

MESSAGE OF THE QUR'AN

Translation and Brief Elucidation

By

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Surah Al-Ma'idah

(The Repast / The table laden with food)

(Recap of verses 35 – 50 of Surah Al-Ma'idah and fresh exposition of verses 51 – 66 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 35- 50 of Surah 5, Al-Ma'idah

The reader would recall that we had concluded our exposition of verses 35 – 50 of Surah Al-Ma'idah in the previous issue of Hikmat e Qur'an. A brief recap of the exposition follows:

- 1- In verse 35, Allah (SWT) commands His servants to obey Him sincerely and avoid everything which is against His Will or law and solicit all means which might bring them close to Him.
- 2- While verse 36 unveils the actual reality of this world and its 'treasures', which amount to nothing as compared to the blessings of the Hereafter, the following verse further clarifies that the unbelievers will never be able to escape the torment of Hellfire and they will be forced to abide in it eternally.
- 3- Verse 38 details the punishment ordained by Allah (SWT) for anyone proven guilty of theft and lays down one of the major priorities in a genuine Islamic Welfare State, viz., protecting the wealth and honour of its citizens as well as serving justice to the perpetrators of crime.
- 4- Verses 39 and 40 explain that forgiveness granted by Allah (SWT) means repenting and becoming righteous by purging one's soul of the sin of stealing (theft). However, in the case that even after the hand of a thief has been cut off, he does not purge himself of the evil intent of stealing and continues nurturing this impure feeling, it would signify that 'stealing' still remains engrained in his soul. Consequently, he would continue to merit Allah's (SWT) wrath in the same way as he used to before his hand was cut off.
- 5- Verse 41 provides instruction to the Prophet (SAAW) and Muslims in general on how to deal with people who devote all their capacities and efforts to ensure that the status quo ante of "jahiliyah" remains intact, and that the reformative mission of Islam should fail to set right the corruption that had come down to them from the past. The verse also enunciates the underlying reasons of such behaviour shown by these people as well as the various methods used by them to undermine the work of bringing glory to Islam.

- 6- Verse 42 is believed to have been revealed at a time when the Jews had not yet become full-fledged subjects of the Islamic State of Madinah. The verse, by using a real-life incident, makes a pointed reference to the judges and the jury-consults who accept false evidence and invent reports in order to issue verdicts contrary to justice and in favour of either those who bribe them or with whom their illegitimate interests lie.
- 7- Verse 43 further unmasks the dishonesty and absence of sincerity among the Jewish people (particularly the rabbis) when it comes to making decisions based on divine scriptures. Their true religion consists merely of worshipping their interests and desires which makes them willing to obtain judgements in their favour by hook or by crook.
- 8- Verse 44 educates the Jews by telling them that all the Prophets (AS) were Muslims (submitters to Allah (SWT)) whereas the Jews had deviated from Islam (submission to Allah (SWT)), and true to their chauvinistic sectarianism and blatant racism, were content with remaining merely 'Jews' as a nation rather than the followers of a religion. Allah (SWT) commands the Israelites to fear Him (SWT) alone and not to distort or conceal what He (SWT) had revealed to them (in the Torah and later) in fear of other men or to suit their own desires. Moreover, the verse is as applicable to Christians and Muslims as it is to Jews.
- 9- Verse 45 indicates that Allah (SWT) had ordained the law of retribution in the Torah, almost similar to as it is in Islam, but the Jews defied the ruling and refused to accept the divine commandments. However, Allah (SWT) has also given the option to the one harmed to relinquish his right of retaliation and says that if he does so, it is a very noble deed which will atone for many of his sins.
- 10- In the continuous chain of the Prophets sent to the Children of Israel, Jesus (AS) the son of Mary (AS), was the last one. Verse 46 explains that the Messiah (AS) did not expound a new religion. That very religion which had been the religion of all the Prophets (AS) was also his religion, and it is towards that religion that he called people.

