

The Good Life

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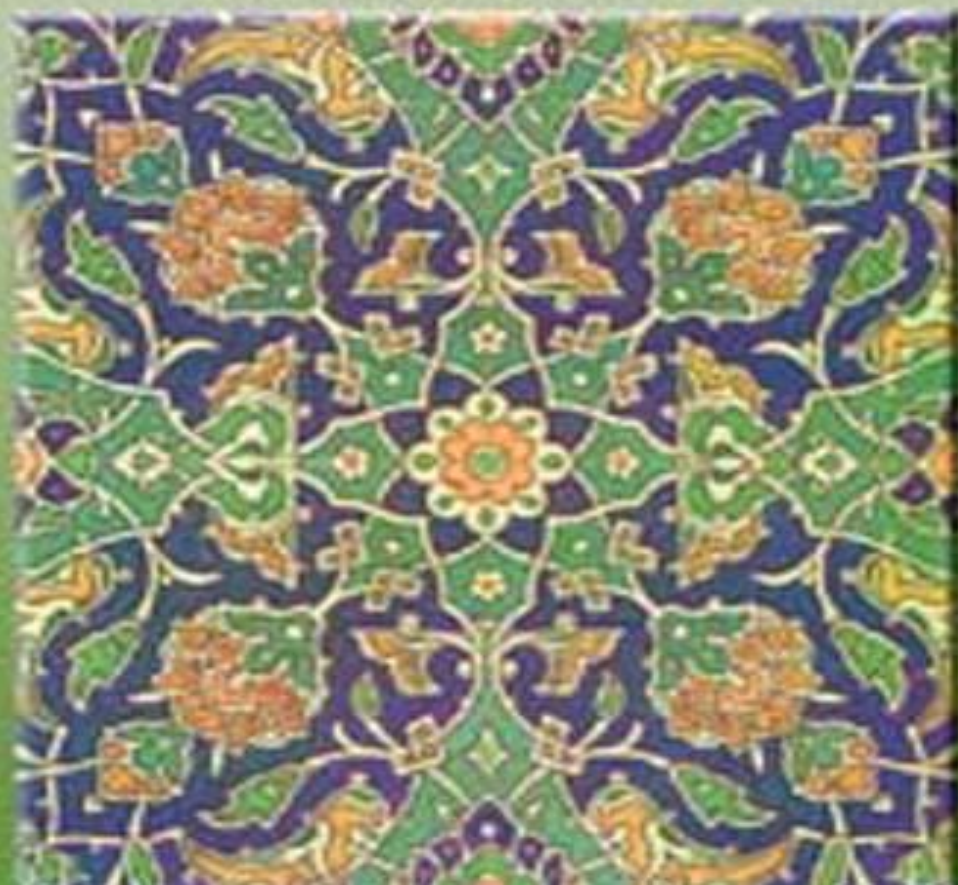




TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents.....	2
Introduction	6
God is One	8
God— The Sublime, the Tremendous.....	9
God’s Signs	10
In Heaven and on Earth.....	11
The Cosmic Call.....	13
Lord of the Great Throne.....	15
Love for God.....	16
God’s Prophets	18
Heaven and Hell.....	20
Prayer	22
Fasting	24
Alms-giving	25
Pilgrimage.....	27

Sacrifice	29
Serving God	30
The Shari'ah	31
The Servants of the Merciful	33
Trust in God	35
Words of Wisdom	36
God-Fearing People	37
The Good Life	38
Haram and Halal (Lawful and Unlawful)	40
Heavenly Souls	42
The Serene Soul	43
Divine Souls	44
The Correct Way	45
Profitable Trading	46
Real Piety	47
God's Hospitality	48



The Believer's Livelihood	49
The People of Paradise.....	50
Everything for God	51
The Believer is God's Tree	52
Good Advice	53
Doomed to Destruction	54
The Deniers of God's Signs	55
Fair Testimony	56
Living in Harmony.....	57
Islamic Society	58
Calling to God.....	60
Magnifying the Lord	61
Eternity is Better	62
Their Efforts will be Rewarded	63
The Day of Reward and Retribution	65
The Religion That is Pleasing to God	66

Table of Contents

Prayers.....	67
To the Lord.....	68
Protect Us!	69
Help Us!	70
Purify Our Hearts.....	71
Grant Us a Righteous End	72
Have Mercy on Us!.....	73
Save us from Evil.....	74
Strengthen Us!	75
Do Not Leave Me Alone!	76
Save Us From Doom	77



INTRODUCTION

This is the third book in our introduction to Islam series. It comprises excerpts from the Qur'an, arranged in a special sequence under relevant headings. No interpretation or commentary has been added. It provides an introduction to Islam which is derived directly from the original revealed source.

The name of this book is taken from a verse of the Qur'an, the full text of which is:

Be they men or women those, who believe
and do what is right We shall surely endow
with a good life: We shall reward them
according to their noblest actions (16:97).

The meaning of the "good life" mentioned in this verse is clear from the phrase "according to their noblest actions". A good life is a life of good actions. The commentator of the Qur'an, ad-Dahhak, has defined it as "being content with an honest living and serving God in one's life." This is the meaning that the Companions of the Prophet and their followers generally inferred from the phrase.

To believe in God and implement His commandments is to qualify oneself for His succour. God bestows multiple blessings on a person who lives a life of faith and righteousness. He enables him to experience the joy of closeness to God in his worship; to settle day-to-day problems in a divinely-inspired manner; to deal with friends and foe in an equally honest-to-God way. God guides him on the straight path. He always seeks God's pleasure and nothing can turn him away from this aim.

The Qur'an has given a clear exposition of the theoretical and practical nature of the good life. The verses which have been selected describe various fundamental aspects of this life in the Qur'an's inimitable style. These passages thus provide both a description of the good life and an authentic example of how it should be lived.

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October, 1980

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New Delhi



GOD IS ONE

Say: God is One, The Eternal God. He begot none, nor was He begotten. None is equal to Him (112:1-4).

