sayyidnā 'Adiyy ibn Ḥātim too has reported the same ruling from the Holy Prophet ﷺ - (al-Jaṣṣāṣ).

The eighth category is that of '*An-Naṭīḥah*' (dead by goring). It refers to an animal which has died in some collision such as by bumping against a train or vehicle, or it has been gored by butting against an

other animal.

The ninth category is of an animal which died when torn apart by some beast.

After describing the unlawfulness of these nine categories, an exception has been mentioned. It was said: *إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ*. It means: If you find any of these animals alive and you slaughter it properly, then, it becomes lawful - eating it is permissible.

This exemption cannot be applied to the first four categories, because in *Maitah* (carrion) and *Dam* (blood), the very possibility does not exist; and as for *Khinzīr* (swine) and what falls under *مَا أُهِلَّ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ* : *mā uḥilla li-ghayrillāh* (what has been invoked upon with [a name] other than that of Allah), they are unlawful in themselves - slaughtering or not slaughtering them is equally irrelevant. Therefore, there is a consensus of Sayyidnā 'Alī, Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Qatādah and other righteous elders on the view that this exemption applies to categories after the first four, that is, to the '*Munkhaniqah*' (dead by strangulation) and what comes after it. So, it comes to mean that, should the animal be found alive under all these circumstances with commonly discernable signs of life, and slaughtered with the name of Allah while in the same condition, then, it is lawful - whether dead by strangulation, dead by blow, dead by a fall, dead by goring or that which a beast has eaten. Any of these slaughtered while sensing signs of life in it shall become lawful.

Under the tenth category, an animal which has been slaughtered at an altar is unlawful. The altar refers to slabs of rocks placed around the Ka'bah which the people of *Jāhiliyyah* took as objects of worship and they would bring animals near the altars and sacrifice them dedicated to these rock slabs. They thought it was worship.

The people of *Jāhiliyyah* used to eat all these kinds of animals, animals which are evil. The Holy Qur'ān declared all of them to be unlawful.

The eleventh practice declared unlawful in this verse is the determining of shares with arrows: *al-istiqsām bi al-azlām*. The Arabic word, '*al-azlām*' used in the Qur'ān is the plural of *zalām*. This was an arrow used to determine shares during the days of *Jāhiliyyah*. They

were seven in number. One would have 'yes' and the other would have 'no' or some similar words written on them. These arrows were kept in the custody of the keeper of the Ka'bah.

When someone wanted his fortune told or wished to find out whether doing something in the future will be beneficial or harmful, they would go to the keeper of the Ka'bah, present money gift to him in anticipation of his service, who would, then, take out these arrows from the quiver one by one. If the arrow so drawn turned out to be the one with the word 'yes' on it, they thought that doing what they wanted to do was beneficial; and if, the arrow drawn had a 'no' on it, they drew the conclusion that they should not do what they wanted to do. The reason why this has been mentioned in the context of unlawful animals is that small groups of pagan Arabs used to have a joint slaughter of a camel or some other animal but, rather than divide up shares from the meat to all participants in accordance with the number of shares originally subscribed to, they would decide it by drawing these arrows. Obviously, by doing that, someone would remain totally deprived, someone else would get too much and there would be someone getting less than what was his right. Therefore, the unlawfulness of this procedure was explained alongwith the unlawfulness of animals.

'Ulamā' say that all methods used to divine future happenings or to find out what is 'Ghayb' (Unseen) - whether divination through numbers ('ilm al-Jafr or Jafar), or palm-reading, or the taking of omen - fall under the injunction of 'determining shares with arrows.'

The Arabic term for 'determining shares with arrows' is sometimes used for *Qimār* or gambling as well wherein rights are determined by the methods of lots or lottery. This too is *Harām* (unlawful) on the authority of the Qur'an which prohibits it under the name, '*Maisir*' (gambling). Therefore, righteous early elders Sa'īd ibn Jubayr, Mujāhid and Al-Sha'bī said that the way the pagan Arabs used arrows to determine shares, people of Persia and Asia Minor used chessmen and pieces of backgammon for the same purpose. They all fall under the injunction about arrows.

After explaining the unlawfulness of determining shares with arrows al-Tafsīr al-Maẓharī has particularly pointed out that the

Qur'anic statement: ذَلِكُمْ فَسُقٌ (This is sin) which follows immediately after this injunction means that this method of divination or determining of shares is an act of sin which leads people astray. After that, it was said:

الْيَوْمَ يَنسَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ

Today those who disbelieve have lost hopes of (damaging) your faith. So do not fear them, and fear Me.