- 11-** Verse 47 starts by warning the Christians to judge according to what Allah (SWT) has revealed to them, and believe in all that is present therein including the coming of the Allah's Last Messenger (SAAW) with His Last and final revelation i.e. the Qur'an. Moreover, the verse submits a three-in-one decree against those (not limited to Christians only) who do not judge in accordance with the Law revealed by Allah (SWT). The first is that they are "kafir" (unbelievers); the second, that they are "zalim" (wrong-doers/oppressors); and the third, that they are "fasiq" (transgressors). This clearly means that one who, in disregard of Allah's (SWT) commandments and of the Laws revealed by Him, pronounces judgements according to man-made laws (whether made by himself or by others) is guilty of three major offences (which may vary in intensity).
- 12-** Verse 48 points to a fact of major significance - The Qur'an and all those Books sent down by Allah (SWT) at various times and in different languages in reality constitute one and the same Book. Their Author (SWT) is one and the same; their aim and purpose are the same; their teaching is the same; and the knowledge which they seek to impart to mankind is the same. The difference between these Books lies in their modes of expression, and this was necessarily so since they were addressed to different audiences. It is, therefore, not merely that these divine books support rather than contradict each other but that they are actually different editions of one and the same book - 'The Book'.
- 13-** Verse 49 resumes the subject found in the previous verse and details the method of doing Justice among people repeated at the start of this verse for emphasis of the command. This verse also tells the Prophet (SAAW) to beware of the Jews who were always in search of an opportunity to deceive him and wished to turn him (SAAW) away from the truth. The audience of this verse are Muslims in general too, as the next part of the verse warns that if ordinary Muslims disbelieve, it is Allah's (SWT) Will to deviate them from the truth and scourge them for some of their sins.
- 14-** Verse 50 states that Allah (SWT) is the Creator of mankind and He (SWT) has the perfect knowledge of everything. Therefore those

who are enlightened by His (SWT) blessing with “ilm” (true knowledge) as opposed to “jahiliyah” (ignorance) know as a certainty that Allah (SWT) knows best what is beneficial for humans and what is harmful to them.

Exposition of verses 51 to 66 of Surah Al-Ma'idah

Verse 51

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ أَوْلِيَاءَ ۚ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ ۗ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّهُمْ مِنْكُمْ فَإِنَّهُ مِنْهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾

“Believers! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for your allies. They are the allies of each other. And among you he who takes them for allies, shall be regarded as one of them. Allah does not guide the wrong-doers.”

In this verse of pivotal importance in defining the foreign policy of an Islamic state, Allah (SWT) prohibits the Muslims to take the Jews and the Christians as their friends, long-term allies and protectors. Because they are only friends and protectors to one another against Islam and have a strong enmity against the Muslims, hence the stern warning to Muslims who join them or act as their agents.

This verse is more applicable in present times because we see that throughout the long Judeo-Christian history the relationship between the Jews and the Christians has not been good and it is quite understandable as the latter not only hold the former responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus (AS) but also resent their slander that Jesus (AS) was born out of wedlock. Today, however, all this has changed. The Jews have gradually eroded the Christian society dividing them into different factions, most of which support them. Protestant Christians, in general, and among them Evangelical Christians, in particular, provide massive financial and political support to the Jews to the extent that these Christian conservatives are sometimes often referred to as Christian Zionists for their blatant bias.