Mankind, worship your Lord, who has created you and those before you, so that you may ward off evil; who has made the earth a couch for you and the sky a canopy; and has sent down water from the sky, thereby producing fruits for you to eat. So do not knowingly set up rivals to God (2:21-22).

God does not forgive partners being ascribed to Him. He forgives whom He will all other sins. Whoever ascribes partners to God has strayed far from the truth (4:116).



GOD—THE SUBLIME, THE TREMENDOUS

Allah—there is no God save Him, the Ever-living, the Eternal. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth. Who can intercede with Him save by His leave? He knows what lies before humans and what is after them, and they encompass nothing of His knowledge save what He wills. His throne comprises both the heavens and the earth, and He is never weary of preserving them. He is the Sublime the Tremendous (2:255).



GOD'S SIGNS

Your Lord is God, who created the skies and the earth in six periods, then ascended His Throne. He throws the veil of night over day. Swiftly they follow one another. The sun, moon and stars are subservient to His command. His is the creation, His is the command. Blessed be God, the Lord of the worlds. Call on your Lord humbly and secretly; He does not love the transgressors. Do not bring corruption to the land after things have been set right. Pray to Him fearfully, eagerly. God's mercy is within reach of the righteous. He sends forth the winds as harbingers of His mercy till, when they bear a heavy cloud, We drive it to a dead land and cause rain to descend thereon, bringing forth all manner of fruit. Thus We will raise the dead to life; perchance you will take heed. And as for the good land, its vegetation comes forth by the leave of its Lord. But poor and scant are the fruits which spring from barren soil. Thus We make plain Our signs for those who render thanks. (7:54-58).



IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH

So glory be to God morning and evening. Praise be to Him in the heavens and on earth, at twilight and at noon. He brings forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living, and He revives the earth after it is dead. Likewise you shall be raised to life. And by one of His signs He created you from dust; now behold you are human beings, ranging widely. And by another of His signs He created for you, of yourselves, spouses that you might find repose in them and has planted love and kindness in your hearts. Surely there are signs in this for people who reflect. Among His other signs are the creation of the heavens and the earth and the variety of your tongues and hues. Surely there are signs in this for those who know. And by another of His signs is your slumbering by night and your seeking of His bounty by day. Surely in that are signs for those who hear. The lightning which He shows you to inspire fear and hope is yet another of His signs. He sends down water from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after it is dead. Surely in this there are signs for a people who understand. The heavens and the earth are firm by His



command; then when He calls you, suddenly, from the earth you shall emerge. To Him belongs everything in the heavens and on earth; all are obedient to Him. He it is who originates creation, then reproduces it, and it is easier for Him. His is the loftiest attribute in heaven and on earth. He is the Mighty, the Wise One. (30:17-27).



THE COSMIC CALL

It is God who splits the grain and the date stone. He brings forth the living from the dead, and the dead from the living. Such is God. How then can you turn away from Him? He splits the sky into dawn. He has made the night for repose and the sun and the moon for reckoning. Such is the ordinance of God, the Mighty, the Wise. It is He who has created for you the stars, so that you may be guided by them in the darkness by land and sea. We have made plain our signs for people who understand. It is He who sent down water from the sky. With it We bring forth the shoot of every plant and then We have brought forth its green leaf and from it close-compounded grain; and out of the date-palm, from its pollen, dates thick-clustered, ready to the hand; and gardens of grapes, olives and pomegranates, like and unlike one another. Look upon their fruits when they fructify and ripen. Surely in all this are signs for people who believe. Yet they ascribe as partners to Him the jinn, though He created them, and they impute to Him sons and daughters without any knowledge. Glory be to Him and exalted be He above what they describe. He is



the Creator of the heavens and the earth. How can He have a son, when there is for Him no consort; when He created all things and He has knowledge of all things? (6:96-104).



LORD OF THE GREAT THRONE

Did you think that We created you in vain and that you would never be returned to Us? Exalted be God, the true King. There is no God but He, the Lord of the great throne. And whoever invokes any other deity besides God—a deity of whose divinity he has no proof—with his Lord alone will be his reckoning. The unbelievers shall never prosper. And say: Lord, forgive and have mercy, for You are the best of those that show mercy (23:115-118).



LOVE FOR GOD

In the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of night and day; in the ships that sail the ocean with cargoes beneficial to men; in the water which God sends down from the sky and with which He revives the dead earth after its death, dispersing over it all kinds of beasts; in the swirling of the winds and in the clouds that are driven between earth and sky; surely in this there are signs for people who understand. Yet there are some people who choose from other beings besides God, as rivals to God, loving them as God alone should be loved—whereas those who believe love God more than all else. If the evil-doers could only see, when they behold the doom, that power lies with God alone and that God is severe in punishment. When those who were followed disown their followers and they behold the doom, and their cords are cut asunder, those who followed will say, “If only a return were possible for us, we would disown them, as they have disowned us.” Thus God will show them their own work as anguish for them. They shall never emerge from the Fire. Mankind, eat of what is in the earth lawful and



wholesome, and do not follow in the steps of Satan, for he is your sworn enemy. He commands you only to evil and indecency and that you should assert about God what you do not know (2:164-169).



GOD'S PROPHETS

Those who believe and have not tainted their belief with wrong-doing shall surely earn salvation for they follow the right path. Such was the argument with which We furnished Abraham against his people. We raise whom We will to an exalted rank. Your Lord is Wise, All-Knowing. And We gave to him Isaac and Jacob; each one We guided as We had guided Noah before them. Among his progeny were David and Solomon, Job and Joseph, Moses and Aaron; thus We reward those who do good. And Zachariah and John, Jesus and Elias; each was of the Righteous. And Ishmael and Elisha, Jonah and Lot, each one We preferred above all beings, as We exalted their fathers, their offspring and their brethren; We elected them and guided them to a straight Path. Such is God's guidance. He bestows it on whom He pleases of His servants. But if they had served other gods besides Him, their labours would have been in vain. On them We bestowed the scriptures, wisdom and prophethood. If these are disbelieved by this generation, then We shall entrust them to others who are not disbelievers. These are the ones whom God guided. Follow their



guidance, and say: 'I ask no wage for it; it is but a reminder to all beings.' (6:82-90).



