

## CHAPTER 5, AL-MAIDAH (THE FEAST) (PART 2 OF 3)

**Rating:**

**Description:** A brief commentary of Chapter 5 of the Quran. It discusses food, hunting, the pledges made by the Jews and Christians, the afterlife, and the feast of Jesus.

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### **Verses 33-40 Ordained punishments, punishment of highway robbery, fearing God and drawing close to Him versus disbelieving in Him, punishment of theft, and repentance**

The principle on which God has created the system of this world is that everybody should discharge his duty and nobody should unnecessarily interfere in the sphere of others.



Human beings have been given clear instructions through prophets, but they have been given a free will with which to act righteously or to rebel. Those who declare war against God and His prophet are terrible criminals. Such people indulge in acts of terrorism. For them there is a terrible punishment in this world and an all-consuming fire in the Hereafter.

The greatest achievement for man is nearness to God. The way to attain this nearness is through *taqwa* (fear of God or piety), i.e. becoming a worshiper or devotee of God through fear of God and struggling to make efforts for His cause. He has to surrender his ego, tolerating every difficulty and unpleasantness; he moves ahead towards God.

The punitive system in Islam for social crimes has two special aspects: one is punishment for a man's crime and the other is the deterrent effect of that punishment. However, if the criminal is truly repentant, seeks God's pardon and completely refrains from such misdemeanors in future, then God may forgive him in the Hereafter.

### **Verses 41-50 Obligation to judge by what God has revealed, Jews and the Torah, Jesus and the Gospel, Muhammad and the Quran**

In Madina there were two kinds of people who opposed the Islamic mission – the hypocrites and the Jews. The hypocrites, feeling that the real Islamic mission was harmful to their success and purposes, merely put on a show of having adopted Islam. The Jews for their part, felt that the Islamic mission was pulling them down from their position. Therefore, they joined hands in running a campaign against Islam. They used to twist the meaning of the Prophet's words to defame him and his mission. Their attitude was to accept only whatever suits their interests. Such people desert God and God deserts them.

The servant of God, who has arisen with the message of God's true religion, should not be discouraged by opposition. The activity against God can never be successful.

There were ancient religious scholars who used to give false decrees and opinions after taking bribes. However, a worse form of corruption is distorting the provisions of the religion by opportunists to suit popular tastes so that they may have honor and glory conferred upon them by the admiring public and receive contributions and offerings from all.

The ancient Jewish leaders had become a center of attraction for the people by dispensing this type of religion. Raising the voice of truth seemed intolerable to them, as this amounted to the demolition of the structure of their vested interests. They would spread bad news about him with interest and their own additions.

The purpose of God's Book was to guide people to the way of eternal welfare and to bring them out of the darkness of desire-worship into the light of true worship. The God-fearing consider the Book of God as a sacred covenant between God and His subjects and they know that they cannot increase in the benefits it confers or lessen in any way the strictness of its ordinances.

In connection with justice it is the requirement of Islamic law that its rules should be enforced without considering any individual's status. Sometimes a man's violence is not the result of mischievous intent, but occurs accidentally under the influence of emotional stress. Under such circumstances, if the victim pardons the perpetrator that will be deemed an act of magnanimity towards the latter.

With the passage of time, the internal reality of religion is lost and public rituals and formal ceremonies assume the strength of the internal reality, eventually becoming 'holy.' That is why God has changed the external framework from time to time so that mentality of considering the framework the real substance of religion is eradicated and God alone should be the center of one's attention.

The bearers of the previous scriptures could not preserve them in their original form, therefore, God revealed the Quran, the authentic expression of His will.

# **Verses 51-86 Muslims allies are God, His Messenger, and the true believers, practices and beliefs of the People of the Scripture, exceeding the limits in religion and following whims, a positive and negative example**

The truly faithful people are those whose entire beings are so pervaded by Faith that they develop a relation with God at the level of love. Fulfillment of Islamic objectives is so dear to them and there is nothing but sympathy and kindness in their hearts for their brothers in Islam. Islamic life is one of purpose and struggle. It is the mission of a Muslim to convey the religion of God to people, guiding the world to keep away from the path leading to Hell and to tread the path leading to Paradise.

Those who claim on the basis of a self-made religion to have a monopoly of devotion to God develop extreme aversion to it and lose all sense of rationality. The result is that they consider pure Muslims to be criminals and blatantly hold their dealings as absolutely fair.

What prevents a man from following the dictates of his desires is his moral fiber. When obstinacy and enmity dominate him, his ability to think becomes suppressed and there is nothing to combat the pressure of his desires.

There were two types of prominent Jews, the rabbis and ‘holy’ men, who remained busy in the work of religion. The secret of their leadership was their presentation of a popular version of religion rather than the true religion favored by God. The favored religion of God is that of *taqwa*. In other words, a man should live in society in such a way that he does good deeds and refrains from sin.

The idea that God is poor with empty Hands and His subjects are rich is false. The root cause of all waywardness is man’s reckless bravado. But once a man fears God, he immediately understands the power emanating from Him and his bravado vanishes.

Because of wishful thinking, the members of the Jewish community were convinced of their salvation before God. What carries weight with God is carrying out His commands and founding one’s life on His religion.

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