Verse 52

فَتَرَى الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يُسَارِعُونَ فِيهِمْ يَقُولُونَ نَخْشَى أَنْ تُصِيبَنَا دَائِرَةٌ ۗ فَعَسَى اللَّهُ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِالْفَتْحِ أَوْ أَمْرٍ
مِّنْ عِنْدِهِ فَيُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا أَسْرَوْا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ نَدِيمِينَ ۗ

“Indeed you see those afflicted with the disease of hypocrisy race towards them, saying: 'We fear lest some misfortune overtakes us. And it may happen that Allah will either bring you a decisive victory or bring about something else from Himself and then they will feel remorseful at their hypocrisy which they have kept concealed in their breasts’”

The outcome of the conflict in Arabia between Islam and unbelief (*kufr*) had not crystallized. Although Islam had become a formidable force owing to the daring, courage and sacrifices of its followers, the forces opposed to it were also tremendously powerful. To an objective observer it might have seemed that either party had an equal chance of success, and so certain people (appearing to be hypocrites at that time) sought to maintain good relations with the Jews and the Christians despite being a part of the Muslim body politic. They expected refuge and protection from the Jews in case Islam was defeated. Moreover, the Jews and Christians held the greatest economic power in Arabia insofar as the economic system and the greenest and most fertile regions of Arabia were in their possession. For these reasons (and only Allah knows Best) such people were keen to maintain good relations with them: they thought that, to regard the conflict between Islam and unbelief as crucially important, and to sever their relations with all those currently in conflict with Islam, would be too great a risk both politically and economically.

However, the matter regarding genuine and ‘certified’ hypocrites was different in contrast to the ones mentioned above. Their intentions were to cause hurt and damage to Islam at all cost. For instance, the chief leader of the hypocrites, Abdullah bin Obayy, remained an enemy of Islam and a back-stabber for Muslims till death, which occurred at a time when the balance of power had started to tilt considerably towards Islam as the dominant force in the region.

This verse covers both “sceptical” people (ones following a policy of wait and see) as well as “genuine” hypocrites (following a policy to damage Islam at any cost) and unveils the respective positions that were concealed in their hearts.

Verse 53

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَهَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ أَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ أَنَّهُمْ لَمَعَكُمْ حِطَّتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَأَصْبَحُوا خَسِرِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾

“And (while) those who believe will exclaim: 'Are these the self same people who solemnly swore by Allah that they were with you! All their acts have gone to waste and now they are the losers.’”

The verse declares that no matter how much the genuine hypocrites (mentioned in the previous verse) profess to follow Islam – by performing Prayers, by observing Fasts, by paying Zakah, by taking part in wars – all was reduced to naught because they had not devoted themselves to the service of the One True Allah (SWT). In pursuit of their worldly ambitions they had split their souls into two, distributing half to Allah and half to those in rebellion against Him (SWT).

Verse 54

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَنْ يَرْتَدَّ مِنْكُمْ عَنْ دِينِهِ فَسَوْفَ يَأْتِي اللَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ يُحِبُّهُمْ وَيُحِبُّونَهُ أَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ ذَلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾

“Believers! If any of you should ever turn away from your faith, remember that Allah will raise up a people whom He loves, and who love Him; a people humble towards the believers, and firm towards the unbelievers; who will strive hard in the way of Allah and will not fear the reproach of the admonisher. This is the favour of Allah which He grants to whom He wills. Allah is vast in resources All-Knowing.”

The phrase 'humble towards believers' signifies that a person should never use his strength against the believers. His native intelligence, shrewdness, ability, influence, wealth, physical prowess should not be used for the purpose of either suppressing, persecuting or causing harm to the Muslims. Among themselves, the Muslims should always find him gentle, merciful, sympathetic and mild tempered.

The phrase 'firm towards unbelievers', on the contrary, means that by virtue of the intensity of his faith, the sincerity of his conviction, his strict adherence to his principles, his strength of character and his insight and perspicacity born of faith, a man should be firm as a rock in his dealings with the opponents of Islam, so that they find it impossible to dislodge him. There should be no doubt in their minds that the believer would rather lay down his life than compromise his position by yielding to external pressures.

In following the religion of Allah (SWT), in implementing His (SWT) injunctions, in judging things to be either right or wrong according to the criteria of the faith, the believer will be afraid of nothing. He will be impervious to opposition, reproach, denunciation, name-calling and scorn. Even when public opinion happens to be hostile, and his efforts to follow Islam single him out for the scorn of the whole world, the man of faith will still follow the way which he recognizes in his heart to be true.