This verse was revealed to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم on the day of 'Arafah of the Last Hajj in the tenth year of Hijrah. This was a time when the conquest of Makkah and almost of all Arabia was complete. Islamic law prevailed all over the Peninsula. Thereupon, reference was made to the assessment of disbelievers that Muslims were much lower in number as against them and that they were weak too based on which they planned to eliminate them. Now that they do not have those ambitions any more nor do they have the power to pose a challenge, Muslims have been asked to feel secure against them and go on to spend their energy in obeying and worshipping their Lord:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

Today, I have perfected your religion for you, and have completed My blessing upon you, and chosen Islam as *Din* for you.

The combination of circumstances in which this verse was revealed is special. Imagine. This is the day of 'Arafah, the foremost day out of the days of the entire year and by chance this 'Arafah fell on a *Jumu'ah* (Friday) the merits of which are well-known. The place is nothing less than the plain of 'Arafāt, close to the Mount of Mercy (*Jabl ar-Rahmah*) which, on the day of 'Arafah, is the chosen spot of the incessant descent of Mercy from Allah Almighty. The time is after 'Aṣr, which is a blessed time even during normal days, specially so on Friday wherein comes the hour when prayers are answered as confirmed by many authentic reports and this is the time for it. Then, this being the day of 'Arafah as well, it is all the more likely that prayers shall be answered particularly at this hour and time.

This is the largest and the first great gathering of Muslims for their Hajj. Participating in it are some one hundred and fifty thousand noble *Ṣaḥābah*, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them

all. And present with his Companions is the Holy Prophet ﷺ who is the very mercy of all universes sitting on his mount, the she-camel 'Aḍbā' under the legendary Mount of Mercy busy with his Wuqūf in 'Arafāt, now a great basic rite of Ḥajj.

It is under the canopy of these blissful merits and blessings and mercies that this verse is being revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Spot witnesses to this spectacle, the noble Companions said: When this verse came in the mode of *Waḥy* (revelation) to the Holy Prophet ﷺ what happened was what had transpired earlier too: The weight released by the descending Revelation could be perceived as the she-camel was crouching under that weight, so much so that she was compelled to sit down.

Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās رضي الله عنه says that this verse is almost the last verse of the Holy Qur'ān; no verse dealing with *Aḥkām* (Injunctions) was revealed after that. The only exception here is that of some verses of persuasive nature which have been identified as having been revealed after this verse. After the revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم lived in this mortal world for only eighty one days, for this verse was revealed on the ninth day of Dhil-Ḥijjah in the Hijrah year 10 and it was on the twelfth day of the month of Rabi' al-Awwal in the eleventh year of Hijrah that the Holy Prophet ﷺ departed from this mortal world.

That this verse was revealed in such elegant setting with a very special concern has its secret in the message it conveys which is a great news, a solemn reward and an abiding hallmark of distinction for Islam and Muslims and for the *Ummah* at large. In a nutshell, the message is that the ultimate standard of True Faith and Divine Blessing which was to be bequeathed to human beings in this world has reached its perfection on that great day. This is, so to say, the climax of the divine blessings in the shape of a True Faith which began with Sayyidnā Ādam عليه السلام and continued in later times when the children of Ādam in every period and every area kept receiving a part of this blessing in proportion to their prevailing conditions. Today, that Faith and that Blessing in its final form has been bestowed upon the Last of the Prophets, the *Rasūl* of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم and to his *Ummah*.

It goes without saying that this bestowal primarily highlights the excellence and distinction of the last and the foremost Prophet, Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā صلى الله عليه وسلم among the community of prophets, messengers and apostles. But, it also proves that the *Ummah* has a distinct status among other Traditional Communities.

This is why some Jewish scholars came to Sayyidnā 'Umar and told him: Your Qur'an has a verse which, if it was revealed to Jews, would have given them an occasion to celebrate its revelation through a festival. Sayyidnā 'Umar asked: Which verse is that? They, in response, recited this very verse (الْيَوْمَ اكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ). Sayyidnā 'Umar said: Yes, we know where and when this verse was revealed. The hint was that the particular day was a day of doubled rejoicing (*Eid*) for Muslims, one for 'Arafah and the other for *Jumu'ah* (Friday).

### The Islamic Principle of Celebrating Festive Occasions

This reply given by Sayyidnā 'Umar also carries a hint towards a cardinal Islamic principle which, of all peoples and religions of the world, is the hallmark of Islam alone. It is common knowledge that peoples from every nation and every religious group commemorate their particular historical events conditioned by their respective self-view. Such days which return each year acquire the status of a major festival with them.