HEAVEN AND HELL

They underrate the might of God. But on the Day of Resurrection He will hold the entire earth in His grasp and fold up the skies in His right hand. Glory be to Him! Exalted be He above all that they associate with Him. The Trumpet shall be blown and whoever is in the heavens and whoever is on the earth shall swoon, save whom God wills. Then it shall be blown a second time and they will stand and look around them. The earth will shine with the light of its Lord and the Book will be set in place. The prophets and witnesses shall be brought in and all shall be judged with fairness: none shall be wronged. Each soul shall be paid in full for what it has wrought, for He is well-aware of what they do. Then the disbelievers will be driven into Hell in hordes. When they draw near, its gates will be opened, and its keepers will say to them: "Did not messengers come to you from among yourselves, reciting to you the signs of your Lord and warning you of the meeting of this day?" They shall say: "Yes, indeed." And thus the punishment which the unbelievers have been promised shall be fulfilled. It shall be said: "Enter the gates of Hell, to dwell



therein forever.” Evil is the dwelling-place of the arrogant. Then those who feared their Lord shall be led in bands into Paradise. When they draw near, its gates will be opened and its keepers shall say: “Peace be upon you! Well you have done. Enter Paradise and dwell therein forever.” They will say: “Praise be to God, Who has been true to His promise to us and has made us inherit the land, that we may dwell wherever we wish in Paradise.” Blessed is the reward of the righteous. And you will see the angels encircling about the Throne, hymning the praises of their Lord. Mankind will be judged with fairness and it will be said: “Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.” (39:67-75).



PRAYER

I am God. There is no god but Me. So serve Me, and perform regular prayers for my remembrance.” (20:14).

Perform the prayers at sunset, at nightfall and at dawn; the dawn prayer is witnessed. And pray for a part of the night, an additional duty for you; it may be that your Lord will raise you up to an honourable station (17:78-79).

Be constant in praying at the beginning and the end of the day, and in the night too. Good deeds make amends for sins. That is a reminder for the mindful. Therefore have patience; God will not deny the righteous their reward (11:114-115).

Be ever mindful of prayers, including the middle prayer. And stand obedient to God (2:238).

And when you have performed the prayer, remember God, standing, sitting and lying down. Then, when you are secure, perform the prayer, for prayer is a duty incumbent on the faithful, to be observed at appointed hours (4:103).

Prayer

Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book, and perform the prayer; prayer prevents indecency and evil. God's remembrance is greatest of all. And God knows what you do (29:45).



FASTING

Believers, fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may ward off evil. Fast a certain number of days; but if any of you be sick or on a journey, let him fast a similar number of other days, and it is incumbent upon those who can afford it to make a sacrifice by feeding a needy person. He who does good of his own accord shall be well rewarded, but to fast is better for you, if you but knew it. In the month of Ramadan the Qur'an was revealed, a book of guidance for mankind with clear proofs of guidance distinguishing right from wrong. So those of you who witness the month should fast during it. But anyone who is sick or on a journey may fast a similar number of other days. God desires ease for you, not hardship. He desires you to fast the whole month so that you may magnify God for having guided you and He wishes you to render thanks (2:183-186).



ALMS-GIVING

Believers, bestow in alms a part of that with which We have provided you, before there comes a day when there shall be neither trading, nor friendship nor intercession. Truly it is the unbelievers who are the wrongdoers (2:254).

He who spends his wealth in the way of God is like a grain of corn that sprouts seven ears, every ear bearing a hundred grains. God gives abundance to whom He wills; God is munificent and all-knowing. Those who spend their wealth in the way of God then do not follow up what they spend with reproaches and insults shall be rewarded by their Lord; they shall have nothing to fear or regret. A kind word with forgiveness is better than almsgiving followed by insults. God is self-sufficient and clement. Believers, do not mar your alms-giving with taunts and mischief-making, like those who spend their wealth only to be seen and praised by people, and believe neither in God nor in the Last Day. Such people are like a rock covered with a little earth; a shower falls upon it and leaves it hard and bare. They shall gain nothing from their works. God does not guide the



unbelievers. But those who give away their wealth from a desire to please God and strengthen their souls are like a garden on a hillside; if a rainstorm falls upon it, it yields up twice its normal crop; and if no rain falls upon it, it is watered by the dew. God sees what you do. Would any of you, being a man well-advanced in age with helpless children to support, wish to have his garden—a garden planted with palm-trees, vines and all manner of fruits, and watered by running streams—blasted and consumed by a fiery whirlwind? Thus God makes plain to you His revelation, so that you may give thought. Believers, give in alms of the wealth you have lawfully earned and of that which We Have brought out of the earth for you; not of worthless things which you yourselves would only reluctantly accept. Know that God is self-sufficient and glorious. Satan threatens you with poverty and bids you to commit indecency. But God promises you His forgiveness and bounty. God is munificent and all-knowing. He gives wisdom to whom He wills; and whoever is granted wisdom receives great good. But none take heed except people of understanding (2:261-269).