Verse 55

إِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ رَاكِعُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

“Only Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe and who establish Prayer, pay Zakah, and bow (before Allah) are your allies.”

Verse 56

وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فَإِنَّ حِزْبَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

“All those who take Allah and His Messenger and those who believe as their allies, (should remember that) the party of Allah will be triumphant.”

Verses 55 and 56 have a common underlying theme and are understood better when read together.

The hypocrites take their friends from the disbelievers or others from the Jews and the Christians instead of the believers but the real protecting friends are Allah (SWT), His Messenger (SAAW) and the faithful believers who perform their regular prayers, give the poor their due and bow down in humility when they give charity. Alternatively it also means that they bow down in obligatory prayers in congregation with other believers.

It logically follows that these are the people who will gain success in this world and, more importantly, in the Hereafter.

Verse 56 also directs the attention of the believers that they must be patient in their desire for victory. They ought to “have faith in the process” because Allah (SWT), in His (SWT) Infinite Wisdom, puts people through trials and tests their faith in various ways. The verse ends with the glad tiding for the believers that sooner or later, Allah's (SWT) followers are sure to triumph.

Verse 57

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا دِينَكُمْ هُزُوءًا وَكِبَابًا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَالْكَفَّارَ أَوْلِيَاءَ
وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾

“Believers! Do not take for your allies those who make a mockery and sport of your faith, be they those given the Book before you or other unbelievers. Fear Allah if you indeed believe.”

Verse 58

وَإِذَا نَادَيْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ اتَّخَذُوهَا هُزُوءًا وَكِبَابًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَوْمٌ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

“And when you call for Prayer, they take it for a mockery and sport. That is because they are a people who do not understand.”

Verses 57 and 58 have a common underlying theme, with the former being more general in implication than the later, and are understood better when read together.

Verse 57 ordains Muslims to refrain from considering such unbelievers and People of the Book (Jews and Christians) as allies who try to make fun of Islam in any form or manner. This verse is as relevant for the Muslims of today as it was for those living 14 centuries ago.

Verse 58 has a message similar to the one given in verse 57, albeit more specific to an Islamic ritual – “The Call to Prayer” (*Adhan*). During the early days of Islam, whenever the unbelievers (and in certain cases the Jews and Christians) heard “The Call to Prayer” (*Adhan*) they made fun of it by mimicry, perverted its words to ridicule it, and gave utterly disparaging and taunting remarks about it. The verse declares that

these were merely acts of absurdity on the part of unbelievers. Had they not been ignorant and foolish, they would not have stooped to such vain tactics, despite their significant differences with the Muslims on religious questions. After all, can any reasonable person be happy to see the people who call to the worship of Allah (SWT) be ridiculed and mocked?

Verse 59

قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ هَلْ تَنْقِمُونَ مِنَّا إِلَّا أَنْ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِن قَبْلُ ۗ وَأَنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

“Say to them: 'People of the Book! Do you hate us for anything else except that we believe in Allah, and in the teaching which has been revealed to us and in the teaching which was revealed before? Indeed most of you are transgressors.'”

In this verse, Allah (SWT) commands His Messenger (SAAW) to ask, rather take to task, those who make fun of Islam and its followers by ridiculing the Islamic teachings and mock Muslims just because they believe in One True Allah (SWT).

In the verse, Allah (SWT) also commands His Messenger (SAAW) to rebuke them for their despicable attitude towards the Holy Qur'an and all the divine scriptures revealed before it.

The verse then declares the fact that most of them are rebellious in nature and evil-doers.