Somewhere the celebration is about the birth or death anniversary of a great person. Elsewhere, it would be a day of coronation, or the day of the conquest of some country or city, or some acclaimed historical event. The net outcome of all such celebrations is no more than increasing the image of particular individuals. Islam is against the cult of personality. It has bypassed the customs of the age of ignorance by eliminating the commemoration of persons and by introducing the commemoration of principles and objectives as standard practice.

Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm, عليه السلام, the patriarch of prophets, was given the title of "Friend of Allah." The Holy Qur'an paid tributes to him on his success against trials. The verse: وَإِذْ ابْتَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ رَبُّهُ بِكَلِمَاتٍ فَأَتَمَّهُنَّ (and when his Lord put Ibrāhīm to a test with certain Words! And he fulfilled them) (2:124) means exactly this. But, no anniversary of his birth or death was ever celebrated, nor that of his son, Ismā'īl عليه السلام, nor that of his mother, nor any kind of memorial was established to perpetuate their

memory.

Of course, there were things of significance in their deeds, things related to the objectives of religion and faith. This legacy was worth the best of preservation and commemoration and this legacy was not only preserved but made mandatory for all succeeding generations as an obligatory part of their religion and faith. Sacrifice. Circumcision. Running between the hills of Ṣafā and Marwah. Throwing pebbles at three places in *Minā*. All these are living, ever-reminding monuments to the deeds of the same righteous elders which they performed by sacrificing their personal desires and natural needs aiming for nothing but the pleasure of Allah Almighty. Right there, in these deeds, there is a lesson for all peoples of all times that human beings should sacrifice everything, even the dearest of the dear, for the good pleasure of Allah.

So, this was how Islam abstained from celebrating days devoted to the birth and death of prominent men, or women, no matter how great, or the days highlighting their personal lives and times. Celebrated instead, were days centered around their deeds, specially those pertaining to some particular act of worship, for example, *Laylatul-Barā'ah* (the Night of Deliverance from Sin), *Ramaḍān al-Mubārak* (the Blessed Month of Ramaḍān), *Laylatul-Qadr* (the Night of Power), *Yowm al-'Arafah* (the Day of 'Arafah), *Yowm al-'Āshūrā* (the Day of 'Āshūrā) etc. As for 'Īd, the well-known Muslim Festival of Rejoicing, it was limited to only two and that too was made purely religious in nature. The first 'Īd ('Īdul-Fiṭr) was set in between at the end of the month of Ramaḍān al-Mubārak and at the beginning of the Hajj months while the second 'Īd ('Īdul-Adḥā) was appointed to be celebrated after the completion of the Hajj pilgrimage.

To sum up, let us return to the reply given by Sayyidnā 'Umar which so succinctly declared that 'Īds in Islam do not follow historical events as among Jews and Christians. This was the custom of *Jāhiliyyah*, the first age of ignorance when the passing of some major historical event would be turned into a festival. Now, as witnesses to the modern Age of Ignorance, we can see how wide-spread this urge to celebrate has become. The limit is that Muslims themselves have started imitating other nations indulging in practices contrary to their way.

Christians started celebrating a Festival commemorating the birth of Sayyidnā 'Īsā, عليه السلام. With their example before them, some Muslims introduced another 'Īd, the Festival of the birth of the Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him, and the blessings of Allah. Devoting a day to take out processions on streets with activities neither reasonable nor valid and filling a night with displays of lamps and lights, they took this to be an act of worship. For this there is no basic justification in the words and deeds of the *Ṣaḥābah*, the noble Companions, or the *Tābi'īn*, the Successors to the Companions, or the large body of the righteous elders of the Muslim Community.

The truth of the matter is that this practice of celebrating days would pass with nations which lack individuals with superior merits and achievements. When lucky, they would find a couple or few suitable enough with a record of something special they may have done and commemorating them would become a matter of national pride for them.

If this custom of celebrating days were to be practiced in Islam, we would have to begin with more than one hundred and twenty thousand prophets each of whom has a big roster of wonderful achievements to his credit. Celebrating the birthday of and commemorating the achievements of each would be very much in order. After past prophets, peace be upon them, let us move to the Last of them ﷺ and look at his pure and pristine life. When you do that there would not remain even one day which could turn out to be devoid of one or the other achievement which deserves to be celebrated. From his childhood to his youth, he was an epitome of moral perfections (or a paradigm of virtues, as termed by some modern Muslim writers in the West) whereby he was considered the most trustworthy person in the whole country of 'Arabia. Are these embellishments not worthy enough for Muslims to celebrate? Then, there is the Revelation of the Holy Qur'ān, the event of Hijrah, the Battle of Badr, and Uḥud, and Khandaq, and Ḥunayn, and Tabūk, and the Conquest of Makkah. Add to these all other battles in which the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم participated. Each deserves a celebration. Similarly, there are thousands of his miracles; each one of them needs commemoration. One needs insight to look at the life of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم which would

bring an honest person to come to the conclusion that his good life - not just a day from it, rather every hour in it - is most worthy of being commemorated, celebrated and rejoiced in.

