

MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN

Translation and Brief Elucidation

By
Dr. Israr Ahmad

Surah Al-Ma'idah

(The Repast / The table laden with food)

(Recap of verses 06 – 19 of Surah Al-Ma'idah and fresh exposition of
verses 20 – 34 of the same Surah, inclusive)

Translator's note:

For the sake of continuity and coherent explanation, most of the general discourse has been made by employing the 'male' as a prototype, which is in no way meant to be diminutive of the opposite gender or to disrespect the status of women.

Moreover, each verse (Ayah) has been kept as a continuum in order to prevent the misrepresentation of meanings, which may occur when the verses are broken up and the translation of those verses becomes kaput when done in bits and pieces.

Cross-references taken from other parts of the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (SAAW) are provided in italics.

The Translation of the Holy Qur'an done by the Message International – USA (www.FreeQuran.com) and edited by Saheeh International – UK, Dar Al Mountada – Saudi Arabia and Al Qummah – Egypt has been used in order to synchronize the use of modern English Language, which we believe will give a more accomplished sense of understanding to Today's mind.

Recap of verses 06 – 19 of Surah 5, Al-Ma'idah

The reader would recall that we had concluded our exposition of verses 06 – 19 of Surah Al-Ma'idah in the previous issue of Hikmat e Qur'an. A brief recap of the exposition follows:

- 1- Verses 6 – 10 of this surah expound on importance of both spiritual purity and physical cleanliness of believers (Muslims) in the sight of Allah (SWT). The initial verses of this section deals with the commands and methods related to physical ablution (both wet and dry) as well as bathing to remove any conjugal impurity. The later verses in this section make mention of the 'favour' bestowed by Allah (SWT) on Muslims by guiding them to the Straight Way, and entrusting them with the task of guidance and leadership of the whole world. The verses also remind Muslims of the covenant which He (SWT) took from them to obey His (SWT) commandments and follow His Messenger (SAAW), when they said "we hear and we obey." The verses also cautions Muslims to be mindful of the fact that Allah (SWT) knows those who fulfil their covenants and those who turn away and prescribes as an absolute essential to have the fear of Allah's (SWT) Knowledge of all things, visible and concealed, at all times, as He (SWT) knows of those (thoughts) in the hearts of all creation and beyond. This section of verses culminates with Allah's (SWT) command to Muslims to maintain justice, whatever the cost may be and forbids them to let enmity and hatred of others cause them to do injustice. Muslims are commanded to fight against injustice and bear witness for Allah (SWT) i.e. tell the truth whenever a testimony is needed.
- 2- The discourse in verses 11 – 19 of this surah appears to have two purposes. Firstly, to warn the Muslims against following the ways of their predecessors, the People of the Book. The Muslims are told, therefore, that the Israelites and the followers of Jesus had made a covenant with Allah (SWT) in the past, in a similar manner that the Muslims had done so. The Muslims are told to take heed lest they also break their covenant and fall a prey to error and misguidance in the same way as their predecessors had done. Secondly, to sensitize the Jews and Christians to the errors they have committed

and invite them to the true religion, i.e. Islam.

- 3- Verse 11 of the surah addresses and unveils the treacherous yet unsuccessful ploy of the Jews to pounce on the Prophet (SAAW) and a number of his close Companions (RA) during an invitation to dinner.
- 4- Verses 12 through 19 generally explain that any assurance of Allah's (SWT) support to the Children of Israel was made conditional upon their continuous response to the call of Allah (SWT) and for support of His Prophets (AS).
- 5- The expression 'giving' loan to Allah (SWT) used in these verses is highly symbolic and signifies spending one's wealth for the sake of Allah (SWT). These verses also elucidate the promise made by Allah (SWT) to 'return' to man every penny that he spends in His (SWT) way along with His (SWT) many-fold reward.
- 6- These verses also explain the concept of the 'Straight Path' (or the 'Right Way') by describing it as the only road that leads to Allah (SWT), amidst the countless winding and crooked paths of life; the road which leads man, disregarding all the curved and crooked paths, straight on to his success, right from this world to the Hereafter.
- 7- In these verses, Allah (SWT) clearly states that He (SWT) cursed the Children of Israel for their countless digressions and made their hearts like stone, thus they are unable to heed to any divine advice. This punishment was awarded to the Children of Israel because they had distorted Allah's (SWT) revelations and neglected much of what they were enjoined. Moreover, the verses foretell that the Jews will always try to deceive the Muslims and make plots against them, but Allah (SWT) encourages Muslims to forgive them and overlook their misdeeds. In essence, Allah (SWT) loves those who do 'good'.
- 8- The deviations of Christians and their concept of worshiping Prophet Jesus (AS) is also detailed in these verses. In this connection it should be recalled that Jesus (AS) never called his followers 'Christians' for he had not come to found a new religion named after him. His mission was to revive the religion of Moses (AS) and of all the Prophets (AS) who preceded him as well as of the one (SAAW)

who was to appear after him. The Qur'an, therefore, does not refer to the followers of Prophet Jesus (AS) as Christians. The Holy Book calls the followers of Prophet Jesus (AS) 'Nasara'.

- 9- Verse 15 in particular refers to the covenant that Allah (SWT) made with the disciples of Jesus (AS) that whenever He sends His Last Prophet, Muhammad (SAAW), they would follow him and support him (SAAW). But they also broke the covenant and neglected much of what they were enjoined, discarding Allah's (SWT) Book and disobeying His Prophet (SAAW). This is why as a punishment Allah (SWT) stirred among them enmity and hatred for each other, which will last till the Day of Judgment when Allah (SWT) will declare to them all that they have done.
- 10- The verses make it as clear as daylight that both the Jews and the Christians used to conceal and distort the true teachings of the Books given to their Prophets (AS), particularly the contexts and contents which mentioned the final Messenger, Prophet Muhammad (SAAW).
- 11- The verses elucidate in a nutshell that with this light of revelation bestowed upon the Prophet (SWT) and the Book, Allah (SWT) guides those who seek His pleasure to the ways of peace and tranquillity. He (SWT) brings them out of the darkness of disbelief and evil into the light of truth.
- 12- The verses also declare that the original mistake committed by the Christians in declaring Jesus (AS) to be a combination of human and divine essences turned Jesus (AS) into a mystery for them, and the more the Christian scholars tried to solve this mystery by resorting to conjecture and rhetorical extravagance the more complicated the whole matter became.
- 13- The verses also reveal that the Jews and the Christians thought (and still think) of themselves as the chosen ones and they say that they are the 'children' of Allah (SWT). But Allah (SWT) commands His Prophet (SAW) to ask them that if you really are true in your claims that you are His loved ones then why does He (SWT) punish you and make you suffer for your crimes? The verses then go on to explain the fact that they (the Jews and Christians) are no different than the rest of His (SWT) creations, thus their being Jews or