PILGRIMAGE

Perform the pilgrimage and visit the Sacred House for God's sake. If you are prevented, send such offerings as you can afford, and do not shave your heads until the offerings have reached their destination. But if any of you is ill or suffers from an ailment of the head, he must pay a ransom, either by fasting or by alms-giving or by offering a sacrifice. In peace time if any of you combines the visit with the pilgrimage, he must make such offerings as he can afford; but if he lacks the means, let him fast three days during the pilgrimage and seven when he has returned; that is, ten days in all. That is incumbent on one whose family is not present at the Holy Mosque. Have fear of God: know that He is stern in retribution. Make the pilgrimage in the appointed months. Whoever intends to perform it in those months must abstain from sexual intercourse, obscene language and acrimonious disputes while on pilgrimage. God is aware of whatever good you do. Provide yourselves well; the best provision is piety. Fear Me, then, you that are endowed with understanding. It is no offence for you to seek the bounty of your Lord by



trading. When you press on from 'Arafat, remember God as you approach the Sacred Monument. Remember Him who gave you guidance when you were in error. Then press on from where the pilgrims go out, and implore the forgiveness of God. He is forgiving and merciful. And when you have fulfilled your holy rites, remember God as you remember your fathers or yet more devoutly. There are some who say: "Lord, give us abundance in this world." These shall have no share in the world to come. But there are others who say: "Lord, give us what is good both in this world and in the next, and save us from the doom of Hell." These shall have a share of the reward. Swift is the reckoning of God. Remember God during the appointed days. He that departs on the second day incurs no sin, nor does he who stays longer, if he truly fears God. Have fear of God, then, and know that you shall be gathered before Him (2:196:203).



SACRIFICE

For every nation We have appointed a holy rite that they may pronounce the name of God over the beasts which He has given them for food. Your God is One God; so surrender to Him. And give good news to the humble, whose hearts tremble with awe at the mention of God; who endure their misfortunes with fortitude, attend to their prayers and spend in charity of that which We have bestowed on them. And as for the sacrifice of cattle, We have ordained it for you as one of the symbols set up by God. They are of much use to you. So pronounce God's name over them as you draw them up in line and slaughter them; and when they have fallen down, eat of their flesh, and feed with it the poor person and the beggar. Thus We have subjected them to you so that you may be thankful. Their flesh and blood do not reach God; it is your piety that reaches Him. Thus He has subjected them to you, so that you may magnify God for having guided you. And give good news to the righteous (22:34-37).



SERVING GOD

To God belongs all that the heavens and the earth contain. Whether you reveal your thoughts or hide them, God will bring you to account for them. He will forgive whom He will and punish whom He will; He has power over all things. The Prophet believes in what has been revealed to him by his Lord and so do the faithful. They all believe in God and His angels, His scriptures and His prophets. We make no distinction between any of His prophets. They say: "We hear and We obey. Forgive us, Lord; to You we shall return." God does not charge a soul with more than it can bear. It shall be requited for whatever good and whatever evil it has done. "Lord do not take us to task if we forget or lapse into error. Lord, do not lay on us the burden You laid on those before us. Lord, do not charge us with more than we can bear. Pardon us, forgive us, and have mercy on us, You alone are our Protector. Help us against the unbelievers." (2:284-286).



THE SHARI'AH

The Lord has enjoined you to worship none but Him, and to show kindness to parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, show them no sign of impatience, nor rebuke them; but speak kindly to them. Treat them with humility and tenderness and say: "Lord, be merciful to them even as they cherished and reared me when I was an infant." Your Lord knows best what is in your hearts; He knows if you are righteous. He is Forgiving to those who turn to Him again and again. Give to the near of kin their due, and also to the destitute and to the wayfarers. Do not squander your substance wastefully, for the wasteful are Satan's brothers; and Satan is ever ungrateful to his Lord. But if, while waiting for your Lord's bounty, you lack the means to assist them then at least speak to them kindly. Be neither miserly or prodigal, for then you should either be reproached or reduced to penury. Your Lord gives abundantly to whom He wills and sparingly to whom He pleases. He knows and observes His servants. You shall not slay your children for fear of want. We will provide for them and for you. To kill them is a great



sin. Do not commit adultery, for it is indecent and evil. Do not slay any person whom God has forbidden you to kill, except for a just cause. If someone is slain unjustly, to his heir We have given the right of retaliation. But let him not carry his vengeance too far, for his victim in turn will be assisted and avenged. Do not interfere with the property of orphans except with the best of motives, until they reach maturity. Keep your promises; you are accountable for all that you promise. Give full measure when you measure and weigh with even scales; that is fair and better in the end. Do not pursue what you do not know; man's eyes, ears and heart—each of his senses will be closely questioned. Do not walk on the earth with haughty self-conceit; you cannot cleave the earth, nor can you rival the mountains in stature. All this is evil and odious in the sight of your Lord. These injunctions are but a part of the wisdom with which your Lord has inspired you. Do not appoint another god with God, or you will be cast into Hell, despised and rejected (17:23-39).



THE SERVANTS OF THE MERCIFUL

The true servants of the Merciful are those who walk humbly upon the earth and say: “Peace!” to the ignorant who accost them: who pass the night standing and prostrate in adoration of their Lord; who say: “Lord ward off from us the punishment of Hell, for its punishment is everlasting, an evil dwelling and an evil resting-place”; who, when they spend, are neither wasteful nor niggardly, but keep the golden mean; who invoke no other god besides God, and do not kill save for a just cause; who do not commit adultery. He that does this shall meet with evil: his punishment shall be doubled on the Day of Resurrection and in disgrace he shall abide forever—unless he repent and believe and do good works, for then God will change his sins to good actions; God is Forgiving and Merciful: he that repents and does good works truly returns to God; who do not bear false witness and when they pass by idle talk, pass by with dignity; who do not turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to the revelations of their Lord when they are reminded of them; who say: “Lord, give us joy in our spouses and offspring, and make us examples to those who are God-fearing.”



These shall be rewarded with the highest heaven for their patient endurance. There they shall be welcomed with a greeting and peace, and there they shall abide forever; a blessed dwelling and a blessed resting place (25:63-76).



TRUST IN GOD

There is but one God. In Him let the believers put their trust. Believers, you have an enemy in your spouses and children: beware of them. But if you overlook their offences and forgive and pardon them, then know that God is Forgiving and Merciful. Your wealth and your children are but a temptation. God's reward is great. Therefore fear Him with all your hearts and be attentive, obedient and charitable for the good of your own selves; for those who guard themselves from their own avarice will surely prosper. If you give God a generous loan, He will repay you twofold and will forgive you, for God is Ever Responsive to gratitude and is Most Forbearing (64:13-18).