After the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, think of some one hundred and twenty thousand of his noble Companions each one of whom is really a living miracle of their master. Would it not be unjust to ignore them and avoid celebrating their achievements? If we pursue this practice still further on, we shall be looking at those who followed after the noble Companions - righteous elders, men of Allah, scholars, masters and guides - whose number would shoot up to millions. If commemorative days have to be celebrated, how could one leave them out? Would it not be an injustice to them? Or, a failure to recognize intellectual merit or spiritual excellence? And if, left with not much choice, Muslims were to decide to celebrate memorial days for everyone, they would have a calendar of activities all full of celebrations with no day free - in fact, they would have to celebrate several commemorations, festivals and 'Ids every hour of every day!

No wonder the Prophet of Islam and all his Companions ignored this custom as outmoded pagan practice from the days of *Jāhiliyyah*! Sayyidnā 'Umar, the second *Khalifah* of Islam, may Allah be pleased with him, alludes to this very approach in his policy statement made before the Jews.

### Understanding Important Meanings of the Verse

This Verse carries the good news that Allah has given to the noble Prophet and his Community three rewards: Perfection of Faith, Completion of Divine Blessing and the Shari'ah of Islam as the Chosen Way for the Muslim Community.

1. Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, and others with him, explain that Perfection of Faith refers to the perfection of all limits, obligations, injunctions and refinements in personal and social behaviour as necessary for the True Faith. Now there is no need to add to it, nor there remains any probability of a shortfall (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī). For this reason, no new injunction from among the total corpus of injunctions was revealed after this. As already pointed out earlier, the few verses which were revealed later on carry either some subjects of persuasion or were a reiteration of injunctions already revealed.

What has been said here is not contrary to the function of the most-authentically qualified jurists of Islam (*Mujtahid* Imāms through which they could explicate and elaborate injunctions of the Shari'ah related to new and unprecedented events and circumstances as based on their highest possible effort and judgement (*Ijtihād*). The reason is simple - because the Holy Qur'ān which has laid down the limits and obligations of religious injunctions has also, at the same time, determined the principles of *Ijtihād*. Pursuant to this authority, all rules and regulations deduced by *Ijtihād* right through the Last Day will be considered as if they are, in a way, the very injunctions of the Qur'ān itself - because they are subordinate to the principles given by the Qur'ān.

To sum up, we can say that 'Perfection of Faith', as explained by Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, is the perfection of all injunctions of the Faith. It needs no addition, while the probability of any shortfall through abrogation just does not exist - because, soon after, the ongoing process of *Waḥy* (revelation) was to be discontinued following the passing away of the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم from this mortal world; and no injunction of the Holy Qur'ān can be abrogated without a Divine revelation (*Waḥy*). As for the apparent multiplicity of sub-injunctions that generated from jurists under the principle of *Ijtihād* was, in reality, no multiplicity as such. It was, rather, the explication and elaboration of the Qur'ānic injunctions.

2. 'Completion of Blessing' means the rise of Muslims and the fall of their antagonists - which was manifested through the Conquest of Makkah, the eradication of the customs of *Jāhiliyyah* and through the absence of all disbelievers from the Ḥajj that year.

The words of the Qur'ān used here show that '*Ikmal*' (perfection) has been coupled with '*Dīn*' (Faith) while the word '*Itmām*' (Completion) goes with '*Ni'mah*' (blessing) - though both words are obviously synonymous and are generally used interchangeably. But, in fact, there is a difference in the sense they both carry. This has been explained by Imām Rāghib al-Isfahānī in his *Mufradāt al-Qur'ān* by saying that the '*Ikmal* and *Takmil*' (Perfection) of something means that the purpose and objective behind it has been accomplished (perfection of something carries exactly the same sense in English,

specially at a time when spoken of, as '*al-yowm*' (today) in the verse already indicates). The other word, '*Itmām*' (Completion) means that nothing else is needed any more. Thus, 'Perfection of Faith' tells us that the purpose of sending Divine Law and the injunctions of Faith into this world stands fulfilled and perfected today; and 'Completion of Blessing' means that Muslims do not have to depend on anyone anymore. Allah has Himself given them supremacy, power, authority. They can use these to promulgate and implement the imperatives (*Aḥkām*, Injunctions) of this True Faith.