Verse 60

قُلْ هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِّنْ ذَلِكَ مَثُوبَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ مَنْ لَعَنَهُ اللَّهُ وَغَضِبَ عَلَيْهِ وَجَعَلَ مِنْهُمْ الْقِرَدَةَ وَالْخَنَازِيرَ وَعَبَدَ الطَّاغُوتَ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَأَضَلُّ عَن سَوَاءِ السَّبِيلِ ﴿٦٠﴾

“Then say to them: 'Shall I tell you about those whose retribution with Allah is even worse? They are the ones whom Allah has cursed, and who incurred His wrath and some of whom were changed into apes and swine, and who served the false deities. Such have an even worse rank and have strayed farther away from the right path.'”

The allegory used in this verse alludes to the Jews whose history shows that they were subjected, over and over again, to the wrath and scourge

of Allah (SWT). When they desecrated the law of the Sabbath (found in the Torah) the faces of many of them were distorted, and subsequently their degeneration reached such a low point that they took to worshipping Satan quite openly. The purpose of saying all this is to draw attention to their criminal boldness while they had sunk to the lowest level of evil, transgression and moral decadence, they vigorously opposed all those who, thanks to their faith, lived a truly pious and righteous life.

Verse 61

وَإِذَا جَاءُوكُمْ قَالُوا آمَنَّا وَقَدْ دَخَلُوا بِالْكَفْرِ وَهُمْ قَدْ خَرَجُوا بِهِ ط وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

“Whenever they come to you they say: 'We believe,' whereas, in fact, they come disbelieving, and go away disbelieving, and Allah knows all that they hide.”

The verse explains that the hypocrites proclaim their faith and pretend to be Muslims when they are in Prophet's (SAAW) presence or with the Muslims. But Allah (SWT) informs His Prophet (SAAW) about the disbelief and hypocrisy that the hypocrites conceal in their hearts, so much so, that He (SWT) dismisses them by stating that they came with disbelief and they went out in the same condition (a zero sum). He (SWT) knows their exact intentions and whatever they want to conceal in their hearts.

Verse 62

وَتَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتَ ط لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

“You will see many of them hastening towards sin and transgression and devouring unlawful earnings. Indeed what they do is evil.”

The verse is fairly self-explanatory as the examples refers to the Jews and we have already read details of the crimes and sins committed by the Jews in depth at other places in the Qur'an. Allah (SWT) does not mince words and clearly decrees that their actions are plain and simple 'Evil'.

Verse 63

لَوْلَا يَنْهَاهُمُ الرَّبَّانِيُّونَ وَالْأَحْبَارُ عَنْ قَوْلِهِمُ الْإِثْمَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتَ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

“Why is it that their scholars and jurists do not forbid them from sinful utterances and devouring unlawful earnings? Indeed they have been contriving evil.”

This verse brings to the fore one of the main reasons behind the degeneration of societies and states, stating that such events occur when the scholars and those in authority of furnishing as well as executing justice do not enjoin good or forbid people from committing sinful things. Although the verse uses the case of Jews to explain the phenomenon, it is equally applicable to Christians and Muslims. As for the Jews, their rabbis and jurist quit forbidding the ordinary people from committing sins or consuming illegal things and the ordinary people, with the active support of the Rabbis, persisted in their evil. Consequently, that became the reason for their decline and punishment.

Verse 64

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدَاهُ مَبْسُوطَتَانِ لَا يَنْفِقُ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَلَيَزِيدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا وَالْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ كُلَّمَا أَوْقَدُوا نَارًا لِّلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٤﴾

“The Jews say: ‘The Hand of Allah is fettered.’ It is their own hands which are fettered, and they stand cursed for the evil they have uttered. No! His Hands are outspread; He spends as He wills. Surely the message that has been revealed to you from your Lord has increased many of them in their insurgence and unbelief, and so We have cast enmity and spite among them until the Day of Resurrection. And as often as they kindle the fire of war, Allah extinguishes it; and they go about trying to spread mischief on earth, whereas Allah does not love those who spread mischief.”