WORDS OF WISDOM

Luqman admonished his son: “My son,” he said, “do not associate others with God; to associate other with God is a mighty wrong.” We have enjoined man to show kindness to his parents, for with much pain his mother bears him, and he is not weaned before he is two years of age. Give thanks to Me and to your parents. To Me all things shall return. But if they press you to associate others with Me, of whom you know nothing, then then do not obey them. Be kind to them in this world, but follow the way of him who turns to me. To me you shall return and I shall tell you what you have done. “My dear son, God will bring all things to light, be they as small as a grain of mustard seed, be they hidden inside a rock or in heaven or on earth. God is Wise and All-Knowing. My dear son, be steadfast in prayer, enjoin good and forbid evil. Endure with fortitude whatever befalls you. That is true constancy. Do not treat people with scorn, nor walk haughtily on the earth; God does not love the arrogant and the vainglorious. Rather let your gait be modest and your voice be low; the ugliest of all voices is the braying of the ass” (31:13-19).



GOD-FEARING PEOPLE

They ask you about the spoils. Say: "The spoils belong to God and the Messenger. So fear God and settle your disputes. Obey God and His Messenger, if you are true believers." The true believers are those whose hearts tremble with awe at the mention of God, and whose faith grows stronger as they listen to His revelations. They put their trust in their Lord, pray steadfastly, and give in alms from that which We have given them. Such are the true believers. They shall be exalted and forgiven by their Lord, and a generous provision shall be made for them (8:1-4).



THE GOOD LIFE

God enjoins justice, kindness and charity to one's kindred, and forbids indecency, abomination and oppression. He admonishes you so that you may take heed. Keep faith with God when you make a covenant with Him. Do not break your oaths after having confirmed them and having called upon God to be your surety. God has knowledge of all your actions. Do not, like the woman who unravels the thread which she has firmly spun, take oaths with mutual deceit and break them on finding yourselves superior to others in numbers. In this God puts you to the proof. On the Day of Resurrection He will make clear to you that over which you are at variance. Had God willed, He would have united you into one community. But He leaves in error whom He wills and guides whom He wills. You shall be questioned about your actions. Do not take oaths to deceive each other, lest your foot should slip after it has stood firm, and lest evil should befall you for debarring others from the path of God, and lest there should await you a mighty punishment.



Do not sell the covenant of God for a trifling price. His reward is better than all your gain, if you but knew it. Your worldly riches are transitory, but God's reward is everlasting. We shall reward the steadfast according to their noblest deeds. Be they men or women, those who believe and do what is right We shall surely endow with a good life; We shall reward them according to their noblest actions (16:90-97).

HARAM AND HALAL (LAWFUL AND UNLAWFUL)

Say: "Come, I will tell you what your Lord has made binding on you: that you ascribe no partner to Him: that you show kindness to your parents; that you do not slay your children because of poverty; We provide for you and for them; that you do not commit any shameful deeds, openly or secretly; that you do not slay the soul God has prohibited except by right. Thus God exhorts you, so that you may grow in wisdom." Do not touch the property of orphans, but strive to improve their lot until they reach maturity. Give just weight and full measure; We never charge a soul with more than it can bear. When you speak, be just, even though it be against a relative. Be true to God's covenant. Thus God exhorts you, so that you may take heed (6:151-152).

Say: "My Lord has forbidden all shameful deeds, whether overt or disguised, and sin and wrongful oppression; or associate with God that for which no warrant has been revealed, or to tell of God what you do not know. Every nation has its term; when



Haram and Halal
(Lawful and Unlawful)

their hour comes, they shall not put it back by a single hour nor put it forward. Children of Adam, when apostles of your own come to proclaim to you My revelations, those that take warning and mend their ways will have nothing to fear or to regret; but those that deny and scorn Our revelations shall be inhabitants of the Fire, and there they shall remain forever (7:33-36).



HEAVENLY SOULS

Indeed man was born with a restless disposition. When evil befalls him he is filled with self-pity, but blessed with good fortune he grows niggardly. Not so the worshippers who are steadfast in their prayer; who set aside a due portion of their goods for the needy and the dispossessed; who truly believe in the Day of Reckoning and dread the punishment of their Lord (for none is secure from the punishment of God); who preserve their chastity (save with their wives and slave girls, for in their case they are not blameworthy; but those who lust after other than those are transgressors); who keep their trusts and promises and bear true witness; and who attend to their prayers. These shall be laden with honours, and shall dwell in fair Gardens. (70:19-35).



THE SERENE SOUL

As for man, when his Lord tests him by honouring him and bestowing favours on him, he says: "My Lord has honoured me." But when He tests him by straitening his means of life, he says: "My Lord despises me." No! But you show no kindness to the orphan, and do not urge one another to feed the poor. Greedily you devour the inheritance of the weak, and you love riches with all your hearts. No! But when the earth is crushed to fine dust, and your Lord comes, and the angels rank on rank, and Hell is brought near, on that Day man will take heed but what good will it do him now? He will say: "Would that I had sent before me some provision for my life." But on that Day none will punish as He will punish, nor will any bind with chains like His. Serene soul, return to your Lord, well-pleased and pleasing Him. Join My servants and enter My Paradise (89:15-30).



DIVINE SOULS

Believers, do not live on usury, doubling your wealth many times over. Have fear of God and you shall prosper. Guard yourselves against the fire of Hell prepared for unbelievers. Obey God and the Prophet, so that you may find mercy. Vie with each other to earn the forgiveness of your Lord and a Paradise as vast as heaven and earth, prepared for the righteous; those who give alms alike in prosperity and in adversity; who curb their anger and forgive their fellow men. God loves the charitable. And who, if they commit evil or wrong their souls, remember God and seek forgiveness for their sins—who but God forgives sins—and do not knowingly persist in their misdeeds. These shall be rewarded with forgiveness from their Lord and Gardens underneath which running streams flow, where they shall dwell forever. Blessed is the reward of those who do good works. (3:130-136).