Also noteworthy here is the arrangement in the Verse where '*Dīn*' (Faith) has been attributed to Muslims while the attribution of '*Ni'mah*' (Blessing) is towards Almighty Allah. This is because '*Dīn*' (Faith) is demonstrated by what the members of the Community do while the consummation of '*Ni'mah*' (Blessing) is directly from Almighty Allah (Ibn al-Qayyim, Tafsīr).

The meanings as established here also clarify that the Perfection of Faith 'today' does not mean that, earlier, the Faith of the blessed prophets was imperfect. Quite contrary to that, the '*Dīn*' (Faith) of every prophet and messenger was perfect and complete in terms of the relevant period of time (Tafsīr al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ with reference to al-Qaffāl al-Marwazī). In other words, it means that the period in which a Law or Faith was sent by Allah to a prophet, it was in itself perfect and complete for that period and for the people who belonged to it. But, the future projection, that the Faith quite perfect for that period and its people will not remain perfect for later periods and peoples, was already there in the ultimate Knowledge of Almighty Allah - He knew that it would be abrogated and another Faith and Law will take its place. This is contrary to the case of the Shari'ah of Islam which was sent last of all since it is perfect from all sides and angles. It is neither specified for any particular time nor is it restricted to any particular area, country or people. Instead of all that, Islam is a Shari'ah which is perfect and complete for every period and every area and every people for all times to come right upto the Last Day.

3. The third reward which has been bestowed upon the Muslim Community through this Verse is that Allah has, by His creational prerogative, authority and wisdom, chosen the Faith of Islam for this

*Ummah* which is perfect and complete in all its aspects - and on which depends the ultimate Salvation.

Certainly great was the message this Verse gave to the Muslim Community which was thus blessed with the finest gift they could ever dream of: the gift of the *Dīn* of Islam - the last and the most perfect Faith, after which there is no Faith to come and in which there shall be no addition or deletion. When this Verse was revealed, Muslims had good reason to be jubilant about Allah's mercy which descended upon them in that manner. But, Sayyidnā 'Umar was found in tears. The Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم asked him the reason for his tears. He replied: This Verse seems to indicate that now your stay in this world is very short, because with the perfection of Islam, the need of a *Rasūl* to be present also stands fulfilled! The Holy Prophet ﷺ agreed with him (Tafsīr ibn Kathīr and al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ). Time showed that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم departed from this mortal world only after eighty one days this event took place.

### **Unlawfulness of Animals: Exception under Compulsion**

Towards the end of the Verse, the statement: *فَمَنْ اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْمَصَةٍ* ( But, whoever is compelled by severe hunger with no way out) relates to animals the unlawfulness of which has been mentioned in the earlier part of the Verse. The purpose of the sentence is to exclude a particular condition from the general rule. If a person is subjected to severe hunger to a point where death becomes likely, then, under this condition, were he to eat a little from unlawful animals mentioned in the Verse, there will be no sin on him. But, the condition is that the purpose of such eating should not be to have one's fill or to enjoy it. Instead of doing that, one should eat just about what would remove the state of compulsion.

This is exactly what the words: *غَيْرَ مُتَجَانِبٍ لِأَنَّهُمْ* (having no inclination to sin) following immediately mean, that is, this act should be free from any inclination to commit a sin. Contrary to that, the purpose should only be limited to get relief from the excruciating state of compulsion. Towards the end of the Verse, the statement: *فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ* (Allah is Most-Forgiving, Very-Merciful) makes a pointed reference to the fact that these unlawful things are still unlawful as they already were, but only such a person has been given leave because of the state of compulsion he may be in.

## Verse 4

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ قُلْ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُم مِّنَ الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلِّبِينَ تُعَلِّمُونَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا أَمْسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٤﴾

They ask you as to what has been made lawful for them. Say, "Made lawful for you are good things, and (hunting through) birds and beasts of prey that you train teaching them out of what Allah has taught you. So, eat of what they hold for you, and recite the name of Allah upon it." And fear Allah. Surely, Allah is swift at reckoning. [4]

Lawful and unlawful animals were mentioned in preceding verses. An answer to a question on the same subject appears in the present verse. Some Companions had asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ about the rule governing hunting with the help of a trained dog and falcon. Given in this verse is an answer to that question.

### Commentary

To make an animal lawful when hunted through a dog or falcon, four conditions have been mentioned in the question and its answer appearing above. These are:

1. The dog or falcon should be taught, trained and disciplined. The functional principle given here is that the dog should have been groomed in a manner that it should, when released at the prey, catch it and bring it back to you - not that it starts eating it. As for a falcon, the rule set was that it should immediately return when called by you, even if it was chasing the prey. When so trained, it will prove that these beasts of prey hunt for you and not for themselves. Now the animal hunted by these beasts of prey will be considered your own. And if they act against this training once in a while, for example, the dog itself starts eating the prey, or the falcon does not return at your call, then, this game is not yours anymore, therefore, eating it is not permissible.