To say that someone's hands are tied, in Arabic usage, is to say that he is niggardly, that something prevents him from being generous and bountiful. Thus the Jewish observation does not mean that Allah's (SWT) Hand is literally tied but that He (SWT) is niggardly and miserly (*Translator's Note: We seek Allah's refuge from such utterances*). For

centuries the Jews had lived in humiliation and misery. Their past greatness had become legend, seemingly too remote ever to be restored, and so they would blasphemously lament that Allah (SWT) had become a miser and that as the door to His (SWT) treasury was now permanently locked, that He (SWT) had nothing to offer them except suffering and calamity. This attitude, however, is not confined to the Jews. When confronted with trials and tribulations foolish people of other nations, too, are prone to utter such blasphemies rather than turn to Allah (SWT) with humble prayer and supplication.

They accused Allah (SWT) of the miserliness from which they themselves had suffered and had become notorious for.

If they entertained the hope that by such insolent and taunting expressions they might evoke Allah's (SWT) munificence, and that His (SWT) bounties would begin to shower upon them, they were dreaming of the impossible. Indeed, such insolence was bound to have the opposite effect - to alienate them further from Allah's (SWT) bounty, to cast them even further from His (SWT) mercy.

Instead of learning any lessons from the Book of Allah, instead of recognizing their own mistakes and wrongs and then trying to make amends for them, instead of probing their miserable situation and then turning to reform, they reacted by launching a violent campaign of opposition to truth and righteousness. Rather than taking to the right way as a result of being reminded of the forgotten lesson of righteousness, they attempted to suppress the voice which sought to remind them and others of such things.

Verse 65

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَكُنَّا عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَا دُخْلُهَا جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ۝

“Had the People of the Book only believed and been Allah-fearing, We should surely have effaced from them their evil deeds, and caused them to enter Gardens of Bliss.”

The verse presents an alternative scenario. Had the Jews sincerely believed in Allah (SWT) and followed His Messengers (AS), including the Final Messenger (SAAW), then surely He (SWT) would have forgiven their sins and admitted them in Paradise. The handful of Jews

who did choose to follow this alternative path, in fact, did receive glad tidings of Paradise in the Hereafter.

Verse 66

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ أَقَامُوا التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَأَكَلُوا مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةٌ مُّقْتَصِدَةٌ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ سَاءٌ مَا يَعْمَلُونَ ۝

“Had the People of the Book observed the Torah and the Gospel, and all that had been revealed to them from their Lord, sustenance would have been showered over them from above and risen from beneath their feet. Some among them certainly keep to the right path; but many of them do things which are evil.

The verse establishes that if the People of the Book had established the laws revealed to their Prophets (AS) and believed in what was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (SAAW) i.e. the Qur'an, then surely Allah (SWT) would have blessed them with provisions descending from the sky as well as from those grown in the earth. However, a vast majority of them did nothing but evil.

The subject also appears in the Old Testament (Leviticus: chapter 26 and Deuteronomy: chapter 28) which records a sermon of the Prophet Moses (AS) to the Israelites in which he impresses upon them in great detail the bounties and blessings of Allah (SWT) with which they would be endowed if they obeyed His (SWT) commandments, and the afflictions, scourges and devastations that would descend upon them if they disobeyed Him (SWT) and rejected the Book of Allah. That sermon of Moses (AS) is an extremely detailed explanation of this verse of the Qur'an.

One example of such People of the Book who adhered to their Books, followed their laws and when Allah (SWT) sent His last Prophet (SAAW) with His last revelation, they also believed in him and followed him, is that of the famous companion, Abdullah bin Salaam (RA). Abdullah bin Salaam (RA), who was a very knowledgeable and pious Jewish scholar embraced Islam as soon as he heard of Prophet Muhammad's (SAAW) message, i.e., the Glorious Qur'an.

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And Allah (SWT) Knows Best!