THE CORRECT WAY

That which you have been given is but the fleeting comfort of this life. For better and more enduring is God's reward to those who believe and put their trust in Him; who avoid gross sins and indecencies and, when angered, are willing to forgive; who respond to the call of their Lord, are constant in prayer, and conduct their affairs by mutual consent; who bestow in alms a portion of that which We have given them and, when oppressed, seek to redress their wrongs. Let evil be rewarded with like evil. But he who forgives and seeks reconciliation shall be rewarded by God. He does not love the wrongdoers. Those who avenge themselves when wronged incur no guilt. But great is the guilt of those who oppress their fellow men and conduct themselves with wickedness and injustice in the land. These shall be sternly punished. But true constancy lies in forgiveness and patient forbearance (42:36-43).



PROFITABLE TRADING

Believers, shall I point out to you a profitable course that will save you from a painful doom? Believe in God and His Messenger and strive for His cause with your wealth and your lives. That would be best for you, if you only knew it. He will forgive you your sins and admit you to Gardens, underneath which running streams flow; He will lodge you in pleasant mansions in the Gardens of Eden. That is the supreme triumph. And He will bestow upon you other blessings which you desire: help from God and a speedy victory. Give the good news to the faithful. Believers, be God's helpers. When Jesus, the son of Mary, said to his disciples: "Who will help me on the way to God?" They replied: "We are God's helpers." Then some of the Israelites believed in him while others did not. We helped the believers against their enemies and they triumphed over them (61:10-14).



REAL PIETY

Piety does not consist in turning your faces towards the east or the west. The pious are those who believe in God and in the Last Day, in the angels and the scriptures and the prophets; who for the love of God give their wealth to kinsfolk, orphans, the poor, wayfarers in need and beggars, and for the redemption of captives; who attend to their prayers and pay the poor their due; who are true to their promises and endure with fortitude misfortune, hardships and peril. These are the true believers, these are the God-fearing (2:177).



GOD'S HOSPITALITY

Do the unbelievers think that they can make My servants protectors against Me? We have prepared Hell to be their dwelling place. Say: "Shall we tell you who will lose most through their labours? Those whose endeavours in this world are misguided and who think even then that what they do is right; who disbelieve the revelations of their Lord and deny that they will ever meet Him." Vain are their works. On the Day of Resurrection We shall not honour them. Hell is their reward: because they had no faith and scoffed at My messengers and My signs. As for those who have faith and do good works, the Gardens of Paradise shall be their abode. They shall dwell there forever, desiring no change to befall them. Say: "If all the sea were ink with which to write the words of my Lord, the sea would surely be consumed before my Lord's words were finished, though we brought another sea to replenish it." Say: "I am but a mortal like yourselves. It is revealed to me that your Lord is One God. Let those that hope to meet their Lord do what is right and make none sharer of the worship due to his Lord." (18:102-110).



THE BELIEVER'S LIVELIHOOD

Believers, when you are summoned to Friday prayer, hasten to the remembrance of God and cease your trading. That would be best for you, if you but knew it. Then, when the prayer is ended, disperse and go your ways in quest of God's bounty. Remember God always, so that you may prosper. But when they see some merchandise or passing delight, they flock to it eagerly, leaving you alone. Say: "That which God has in store is far better than passing delight or merchandise. God is the best of providers." (62:9-11).



THE PEOPLE OF PARADISE

Truly successful are the believers who are humble in their prayers; who avoid profanity, and are active in charitable works; who restrain their carnal desires, (except with their wives and slavegirls, for these are lawful to them; whoever seeks after more than that has transgressed); who are true to their trusts and promises and never neglect their prayers. These are the inheritors of Paradise, and therein they shall abide forever (23:1-11).



EVERYTHING FOR GOD

God has bought from the believers their selves and their possessions and in return has promised them Paradise. They fight for His cause, slay, and are slain. That is a promise binding upon God in the Torah, the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is more true to His promise than God? Rejoice, then, in the bargain you have made. That is the supreme triumph. Those who repent, those who worship, those who praise Him, those who journey, those who bow down, those who prostrate themselves, those who enjoin right, forbid wrong, and observe the commandments of God, shall be richly rewarded. Give the good news to the believers (9:111-112).



THE BELIEVER IS GOD'S TREE

Do you not see how God compares a good word to a good tree? Its root is firm and its branches are in the sky; it yields its fruit in every season by God's leave. God gives people parables so that they may take heed. But an evil word is like an evil tree torn out of the earth, possessing no stability. God will strengthen the faithful with His steadfast Word, both in this life and the hereafter. He leads the wrongdoers astray. He accomplishes what He pleases (14:24-27).



GOOD ADVICE

God commands you to hand back your trusts to their rightful owners, and to pass judgement upon people with fairness. Noble is the advice God gives you. He hears all and observes all (4:58).

He who fears God will take heed, but the most sinner will flout the warning. He shall be cast into the great Fire, where he shall neither die nor live. Successful is he who purifies himself, who remembers the name of his Lord and prays. Yet you prefer the life of this world, although the life to come is better and more lasting (87:10-17).



DOOMED TO DESTRUCTION

Woe to every backbiting slanderer who amasses riches and sedulously hoards them, thinking that his riches will render him immortal! By no means! He shall be flung to the Destroying torment. Would that you knew what the Destroying torment was like! It is God's own kindled fire, which will rise up to people's hearts. It will close upon them from every side, in endless columns (104:1-9).



THE DENIERS OF GOD'S SIGNS

He who turns away from My remembrance shall live in anguish and come before Us blind on the Day of Resurrection. "Lord", he will say, "why have you brought me blind before you, when in my lifetime I was blessed with sight?" God will answer: "Because Our signs came to you and you forgot them. In like manner this Day you are yourself forgotten." And thus do We reward the transgressor who denies the revelations of his Lord. But the punishment of the world to come is more terrible and more lasting (20:124-127).