2. The second condition is that you should release the dog or falcon immediately at your choice and will, not that they dash after some game and hunt it on their own. In the verse under discussion, this condition has been made to come out clearly by the use of the word, "*Mukallibīn*." Lexically, this word is a derivation from '*Taklīb*' which basically means the training of dogs. Later, it also came to be used in the sense of training beasts of prey and releasing them after the game.

The author of the famous Tafsīr Jalālayn explains it in the sense of '*Irsāl*' (send after) which means releasing after the game. This view has been reported in Tafsīr al-Qurṭubī as well.

3. The third condition is that the beasts of prey do not themselves start eating the game - instead, they should bring it to you. This condition has been explained through : *بِمَا آمَسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ* (what they hold for you).

4. The fourth condition is: When you release the dog or the falcon after the game, do it after saying '*Bismillah*' (With the name of Allah).

When these conditions stand fulfilled, the game - if dead before it reaches you - will still be lawful with no need to slaughter. If otherwise, it will not be lawful for you unless slaughtered.

With Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, there is a fifth condition as well: That this beast of prey should have also wounded the game. A hint towards this condition is embedded in the word, "*Al-Jawāriḥ*" (birds and beasts of prey) which also means animals which wound or injure.

**Ruling:** This injunction covers wild animals out of one's possession and control. In case a wild animal has been captured, it will not be lawful without having been properly slaughtered.

Finally, at the end of the verse, there comes the instruction that hunting through a beast of prey has no doubt been made lawful by Almighty Allah, but, it is not permissible to ignore *Ṣalāh* and other necessary religious obligations for the sake of having fun chasing game.

#### Verse 5

الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ حِلٌّ  
لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَهُمْ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ

مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أَجْوَرَهُنَّ  
مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرِ مُسْفِحِينَ وَلَا مَتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ  
بِالْإِيمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٥﴾

This day, good things have been made lawful for you. And the food of the people of the Book is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them, and good women from among believers, and good women from among those given the Book before you, provided you give them their dowers, binding yourself in marriage, not going for lust, nor having paramours. And whoever rejects Faith, his effort will go waste and, in the Hereafter, he is among the losers. [5]

### Commentary

In the first verse of Sūrah al-Mā'idah, the lawfulness of domestic animals such as the goat, cow and buffalo has been described. The third verse has a detail of nine kinds of unlawful animals. From that detail to the opening sentence of the present verse, we come to know in summation the essentials of the lawfulness and unlawfulness of animals as well as its operating standard and rule.

The verse opens with the words: *الْيَوْمَ أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ* (This day, good things have been made lawful for you). Here, 'this day' means the day on which this verse and those before it have been revealed, that is, the Day of 'Arafah in the Last Hajj of Hijrah 10. The sense is that the way your Faith has been made perfect and the blessing of Allah stands completed for you on this day, very similarly, good things from Allah which were already lawful for you have been allowed to stay lawful for ever. The probability that the injunction could be withdrawn does not exist anymore because the ongoing process of revelation was to be discontinued.

This sentence mentions the lawfulness of good things. But, another verse (7:157): *مُحِلٌّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَمُحْرَمٌ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثُ* (Made lawful for them are good things and made unlawful for them are evil things). Here, by placing 'Aṭ-Ṭayyibāt' (good things) against 'Al-Khabā'ith' (impure things), the reality of both words has been made clear. Lexically,

things good, pure, clean and delightful are called '*Aṭ-Ṭayyibāt*'; and in contrast, '*Al-Khabā'ith*' is used to denote things which are evil and disgusting. Therefore, this sentence of the verse stresses that everything good, pure and beneficial has been made lawful for human beings and everything disgusting and harmful has been made unlawful. The reason is that human beings are not like animals whose purpose of life is limited to eating, drinking, sleeping, waking - being no more than a sort of live-die cycle. Nature has made them the master of the universe for some special purpose and that cannot be achieved without having high and pure morals. Therefore, immoral human beings would really not deserve to be counted as human beings.

That is why the Holy Qur'an has said about such people: *بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ*, that is, they are like cattle, rather more astray. Now if we accept that the 'humanity' of human beings depends on the betterment of their morals, it will become necessary to concede that they must be made to totally abstain from everything which leads to the corruption of human morals. Everyone knows how environment and society affect human morals. When things outside can do that to human morals, just imagine what would be the effect of things which go inside the human body for what becomes a part of the human body must affect its ethical behaviour. Therefore, caution must necessarily be observed in all foods and drinks. And let us keep in mind that unlawful income from theft, robbery, bribery, interest, gambling and evils like that, once it becomes part of anyone's body, will inevitably remove one farther from humanity and nearer to 'satanic nature.'

Hence, says the Holy Qur'an: *يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا* (O' Messengers, eat from good things [made lawful as sustenance] and do righteous deeds - 23:51). Here, the command to be righteous in deeds refers itself back to the command to eat from what is *Halāl* (lawful) because without eating *Halāl*, righteous deeds cannot be imagined. This consideration is very important specially in the case of meat which becomes an integral part of the human body. One has to be most cautious and guard against the possibility of non-*Halāl* meat entering his system through food and go on to spoil his morals. Similar is the case of meat which is physically harmful for human beings as the carrier of bacteria causing disease and death. Everyone knows that abstention

from such meat is necessary. As for things declared evil by the Shari'ah of Islam, these are definitely agents of corruption for the human body or the soul or both. Since they are dangerous for human life and morals, they were made unlawful. As opposed to this, good things, the '*Tayyibāt*' contribute to the nurture and flowering of the human body, soul and morals - so, they were made lawful. In this way, this brief sentence of the Qur'ān has given to us the philosophy and ground rules of the lawful and the unlawful, so to say, in a nutshell.

Now, as to which things are pure, beneficial and desirable and which others are impure, harmful and disgusting, the real decision of the matter lies with the desire and aversion of one's inherent good taste. This is the reason why animals declared unlawful by Islam have been considered impure and disgusting by people of good taste during every period of time - for instance, carrion and blood. Nevertheless, there come occasions when custom-based ignorance overpowers good taste and when the fine line between good and bad fades out. Or, the evil in some things is concealed. In such situations, the decision of the prophets, peace be on all of them, is the guiding and binding authority for everyone. The reason is that the noble prophets are the foremost in commonsense, decency, goodness and taste among human beings. They were specially gifted by Almighty Allah with an intrinsically sound and balanced nature and He Himself took the responsibility of their nurture and grooming. One might say that they rose to be what they were under a Divine security shield manned by angels which saw to it that their minds and hearts and morals would never be affected by any evil environment. So, things they took as evil are really evil; and what they found to be good is really good.

In Ḥujjatullah al-Bālighah, Shah Walīyyullāh says that all animals declared unlawful by the Shari'ah of Islam, when observed closely, will all fit compactly under two principles: one - an animal is evil by its nature and disposition; two - the method of slaughtering the animal is wrong, as a result of which it will be considered 'dead' ( '*Maitah*' - carrion), not slaughtered.

In the third verse of Sūrah al-Mā'idah, things called unlawful are nine in number. Out of these, the 'swine' is part of the first kind; the rest of the eight are in the second. By saying: *وَيَحْرِمُهُمُ الْخَبِيثَاتُ* (He allows

them as lawful what is good [and pure] and prohibits them from what is bad [and impure] - 7:157 - AYA, rev. ed., Madinah) the Holy Qur'an declares the general rule that all evil animals are unlawful. For details, the Holy Qur'an points out to some clearly, for instance, 'the flesh of swine' and 'flowing blood'... The enumeration of the rest was entrusted to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. One sign of an animal being evil he gave was that a people could have been punished by having been transformed (*Maskh*) into the form of an animal. This indicates that the particular animal is evil by its very nature as Divine wrath transformed it into an animal. For example, says the Holy Qur'an: **وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمْ** **الضفادعَ وَالنمَارِقَ** which means that some peoples have been transformed into swines and monkeys as punishment. This proves that both these kinds of animals are evil by nature - they, even if slaughtered, would still not become lawful. Then there are animals whose very doings and likings are sufficient for people of natural disposition to sense the evil inside them. For instance, there are beasts who live by injuring, tearing and eating other animals - a hard-hearted lifestyle indeed.

Therefore, when someone asked about a wolf from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, he said: "Can a human being eat it?" Similarly, there are many animals among crawlers and fliers whose very nature is to hurt or snatch away things, for instance, the snake, scorpion, house-lizard, fly, or a kite and falcon and others like them. So, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم set the rule that animals among beasts which tear animals apart with teeth, such as the lion and the wolf and others of their kind, and animals among birds such as the falcon and the hawk and others of their kind which hunt with their claws, are all unlawful; or, animals which are by nature mean and low or get themselves befouled with impurities, such as the rat or animals which eat carrion, or the donkey and similar others, all fall under the category of animals the physical properties and harmfulness of which is readily sensed by any human being with a normal mind and temperament.