FAIR TESTIMONY

Believers, be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing fair testimony. Do not allow hatred for some people to turn you away from justice. Deal justly; justice is nearer to piety. Have fear of God; He knows what you do. God has promised those who believe and do good works forgiveness and a rich reward. And the unbelievers who deny Our signs shall dwell in Hell (5:8-10).



LIVING IN HARMONY

Believers, when you confront an opposing force, stand firm and make constant mention of God, so that you may triumph. Obey God and His Messenger and do not quarrel with one another, lest you should lose courage and your resolve weaken. Have patience; God is with those who are patient. Do not be like those who left their homelands elated with arrogance and a desire to be seen and praised by men. They debar others from the path of God: but God encompasses what they do (8:45-47).



ISLAMIC SOCIETY

Believers, if an ungodly person brings you some news, inquire first into its truth, lest you should hurt others unwittingly and, afterwards, be filled with remorse for what you have done. Know that God's Messenger is among you. If he obeyed you in many matters, you would surely come to grief. But God has endeared the Faith to you and beautified it in your hearts, making unbelief, wrongdoing and disobedience abhorrent to you. Such are those who are rightly guided through God's grace and blessing. God is wise and all-knowing. If two parties of the believers take up arms against one another, make peace between them. If either of them commits aggression against the other, fight against the aggressors until they submit to God's judgement. When they submit, make peace between them in equity and justice; God loves the just. The believers are one brotherhood; make peace among your brothers and fear God, so that you may be shown mercy. Believers, let no men mock other men who may perhaps be better than themselves. Let no women mock other women, who may perhaps be better than themselves. Do not defame one another,



nor call one another by nicknames. It is evil to be called by a bad name after embracing the true faith. Those who do not repent are wrongdoers. Believers, avoid immoderate suspicion, for in some cases suspicion is a sin. Do not spy on one another, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Surely you would loathe it. Have fear of God. He is forgiving and merciful. Mankind, We have created you from a male and a female and divided you into nations and tribes, so that you may know one another. The noblest of you in God's sight is the one who fears God most. God is wise, and all-knowing (49:6-13).



CALLING TO GOD

Call people to the way of your Lord with wisdom and kindly exhortation. Argue with them in the most courteous manner. Your Lord knows best those who stray from His path and those who are rightly guided. If you punish, let your punishment be proportionate to the wrong that has been done to you. But it is best for you to endure your wrong with patience. So be patient; your patience is for God. Do not grieve over the unbelievers, and neither be distressed by their plots. God is with those who keep from evil and do good works. (16:125-128).



MAGNIFYING THE LORD

You who are wrapped up in your vestment, arise and give warning, Magnify your Lord, purify your inner self. Keep away from all pollution. Be patient, for your Lord's sake. The day when the trumpet sounds should not be an easy one for the unbelievers; it shall be a day of anguish for them (74:1-10).

No, by the moon! By the departing night and the rising dawn, Hell is a dire scourge, a warning to mankind; alike to those of you who would advance and those who would hang back. Each soul is the hostage of its own deeds. But those on the right hand—they will be in their gardens, inquiring of the sinners; "What brought you into the Fire?" They will reply: "We never prayed or fed the hungry. We engaged in vain disputes and denied the Day of Reckoning until death overtook us." No intercessor's plea shall avail them then (74:32-48).



ETERNITY IS BETTER

Successful is the person who purifies himself, who remembers the name of his Lord, and prays. Yet you prefer this life, although the life to come is better and more lasting. All this is written in earlier scriptures; the scriptures of Abraham and Moses (87:14-19).



THEIR EFFORTS WILL BE REWARDED

We have created man from a drop of thickened fluid so that We may test him. We made him a being endowed with hearing and sight. We have shown him the way, whether he be grateful or ungrateful. For the unbelievers We have prepared fetters and chains, and a blazing fire. But the righteous shall drink a cup flavoured with the Camphor—a spring at which the servants of God will refresh themselves as it gushes forth abundantly; they who keep their vows and dread the far-spread terrors of Judgement Day; who, though they hold it dear, give sustenance to the poor person, the orphan and the captive, saying: ‘We feed you for God’s sake alone; we seek of you neither recompense nor thanks; for we fear from Him a day of anguish and of woe.’ God will deliver them from the evil of that day, and will make their faces shine with joy. He will reward them for their steadfastness with robes of silk and the delights of Paradise. Reclining there upon soft couches, they shall feel neither the scorching heat nor the biting cold. Trees will spread their shade around them, and fruit will hang in clusters over them. They shall



be served with silver dishes, and beakers as large as goblets; silver goblets which they themselves shall measure; and cups brimful with ginger-flavoured water from the Fount of Selsabil. They shall be attended by boys graced with eternal youth, who, to the beholder's eyes will seem like sprinkled pearls. When you gaze upon that scene you will behold a kingdom blissful and glorious. They shall be arrayed in garments of fine green silk and rich brocade, and adorned with bracelets of silver. Their Lord will give them pure nectar to drink. Thus you shall be rewarded; since your endeavours in life shall be pleasing to God. (76:2-22).



THE DAY OF REWARD AND RETRIBUTION

When the sky is cleft asunder; when the stars scatter and the oceans burst beyond their bounds; when the graves are overturned; each soul will know what it has sent ahead and it has left behind. O man! What evil has enticed you away from your gracious Lord who created you, gave you an upright form, and well-proportioned you? In whatever shape He willed, He moulded you. Yet, you deny the Last Judgement. Surely there are guardians watching over you, noble recorders who know of all your actions. The righteous shall surely dwell in Bliss. But the wicked shall burn in a blazing fire on the Judgement-Day; which they shall not be able to evade. Would that you knew what the Day of Judgement is! Oh, would that you knew what the Day of Judgement is! A Day when no soul shall be of the least avail to another soul; for on that Day all sovereignty is God's alone (82:1-19).



THE RELIGION THAT IS PLEASING TO GOD

As for the home of the world to come, We shall grant it to those who seek neither to exalt themselves in this world nor to spread corruption. The righteous shall have a blessed end. Whoever does good shall be rewarded with what is better. But those who do evil shall be requited only according to what they did (28:83-84).

As for him who rebelled, and preferred the life of this world; Hell shall be his Final Abode. But as for him who feared to stand before his Lord and restrained his soul from base desires; Paradise shall be his Final Abode (79:37-41).

He that chooses a religion other than Islam, it will not be accepted from him and in the world to come he will be one of the lost (3:85).



PRAYERS

Praise be to God, Lord of Creation, the Beneficent, the Merciful, King of Judgement Day. You alone we worship, and to You alone we pray for help. Guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom You have favoured, not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray (I:1-7).



TO THE LORD

Lord, do not take us to task if we forget or lapse into error. Lord, do not lay on us the burden You laid on those before us. Lord, do not charge us with more than we can bear. Pardon us, forgive us our sins, and have mercy upon us. You alone are our Protector. Give us victory over the deniers (2:286).

God, Lord of all sovereignty, You bestow sovereignty on whom You will and take it away from whom You please; You exalt whomever You will and abase whomever You please. In Your hand lies all that is good; You have power over all things. You cause the night to pass into the day and the day to pass into the night; You bring forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living. You give without stint to whom You will (3:26-27).

PROTECT US!

Lord, give us joy in our spouses and offspring, and cause us to be foremost among those who are God-fearing (25:74).

Inspire me, Lord, to render thanks for the favours You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and to do good work that will please You. Admit me, through Your mercy, among your righteous servants (27:19).

Lord, Your mercy and knowledge embrace all things. Forgive those that repent and follow Your path. Shield them from the scourge of Hell. Admit them, Lord, to the Gardens of Eden which You have promised them, together with all the righteous among their fathers, their spouses, and their descendents. You are the Almighty, the Wise One. Deliver them from all evil. He whom You will deliver from evil on that Day is surely one You have graced with Your mercy. That is the supreme triumph (40:7-9).





HELP US!

Lord, give us what is good both in this world and in the next and save us from the chastisement of the Fire (2:201).

Lord, fill our hearts with steadfastness. Make firm our step and help us against the unbelievers (2:250).

Lord, do not cause our hearts to go astray after You have guided us. Grant us Your own mercy; You are the munificent Giver (3:8).

Lord, we believe in You: forgive us our sins and keep us from the torment of Hell-fire (3:16).



PURIFY OUR HEARTS

Forgive us, Lord, and forgive our brothers who embraced the Faith before us. Do not put in our hearts any malice towards the faithful. Lord, You are compassionate, and merciful (59:10).

Lord, in You we have put our trust; to You we turn and to You we shall come at last. Lord, do not expose us to the designs of the unbelievers. Forgive us, Lord; You are the Mighty, the Wise One (60:4-5).

Lord, perfect our light for us and forgive us. You have power over all things (66:8).



GRANT US A RIGHTEOUS END

Lord, You have not created this in vain. Glory be to You! Save us from the torment of Hell-fire. Lord, those whom You will cast into Hell shall be put to eternal shame: none will help the wrongdoers. Lord, we have heard a crier calling men to the true Faith, saying: "Believe in your Lord." So we believed. Lord, then, forgive us our sins and remove from us our evil deeds and make us die with the righteous. Lord, grant us what You promised through your messengers, and do not cast shame on us on the Day of Resurrection. Truly, You never fail to fulfill Your promise (3:191-194).



HAVE MERCY ON US!

Lord, make me and my descendents steadfast in prayer. Lord, accept my prayer. Forgive me, Lord, and forgive my parents and all the faithful on the Day of Reckoning (14:40-41).

Lord, have mercy on them both (i.e., my parents) as they cherished and cared for me when I was a little child (17:24).



SAVE US FROM EVIL

Lord, we have wronged our souls. Pardon us and have mercy on us, or we shall surely be among the lost (7:23).

Lord, bless us with patience and let us die as Muslims (who have surrendered themselves to Your Will) (7:126).

Lord, You alone are our Guardian. Forgive us and have mercy on us: You are the Best of those who forgive. Ordain for us what is good, both in this life and in the Hereafter. To You alone we have turned in repentance (7:155-156).

Lord, do not let us suffer at the hands of the wicked. Deliver us, through Your mercy, from the unbelievers (10:85-86).

Creator of the heavens and earth, You are my Guardian in this world and in the next. Let me die as one submitting to Your Will (i.e., Muslim) and join the righteous (12:101).

STRENGTHEN US!

Lord, grant me a goodly entrance and a goodly exit,
and sustain me with Your power. (17:80).

Lord, have mercy on us and guide us out of our
ordeal.



DO NOT LEAVE ME ALONE!

Lord, put courage into my heart, and ease my task for me. Free my tongue from its impediment, so that they may understand my speech (20:25-28).

Lord, cause me to grow in knowledge (20:114).

Lord, I have been afflicted with distress: but You are the Most Merciful of all who show mercy (21:83).

Lord, do not leave me childless; You are the Best of all heirs (21:89).

Lord, let my landing from this ark be blessed. You alone can make me land in safety. (23:29).

Lord, build me a house with You in Paradise (66:11).

Lord, I stand in need of the blessing which You have sent me (28:24).

Lord, deliver me from these corrupt people (29:30).

Avenge me, Lord, I am overcome! (54:10).



SAVE US FROM DOOM

Lord, I seek refuge in You from the promptings of the devils. Lord, I seek refuge in You from their presence (23:98-99).

Lord, we believe in You. Forgive us and have mercy on us; You are the Most Merciful (23:109).

Lord, ward off from us the punishment of Hell, for its punishment is everlasting (25:65).