To recapitulate, we can say that the animals which have been made unlawful under the Shari'ah of Islam are of two kinds: Those intrinsically evil and those which are not evil by themselves but they have not been slaughtered following the method of slaughtering animals ordained by Almighty Allah. This includes all other options such

as the animal was not slaughtered at all - but was killed by shock or blow - or the act of slaughtering did take place, but rather than pronounce the name of Allah on it, a name other than that of Allah was recited, or just no name was pronounced by knowingly omitting the name of Allah at the time of slaughter. Such *Dhibh* or slaughter is equally untrustworthy and invalid in view of the Sharī'ah. In fact, this is very much like having 'killed' an animal without proper slaughter.

Something worth attention here is that everything one eats and drinks comes to him as a blessing from Allah, but, excepting the animals, no restriction has been imposed on cooking or eating anything from them other than that which would make it necessary for you to say '*Allāhu-Akbar*' or '*Bismillāh*' invariably before cooking and eating, as if, that food would not be lawful without it. At the most, the saying of '*Bismillāh*' at the time of eating and drinking anything has been classified as desirable or recommended ('*Mustahabb*' : acts the neglect of which is not punished by Allah, but the performance of which is rewarded). Contrary to this is the matter of animals, for it has been made necessary ('*Wājib*') that the name of Allah be invoked while slaughtering them - and if, anyone were to leave out the name of Allah at the time of the slaughter, the animal was declared to be carrion, and unlawful: What is the wisdom behind it?

A little deliberation makes it clear that the lives of all living beings are equal in a way. Therefore, the act of one life form whereby another life form is slaughtered and exterminated should, obviously, be not permissible. Now, for those it has been made permissible, it is a major reward from Allah. That is why the realization of the presence of this Divine blessing and the expression of gratitude for it has been made necessary at the time of slaughtering the animal. This is contrary to the case of things like grains and fruits - their very growth is for the sole purpose that human beings use them up to fulfill their needs. Therefore, the saying of '*Bismillāh*' only whenever used has been placed at the level of being desirable ('*Mustahabb*') - it has not been made necessary ('*Wājib*': a duty which, if not done, brings punishment).

There is yet another reason. There was a lingering custom from the days of *Jāhiliyyah* that disbelievers used to pronounce the names

of their idols while slaughtering animals. The Shari'ah of Islam transformed this un-Islamic custom into a wonderful act of worship by making it necessary to invoke the name of Allah instead. This was functionally the most appropriate strategy that some correct name instead of the false one be proposed, otherwise it would have been difficult to wean people away from ongoing customs and habits.

### The slaughter of the people of the Book

The second sentence of the Verse is: **وَأَطْعَمُوا الَّذِينَ آتَوْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ حَلَّ لَكُمْ وَأَطْعَمْتُمْ حَلَّ لَهُمْ** (and the food of the people of the Book is lawful for you, and your food is lawful for them ... ). According to the consensus of *Ṣaḥābāh* and *Ṭabi'īn* (the Companions and their Successors), the word '*Ṭa'ām*' (food) at this place means 'properly slaughtered animals' (*Dhabīḥah*). This is what has been reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, Abū ad-Dardā', Ibrāhīm, Qatādah, al-Suddī, Ḍhaḥḥāk and Mujāhid, may Allah be pleased with them all (Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī and al-Jaṣṣās) - because, in foods of all other kinds, the people of the Book and the idolators and all other disbelievers are just the same as bread, flour, lintels, beans, rice, fruits and similar other eatables need no slaughtering. For Muslims, eating that kind of food, of course, when procured by any lawful means, is permissible - and conversely, when they procure it from Muslims, it is lawful for them. Thus, the essence of the sentence is that the *Dhabīḥah* (properly slaughtered animal) of the People of the Book is lawful for Muslims and the *Dhabīḥah* (properly slaughtered animal) of Muslims is lawful for the People of the Book.

At this point, there are some issues which should be considered. First of all, who are the People of the Book in the terminology of the Qur'an and Sunnah? What does 'Book' mean? And, is it also necessary that, in order to be regarded as the People of the Book, these people believe in and act according to their Book, correctly and faithfully? Here, it is obvious that the Book cannot be taken in its literal sense, that is, any written page. It can only mean a particular Book which has come from Allah. Therefore, there is a consensus of Muslim *Ummah* that 'Book' could only mean a particular Scripture about which there exists a certitude that, confirmed by the Holy Qur'an, it is the Book of Allah, for instance, the Torah, Evangile, Zabūr (Psalms) and other scriptures of of Sayyidnā Mūsā and Ibrāhīm. Therefore, peoples